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DISCUSSION

Protection and Exports

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IN a recent paper Patibandla (1995) criticises our earlier work [Marjit and Sarkar 1995] on two grounds. First we do not consider the liberalisation of intermediate good imports which are used in exportables. If tariff goes down marginal cost of export production drops and exports expand. Thus a general reduction in tariff may expand exports. Second, there is a proposed ambiguity regarding the local firm's choice of the pricing rule under a tariff. Our response is as follows.

We specifically considered the case with final goods and tried to explain what is really meant by saying that our exports are residual. However, even if one brings in intermediates and marginal costs shift down, there is no guarantee that total exports will expand because as tariff on final goods comes down, domestic sales expand and as mc comes down total production expands. One does not know about the surplus. But the main point is that conventional wisdom regarding 'tariff-decline led growth of exports' would have to be clarified.

The second criticism is totally unfounded if the 'profit-maximisation' motivation of the monopolist is closely followed. We did not provide the explicit proof because we thought it was too obvious. But now we provide a schematic demonstration of the optimal pricing rule.

Let t_m be the tariff rate such that,

$$P_w + t_m \geq P_m \text{ (we define } P_m \text{ later)} \quad (1)$$

We know that the profit maximising choice of local and global sales are Q_L and Q_w satisfying the following:

$$mr(Q_L) = P_w = C'(Q_L + Q_w) = mc \quad (2)$$

With the local selling price at $P_m = f(Q_L)$, $f(\cdot)$ being the demand function.

Total profit is given by

$$\pi = f(Q_L) Q_L + P_w Q_w - C(Q_L + Q_w) \quad (3)$$

Now suppose t_m is reduced to t with $P_w + t < f(Q_L)$.

We prove that the local firm must choose to sell at $(P_w + t)$ and since there is no other firm, it would serve the entire market.

Given P_w , total $Q = \hat{Q}_L + \hat{Q}_w$ does not change.

The new aggregate profit therefore is

$$\pi = P \hat{Q}_L + P_w \hat{Q}_w - C(\hat{Q}_L + \hat{Q}_w) \quad (4)$$

Note that $\hat{Q}_L + Q_w = \hat{Q}_L + Q_w = Q$, solving $C'(Q) = P_w$. We show that P , the new local price, must be equal to $(P_w + t)$.

Suppose $P > (P_w + t)$. Then nobody buys from the monopolist. Hence, $P > (P_w + t)$ is impossible. Let $P < (P_w + t)$ and $P = f(Q_L)$. $\hat{Q}_w = Q - \hat{Q}_L$. Suppose now the local firm transfers one unit of output from the global to the local market. It loses P_w and gains a marginal revenue defined as $mr(\hat{Q}_L)$ at \hat{Q}_L . This $mr(\hat{Q}_L)$ has to be lower than P_w because $P_w = mr(Q_L)$ at $P_m = f(Q_L)$ and $P < P_{w+t} < P_m \Rightarrow \hat{Q}_L > Q_L$. As mr curve is downward sloping $mr(\hat{Q}_L) < mr(Q_L)$. Hence, the firm would always like to cut back local sales as much as it can till it reaches Q_L , the first-best with $mr(Q_L) = P_w$. But now it faces a limit at $(P_w + t)$ and would definitely produce only up to $\bar{Q} = f(P_w + t)$. There is no way that the local monopolist would charge a P lower than $(P_w + t)$ as mentioned in Patibandla (1995) leaving the only possibility that $P = P_w + t$. This completes the proof.

To conclude it can be rightfully asserted that the theoretical point we wanted to make is the only result consistent with the profit maximisation hypothesis. Patibandla (1995) uses a different model with intermediates and gets different result. The remarks regarding our analytical framework do not stand valid as they fail to note the determination of the optimal pricing rule.

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