

## **MAJOR ISSUES AND BILATERAL COOPERATION IN INDO-CHINA RELATIONS**

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**Abstract:**

*This is the era of multi-polarization where the unipolar and bipolar international order has lost its relevance. Indo-China trade and cooperation is marked by strong political commitment of the leaderships of both countries in this regard. The structural framework for co-operation is being continuously strengthened and expanded. Even some ethical measures in political relations are essential. The emergence of China and India giants undoubtedly throw a huge new weight onto the world's geopolitical balance.*

*This research paper concentrates on the metamorphosis of the political relations in between the two countries in post-cold war era especially from 1991 to 2017. This can help us to understand the major issues and bilateral cooperation of the between the two countries and their political strategies and cordial relations. It also attempts to investigate the major political strategies of Indo-China relations. It designs to show the reason behind the clashes and positive solutions to tackle the challenges of two nations.*

**Key Words:**

*International Relations, bilateral, bipolarization, unipolarisation, post-cold war, globalization etc.*

**Objectives:**

The present research proposes to work for the fulfillment of the present following objectives.

1. To identify major issues related to Indo-China relations
2. To understand current relations of both the countries.
3. To investigate bilateral cooperation in Indo-China relations
4. To give a deep look at the root cause of all the violent conflicts and problems.
5. To find out the solutions through socio-cultural, economic and other benefits.

**Major Issues of India-China Relations:**

India and China are the two of the world's oldest civilizations each with the quality of resilience, which has enabled to survive and prosper through the ages and against the odds. Both have a long, rich strategic tradition. This can help us to

understand the major issues and bilateral cooperation of the two countries.

**Border Issue:**

Border issue between the two countries one of the major concerns. The entire Sino-Indian relations spoiled because of border disputes. The border comprises the actual line of control, the small undisputed sections in the centre and the McMahon Line in the East. It covers 2520 miles long land. It traverses Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The major border skirmishes taken place in 1962 and in 1967. There were three major military conflicts and two standoffs which comprise Indo-China War of 1962, The Cho La Incident in 1967, Sino-Indian Skirmish in 1986-1987, Daulat Beg Oldi Incident in 2013 and Doklam Standoff in 2017. The demarcation existed as the informal ceasefire line between India and China after the 1962 and the conflict until 1993. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai employed the phrase that is Line of Actual Control and addresses it to Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. On the Chinese side, the line traverses the Tibet Autonomous Region. Indian claimed 37244 square kilometer area as a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the region of Ladak but it is controlled and administered as a part of the Chinese autonomous region of Xinjiang. The eastern region of Arunachal Pradesh which lies south of the McMahon Line. The McMahon Line was part of the 1914 Simla Convention between British India and Tibet. But China rejected this agreement. The area extends for 550 miles from Butan in the west to 160 miles east of the great bend of the Brahmaputra River in the east, largely along the crest of the Himalayas. This line was agreed by Britain and Tibet as part of the Simla Accord which was signed in 1914. The legal status is disputed by the Chinese government.

**Water Disputes:** Water dispute is major concern in the conflict between Sino-Indian relations. Both India and China are major consumers of fresh water of the River such as Brahmaputra which is also known as Tsangpo in China. While China is already involved in several water-sharing disputes

with countries like Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam over the Mekong River. China plans to build several dams on the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra. Brahmaputra which originates as Tsangpo in Tibet is one of the major water resources in India's north-east especially as a source for irrigation and industrialization. China has an exclusivist policy about the sharing of natural resources. India meanwhile looking to build 25 hydropower plants in Arunachal Pradesh before China complete its project. Instead China considered that India plans to decrease in the flow of the river water and the destructions of the Himalayan ecosystem.

**Trade Imbalance:** Trade relations between India and China formally resumed in 1978. Six years later, two countries signed the most favored nation (MFN) agreement. India's trade with China began rather modestly, as low as 2.92 billion dollars in 2000. Eleven years later, it rose to a phenomenal all-time high of 73.9 billion dollars. In 2012, decreasing Indian exports over the previous 12 months meant, it fell to 66.67 billion dollars. Indian exports decreased and strong Chinese regulatory system have put off exports from India, especially from sectors like Information Technology, meat and pharmaceuticals. India is believed to have the upper hand. India exports raw material to China. It also imports finished materials and goods from China. That was made degradation of India which invades the markets in various sectors like electronics, toys and firecrackers. This affects India's own manufacturing sectors. There are various goods such as ceramics, glasses and bathroom fittings are very easier to import from China. The world prefers buying finished goods from China for various reasons. China's products are cheap in prices and better in quality as compared to rising production costs and taxes. Indian market shut up and industries collapsed due to better quality products of China. President Xi's visit to India is sure to bring more investments.

**String of Pearls:** One of the major issues is geopolitical influence in Indian Ocean. The string of pearls involves the development of commercial ports in various countries as a part of Silk Routes. China plans to build an important trade corridor which extends from its naval base in Tanzania, Africa Hainan Island with several ports encircling mainland India. The routes comprise Chittagong in Bangladesh, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Gwadar in Pakistan and Marao Atoll in Maldives. India protects and denies the development of naval

routes. This created major conflict between Sino-Indian relations.

India and China relations have been tense ever since a border dispute led to a full-scale war in 1962 and armed skirmishes in 1967 and 1987. Several rounds of talks held over more than a quarter of a century (since 1981) have failed to resolve the disputed claims. Agreements on maintaining peace and tranquility on the disputed border were signed in 1993 and 1996. An agreement on the guiding principles for settlement was concluded in 2005.

An unsettled boundary also suits Chinese interests for the present because China's claims in the western sector are complicated by the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir, Pakistan's interests in the Sino-Indian territorial dispute, and Beijing's interest in keeping India under strategic pressure on two fronts.

Even if the territorial dispute was resolved, China and India would still retain a competitive relationship. Other factors, apart from the territorial dispute, contribute to the fractious and uneasy relationship. These include the nature of China's ties with India's smaller South Asian neighbors (including its arming of them); the legacy of Cold War alignments (Beijing-Islamabad-Washington versus the Moscow-New Delhi); continuing unrest in Tibet and Kashmir; Chinese encroachments into what India sees as its sphere of influence; Beijing's plans for a naval presence in the Indian Ocean; resource competition; power asymmetry and a rivalry for the leadership of the developing world and multilateral forums; and, more recently, the nuclear and naval rivalries.

Historically and culturally India never played second fiddle to China. Therein lies the root cause of volatile and strained relationship: Seeing China as the reference point of India's economic, security, and diplomatic policies, India's strategic analysts have long emphasized the need to keep up with China militarily. Initially, India's nuclear capability was aimed solely at deterring China, not Pakistan. It is the adversarial nature of the Sino-Indian relationship that has driven India's and, in turn, Pakistan's nuclear weapons programs.

The 1998 Indian nuclear tests were preceded by the Indian defense minister George Fernandes' statements that called China a bigger potential threat than Pakistan and described how his country was being encircled by Chinese military activities in Tibet and alliances with Pakistan and Myanmar. From New Delhi's perspective, much of Beijing's penetration deep into the South Asian region in the

second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been primarily at India's expense. At the heart of Sino- Indian antagonism is the Indian belief that China is seeking to deny India its proper stakes in the game of international politics.

Both China and India of decline are keen to assume the great power roles they believe have been their right in view of their histories and civilizations. Both have similar robust attributes of a strong power: massive manpower resources; a scientific, technological, and industrial base; and formidable armed forces. Both are nuclear and space powers with growing ambitions. When Chinese and Indian elites speak of restoring their country's rightful place in the world, they give expression to a concept of preeminence in Asia and the wider world. This concept reflects their perception that as the foundation of regional cultural patterns, their rightful place is at the apex of world hierarchy.

The similarities between the two Asian giants' outlooks, aspirations, policies, and interests are indeed striking, despite their differing political systems. Both want a new international status that is commensurate with their size, strength, and potential. Both identify the present pattern of international relations with a world order designed to perpetuate the world domination of Western powers. Both see Asia's rise on the world stage as bringing about the end of Western dominance. Though uncomfortable with the U.S. dominance in world affairs, both are courting Washington to help balance their relationships with each other until they are strong enough to do so on their own. Both oppose the status quo: China in terms of territory, power, and influence; India in terms of status, power, and influence. Both yearn for a truly multipolar world that will provide them the space for growth and freedom of action that befits great powers. Both have practiced 'tilted nonalignment' (during the Cold War China tilted toward the U.S. (1971– 89) and India toward the USSR (1971– 1991) while preaching independent, nonaligned foreign policies. Both vie for influence in Central, South, and Southeast Asia and for leadership positions in global and regional organisations. Each puts forward proposals for multilateral cooperation that deliberately exclude the other.

Both see themselves as great Asian powers whose time has finally come. Both have attempted to establish a sort of Monroe Doctrine in their neighborhoods without much success. Both claim that their attitude toward their neighbors is essentially benevolent, while making it clear that those neighbors must not make policies or take

actions, or allow other nations to take measures in their countries, that each deems to be against its own interest and security. If they do so, China and India are willing to apply pressure in one fashion or another to bring about desired changes. Both are unable to reassert their traditional suzerainty (dominion) over their smaller neighbors, as any attempt to do so encounters resistance from regional and extra- regional powers. Both remain suspicious of each other's long- term agenda and intentions. Each perceives the other as pursuing hegemony and entertaining imperial ambitions.

China and India also share remarkable similarities in economic outlooks and policies. Both are focusing on increasing comprehensive national strength on a solid economic- technological base. Both are major competitors for foreign investment, capital, trade, resources, and markets. Burgeoning economic ties between the world's two fastest-growing economies have become the most salient aspect of their bilateral relationship.

But in the economic sphere Chinese and Indian economies are still more competitive than complementary. Both look to the West and Japan for advanced technology, machinery, capital, and investment. Many Indians see China as predatory in trade and look with worry at China's robust growth rates, fearing getting left behind.

China and India's strategic cultures require both to regain the power and status their leaders consider appropriate to their country's size, population, geographical position, and historical heritage. There have been numerous occasions in history when China and India were simultaneously weak; there have been occasional moments of simultaneous cultural blossoming. But for more than half a millennium, Asia has not seen the two giants economically and militarily powerful at the same time. That time is now approaching fast, and it is likely to result in significant new geopolitical realignments. The emergence of China and India as economic giants undoubtedly will throw a huge new weight onto the world's geopolitical balance. As India grows outwardly, the two giants are beginning to rub shoulders (or ruffle feathers) in different parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. New economic prosperity and military strength is reawakening nationalist pride in India, which could bring about a clash with Chinese nationalism. The existence of two economically powerful nations will create new tensions as they both strive to stamp their authority on the region.

In the power competition game, while China has surged ahead by acquiring economic and military capabilities underpinned by a clear policy to

achieve broader strategic objectives, India has a lot of catching up to do. The existing asymmetry in international status and power serves Beijing's interests very well; any attempt by India to challenge or undermine China's power and influence or to achieve strategic parity is strongly resisted through a combination of military, economic, and diplomatic means.

This research attempts to investigate the major political strategies of Indo-China relations. It will attempt to show the reason behind the clashes and positive solutions to tackle the challenges of two nations.

**Conclusion:**

The study of international strategic relation between India and China makes clear the normative structures, the approaches and the frameworks available for making decisions and choices ethically in the international and global sphere. These help resolve some of the major international problems, issues, and provide insight into international conflicts. There is much understanding of international crises, shared problems requiring international cooperation and joint action. Good International relations directs us in the direction of building an international community in which every other community can actively and fruitfully participate and flourish. International regimes may be assessed and evaluated in terms of the international ethics they employ in solving international problems. In a way international moral codes and diplomacy will continue to evolve good strategic relations among the nations.

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