

INDO-CHINA POLICY - RETHINKING TIES WITH EACH OTHER

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Abstract

People are aware that India and China's relationship is stressed and contemporary. The majority of political specialists believe that the world's political system is shifting as power shifts from the West to the East. China and India, the two nations with the largest populations, are beginning to proclaim their identities and are becoming economic superpowers. China and India, the two largest countries in the region, will play a significant role in determining the course of the 21st century. Even while ties between India and China have improved in recent years, they remain very complex and difficult to describe. Despite frequent border conflicts and economic nationalism in both nations, the two have attempted to cooperate economically till now. With the positive relations in mind, countries are trying to synchronise and grow together while the concerns seem complex with recent disputes, boycotts, pandemic etc. The paper has attempted to understand the relatable dimensions and actions both governments took for a better relationship. The results identified that future seems bright for both nations but, they need to cooperate and grow together leaving tensions apart.

Keywords: Indo-China, Galwan dispute, Covid-19, Power shift, Taiwan, Asia, USA



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Introduction

Ties between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and India are known as Sino-Indian relations and Indo-Chinese ties and since the beginning of recorded history, India and China have gotten along well. When the Chinese Communist Party won the Chinese Civil War, and especially when the People's Republic of China seized control of Tibet, ties between the two nations have weakened. Deng Xiaoping compared Vajpayee and Gandhi to emphasise China's stability and pragmatic nature. India had hoped that China would be open

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to a workable border settlement, eager to institutionalise peace through confidence-building measures, and respectful of India's territorial integrity. Due to better Sino-Indian relations, China-Pakistan conflicts were expected to decrease (Gokhale, 2021). So, restoring trade and commercial connections, easing prohibitions on people-to-people contact, implementing confidence-building measures along the border, normalising military-to-military interactions, and expanding multilateral cooperation are some more actions implemented and needed to make these two nations well connected (Deepak, 2020).

A positive outlook may be seen for both India and China going forward. The Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for settling the India-China Boundary Question was signed in 2005. With this, the resumption of interactions between top leaders, China's formal recognition of Sikkim as a part of India, a decrease in support for rising organisations in north-eastern India and neighbouring areas, and business growth all contributed to a more peaceful and prosperous region.

To China, facts are irrelevant in settling the border conflict. Concerns increased after 2000 over China's fast infrastructure development in Tibet and along the Line of Actual Control (LAC); China's stance on Jammu and Kashmir did not alter; Pakistan got more lethal weaponry; and China ceased defining the LAC in 2003 (Rahmati, Ali & Kamraju, 2020). At about halfway through the century, the trade gap became a significant concern. With the LAC as a buffer zone, China knew it could construct without worrying about Indian opposition. India's primary trading partner has shifted to China while India reacted cautiously to Tibet's independence. The Chinese authorities may not have gotten the perfect results they were hoping for in Tibet, and their hopes for a speedy resolution of the boundary conflict were crushed. Fearing a rebalance of India's relations with the U.S. after 2008, they felt the China threat idea gaining popularity in India was explicitly reinforced (Gokhale, 2021).

As a result of China's rise, the balance of power in East Asia and the Himalayas has shifted. China discusses creating a multipolar world while simultaneously altering the Indo-Pacific area. In actuality, however, it has difficulty accommodating Asia's diverse interests and is unwilling to do so as India is closer to the United States and its allies (East Asia Forum, 2022). History must be considered when analysing India's East Asian foreign policy actions. India and China began to get along in the late 1970s when the Cold War was still going on, and globalisation was starting. They shared the same age and developmental stage, which facilitated their friendship (Baruah, 2021).

Many believe that India's 2017 decision to reconsider its participation in the Quad was prompted by the Doklam border stalemate. In this example, India's decision to incorporate the Quad and the Indo-Pacific Strategy into its military and diplomatic policy was likely prompted by the 2020 Galwan border dispute (Gokhale, 2021).

This article argues that the rising mistrust between two nations results from how one country perceives and feels about the other in the context of world events. Both nations believe they are cultural superpowers and want others to concur. Misperceptions can lead one country to think that another's acts or behaviour were motivated by wrong motives, resulting in a lack of trust. Before discussing particular issues, both parties may need to reconsider what they believe they know about the other. Scholars from China and India also produced most of the publications considered in this analysis.

The objective is to determine what the two nations believe about the relationship between them. The paper examines the issue from three distinct angles—the first concerns the evolution of China and India's foreign policy since 2008 and their mutual influence. The second examines how each side perceives the other, and the role played by the present governments in this process. The third and final lens is the intensifying competition between China and India in the Indo-Pacific area. Even though there are different perspectives on this connection, such as the alliance between China and Pakistan, the most severe issues currently appear to be less significant. The most difficult problems seem to stem from how each nation perceives the geopolitical objectives of the other.

Aim

The study aims to understand the current Indo-China Policy and rethink ties with each other.

Literature Review

Khan & Shamim (2022) stated that India and China are Asia's two most populous and fastest-growing countries. Therefore, their connection continues to strengthen and this co-operation consists of several distinct components. For instance, both nations saw themselves in history as significant civilisations with a global effect, and the people and leaders of both countries wished to reclaim their historical positions as global leaders. India and China possess some of the world's most robust demographic, economic, territorial, and military capacities. They also have a history of being involved in highly horrible things that the West did to other nations. The reality further pads these similar histories and perspectives that both countries have participated in heinous actions. The agreement between the two nations on

modernisation and development strategies makes the expansion of regional, bilateral, and international commerce a common objective. It gives them a considerably more vital role in international affairs.

Panda (2022) illustrated that Taiwan's ambiguous position and conflicting language intensify anxiety. The nations of the Indo-Pacific are on high alert due to these pressing problems. Since 2020, India, in particular, has been on the high lookout because of its protracted border conflict with China in the Himalayan region. The fact that the West is concerned about Xi Jinping's strategy to revitalise China and the accompanying power struggle, notably the recent "U.S. offensive" in the Indo-Pacific, aids India's geopolitical objectives. Because the peace in the region is fragile, a cautiously proactive attitude from both nations is required. India's aggressive foreign policy objectives of multi and targeted alignment and strategic autonomy rely on New Delhi not upsetting China while emphasising its freshly growing power parity with Beijing.

According to Grossman (2022), Modi and his *Bhartiya Janta Party* (BJP) administration have also adopted an ultrarealistic foreign policy stance. For instance, they dealt with the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine well. This method has been used globally, not only in India. India has an unprecedented alliance with the United States and other nations in Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific. China and Russia are both interested in doing business with India. All this has placed New Delhi for the first time on the global scene and at a strategic crossroads.

An article by *India Today* (2022) described that Indian and Chinese soldier had been deadlocked at several flashpoints in eastern Ladakh for more than two years. After high-level military discussions, the two sides ceased hostilities in several regional locations, but the situation remains standing, and little progress has been made. A narrow sense of "Asian patriotism," according to India's Union External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, is unfavourable to the continent's interests. "Asia desires to take advantage of chances in other regions since it is so vibrant and inventive. It cannot be a one-way street". This viewpoint is inconsistent with the realities of globalisation. Jaishankar added that the Indo-Pacific area's developments significantly impact Asia's prospects and challenges.

Krishnan (2020) found that since 2014, Chinese investments in India have increased, altering the previously transactional character of their relationship. Chinese enterprises are becoming well-known investors and participants in various sectors, ranging from infrastructure and energy to real estate and internet startups, which are more recent areas of

interest. Their research compiles data from several sources to provide a more comprehensive picture of Chinese investment in India. China has invested more than US\$26 billion in India for the present and the future and this increase in investment has several effects on China and India's relationship.

Discussion

Perception towards future

Because of the continuing military standoff between India and China, the external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar stated that the future of Asia rests on India and China's relationship and that "the condition of the border will determine the status of the relationship (Mint 2022)." How India and China's ties evolve in the following years will significantly impact Asia's destiny (Hindustan Times, 2022). The three mutuals—mutual sensitivity, mutual respect, and mutual interest—must be the foundation of relationships for them to regain their footings.

Several confidence-building measures were agreed upon as a consequence of this equality. This allowed India and China to develop and normalise their collaboration in other sectors. They joined several international organisations, including the BRICS grouping, the East Asia Summit, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, among others.

Actions taken

It is hardly surprising that Chinese scholars are now examining India's "Act East Policy" and other subregional and international organisations that support the Indo-Pacific strategy. These international organisations include the Indian Ocean Rim Association, the Security and Growth for All in the Region vision, and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. Many of these organisations are intended to offset China's expanding influence. India has now shifted its focus from China to Southeast Asia to initiate connection initiatives. This is true regardless of whether or not these initiatives satisfy the Indo-Pacific policy's objectives for example, the Cambodia-Vietnam-India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway has been widened and is expected to be completed by 2023.

India supports " Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) centrality" and seeks a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region based on a rules-based international order. This apparent balance has made it simpler for India to collaborate on security with the United States and other regional middle powers. Institutionalising the India-US 2+2

conference, the Quad, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, and the US-India Malabar drills demonstrate that cooperation between the two nations is increasing.

India's political and economic influence is relatively insignificant compared to China's. In 2021, the value of commerce between China and ASEAN was \$878.2 billion, above the value of trade between ASEAN and India, which was \$78 billion. However, East Asian nations have long backed India's presence in the region, even though most disagree with India's self-described position as a "net security provider" and believe the United States should play that function.

Economic connections

As the economic and investment connections between India and China evolve, so must their interactions. Engaging new nations with a stake in the relationship is an immediate issue. Between China and India, at least 30 channels for at least 30 government ministries to communicate have been established. The essential points of communication are the Ministry of External Affairs in India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in China, but in recent years more talks have been shown to address the expanding economic activity. The Joint Group on Economic Relations, Science, and Technology (JEG) was established in 1988. Since then, it has convened just eleven times.

China invested much more money in India's telecom, electronics, solar, and, most notably, digital industries as trade developed. India was a bit spiteful of China's rise, but it also saw chances for the two nations to cooperate for mutual benefit. However, over the past two decades, India has become increasingly aware of the dangers posed by the increasing economic, military, and technical contrasts between the two nations (East Asia Forum, 2022). Chinese corporations are attempting to stay in India for the first time, and their investments in Indian enterprises offer them a stake in the Indian market for the long term. Changes are occurring in India's commercial and investment partnerships with China, particularly with China's private sector and provincial governments, which have grown influential in determining China's diplomacy with India. This implies New Delhi will require a new strategy and approach to its relations with China. A transparent, credible, and predictable regulatory framework is needed to achieve a better long-term balance between promoting a welcoming, open, and predictable investment climate and preserving security and privacy. The flood of Chinese investment makes it difficult for India to regulate its foreign investment.

Conclusion

As a result of the power shift in Asia, China has altered its behaviour. It has been flexing its might in the disputed border regions between India and China, resulting in casualties and protracted standoffs. Until recently, India did not select a side and was a "swing state" between the leading regional powers. This may be deduced from India's initial ambivalence toward the Quad. In a keynote address at the 2018 Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged China and India to "operate together in trust and confidence, taking each other's interests into account."

Consequently, it is conceivable to view the relationship between India and China as an emerging nexus in which certain elements can be considered both positive and negative. Given the breadth of their global interests and the fact that both nations are assuming a more significant role on the international stage, it is confident that they will continue to cooperate. The number and breadth of these advantages and obligations are constantly expanding. Internationally, their relationship is viewed as a common security concern because many tactical choices taken by one side are swiftly reversed by the other and are viewed as a constant danger to the interests of others. In addition, constructivism would attempt to demonstrate how anthropological activities like community building can generate more common purposes than dangers. This might let India and China concentrate on positive matters rather than a security issues. Observing these frequent social behaviours and how they make individuals feel might provide insight into state alliances and rivalries. These behaviours have historical roots, yet they are also present in contemporary human interaction.

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