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THE DYNAMICS OF INDO-SINO RELATIONS

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Abstract

India and China are one of the oldest living civilizations of the world. Both the countries have dominated the Asian region and impacted the world in many ways. These two emerging superpowers share the love-hate relationship. Both the countries are most populous countries of the world, therefore the largest markets, and labor force in the world. While one has communal ideology the other is the world's largest democracy.

The role of cultural, diplomatic, economic, and geographical aspects of both India and China and its impact on the bilateral relations is being studied and reflected in this paper.

It also studies the roadblocks for the better bilateral relations and the relational dynamics between the countries in the context of international relations.

Keywords: Bilateral Relations, Trade Agreements and Treaties, History of Hostile Environment in The Neighborhood, Pearl of Strings Strategy of China, Border Disputes Between India and China, Wolf Warriors, Use of Media, Military Might, Manufacturing Hub.

Introduction

'Good fences make good neighbors'; it couldn't be truer in the context of India and China.

India and China are one of the oldest living civilizations of the world. Both the countries have dominated the Asian region and impacted the world in many ways. These two emerging superpowers share the love-hate relationship. Both the countries are most populous countries of the world, therefore the largest markets, and labor force in the world. While one has communal ideology the other is the world's largest democracy.

Objective

Understanding the dynamics of cultural, diplomatic, economic, and geographical aspects of India and China and its impact on Indo – Sino relations

Different aspects of Indo-Sino relations

Diplomatic aspects

India recognized People's Republic of China (PRC) as a legitimate government of China and was the first non-communist country to establish diplomatic relations with PRC.

Panchsheel principles were formulated and initiated by Prime Minister Nehru for peaceful coexistence. But China never reciprocated positively to these principles. Like China does not respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Aksai Chin, and Kashmir. China's attack on India in 1962.

Its constant interference in Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, the spirit of Panchsheel being not followed and led to the feeling of letdown among the Indians.

Dalai Lama fled China and Prime Minister Nehru formally offered him asylum in India in 1959 and since then, he is living in India. Though India did not take stand against China on Tibet, it nevertheless offered refuge to many Tibetans who came to India through North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) via Arunachal Pradesh, unable to endure PRC's repression.

Cultural aspects

The phrase 'Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai' was coined by PM Nehru in 1950's, which later became hollow and one sided amid Indo-Sino 1962 war.

India's soft power diplomacy includes its history, culture and values, which has attracted many people across the globe including China. Another aspect is Bollywood movies being famous and appreciated in China.



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Spread of Buddhism in China through India

Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis served the Chinese during the Sino-Japanese war

Various cultural exchange programs to serve as a step to bring these two nations together.

Geographical aspects

Indo Sino War in 1962 when China attacked Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh. China claimed control over Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh. The War ended with India's defeat and unilateral ceasefire with Chinese occupying Aksai Chin region of India, which is now administered by China as part of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Tibet Autonomous Region.

Indo Sino border demarcation

The total length of Indo-Sino land border is 3488 km

McMahon Line - boundary between Tibet and British India agreed upon in March 1914 in Delhi as a part of 1914 Shimla Convention, and Johnson Line – of 1865, puts Aksai Chin in Jammu and Kashmir region of India, but it is disputed by China as per its convenience.

Economic aspects:

India – China bilateral trade

As per the Trade agreement in 1984, India and China accorded MFN (Most Favored Nation) status on each other. Since 1992, India and China fully got into bilateral trade in the modern context

According to PHD CCI website – “In 2013, China overtook UAE to become India's biggest trading partner. Presently, China is India's 4th biggest export destination whereas the biggest import source.”

Cheap labor and low-priced goods among various other factors have contributed to large scale imports from China, this in turn results in dumping of Chinese goods into Indian markets leading to indirect killing of Indian production units. For instance, due to excessive imports of Chinese toys into Indian markets Indian toy production units found themselves in an unsustainable competition with Chinese manufacturers.

Despite India-China's relations in other aspects, China still remains in the top trading partners list of India in 2020-21

To avoid over-dependence, India initiated many schemes to promote and encourage Indian manufacturing units with 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan' to make India self-reliant.

Indian diaspora & students in China

According to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), a major component of Mainland China is students. About 8,000 Indian students are enrolled in Chinese Universities, particularly in Chinese medical universities where they are pursuing MBBS studies. Easy admission system, affordable fees and good standard of facilities are the main attraction for the Indian students.

There are Indian community associations in Beijing, Shanghai, Shaoxing, like ICB (Indian Community of Beijing) and SIBA (Shaoxing Indian Business Association) and Shanghai-Indian Association.

Recent developments

Wuhan Summit 2018

An informal summit between India's PM Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, was held in Wuhan, China on 27-28 April 2018.

Mamallapuram Summit 2019

Second informal summit between India's PM Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping was held in Chennai, India on 11-12 October 2019.

Both these summits were held to normalize the strained relations after the Doklam incident. COVID 19 issues and Chinese government's use of media:



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On 31st December 2019, cases of COVID-19 were identified and reported in Hubei Province, Wuhan, China. Since then, a rapid spread of this COVID-19 epidemic can be seen across the globe.

Chinese wolf warrior diplomacy method was adopted by the CCP government to malign India, accusing it of spreading the COVID pandemic. It also accused India among other countries for sealing the borders as an overreaction and putting China to hardship.

There were soured relations given China's encroachment in and around Galwan Valley, there was also military skirmish leading to martyrdom of Indian soldiers, further souring the relations. 59 Chinese apps were banned in India citing security concerns.

Hurdles in Indo-Sino relations China's Support to Pakistan

China for many instances extended tacit as well as overt support to Pakistan in Kashmir, which is an integral part of the Indian territory, whereas, it expects India to respect China's territorial claims over Taiwan and Tibet. It also blocks India's attempt to bring to justice the terrorists given safe haven by Pakistan. Example, Hafiz Saeed, Azhar Mahmood etc. It vetoes and blocks India's entry in the UNSC as a permanent member.

Territorial aggression and expansion with its claims over Tibet, South China Sea disputes over islands and claims over Indian territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin.

Doklam, Bhutanese territorial region, on which China started to build infrastructure led to conflict between India and China. Bhutan is India's ally and has signed a treaty with India allowing India to assist in Bhutan's military and diplomatic affairs.

On 18 June 2017 with 'Operation Juniper', Indian troops armed with weapons crossed the Sikkim border into Doklam to stop the Chinese troops from constructing the road.

The strategic concern regarding this matter is the Chinese influence in Doklam could lead to easy access to the Chumbi Valley and the Siliguri Corridor (aka India's Chicken Neck). This is a very strategically important place for India as it connects the rest of the India with its North-Eastern States. With China constantly building infrastructure around the borders, this implies serious security challenges in the area.

China encircling India, known as, String of Pearls, increasing Chinese naval influence in the Indian Ocean Region with an intention of encircling India, by building its military and naval infrastructure in ports of various countries in sea.

By developing infrastructure in various countries, China exerts influence over them. Belt and Road Initiative, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on land, a Chinese strategy to connect Asia, Africa and Europe to facilitate better connectivity.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, an initiative to develop infrastructure in Pakistan passes through Pakistan occupied Kashmir which is an integral part of India.

Further examples of these are, Chinese presence in Strait of Malacca, Myanmar's Kyaukpyu port, Chittagong Port in Bangladesh, Hambantota Port of Sri Lanka, Gwadar Port in Balochistan, a region of Pakistan and various other ports.

Loan / debt-trap diplomacy

China lends large sum of loan to other nations trapping them in debt to gain more leverage to intervene in its domestic and diplomatic affairs thereby using them against Indian interests.

Conclusion

In spite of ideological and political differences, both India and China came together and took a stand against USA with reference to The Paris Agreement against Carbon footprints as it had clauses, not in the interest of both the countries. This incident proves that international relations are flexible and fleeting. No country is a permanent friend or enemy. It is based on mutual interests and the ability to stand up to the other country that decides the equation.



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