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## INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY TIME PERIOD: A STUDY OF MAJOR GEOPOLITICAL ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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### Abstract

*There is no doubt that India and China are the oldest civilizations of the world. Although both of them plays the vital role in the South Asian region. Since the origin of the statehood, India always adopted the policy of Dharma in its political and social affairs. Along with this India always played the role of the big brother in South Asian region for maintain the peace and cooperation in this area. The Gujral doctrine is one of the best examples of this scenario. In opposition to this China is the country which proclaims more and more territory without any certified documents. The expansionist policy of China is the great barrier for the peaceful negotiations not only for the India but also for other developing countries. The accumulation of the Habanbatota Port in the Sri-Lanka and the impeachment of Tibetan autocracy in its state affairs, reflects the foreign policy of China to harsh the sovereignty of the developing countries for territorial expansion. India and China border dispute is also the major issue for peace establishment in this region. The geographical discontinuity of the India and China border and the Hotchpotch agreement during the colonial rule between the British officers are also the main reason for mistrust. The aim of this paper is to study the contemporary issues and their inference in present scenario. To reach at desired outcome the secondary sources are used in this paper.*

**Keywords:** Border dispute, Countries, Maps, Relations, Geographical



## **Introduction**

After getting the independence and the formation of the KMT government in 1949 in the China the communist ideology is at its topmost level. Since after China opened its economy and developed very fast and now the situation is the India's economy is one-sixth of the China's economy. In this situation it is very hard to engulf with China in war. Even the friendship of the China and Pakistan is very well known. If we analyse the history, we may trap in two-sided front war. In these critical conditions the relations between India and China have been worsening. The two world powers are facing off against each other along their disputed border in the Himalayan region. The root cause is an ill-defined, 3,440km (2,100-mile)-long disputed borders<sup>1</sup>. Rivers, lakes and snow-caps along the frontier mean the line can shift, bringing soldiers face to face at many points, sparking a confrontation. The two nations are also competing to build infrastructure along the border, which is also known as the Line of Actual Control. India's construction of a new road to a high-altitude air base is seen as one of the main triggers for a deadly 2020 clash with Chinese troops.

If we analyse the border dispute laterally the major reason for this mistrust between these countries are the Geo-political aspects of the countries. Now the situation is worse than bad. Despite military-level talks, tensions continue. In December 2022 troops clashed for the first time in more than a year<sup>2</sup>. It happened near the Twang sector of Arunachal Pradesh state, the eastern tip of India. Some soldiers suffered minor injuries. De-escalation work has taken place since a major clash in June 2020. The Galvan Valley battle - fought with sticks and clubs, not guns - was the first fatal confrontation between the two sides since 1975. At least 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers died. Another face-off in January 2021 left troops on both sides injured. It took place near India's Sikkim state, between Bhutan and Nepal.

In September 2021, China accused India of firing shots at its troops. India accused China of firing into the air. If true, it would be the first time in 45 years that shots were fired at the border. A 1996 agreement prohibited the use of guns and explosives near the border. The same month, both countries agreed to disengage from a disputed western Himalayan border area. But in current scenario the power game and requirement of resources is changed, in addition to this the expansionist policy of China along with its borders and in South Asian Sea is the cause of mistrust in South Asian region.



## **History of India-China relations**

India and China are two major countries along with Himalayan region with the old peaceful relations. There are some evidences found in the writing of Kautilya and Sun Tzu about the governing of the state. Yet if one analyses the formation of different continents and take a purview of the world different landmasses one is able to find that all the formation was fragmented from the one part that is called Panthalassa also here are some evidences found in history that there are strong relations between Indian tribes and Chinese tribes residing in Himalayan region. Although these countries are joined by the silk trade route during the colonial time period. Buddhism is also spread into the central Asia through India. The ethnic traits of the Chinese people and the north eastern people are similar to one another. The cultural immunity was also found in some aspects but it was drastically deviated after the invasion of the Muslim rulers in India and its subcontinent<sup>3</sup>.

Although the regular westward expansion during the Mongol empire, increased the influence of Chinese dynasties towards Tibetan region. The relation between China and India are deteriorated after the communist regime in China<sup>4</sup>. In the current scenario there is the vast difference between the relation between India and China. The major factors of the dispute and sourness between India and China relations are the geographical location of India and China borders. The line drawn during the period of the colonial rule are never been subjugated by the China blamed that it has the colonial impression also the border is in hilly region. Due to this the permanent fencing cannot be done. The border is also divided in three parts. The most disturbed region during this time was the Norther region. There are several incidents of push and shove in that region. It consists the area of Ladakh territory of India and he Xinxiang province of China. The largest area claimed by the China is in the Eastern region of India the Arunachal Pradesh. Here China claims on 1362km<sup>2</sup> area.

Since the Independence both the countries are met are various platforms and tried to resolve the border dispute but due the expansionist vision of China it outreached again and again to create the disturbance. Although there are several agreements signed to resolve India-China border dispute. First it was initiated during the Shimla agreement to demarcate the boundary between Tibet and North East India, a convention was held at Shimla in 1914, representatives of all three i.e., Tibet, China and British India. After the discussion,



the agreement was signed by British India and Tibet but not by the Chinese officials. Presently India recognises the McMahon line, as agreed by the Shimla convention, as the legal boundary between India and China.

However, China rejects the Shimla agreement and the McMahon line, contending that Tibet was not a sovereign state and therefore did not have the power to conclude treaties. After this the Panchsheel doctrine was introduced to resolve the dispute between India and China, also both the countries signed various agreements. The new peace-making dialogues between the countries brings positive results<sup>5</sup>.

### **Border Dispute between India and China**

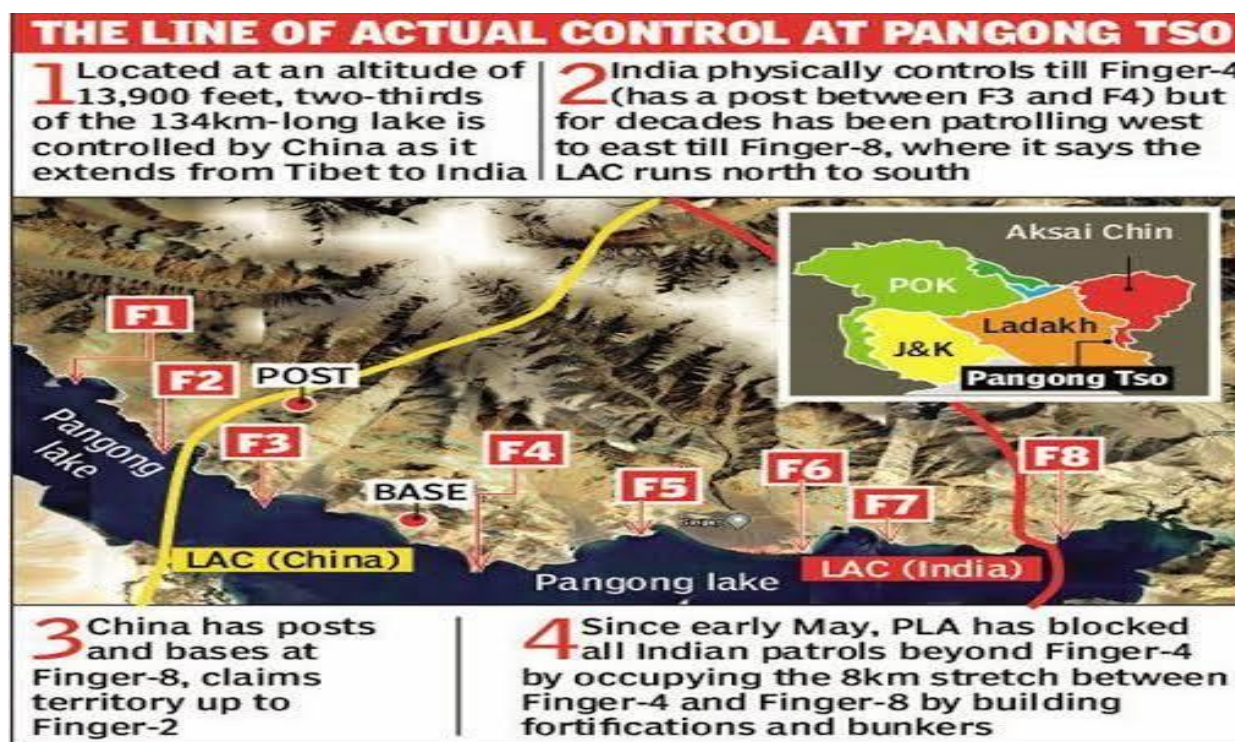
The border issue between India and China is divided into three major portions which almost have same geographical structure and different strategical importance. The largest disputed area between India and China is in the Eastern sector. The Arunachal Pradesh that is the state of India share its boundary with China in its Northern slope is claimed by China that it is its territory. Here China claims a huge piece of landmass around 90,000km<sup>2</sup>. Yet in 1962 war China occupied this but later they announced it the unilateral ceasefire and moved back. However, it is still claimed by China that it is his territory. The second major sector that are claimed by China is in the western sector around 38000km<sup>2</sup>. which is occupied in 1962 war. Here China claims this as the part of its Xinjiang province but India rejected it and puts its stands with the documents of Ladakh treaty. Mainly this is no men's land Later than the least controversial portion is the central sector but before sometime this area is most in news. There are too many incidents occurred between India and Chinese army's conflict. Beside the border dispute the maritime policy of China in Indian ocean and South China sea are the reason of the mistrust<sup>6</sup>. The Diamond of necklace policy of India is considered as the answer of China's string of pearls. Although the formation of military bases in the guise of the Ports are the evil's eye action of the China's string of pearls policy which is also the important issue for security.



### Current situation of India and China in different spheres

The major tension areas between India and China in current scenario are pointed as three places. One is Galvan valley, Pangong Tso lake and India's support to the Bhutan on Doklam issue. All the three places have their geographical strategical importance for both countries. Galvan valley conflict occurred in May, 2020 after that two ministerial level meetings were held. After the first round of negotiations the militaries of both countries clashed. India places its stands at it is while China claims the are in the Eastern of Galvan valley after the second clash India also banned 59 Chinese apps and several other trade restrictions were imposed<sup>7</sup>. But it is hard to counter China in the area of economy because "India is importing 16% of its goods from while it is only 1% of Chinese goods export for China which can be ignored by Chinese government"<sup>8</sup>.

The second one place is the Pangong Tso lake which is situated at the height of 3.96K.M. It is narrow landlocked lake which exists in the path of the Chushul approach, one of the main approaches that China can use for an offensive into Indian-held territory. The governance issue in this area is the reason for dispute which is elaborated in the following picture. Along with these issues several other matters are responsible for suspicion situations between the countries like the membership of UNSC, the QUAD, India-USA relations, the issue of Dalai Lama and Masood Azhar which are also necessary to resolve in contemporary time period.



The third one is the Dokalm issue which is the territory of Bhutan. However, China proclaims it that the part of China<sup>9</sup>. India starts deployment of army in this area after the offensive actions of Chines People’s liberation army. India favours Bhutan in this are for its strategical security importance after strong warning the pilgrims of Man Sarovar were stopped by China by accusing India that Indian army destroyed the bunker of their army and started intervention this area.

### Is India ready to face the challenges on border?

India got a in 1962 war. Yet the situation is still challenging however it is much better than 1962. India is building its infrastructure along with the LAC although the deployment of army in huge amount is a positive aspect to counter any aggression from China<sup>10</sup>. Beside this India also formed the Brahmos missile base in Arunachal Pradesh for emergency in war. The formation of Bhupen-Hazarika Setu which connects both the states of India, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh reduces the time of response in the situation of war. Many mountain strike corps are reconstituted to counter the aggression with highly equipped instruments. On the other hand, India’s opposition to the OBOR, CPEC in security council and BRICS summit is also the key issue and major challenge for India to enhance its national security.



## **Conclusion**

Despite gloomy predictions about the inevitability of competition between China and India,

cooperation between Asia's two emerging powers negotiation is possible between two major super powers of Asia. Yet there are several issues between the countries but the major issue is the geographical tensions of the border and territory. The geographical situations of the countries and the border area which exists in the Hilly area is also the ground for unavailability of the wire fencing. Historically if we analyse the geographical situation of the Himalayan Mountain, it is beneficial for India to save the territory from Mongol interventions also thus is the route for the silk trade. After the formation of the KMT government in China the relations get deteriorated with respect to time and also a war occurred in 1962. The war is the outcome of China's expansionist policy which paved the way in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The disturbances created by the China in the South Asian Sea and formation of ports by trapping the developing countries in the net of debt hampered the peace of not only India but also the whole region of South Asia. In this reference to solve the military collapse both the countries are required to stick to the 2005 protocol and 2013 border defence cooperation agreement. India is trying to replace the Chinese products through Aatmnirbhar Bharat but it is hard to close the trade relations with China in this global technical era so it is required for both countries to enhance their economic relations. In all these factors the most important is to solve the border disputes because the unsolved geopolitical issues between both the counterparts have become infringement for political development of the nations. It can be proved by the recent military attack of June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in Galvan Valley which led to the bilateral and trilateral negotiation without any resolution. Both the countries are the major superpowers of this South Asian region and these disputes may be solved with bilateral agreements. The most important perspective is to implement the peaceful agreements in all spheres of nation which can sustain the trust issue and both countries move forward peacefully.



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