



Red Sea turmoil and its repercussion on the region security

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Accepted: 8 June 2025

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Abstract The main purpose of this study is to examine the repercussions of Red sea instability on the Red Sea Region security. This research is significant in providing theoretical insights for stakeholders to address the repercussions of Red Sea instability in the Red Sea Region's for the region states. This study employed Qualitative research approach with Case study research design and data was collected through interviews and document analysis. The data was analysed through thematic analysis. Based on the analysis conducted; the study found that the instability of Red Sea leads to various socio-economic problems in the region, such as economic disruptions, political instability, piracy threat, Security threats and diplomatic challenges, increased competition among regional powers, potential to proxy war, large-scale displacement and refugee influx, proliferation of arms and weapons, disruption of trade route in the region states. In general, the findings of this study revealed that, the Red Sea region governments play a pivotal role to address the multi-faceted challenges of Red Sea instability in the region by strengthening diplomatic engagement with neighbouring Red Sea countries & regional power; exploring economic diversification strategies for their economy, and Enhancing and legalizing their maritime security. Red Sea region

states should collaborate with international organizations, strengthen national institutions, strengthen security forces, and address conflicts in the Red Sea Region to prevent spillover effects and counter terrorism efforts.

Keywords Red Sea · Red Sea region · Security · Turmoil

Introduction

Political, economic, and security issues have long plagued the Red Sea region, with far-reaching effects for the Region states. Due to commerce, security ties, and worries over water supplies, the region countries, is closely linked to the Red Sea. Their stability and growth might be severely impacted by the instability in the Red Sea area, which is made worse by wars, piracy, political rivalry, and terrorist threats (Edwards, 2013; Gass, 1970).

The Red Sea region countries are susceptible to the effects of regional instability because of their close proximity and longstanding connections to the Red Sea. Countries faces significant obstacles to their security and economic prosperity, including the closure of important trade routes, security concerns from nearby nations, and the possibility of a refugee inflow brought on by wars. Furthermore, their imports and exports depend heavily on the Red Sea, so any interruptions there would be harmful to the region's

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economy and general growth (Aliboni, 2015; Weber, 2017).

To effectively address these issues, politicians, scholars, and foreign partners must have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of Red Sea instability and its particular ramifications for the region security. This study intends to offer important insights that can guide policy decisions and interventions to lessen the effects of instability on the region's stability and prosperity by examining the intricate interactions of political, economic, and security factors in the Red Sea region (De Waal, 2017; Crossley et al., 1992).

Countries may see serious political and economic fallout from the unrest in the Red Sea region. Political unrest, economic upheavals, security risks, and diplomatic difficulties were a few possible effects of Red Sea instability in the region security. The Red Sea states may see heightened political tensions and conflicts as a result of political instability in the Red Sea area, which includes nearby nations like Sudan, Yemen, Djibouti, and Eritrea (Lefebvre, 1998; Negash, 2024).

According to economic disturbances, states rely heavily on the Red Sea region as a commerce route, giving it access to seaports for both imports and exports. Their capacity to trade with the rest of the world may be significantly impacted by any regional interruptions, including blockades or hostilities. Supply chain interruptions, shortages of necessities, and higher import and export prices might result from this. They may potentially be at risk for cross-border conflicts, terrorism, and piracy as a result of instability in the Red Sea region. Additionally, the Red Sea region's volatility poses Instability in the area might put the region diplomatic ties with the rest of the world. On important regional concerns including infrastructure development, security, and trade agreements, this might make diplomatic efforts and collaboration more difficult (Edwards, 2013; Tekuya, 2024).

Red Sea instability in region has a variety of political and economic effects that can have a significant impact on the stability, security, and economic growth of the region states. Countries must thus keep a careful eye on regional events and take the initiative in diplomatic initiatives to lessen the possible effects of instability in the Red Sea region. Therefore, this study's goal was to investigate how Red Sea instability affected the Region security (Lawson, 2017; Negash, 2024).

Today, nations all across the world are dealing with a variety of political and socioeconomic issues (Tekuya, 2024). Numerous geopolitical, economic, and security issues are contributing to the growing instability in the Red Sea region, which has serious implications for the region states. Numerous issues that might destabilize the whole area are now plaguing the Red Sea region, such as political upheaval, wars, piracy, and terrorist operations (Gass, 1970; Weber, 2017).

Examining and comprehending the precise manner in which Red Sea instability impacts the region is the current issue. This covers the possible dangers that wars, political tensions, and other causes of instability in the Red Sea region pose to state's security, trading routes, economic growth, and regional stability. Furthermore, the research must investigate how these effects could materialize as an inflow of refugees, obstructed commercial routes, elevated security threats, and other difficulties that might have a significant impact on the region stability and economy (Mabon & Mason, 2022; Wondamagegnehu, 2018).

This study intends to give a thorough grasp of the intricate dynamics at work by identifying and evaluating the major problems associated with Red Sea instability and its effects on the region. It also offers insights that can help stakeholders, researchers, and policymakers create strategies that effectively address these problems and protect the Region's interests in the face of regional instability (Vertin, 2020).

Red Sea region has serious difficulties as a result of the ongoing instability in the Red Sea region, which has an impact on commerce, security, humanitarian aid, and diplomacy. The many effects of Red Sea instability on the Region are examined in this research, including potential refugee inflow, trade route interruption, security risks, water security issues, diplomatic challenges, humanitarian problems, and economic ramifications. In order to mitigate the negative effects of Red Sea instability on the Region and maintain regional stability, addressing these issues requires a comprehensive strategy that includes diplomatic tactics, security cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and sustainable development initiatives (Edwards, 2013; Lawson, 2017).

Various scholars investigate the topic of Red Sea instability and its consequences. The study by Alemu and Ahmed (2020) examines the economic consequences of Red Sea instability on Ethiopia, focusing

on disruptions in commerce routes, insurance premiums, and investment risks. Gebrie & Ali (2018) examine the humanitarian challenges of Red Sea instability, focusing on displacement and influx of refugees. Tesfaye and Yohannes (2021) explore the security dynamics in the Horn of Africa, highlighting the need for proactive measures to protect states interests. However, the study does not consider the contributions of people and government to the region's volatility. The researcher aims to address the gap in understanding the Red Sea Turmoil and its impact on the Region Security.

Review of related literature

Red Sea

The Arabian Peninsula and northern Africa are separated by the Red Sea. Connecting the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, it is one of the most important and strategically located waterways in the world. These are some of the Red Sea's salient features. Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen are among the nations that border the Red Sea. At its widest point, it is up to 225 miles (360 km) wide and around 1200 miles (1900 km) long. With an average width of around 186 miles (300 km), the Red Sea is a small body of water. It is encircled by mountain ranges and desert terrain, with the African area to the west and the Arabian Peninsula to the east.

A vital trading route that links Europe, Asia, and Africa is the Red Sea. It is a vital route for international shipping, especially for commodities traveling from Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Ship travel time and expenses are decreased by the Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean and Red Seas and is situated at the northern end of the Red Sea. The history and civilization of humanity have been significantly influenced by the Red Sea. Since ancient times, it has served as a vital trading route, linking East African, Arabian, and Egyptian civilizations. During the Age of Exploration, the Red Sea was crucial for marine navigation as well (Drake & Girdler, 1964; Humphreys, 2012).

Environmental issues including pollution, overfishing, and climate change affect the Red Sea, just like they do many other marine ecosystems. The creation of marine protected zones and conservation programs

are two ways that efforts are being made to maintain and safeguard the Red Sea's fragile marine ecosystems. In summary, the Red Sea is a location of great ecological value in addition to being an essential waterway for global trade. It is a vital region for international trade and environmental preservation due to its advantageous position and abundant biodiversity (Bosworth, 2015; Tekuya, 2024).

Researchers have traced the origins of instability in the Red Sea region by looking at its historical context and importance in world geopolitics. The contemporary political environment has been formed by the historical exchanges and power dynamics between Red Sea bordering nations (Gass, 1970; Weber, 2017). Scholars have examined how Red Sea instability affects State's security, concentrating on dangers including terrorism, piracy, and foreign military involvement. Two major areas of academic attention have been the possibility for war escalation and the vulnerability of Ethiopian maritime commerce routes. Ethiopia's strategic stance in respect to the instability of the Red Sea has been examined in studies that have examined the nation's security strategies, regional relationships, and diplomatic initiatives. Scholarly literature has examined the Ethiopian government's reactions and tactics to lessen the effects of Red Sea instability. Researchers have looked at how rivalry for resources, especially ports and water, exacerbates instability in the Red Sea area and affects Ethiopia. Regional power conflicts have brought attention to the difficulties in accessing marine resources and control issues (Edwards, 2013; Lefebvre, 1998).

Instability in the Red Sea affects regional integration and cooperation initiatives in the Horn of Africa. Scholarly debate has focused on the possibility that heightened tensions and conflicts might impede regional cooperation and economic growth among nations, particularly Ethiopia.

The humanitarian effects of Red Sea instability have been discussed in academic literature, especially as they relate to cross-border conflicts, displacement, and refugee flows. The effects on the Region most vulnerable people have highlighted the pressing need for coordinated humanitarian measures. The functions of major nations, regional organizations, and the United Nations in settling disputes and fostering stability in the Red Sea area have all been the subject of studies. Scholarly investigation has focused on how well foreign interventions and peace building

initiatives address the underlying causes of instability. In their conjectures about potential futures of Red Sea instability and its effects on Ethiopia, academics have provided suggestions for decision-makers, regional players, and the global community. To negotiate the intricate dynamics of the Red Sea area, strategies for resource management, diplomatic engagement, and conflict avoidance have been put forth (Bosworth, 2015) (Fig. 1).

Methods and materials

This study uses qualitative research to understand the meanings people assign to a particular phenomenon and to answer research questions about social phenomena and their settings. The research aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the parliament's involvement in addressing the effects of Red Sea instability in the Region Security. The study uses a case study approach, choosing the Red Sea unrest

as a case study. Purposive sampling is used to gather data from key informants and experts. Both primary and secondary data sources are used, key informant interviews, online blogs, books, journals, working papers, conference proceedings, news, and magazine opinions. A thorough data gathering tool is essential for assessing reliability, authenticity, and credibility. Data gathering tools include semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, document review, and thematic analysis. The study uses thematic analysis to code, classify, and create themes based on the information gathered from interviews, document analysis, and media material.

Results and discussions

In order to accomplish the goals of the study, the researcher attempts to focus on the effects of the Red Sea instability in the Region Security. The information obtained through qualitative data gathering



Fig. 1 Map of the Red Sea region. Source www.alamy.com

techniques demonstrated that the Red Sea instability in the Region had a variety of effects on the Red Sea Region's economy, politics, humanitarian situation, and security (Bekele & Mohammed, 2019).

The impacts of Red Sea Instability in the Region

Economic Impacts of Red Sea instability

Trade, investments, and State's general economic growth can all be impacted by the instability in the Red Sea region. Significant security risks, such as possible conflicts and destabilization, are also presented by the instability to the Region (Attia & Saleh, 2021).

In an interview, one expert state:

"To be honest, Ethiopia and the all Red Sea Region surrounding area are greatly impacted by the Red Sea's volatility. For instance, the country's border region, migrant population, peace and stability, and diplomacy will all be impacted in different ways by imported and exported goods." (Personal interview 4, 2024).

This helps us to understand how the Red Sea's volatility affects the Region on a variety of socioeconomic levels. Such as trade route interruptions, pirate threats, proxy conflicts, humanitarian crises, and migration crises. According to Alemu and Ahmed (2020), there are a number of economic, political, diplomatic, security, and humanitarian repercussions associated with the Red Sea's volatility.

Another interviewee demonstrating this point:

"As previously said, commerce in products and services has been significantly impacted by the Red Sea's instability; this will have a significant impact on the nation's peace and stability, the border region, the migratory population, and its diplomacy. Every stakeholder should be able to contribute to solving these issues, beginning with the general public" (Personal interview 1, 2024).).

This statement makes it clear that the country's import and export of goods are significantly impacted by Red Sea instability.

Trade Routes Disruption Red Sea Region's import–export operations are impacted by disruptions to Red Sea trade routes and marine security issues because the nation mostly depends on the Bab el Mandeb strait for its commercial links with the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. State's access to important maritime commerce routes may be hampered by Red Sea instability, which might impact the import and export of products and result in higher prices and logistical difficulties (Humphreys, 2012; Kendie, 1990).

In an interview, one expert state:

"The Red sea Region State's commerce routes are severely disrupted by the Red Sea's volatility, which affects both historical and modern marine operations. Due to the continuous wars, especially those involving Houthi militants, marine trade through the Red Sea and Suez Canal has significantly decreased, necessitating a move to more expensive and lengthy alternate routes. In addition to interfering with the flow of commodities, this interruption raises operating expenses, which may have a domino impact on the Region's economy." (Personal interview 7, 2024).

According to Insoll (2021) the Region States has long relied on the Red Sea as a vital commerce route, allowing the movement of products from the Gulf of Aden to Harlaa, including marine shells. Recent Houthi attacks have resulted in a 42% decrease in transits via the Suez Canal, with container ship transits dropping by 67%. This trade network extended beyond Ethiopia, impacting markets in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. There have been reports of lengthier transit times and higher shipping prices as a result of rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope, which has an impact on the Region State's supply chain for a number of industries. The volatility drives up freight rates and operating expenses, which might cause inflationary pressures on countries necessities. Due to its reliance on imports and exports via various channels, the Region economy has a difficult time maintaining (Rodríguez et al., 2024).

Socio-Economic Development By redirecting resources toward security measures, conflict mitigation, and risk management, Red Sea instability might impede Ethiopia's socioeconomic development

efforts and impact long-term development objectives (Mohamud, 2023; Negash, 2024). Political unrest and security threats in the Red Sea region might cause delays or setbacks for Ethiopia's participation in regional infrastructure projects (Attia & Saleh, 2021; Gebreluel, 2014).

Economic growth is undermined and foreign investment is discouraged by political turbulence in the Region that is made worse by regional tensions. Economic competitiveness and trade efficiency in the Region are hampered by inadequate infrastructure, especially in the areas of telecommunications and transportation. These infrastructure deficiencies are made worse by the unrest in the Red Sea region, which makes it more difficult for the states in the Region to conduct successful foreign trade.

Container ship capacity in the Red Sea has decreased by 80% as a result of Houthi strikes, requiring ships to detour around Africa, increasing journey times and expenses. Due to safety concerns, major shipping firms like A.P. Møller-Maersk have changed their routes, which have resulted in an increase in the cost of insurance for traveling through the area (Nandini et al., 2024).

Piracy Threat Piracy in the waters near the Horn of Africa threatens shipping channels and might have an impact on the Region's business operations and global commerce (Vertin, 2020). Piracy risks and marine security are greatly impacted by the instability in the Red Sea region, especially as a result of Houthi attacks. Due to the Red Sea's diminished strategic significance as a worldwide commerce route, maritime businesses now face more hazards, and the military is more heavily present in the region.

Economic Uncertainty the Region's economic development, international direct investment, and investor confidence may all be impacted by economic uncertainty brought on by instability in the Red Sea area (Negash, 2024). The energy security may be impacted by state-to-state conflicts or disruptions in Red Sea trade routes, especially if it depends on imported energy supplies from the area (Aliboni, 2015; Vertin, 2020).

Many vessels have chosen to take longer routes around the Cape of Good Hope as a result of the assaults, which have caused a major drop in marine activity in the Gulf of Aden and Suez Canal.

Due to longer transit durations and more stringent security procedures, this change not only upsets global supply networks but also raises operating expenses and freight prices (Rodríguez et al., 2024).

With regard to this, one key informant interviewee strongly assured that:

“Global trade and regional supply chains are greatly impacted by the instability in the Red Sea region, especially as a result of Houthi attacks. Economic instability has been made worse by the interruption of marine commerce, which has resulted in higher operating costs, longer transit times, and a move towards other routes. Due to Houthi insurgent activity, the Red Sea's container ship capacity has decreased by 80%, requiring ships to divert across Africa, which has resulted in a 30% increase in transit times. Certain shipping rates have quadrupled as a result of the change in marine routes, which has a significant impact on businesses that depend on on-time delivery” (Personal Interview 8, 2024).

Political impacts of Red Sea instability

Alliances and Partnership States in the Region may become isolated or be compelled to choose a side in regional power struggles as a result of the Red Sea issue, which has caused opposing blocs and alliances to develop in the area. This might have an impact on their diplomatic ties and foreign policy goals (Humphreys, 2012; Lawson, 2017).

One interviewee also confirmed this:

“Recently, in connection with the instability of the Red Sea, some countries have come up with their own power alignment. For example, we can see the alignment between Egypt, Eritrea and Somalia” (Personal interview 2, 2024).

Geo-political Dynamics As the nation attempts to manage intricate geopolitical processes and reduce the likelihood of violence, Ethiopia's role as a mediator or peacekeeper in the Red Sea problem may put a burden on its diplomatic capabilities and resources (Attia & Saleh, 2021; Kendie, 1990). Geopolitical dynamics are greatly impacted by the instability

in the Red Sea region, especially when it comes to maritime security, foreign military presence, and regional cooperation. An 80% reduction in container ship capacity has resulted from the continued Houthi attacks on commercial boats, disrupting maritime trade and endangering the security of global trade by increasing costs and lengthening travel times. Furthermore, the legal issues raised by these attacks make it more difficult to respond internationally and draw attention to the possibility of more intense military conflicts, which might further destabilize the area (Nandini et al., 2024).

In an interview, one expert state:

“The security environment is complicated by the rivalry between superpowers for influence in the Red Sea, which raises the possibility of intra-state conflicts and proxy wars. For regional organizations to promote stability and collaboration, they must adjust to these changes (Personal interview 3, 2024).

The categorization of Houthi activities complicates international reactions and legal frameworks by posing legal issues pertaining to guerrilla warfare and maritime terrorism. International collaboration is necessary for marine security because of the possibility for increased warfare, such as assaults on military boats, which poses further hazards to global trade and energy supply.

Competition among Regional powers There is heightened rivalry for influence and control in the Red Sea region between regional countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, and Iran. Ethiopia's strategic objectives and regional security may be impacted by this geopolitical competition. As a result of the Red Sea issue, regional players such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Turkey, and Iran are vying for control and influence over the strategically important waterway and its environs (Aliboni, 2015; Attia & Saleh, 2021).

There are advantages and disadvantages for regional security associated with the growth of foreign military installations in the Red Sea. Although it helps fight terrorism and piracy, it also runs the risk of escalating regional disputes and outside meddling (Liyew, 2024).

Security and humanitarian impacts of Red Sea instability

There are significant security and humanitarian ramifications to the instability in the Red Sea, which is mostly caused by Houthi strikes. Global supply chains and local economies are impacted by the disruption of marine trade routes, which raises operating costs and causes delays. Houthi attacks have caused an 80% reduction in Red Sea container ship capacity, forcing ships to detour across Africa, which has resulted in a major increase in transit times and prices. Instability of the Red Sea enhanced Military Presence. The protracted war makes it necessary for foreign troops to conduct more frequent military patrols, which further complicates the dynamics of regional security (Nandini et al., 2024). Concerns about maritime terrorism have been raised by Houthi drone and missile assaults that have targeted Israeli ships. To protect navigation, international troops must increase their military patrols.

The following participant proved this, as::

“Food insecurity in the area is made worse by trade route disruptions, as import-dependent nations experience shortages and price increases as a result of higher shipping costs. Healthcare Supply Chain Strain also another encounters of the Red Sea instability in Ethiopia as well as the region. Public health outcomes in impacted areas are impacted by delays and higher medical supply prices in the healthcare industry.” (Personal Interview 1, 2024).

The Red Sea region is a prime target for terrorist attacks due to extremist forces and Al-Shabaab operations. This instability can affect states in the Region counterterrorism operations and security problems. Border insecurity, displacement, and refugee crises can exacerbate security threats along the Region states. Increased militarization and foreign interventions in the region can lead to border conflicts, spillover effects, and war escalation. Interconnected conflicts in neighboring nations can pose complex security risks, while proxy wars in Yemen and Sudan can spread to other states, causing heightened insecurity and regional instability. Arms proliferation in the region can exacerbate terrorism, wars, and instability.

States in the Region export capabilities are impacted by the security threats, such as port closures and naval blockades, in the Red Sea, which jeopardize its trade routes (“The Red Sea Regional Security Complex: The Implications of the Red Sea Forum for Ethiopian National Security”, 2024) (“Red Sea crisis will worsen the world trade downturn”, 2023). The socio-economic environment is further complicated by the increased dangers Ethiopian immigrants face when crossing the sea, which might result in a loss of human capital.

Summary

The Red Sea Region governments must address the impact of Red Sea instability on their security, including trade routes, investment prospects, and economic development. Security risks include potential wars and instability, and a refugee crisis burdens Ethiopia’s infrastructure. They must develop a strategic response to mitigate the consequences of the instability, improve regional collaboration, and minimize potential harm to its security and stability.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The Red Sea region is becoming increasingly unstable due to a number of factors, including piracy, terrorism, political problems, and international meddling. This instability has a significant impact for the Red Sea Region. The risks posed by the Red Sea’s instability might have an impact on countries security, economic activities, and regional stability.

Governments in the Region must closely monitor developments in the Red Sea region and take decisive action to address issues brought on by the instability. They must aggressively seek diplomatic ties with its neighbors, regional organizations, and international partners in order to mitigate the threats posed by the Red Sea’s volatility.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- The governments in the Region should play its part in promoting their security in the Red Sea area and oversee the appropriate execution of regulations
- The governments are putting in place a structure and a process that helps safeguard their national interest.
- The governments are encourages peaceful settlements of political disputes in the Red Sea region in order to foster stability and lessen the effects on the Region.
- In order to promote communication, cooperation, and the settlement of disputes in the Red Sea area, the governments should take an active part in diplomatic efforts. Building trust and reducing tensions can be achieved by fortifying ties with nearby nations and regional powers.
- To advance peace, security, and stability in the Red Sea area, the governments in the Red Sea Region ought to collaborate closely with regional institutions such as the African Union and IGAD. Working together may efficiently handle shared concerns and improve collective security. Determining how they might work with international organizations, multilateral platforms, and regional partners to advance stability, security, and peace in the Red Sea area.
- To combat piracy, illicit activity, and marine security risks in the Red Sea area, the governments in the Region strengthens their cooperation with international partners and neighboring nations.
- The governments should be committed to promoting stability and peace by supporting refugees and internally displaced people affected by conflicts in the Red Sea Region, offering relief, resettlement assistance, and infrastructure development.
- To improve regional connectivity and lessen reliance on the Red Sea for commerce, governments must building alternate transportation routes and infrastructure.
- The state Supporting efforts to resolve conflicts and promote peace in unstable surrounding nations will help to stabilize and secure the area, which would ultimately aid their own stability and growth.
- The governments can explore economic diversification strategies like establishing alternate transit routes, fostering trade alliances, and funding infra-

structure projects to reduce dependence on Red Sea trade routes and mitigate instability.

- Governments in the Red Sea Region can better manage the volatility of the Red Sea if the government strengthens its national institutions, security forces, and governance structures. This would increase their resilience to both internal and external threats.
- To safeguard their interests in the Red Sea Region, they should strengthen their marine security capabilities through staff training, technology acquisition, and cooperative exercises.
- The governments can assist safeguard their commercial routes and lessen the threat of piracy in the Red Sea by strengthening maritime security measures including coast guard capabilities, collaboration with naval forces, and intelligence sharing.
- In order to successfully combat security challenges, the governments must keep up its efforts to combat terrorism and extremism in the area, working with partner states and international organizations.
- To provide policymakers with suggestions on how the governments in the region can safeguard their national interests by navigating and responding to the political and economic difficulties brought on by Red Sea turmoil.

Therefore, States in the Red Sea Region can preserve their security in the Red Sea region, advance regional and international peace, and defend their interests by putting these suggestions into practice and continuing to take proactive steps to solve the difficulties brought on by Red Sea instability.

Acknowledgements My heartfelt thank goes to the participants of this research. my sincere gratitude also goes to the reviewers of manuscript who comment critically and worthwhile. I have also a big honour for our staffs.

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Funding The author declare that no funds, grants, or other support were received during the preparation of this manuscript.

Declarations

Conflict of interest No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Ethical approval All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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