



India-China bilateral relationship

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Abstract

We know that Asia's largest and most rapidly rising powers in contemporary global politics, relations between India and China are becoming ever more intertwined with each other, this symbiosis, including a shared civilization basis, a mutual desire to re-become great powers in international relations and common modernisation goals. India and China mark the 1st April 2020 as the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between them starting from 1950 till now. We know that there are ups and down in relations between India and China but still relationship between India and China are still strong and both nations leadership wants to strong relationship between them.

Keywords: Indo-China relations, south Asia, India-China approaches

Introduction

India and China are two great nations of world and located on Asia. In terms of populations China and India ranked first and second respectively. In terms of geographical area China is the third largest country in the world while India is the seventh largest in area. We know that relationship between India and China started with cultural and economic relations during the ancient times. It is believed that the people of Indus Valley Civilisation had rich trade relations with their Chinese counterparts. Both countries to be the home of some of the oldest civilisations and we know that both countries have suffered due to colonialism though China was never under complete direct control of a foreign power on the other hand, India remained under various foreign powers for several centuries. Both countries obtained complete independence almost together and both are considered to be next power centres of the world economy. We know that from the last seven decades both countries are large industrial centre and largest market, both are capable military power, and India have large pool of young manpower. In this context, it gets very relevant to examine the relation of these two emerging super powers of the world. A collective adherence to modernisation and development policies also galvanises the two entities together whereby achieving increased levels of bilateral, regional and global trade is a common aim, which is serving to successfully augment their power across all domains of international affairs. Expressing similar demands in the face of similar challenges is becoming more evident in issues ranging from how both India and China can effectively manage the climate emergency as developing states to gaining more representative voices in existing and new multilateral institutions.

History of India-China Relationship

India- Chinese relations can be traced back to several thousand years back. It is believed that Indus Valley civilization people have relationship with Chinese counterparts and its believed that India purchased jute from China and export wheat and cotton to China. We know that

Buddhism originated in India and reached to China through Buddhist monks and traders. Several Chinese scholars such as Fa Hsien, Sung Yun, Hsuan Tsang came to India and studied various aspects of Buddhism and other available knowledge. In the medieval centuries, India was prone to foreign invasion from the barbaric tribes of central Asia as well as Islamic Perso- Arabic and Turkic invaders. In British period, British occupied the political control over entire India. Almost the same time, China also came under the influence of England, France, Russia, United States of America and Japan. As Indians suffered in hands of the British, the Chinese were exploited by the Japanese imperialism. The Chinese President Chang Kai Shek had made a visit of India in 1942 and garnered a great wave of sympathy from the Indians against the Japanese aggression of their country. Later In April 1950, India became the first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and K. M. Panikkar was appointed India's first ambassador to China.

Important chronology between India-China relationship

In 1955, both countries attended the Asian-African Conference in which 29 countries participated in Bandung, Indonesia and jointly advocated the Bandung Spirit of solidarity, friendship and cooperation. It has led to the decolonisation of the whole of Asia and Africa and to the formation of a Non-Aligned Movement as the third Way between the Two Blocs of Superpowers in the Cold-War era. In 1962, the border conflict led to a serious setback in bilateral relations. The main reason for the Indo-China war was a dispute over the sovereignty of the widely separated Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh border regions. India claimed Aksai Chin to be part of Ladakh whereas China claimed it as part of Xinjiang.

After Indo-China war, in 1976 China and India restored ambassadorial relations and bilateral ties improved gradually. Later in 1988 Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China, initiating the process of normalization of bilateral relations. The two sides agreed to look forward and develop bilateral relations actively in other

fields while seeking a mutually acceptable solution to boundary questions. During this visit, both sides agreed to develop and expand bilateral relations in all fields. It was also agreed to establish a Joint Working Group (JWG) – to seek a fair, reasonable, and mutually acceptable solution on the boundary question – and a Joint Economic Group (JEG). Indian President R. Venkataraman visited China in 1992. He was the first President who visited China since the independence of the Republic of India. Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited India in 1996 and he was the first head of state from China who visited India since the establishment of bilateral ties. Agreement between the Government of China and the Government of India on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas was signed. The year 2011, It was the ‘China-India Exchange Year’. Both sides held a series of people-to-people and cultural exchange activities. Both of them signed a memorandum on joint compilation for the ‘Encyclopaedia of India-China Cultural Contacts’.

The year 2012 termed as ‘Year of China-India Friendship and Cooperation’. In this year the head of the governments met each other on the side lines of the 4th BRICS Summit and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In the year 2015, the two sides met on the side lines of the 7th BRICS Summit in Ufa, Russia and the Leaders' Meetings on East Asia Cooperation in Malaysia. China decided to open the Nathu La Pass (Sikkim) to Indian official pilgrims to Xizang. India celebrated the India Tourism Year in China. In the year 2018, Chinese President held an informal meeting with Indian Prime Minister in Wuhan which set up a new model of exchanges between two leaders. Later Indian Prime Minister visited China to attend the SCO Summit in Qingdao. The two leaders met again on the side-lines of the 10th BRICS Summit and the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires. The second informal meeting was held in Mamallapuram, Chennai which reaffirmed the Wuhan consensus in the year 2019 and both nations agreed to build a closer partnership for development, enhance the in-depth strategic communication, promote mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields and advance exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilizations. Both sides met on the side lines of the SCO Summit in Bishkek and the 11th BRICS Summit. The year 2020 is the golden year for relationship between India-China Diplomatic relations. It marks the year of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India. It is also China-India Year of Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges, where the two sides agreed to hold 70 celebratory activities to demonstrate the historic connection between the two civilizations as well as their growing bilateral relationship. Later in June, Galwan valley conflict, the incident represents a watershed in India's relations with China and marks the end of a 45-year chapter which saw no armed confrontation involving loss of lives on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The violent clash happened when the Chinese side departed from the consensus to respect the LAC and attempted to unilaterally change the status.

Politic and diplomatic development

The Communist Party of China (CPC) has maintained friendly relationship with Indian Political Parties and there are 20 Inter-parliamentary friendship groups have been set

up by China and India. There are 50 dialogue mechanisms between China and India for exchanging views on various topics of bilateral, regional and global concern.

Trade and economic relations with China

Since the beginning of the 21st century, trade between China and India has grown from less than \$3 billion to nearly \$100 billion, an increase of about 32 times. In 2019, the trade volume between China and India was \$92.68 billion. With a combined market of over 2.7 billion people and a GDP of 20% of the world's total, China and India enjoy huge potential and broad prospects for economic and trade cooperation.

India-China defence partnership

India and China conduct the “Hand-in-Hand” exercise on a six-month cycle. The first Hand in Hand exercise was held in 2007, in which both sides focused on the counter-terrorism scenario. The exercise aims to enhance interoperability between the two countries' armies, share combat experiences, promote friendship, and build understanding between the Chinese and Indian Armies. The Exercise also allows the Chinese and Indian armies to tackle possible security challenges in new circumstances and share their battle experiences.

Challenges in Indo-China Relationship

1. Both countries have territorial claims over land controlled by others.
2. Salami slice technique where China is changing the status of LAC one inch at a time by undertaking minor military incursions and creating new status quo.
3. India's acute dependency on Chinese imports- gives china leverage to play supply chain politics-disruption in APIs, automotive etc. during lockdown.
4. China's diversionary tactics to prevent spotlight of world against her for corona failure, Hong Kong and Taiwan issue.
5. China's open support to Pakistan on issues like article 370-took matter to UNSC twice-India warned them of strain in relations if it continues.
6. Brahmaputra River water sharing is a major flashpoint between India and China. China has been building dams after dams in the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra which is called Tsangpo in Tibet. India has objected to it, but there has been no formal treaty over sharing of the Brahmaputra river water.
7. Tibet had declared independence from China in 1913. China reoccupied Tibet in 1950. China accused India of fomenting trouble in Tibet. The Dalai Lama formed a Tibetan government in exile, which still functions without any real authority over the people. Protests are often staged by Tibetans against China in India and many other countries. China objects to the Dalai Lama's free movement in India and abroad in general and his recent visit to Arunachal Pradesh in particular.
8. Market Economy Status (MES): Once China is granted MES, it will severely limit India's ability to resort to antidumping as the authorities (DGAD) will have to accept the production costs and selling price in China as the benchmark.
9. Cyber Attack: Reports of cyber-attacks on Indian government and military networks—allegedly emanating from China have also been a concern.

Way Forward

1. **Leading:** It means to reach consensus and guide the direction of the development of bilateral relations under the guidance of leaders from both nations.
2. **Transmitting:** It means to transmit the leaders' consensus to all levels and translate it into tangible cooperation and outcomes.
3. **Shaping:** It means to go beyond the mode of managing differences, shape bilateral relations actively and accumulate positive momentum.
4. **Integrating:** It means to strengthen exchanges and cooperation, promote convergence of interests and achieve common development.
5. Trust deficit is a critical issue in Sino-Indian bilateral relations. In order to solve this problem, track II diplomacy can play a more active role. For e. g. BCIM (Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar) economic corridor is an outcome of track II dialogue.
6. There is a need to control negative publicity in the relationship. Deeper engagements between the media persons of the two countries can help in improving image of the two countries.
7. Improvement of the India-China relations require rational voices, A comprehensive and substantial study of each other's national and social conditions is need to be done by scholars to strengthen cooperation.
8. Cultural industry, including tourism, entertainment, publications, internet service sectors, needs to be targeted to reduce the trade deficit.
9. There is need to increase the frequency of talks at highest levels multilateral meets such as East Asia Summit (EAS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), BRICS and G-20.
10. India and China should seek an early settlement of the border issue, before the final settlement of the boundary question is reached we should jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

Conclusion

China and India must transcend the bilateral dimension of their ties for stability in Asia and the world. Enhancing confidence-building measures and an early settlement of the boundary issue is vital for the two nations. The two rising Asian powers are helping shape a new distribution of global power, as demonstrated not just by their growing prominence within the machinery of multilateral economic and security diplomacy but also by the ardour with which they are courted by other international actors. India-China should stick to ethics of the Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) and must strengthen coordination on international and regional affairs through more regular and high-level political engagement. Through enhanced physical connectivity and economic integration, both countries can act as an engine of growth for the entire subcontinent.

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