


Trans-Himalaya Connectivity: Comprehensive Approach to Resolve China-India Political Conundrum

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ABSTRACT

China and India have a long civilization. Even before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1950, both countries had a long history of exchanges on educational, cultural-spiritual, and trade in ancient times. But since the mid of 1950, both countries didn't enjoy good bilateral relations and that culminated with the war of 1962. Again, rapprochement began in mid of 1980. Border issue, ideological-political model, and approach on global orientation are the issues both countries have different views, which sometimes produce severe bilateral relations problems. June 15 incident in Ladakh has created severe confrontation and new regional geopolitical imbalance. Five-point consensus in Moscow helped to reduce prevailing tension. This study finds that only regular cooperation and open dialogue can provide a fruitful platform to create a trustful environment and search for peaceful settlement of the dispute. Harmony between these two countries will support for peace and prosperity of the Trans-Himalaya region. This research is based on qualitative research and follows the secondary data. It takes a comprehensive approach as a theoretical framework to analyze the issues. The researcher is very serious about testing the validity of data and its analysis. As per the research requirement, this paper is explorative in format.

1. Introduction

China and India have a long civilization and history. Even before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, both countries had a long history of exchanges on educational, cultural-spiritual, and trade in the ancient time. Lord Buddha was born in Nepal. And Buddhism came to China from Nepal and India. There were many authentic documents and evidence to show the harmonious relations between China and India in ancient times. This harmony supported peace, progress, and stability in the entire region. Historical documents show that the Himalayan ranges' geographical difficulties had not disturbed for exchanges and cooperation between these two giant neighbors in the ancient time.

In the 21st century, Sino-India relations have become increasingly significant and produce extensive implications (Zhang 2010). Growing dependencies on each other are also the result of changing strategic interests, national requirements, and stand on the regional-global sphere. With having multiple political disputes and bitter experiences in the past, since 1991 both countries have demonstrated diplomatic maturity and political wiliness to expand cooperation on common issues and tries to find resolution of contentious issues through dialogue and comprehensive negotiation with setting up institutional mechanism, in which formal and informal talks and efforts have supported to create trust and a favorable environment.

Strong trade and finance links, which will cross 100 billion dollars soon, have been proof of growing interdependencies and cooperation. Both sides without a doubt did profound work to reduce tension and peacefully continue the relations (Zhao 2000). Thoughtful political engagement and reality-based dealing stand on own national interest have created space for tangible cooperation. Interestingly, since some years of security and military cooperation, exchanges and joint exercises are also happening this is said to further enhance cooperation mitigating misunderstanding. No doubt that China and India both have distinct political systems and exercises. Through the mechanism like a BRICS (a community of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) both countries have given a strong message that they have many issues to work together, and can respect each other's political system, practices, and model. India's soft-balancing strategy could work nicely to deal with China if pragmatically implemented (Paul 2018).

War of 1962, India's open support of Dalai Lama particularly since 1959, anti-China activities using Indian soil, and border dispute are the major factors that are creating hurdles on China-India open-heart relations. Definitely, both countries are trying a lot to mitigate tensions and build trust, but in reality, until and unless they address political issues, the actual harmony is hard to establish. Understanding this reality, both leaderships have been focusing on gradually building understanding through multiple efforts, and also through established mechanisms, they try hard to resolve politically contentious issues. Many regional experts opine that India should stop listening to the provocation of America-led Western powers, it should listen to the voice of its own people and national requirement to maintain bilateral relations with neighbor countries. China and India need to resolve their differences through their own mechanism detecting Western concern (Wang 1998). At a critical moment created by COVID-19, China and India went in a face-off on June 15, which took the lives of 20 Indian soldiers and injured dozens on both sides. It has created a new conflicting situation in the region and attracts concern of major powers of the world. At the sideline of the SCO Summit on September 10, Foreign Ministers of China and India, Wang Yi, and Subrahmanyam Jaishankar reached a 'Five-Points' agreement to reduce existing tension on the Ladakh border. Both focused on continued dialogue and negotiations to resolve the disputed issues.

The paper's findings and the conclusion are that both governments should take a tangible cooperative approach and ways to resolve the border dispute through continuous dialogue and discussion. It supports wiping out distrust and misunderstanding which is still a hurdle to bilateral engagement. They should also further advance the level of exchanges and collaboration based on common mutual areas and interests. Both governments can work closely at a regional and global level at large to play a mediating role in conflicts, crises, and confrontations (Yuan 2008). It is because the developing world listens to their voice and the developed world will be compelled for fruitful negotiation. By implementing the above-mentioned recommendations, India and China could uplift their partnership to a new level of broad cooperation and engagement.

This research is based on qualitative research and follows the secondary data. It takes a comprehensive approach as a theoretical framework to analyze the issues. The researcher is very serious about testing the validity of data and its analysis. As per the research requirement, this paper is explorative in format.

2. Objective of the Research:

This study's major objective is to try to analyze multifaceted issues regarding China-India relations and suggest rational recommendations to resolve contentious issues and move forward toward broad inclusive cooperation based on mutual trust and understanding.

3. Theoretical Framework and Research Methodologies

The comprehensive approach of international relations is used to analyze the China-India overall relations. This approach is started used widely in the international relations discipline since 1970. United Nations is one of the strong agencies to use this approach to describe international behavior, events, and activities. The purpose of such an approach is cooperation among nations when reasonable and integration capabilities when possible to develop both a shared vision of strategic objectives and an end state, requiring mutual awareness of risks, threats, and actions of participants (Jasper and Moreland 2015). This approach support to judge, analyze and acknowledge the patterns of relations between actors in all positive and negative circumstance. "A Comprehensive approach is taken to mean the employment of unified principles in planning and conducting with all relevant actors in an increasingly complex environment" (Ibid.). This approach is widely accepted, and new practices based on this approach hope to generate new ideas and patterns in a related area. It supports analyzing and gives the theoretical ground for international actor's behavior (Jasper and Moreland 2014).

In this paper, a comprehensive approach is used to analyze, judge, and evaluate the overall bilateral relations between China and India particularly since 1950. Both countries have faced numerous experiences of positive and negative circumstances in their bilateral relations. This approach provides theoretical basements to analyze the situation and guide toward the conclusion points. Theoretical clarity and basement structurally help to generalize even the complex and diverse issues systematically and give direction for further research work. This research is qualitative in nature and descriptive in form. Secondary data are used and tries hard to make proper validity and authenticity of the data.

4. Post WWII to 1962: Sino-India Relations

People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949, it was a big political event in the Asia region particularly victory of communist principle at the nation of largest population. Similarly, another giant of Asia, India, got independence in 1947 from British imperialism. Critics said that though India had got independence from the British, its functions, attitude, and administrative systems are still clung with British imperialistic modality (Sharma 2019). India was the first non-socialist nation to recognize PRC on 30 December 1950. Even though the two countries have a different political foundation, social democracy, and communist socialism have some commonalities particularly in issues related to social, economic, and justice. China appreciated India's role to recommend PRC on the Security Council permanent seat of UN (Zhao 2000). Chinese President and Chairman of Communist Party of China Mao Zedong and India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru both came from long political struggle. So initially they recognized each other on how two countries cooperate and move forward harnessing the relationships. China and India signed significant bilateral agreements in 1954 which formulated "five principles of co-existence", also known by Panchasheela in the Hindi language (Zhang 2010). In course of increasing bilateral relations, Chinese Premier Zhao Enlai visited India in 1954. Similarly, Nehru visited Beijing in the same year and talked with senior Chinese leaders about extending friendship and finding common ground for cooperation at the international level (Wang 1998). Substantially, India and China enjoyed cordial relations until they broke out of the 1962 war. It does not mean that they had no problems on a bilateral level. Because China had not accepted the borderline demarcated by British imperialists and this issue is still in limbo. But India is stick on the McMahon line drawn by the British Indian administration in 1914, which the Chinese side has protested for a long and didn't recognize.

China claims that around 90,000 square kilometers of territories were under India's control since the British imposing the McMahon line unilaterally. On another side, India is blaming China for taking Aksai Chin territory, which is said, in a strategically significant location. Zhao and Nehru tried to find common ground to resolve the border issue but failed to reach on solid conclusion because of different approaches. So particularly from the end of the 1950s, Sino-India relations turned into a lack of trust and some point of rigid direction. India's decision to increase military checkpoints at border areas and starting to play Tibetan card had infuriated Beijing. Tibet's location as a strategic area also gave pressure on China to detect India's expansionist approach (Yuan 2008). Nehru's administration gave asylum to the Dalai Lama and his thousands of disciples and supported for anti-China activities that had made Chinese leadership angry and pressure them to take tangible measures. Beijing decided to 'teach India a lesson that was culminated in a border war of October 1962 (Ibid.). War went just for a month, and China secured victory over India. It is said in a military sphere that the 1962 war had given the real pictures of the lack and weakness of the Indian army and administration. Failure of the Indian army to tackle China had humiliated and demoralized Indian leadership (Dixit 2003). They misjudged the real strength of the People's Liberation Army.

There were fewer dialogues in the 1970s between the leadership of China and India though there were some efforts to calm down the relations. When China-Soviet Unions relations were weakest since the weakest point since the mid-1960s, India-Soviet Union had strong friendships and partnerships. The Soviet Union had provided huge supports to India's development. Another side, China and Pakistan became strong friends and started multiple bilateral cooperation and exchanges. Wonderful was that rest of the South Asian neighbors were not divided on the Sino-Indo war; instead, they maintained a neutral position and requested both parties to resolve the issue. The role of the governments of Nepal and Sri Lankans to give pressure on China and India for ending war immediately was widely appreciated. History shows that due to the inherent dispute, it is becoming hard to forward a true sense of rapprochement on bilateral relations of India and China (Panda and Atmaja 2019).

China and India had restarted dialogue since the end of the 1970s with exchanges of visits. Government and non-governmental levels visits had supported slowly to calm down the heat of war and move for peaceful means to talk and resolve the pertinent issues. Positively, in 1981 foreign ministers of both countries met and discussed normalizing the relations. With increasing dialogue, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's state visit to China in December 1988 was a historical event to normalize the relations and both sides agreed to find mutually acceptable solutions to the border issues (Ranganathan 1998). With the high-level visit of the Indian Prime Minister, a new dimension on bilateral relations began. Two countries have initiated multiple efforts to enhance cooperation, even though, still now there is no substantial change on territorial claims by the two sides.

5. Uncertainty and Rapprochement

The 1962 war had created a deep lack of trust and containment approach between India and China. Substantially they have been political, ideological, and practical mechanism-based differences. At the pick time of the Cold War, these two highly populous countries had entered into the new format of the cold war with aim of negation to each other until the rapprochement began in the mid of 1980. The political leadership of the two countries had started informal discussion and dialogue since the mid of 1970s with aim of normalizing the situation. Both realized that they could cooperate in common issues by putting political differences on one side, which can be addressed through continuing negotiation and efforts. China had tested nuclear power in 1964 and India did in 1974. Due to India's close policy on testing second nuclear power in 1998, China had objected to India's motive and breach of the international laws, norms, and consensus.

China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 paved the way for the further enhancement of a cooperative approach toward the world. With it, China has been more connected and inter-dependence with the world community. Though India is still not recognized as a sub-regional power in South Asia, China comes in a position to tackle American hegemony and contribute to balanced world order. India-China relations from 1950 to 1990 had multiple dimensions with sometimes deep confrontation and sometimes triumphalism of slogan Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai (Indian and Chinese are brothers). Since 1950, these two countries had shown a strong commitment to fight against imperialism globally. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "our two peoples' common interests in their struggle against imperialism outweigh by far all the differences between our two countries. We have a major responsibility for Sino-Indian friendship, Asian-African solidarity, and Asian peace" (Government of India 1962).

Many experts take the issue of the Bandung Conference of 1955, where Nehru took the time to introduce Chinese Premier Zhou En Lai to other leaders of developing nations (Miller, 2007). Bandung conference supported fostering solidarity between developing nations and formed a commitment to fight against imperialism and hegemonic postures of great powers. But unfortunately, the Sino-India rivalry began just three years after the Bandung Conference. India shows a more arrogant role and destructive approach toward the sovereignty and integrity of China. It tried to play a hampering role on the issue of China's Tibet by provoking and supporting separatist Dalai Lama.

Since the end of the 1950s, India had taken a more aggressive policy in terms of the border issue. In November 1961, India establishing some military posts at the north of existing Chinese positions and also cut off Chinese supply lines. This strategy was also maintained at the time of truce even after the 1962 war. When the situation went on a critical phase China and India entered into a full-fledged war in October 1962. Angry Nehru asked the United States for assistance even the bilateral relations between these two countries was not fruitful due to India's involvement on non-alignment movement and some campaign against the United States. Then American President John F. Kennedy had responded quickly by sending an aircraft carrier to the Bay of Bengal. But knowing the internal situation and global responsibility, China had declared a ceasefire unilaterally. The war took 31 days and India was severely defeated by China.

Acknowledging the international situation, the United States and China had agreed to build up rapprochement by fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. It had supported China to get UN membership and a permanent seat of the Security Council. With Deng Xiaoping became a paramount leader in 1978, China launched reform and opening-up policy aiming to enhance deep and inclusive cooperation with the rest of the world. Since then, politically stable China also with a solid economic-social plan, went on a deep structural reform and achieved outstanding development and prosperity. In South Asia, China's maintained more close relations with Pakistan. With increasing cooperation with Pakistan, the two countries had signed an agreement on nuclear cooperation in 1976 (Tellis 2004).

Deng's foreign policy was very pragmatic and objective. He maintained the principle of "Hide brightness, Nourish obscurity" emphasizing domestic issues and detach from regional and international conflict and war. At the short period of Janata Dal-led government in 1979, then Foreign Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee paid a historic visit to China. But after a governmental change in New Delhi, the confrontation between the two countries existed with some border skirmishes. Experts said that China-India comprehensive rapprochement began with Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's historic visit to China in 1988. At the meeting, both leaders agreed to find consensus and understanding on common issues and also cordially continue dialogue and negotiation to resolve the contentious issues. Since then, the normalization process getting positive, and two countries with having differences on multiple issues have been fostering cooperation in multiple fields. Exchanges of visits and cooperation on regional and global issues by both sides also increased exponentially. Their strong cooperation in the trade and finance sector is historical with huge global impacts. Fostering cooperation support to reduce misunderstanding and expand the level of trust and collaboration (Luo 2018)

Though understanding was building since mid of the 1980s, there had been some skirmishes and a clash of interests on multiple occasions since then. India illegally supported the seventh Karmapa to escape from China's Tibet in 2000. It showed the malign intention of the Indian administration even though rapprochement was going in a positive way. Both countries had celebrated "India-China Friendship Year" in 2006 with the exchange of high-level visits and many cultural events and programs. Nathula trading pass on the Sino-India border in Sikkim was reopened which was halted after the 1962 war. Importantly, the two countries did their first-ever joint military exercise in December 2007. The leadership of the two countries reaffirmed a 'shared vision on the 21st century' in 2008 (Zhang 2009). China became India's largest trading partner in 2009 (Ministry of Commerce and Industry 2009).

June 15 incident had given a big strike on their relations. Both countries blamed each other for escalating the conflict. After that India took many actions to detach from China like banning Chinese apps, stopping Chinese investments, and canceling ongoing projects. It has increased fear that if this situation went on the wrong track, it could lead to a massive conflict at a regional level

which would create destructive instability and long conflict. Indian professor Meghnad Desai suggested Indian Prime Minister Modi learn from the mistake of Nehru and resolve the dispute with China. "Nehru ordered the Army to throw the Chinese out. India was humiliated. No NAM nation came to help India; only the US and Israel did. India forgave him. Modi can learn from Nehru what not to do" (Desai, 2020). Now also without provoking the situation, both countries should focus on tangible dialogue to address the situation.

With the dawn of the 21st century, though they have to resolve some specific political and boundary issues, they made commitments to foster cooperation and understanding in the rest of the areas. The border issue is still a contested issue they have to resolve. Fortunately, on many occasions, both leaders vowed to resolve issues through comprehensive dialogue and negotiation. Sometimes India crossed the boundary of trust and consensus and hurdle on the bilateral relations. China claims that the Eastern part of Tibet, which India is taking as its Arunachal state, should come under Chinese sovereignty. So when the Indian high-level leadership went on to visit 'Arunachal state', China has protested and asked about the real intention of the Indian government on China's Tibet affairs.

Since the time of Prime Minister Nehru, India's neighbor policy has been unproductive. Other neighbor countries of India except for China, like Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka have been at multiple occasions raised questions on Indian hegemonic attitude and non-diplomatic activities of Indian officials. Many types of research also show that India is the most unpopular country among neighboring people in South Asia. But still, India is searching dominant role in the region, when it has a lack of trust and practicality among neighbor friends.

6. China-India and Engagement on Regional Affairs

Though China has been trying to keep India as a friendly neighbor country, the Indian approach toward China looks more arrogant and assumes as a strategic and security challenge regionally. In reality, Indian establishments still failed to realize China's real economic, political, and security strength. China, by its overall strength, is a global power even though it has not declared its side. The reason behind it is that China doesn't want to play the geopolitical, zero-sum, and confrontational game at the global level. Published foreign affairs documents have emphasized China's interest to contribute to peace, harmony, development, good governance, and inclusiveness of the world (Zhao 2000).

The two countries realized that the border issue could not be resolved from one discussion. Former Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai at the time of his India visit said that due to the nature of the problem, it would take a long time to settle the boundary issue. But he further said that continuous dialogue and works from mechanism could support to resolve the issue in a proper manner. Since the end of 1990, both countries have advanced the border region's infrastructure by installing high-level technologies. Both sides are strictly working to detect incursion from one another side, which situation sometimes leads to border skirmishes (Wang 1998). Donald Trump administration's Indo-Pacific strategy is directly aimed to contain the rise and influence of China in the Indo-Pacific region. India, though it has not formally supported the US-initiated Indo-Pacific strategy, it is not hard to understand that on the issue of containment of China, the Indian establishment would support any initiative of US administration unless the latter hurdle the security interest of India. To show global responsibility, China still needs to expand more role and contribution to the global community as per its strength and capability (Mazarr, Michael J., et al 2018).

American National Security Strategy of 2017 and Defense Strategy of 2018, formally has recognized China as a threat to its overall national security and interest. It mentioned that ideologically, culturally and in terms of the range of development, China is going to reduce American influence and establish a new global order, which is friendlier to it. But Chinese policymakers reiterate that China just wants to contribute to world peace, stability, development, and harmony. With China's positive and comprehensive partnership increased in South Asia, Western powers particularly the US has shown seriousness and since last decade it has been proposing multiple projects and program to reduce the Chinese supports. Indian policymakers have a fear that China never accepts her as a rising power in Asia (Kulkarni 2017). Debate on taking or refusing of American millions dollar project Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in Nepal is also one example of how the US is approaching projects to contain Chinese supports and investment in the South Asian region.

China-India bilateral trade is going to cross 100 billion dollars soon. China's trade and other affairs of cooperation with the rest of the countries of South Asia have been mounting for some years. On one side, India's cooperation and trade with China are also increasing to a new height, but on another side, Indian experts and policymakers, directly and indirectly, raise a serious question on China's increasing constructive partnership with the rest of South Asian countries (Zhang 2006). South Asian neighbors think that India always creates an obstacle to the peace and stability of their countries. History also shows that India's big brother attitude and British-era style diplomacy tended it toward failure of neighbor diplomacy, and studies show that anti-India sentiment is very high in its neighbor countries.

South Asia is the land of the largest number of poor people in the world. Deep structural reforms are required for the socio-economic transformation of the region. Great powers always give importance to the geopolitical and geostrategic significance of

the region. Knowing the potentiality of development, China for some years has been giving immense priorities on the region. From his first tenure, President Xi Jinping has given policy priority to neighboring countries, which is proved by the programs of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Due to the narrow attitude, regional experts opined that India is morally and practically losing grounds in the politics of South Asia (Sharma 2019a). The rest of South Asian countries is not ready to accept India's traditional and hegemonic behavior. As a rising economic power of the region, India needs to foster partnerships with neighboring countries based on equality, respect, and balance. Then only, it could lead the region to gain mutual economic benefits and eventually contribute to peace and stability of the region (Ibid.).

It is not hard to judge that India is anxious about the increasing partnership of China with its neighbor countries. But unfortunately, India doesn't calculate and evaluate that why there is a high positive attitude in the rest of South Asia on China and similarly negative sentiment on India. Sometimes Indian policymakers talk about regional integration, but they failed to understand the reality of hurdles created by their own nation for peace and stability of the region (Meng 2017). Without finding the reason, it is futile to blame China for creating positive space in South Asia. Some regional experts say that South Asia can be the strategic challenge for India where other great powers have a strong presence and Indian interest is being checked and forced to accept the reality. China's increasing hard and soft power presence in the rest of South Asian countries is not only being taken positively but also multiple layers of exchanges and collaboration are also harnessing in an exclusive way based on mutual trust and win-win cooperation.

With China's growing engagement and cooperation in South Asia since some year can be assumed that India is not taking easily and feeling her declining influence in the region. The major problem of the Indian establishment in dealing with South Asian neighbors is that it is not even minimally successful to gain positive views from people of the region. It is also depicted as a malign and interfering party who don't want peace, stability, and development in the region. Regional experts opined that due to a lack of strategic culture and diplomatic characteristics, Indian official diplomats are known bad guys in the region. Some works can be done positively but Indian officials carry out with noise, disturbance, and encroachment style. So people easily know what the Indian establishment is doing in the internal matter of their country.

Western powers' Containment policy particularly America has actually begun a geopolitical game in the South Asia region. Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) is an open document about America's strategy to stop China's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. Some Indian experts say that for long-term goals, Western encroachment in the region aiming to stop China will be more dangerous for India than China's developmental support and cooperation. They also suggest Indian policymakers detect Western influence; India should start a constructive dialogue with China and South Asian neighbors, and also provide kind support with zero interference to the neighbors (Raghavan 2018). But in a practical area, the Indian establishment doesn't accept this suggestion and seems to continue the same outdated interfering neighbor policy.

India's interfering approach toward the neighboring countries definitely undoubtedly creates an environment for other powers' interest and builds the ground, though this is not only the region. There are many reasons for South Asians to be positive toward China, but the first and foremost reason is China's non-interfering and supportive posture. China never involves government change or creates hurdles in the region (Lan 2008). Based on the understanding and requirement of the respective country, China has put forward cooperation. Experts say that if India realized its long diplomatic mistakes while dealing with the neighbor countries and wants to change the course, it should learn from China's neighbor policy and diplomatic strategic culture and practice. Without correcting own policy, it is futile to blame others for the enhancement of the presence in the region. Due to the changing world scenario and geopolitical dynamism, South Asia is becoming a new ground of great power interest; it is the sign of changing context, course, and behavior of the regional actors.

7. Is China a friend or foe of India?

With the China-India face-off of June 15, many questions are raised from many sides on durable relations between them. When we go back toward history and observe the scenario, in the open office documents and opinion of Indian politicians or officials, it has not denoted China as an adversary or enemy. The two largest developing countries of the world where China is the 2nd and India is the 5th economic power in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have multiple differences in terms of political, ideological, economic, and social model and practices. Since the China-India war of 1962, Indian policymakers have been showing not much positive attitude even though the two countries' rapprochement since mid of 1980 has linked them with multiple and higher scales of cooperation and exchanges. But in outside, Indian policymakers have not used the negative statement to criticize or blame China.

Moscow's meeting of Foreign Ministers of both countries has done important Five-Points agreements to mitigate confrontation on border areas. Both have emphasized solid dialogue when the nations are in a confronting situation. At a critical time of the Covid-19 pandemic, China and India need to cooperate while both are large populations and socio-economic impact could be high. Any provocation on border areas could be of high cost at this critical moment. Experts say that only tangible communication is a medium to create a stable environment at the border areas (Sharma 2020).

India thinks that it is a competitor of China, but China doesn't accept it. Experts say that India needs to reform and do a lot to be a place of a competitor of China. America can say China is a competitor but India can't. In practice, China doesn't like the term 'competitor', rather it prefers 'comprehensive or strategic partner'. India is facing a lot of political, social, and economic problems, and another side China is highly organized, stable, and more purposeful too. And similarly, China has very strong and dynamic public and private institutions to formulate and implement policies, programs and mobilize resources. These are the most important reasons, why China leaves India behind on speedy development and institutional reforms.

China and India both are nuclear power, even though, Military experts opine that China can only be compared with America and Russia in terms of modern military equipment. China is also far ahead on cyber warfare technologies and security. Acknowledging China's growing military strength, India has been also buying advanced military equipment of an amount of billion dollars from Russia and America. India with a solid economic plan can minimize the economic gap with China (Sen 2010). China has been assuring India that its rise is not against the neighboring countries, but to support peace, development, and harmony. China's peaceful policy is also proved by its effort to resolve the Doklam issue of 2017 between China and India. Experts say that President Xi Jinping had shown more maturity and political morality than Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to sort out the Doklam issue peacefully (Qinglong 2017).

Because of China's strong presence globally and deepening China-India economic-cultural-people to people level cooperation, now many experts on the China-India issue suggest to the Indian policymakers that dialogue and continuous communication are the effective means to resolve the issues and get benefits from cooperation (Zhang 2009). For some years, China and India have done joint military exercises. It is expected to support building trust and reduce confrontation on the border issues. This exercise could support mitigating misperception and. Furthermore, if India makes harmony with China by rejecting Western provocation, China could help for deeper rapprochement between Pakistan and India. If this situation occurs, it will support sustainable peace, stability, and development of the entire region. Positively, China and India's leadership agreed to set up a direct hotline service to build understanding and continue the dialogue (Shukla 2010).

Regional experts opine that India should leave to see China as a foe. This outdated mentality would not provide a positive consequence for India in a long run. Instead, India's outdated neighbor policy further brings India's neighbors and China close. India can't stop China to foster deep cooperation in the region. China's comprehensive engagement in the region will further support India's social-economic change and promote inclusive integration (Zhang and Zhang 2006). The process is already beginning. Chinese companies have funneled billions of dollars in the region. Except for India and Bhutan, most of the countries of the region have signed an agreement on China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Not only this, China and these countries have started multiple levels of inclusive partnership and getting benefits from the spirit of win-win cooperation. But India is still protesting BRI assuming that the BRI-based project China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has interference with her sovereignty. But China says that CPEC has no intention to interfere in India's matters.

Except for some political issues, there are no confrontation issues where China and India collide. Both are strong markets to each other and are the strong voice of the developing world in the international forums. Similarly, there are many regional and international mechanisms, where both countries with other countries are cooperating on common issues. India is the second strong member of the China-led Asian Investment and Infrastructure Bank (AIIB). Both countries are cooperating on BRICS (Community of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa; and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Sharma 2019b). Agriculture, climate change, terrorism, taxes; property rights, patents are among the issues China and India are working closely in the international levels. Due to the combined strong voice of China and India, on many occasions, World Trade Organization (WTO) has changed policies to support the issues of the underdeveloped and developing world.

Increasing cumulative engagement between China and India has many positive aspects for the regional and global levels. West doesn't want China-India rapprochement. Sometimes history shows that the Indian establishment had been provoked by Western powers to act against the genuine concern and interest of China. Unfortunately, due to the lack of strategic culture and long-term diplomatic vision, India doesn't understand that Western influence in South Asia hampers it more than China's cooperative approaches. Besides political interference, the West tries hard to impose cultural imperialism on the rest. In a long run, this motive would be more destructive for host countries and can damage history and cultural strength. Although there are many political differences between China and India, they have many cultural similarities and common historical aspects (Zhang and Jianxue 2007). With dialogue and negotiation, these two countries can sort out the challenges and move toward the common goals of peace, prosperity, and harmony.

8. Increasing Interdependence and Mitigating Stalemate

For some years China and India are enjoying maximum cooperation and exchanges at any time in history. The trade scale of both countries is going to cross 100 billion dollars soon. Now China is a second economy, India is the fifth largest GDP in the world. Rising countries with the largest populations, both are becoming strategically important to each other in terms of trade, finance, technology, capital flow, and knowledge sharing. It is the significance of present context and even more requirement for the

positive consequence in the future. The problem for India is that due to the lack of effective neighbor policies, her neighbors still don't recognize India as a regional power or any type of responsible power in the regional sense. For it, the failure of Indian policymakers or establishment in a broad sense is responsible for not creating a minimum level of trust among neighboring countries.

If India wants an important place in regional and global affairs, support of China is vitally necessary. The attitude of rivalry or unhealthy competition could not support India to expand its role. If India with the support of Western forces tries to intersect China, definitely China will solidly face the situation and its diplomatic hurdle to India could be high, which India might feel hard to recover. Competition with cooperation formula is only the option as policy experts say to expand China-India multi-dimensional cooperation and get benefits as per national capacity, requirement, and interest. The ball is in the Indian court actually, in which way to follow to move in a comprehensive way with long-term benefits (Sharma 2019a).

China comparatively shows a peaceful approach toward the regional and global perimeter. Its official proclamations of the peaceful rise and peaceful development policies have been working comprehensively to build trust globally (Zhang 2020). Even a country like Japan, whose political relations for long with China have not been positive, its success to expand depth cooperation and build understanding in many levels. Here most important factor is whether you are successful to forge a common point of understanding with other countries or not. If you succeed, your policy will work, if not then you have to change the road with self-correction or judgment. China's recent history shows that it is successful to expand foreign relations according to the capability and national requirements.

India needs to reform more structural change in the economy, military and defense sector if it wants to reduce the power gap with China (Sawhney and Wahab 2017). India is a member of some organizations in which China is a leading actor like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), New Development Bank (NDB), and so on. Some Indian experts opine that India can join China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) if there is no China-Pakistan Economic Corridor program (CPEC). India accused that CPEC has violated its sovereignty. But on another side, China reiterated that there is no intention to violate India's sovereignty, and at CPEC, China and Pakistan are dealing based on their national priorities. There is some issue of dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Since 1947, these two countries went on direct and indirect war and confrontation on the territorial issue of Kashmir.

More engagement between China and India would support them to mitigate disputes and foster the multiple levels of cooperation and exchanges on benefits of both countries. To resolve the border dispute, both countries have established joint mechanisms to study and recommend the ways of tangible solutions (Wang 1998). Only the concrete negotiation is the option to address the dispute and increase the harmonious relations as both countries reiterated many times. On the occasion of the Wuhan informal summit in 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping had proposed a "Two Plus One" proposal to mutually cooperate between China and India to invest and expand cooperation with the rest of South Asia countries. China always wants to play a constructive role in regional integration (Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018). It is said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not give any positive or negative sign on that proposal. Wuhan informal summit has supported building understanding between India and China (Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018). Similarly initiative or second informal summit between two leaders happened in October 2019 in Mamallapuram ancient city of Tamil Nadu state of India. "The purpose of the summit, as described by Chinese Ambassador to India Luo Zhaohui, was for the two leaders 'to have a free exchange of views without fixed topics. They will talk about major issues; they will have a free atmosphere with each other which is a very good format for discussion'." (Thakker 2019).

Chinese side claims that with a benign approach of cooperation "Two Plus One" proposal was forwarded. It further clarified that this is a long-term policy to create understanding and mutual trust between China and India and to attract interested countries to move on related cooperative fields. When we see this proposal's depth spirit, it is not hard to understand that China wants solid cooperation with India to foster cooperation in the region. There could not be any other mechanisms to reduce misperception rather than dialogue and continue the discussion (Mohan 2012). When China and India begin cooperation in one common project, two countries can build up understanding, and second, they can enter into a new era of cooperation mitigating confrontation, dispute, and distrust. If the Indian establishment can realize that its neighbor policy is failed, China's proposal could give space to sow trust, then it shouldn't do late to move based on the spirit of win-win cooperation according to the direction of the "Two Plus One" proposal.

With the increasing national power and global engagement of both China and India, experts suggest long-term comprehensive cooperation and partnership and can also move with healthy competition. On the occasion of President Xi's visit to India last October, both countries agree to uplift friendship into a comprehensive strategic partnership (Thakker 2019). Both countries have clearly acknowledged the boundaries, significance, and challenges of their relationship. Both countries' relations depend on their national priorities, regional geopolitics, and global great power equations. Western forces are provoking India to take strict options

while dealing with China. But the pragmatic option is to maintain harmonious and cooperative relations with China for the long-term benefits of India.

9. Major Recommendation and Conclusion:

With the new confrontation of June 15, misunderstanding and distrust have increased after a long period of peaceful engagement. Even though they have politically contentious issues on bilateral relations, two rising powers China and India have been working together in many common issues of regional and global concerns. The five-Points consensus held in Moscow between Foreign Ministers of both countries has created a position environment to harness dialogue and negotiation. Arms control, terrorism, climate change, the demand of developing world, agriculture, information technologies, peace, and security are among the major issues both countries are cooperating in an international forum. India is a member of some regional and global organizations initiated by China. India needs not think that its rapprochement with China will have a negative impact on its future development (Yang 2010). India is a big market for Chinese products, and India's software industries have the largest market in China. So with the dawn of the 21st century, cooperation between these two countries has reached a new height with deep engagement and exchanges. Banning Chinese apps and trying to stop Chinese companies, India cannot get any benefits. Further, it will lose the massive opportunity of investment and a big Chinese market.

Now, experts on China-India affairs raise questions on that though there is deep cooperation between these countries, is that relations credible and really based on mutual trust? This is definitely a tough question. The challenge before the leadership of both countries is how to maintain trustful relations with reducing conflict and misperceptions. Chinese experts sometimes accuse that India is provoked by Western powers to act against China. This statement also became reality when particularly American senior officials openly put their views against China. They openly urge India to take assertive actions to contain genuine Chinese interest. West wants division, not cooperation between India and China, to wipe out China to become a global actor. The Chinese side always claims that its military strength is not targeted to any countries and it believes in the peaceful settlement of the disputes (State Council Information Office 2015).

This study has concluded that if China and India become really serious to expand their relations based on trust and credibility, they can achieve a lot and also can contribute to regional and global peace, stability and prosperity. According to the report of the World Bank, by 2050 China and India will be first and second economy respectively. In this scenario, as they say, many times about their interest in the balanced new world order, cooperation between China and India will be very essential in that regard. The present world order led by America is more imbalances, injustice, win-lose basis, and top-bottom paradigm in political engagement. To challenge this imbalance and establish new world order, China-India should foster their bilateral relations fully based on trust and understanding, completely reducing misperceptions and stalemates.

Regular high-level political dialogue, multiple levels of negotiation through the established joint mechanism, strategic cooperation on bilateral relations, cultural and people to people level exchanges are among the things which need to be accelerated further to reduce future confrontation and increase benefits based on mutual understanding and trust. No doubt, still there are huge misperceptions between these two countries. This study finds that only regular cooperation and open dialogue can provide a fruitful platform to create a trustful environment and search for peaceful settlement of the dispute. Present mistrust could only be address through regular dialogue and a pragmatic trust-building process from both sides.

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