



#### MAPPING THE PERCEPTION: INDO-CHINA RELATIONS

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#### **Abstract:**

*Annexation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China started in 1950. It was ended after the Government of Tibet signed the Seventeen Point Agreement on 1951. Dalai Lama and many residents of Tibet migrated to India. This event triggered the anxiety in China. The expansionist attitude displayed by China from 1962 laid to the formation of China Occupied Kashmir to recent claim about Arunachal Pradesh.*

*Though it is geography of both countries that plays a key role in this dispute, the leaderships are also responsible for fuelling the crisis. China's expansionist attitude is also fuelled by its stagnant economic performance recently and its effort to assure resources to continue its industrial growth and expansions. The recent Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso clash shows how China still believes in its ideology as expansionist and trying to stall the development of neighbouring country. Today, in the age of globalization, China is using its full potential to dominate the global market and be the most powerful among all. Most of the countries have emerged dependent on China for the supply of their daily consumable products. The Chinese hegemony in terms of military, economy and geopolitics has emerged as one of the problem areas for India.*

*This research attempts at seeking perceptions of the common people's awareness about the border issue, their expectations and their perspectives over both countries and also seeks suggestions to emerge with solution to the current geopolitical situation between China and India.*

**Key words:** *India, China, Border dispute, Relations, Economy, Skirmish, Perceptions..*

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#### **Introduction:**

Indo-China relation had been in news since 1962 when the war between both the country started but the beginning was with the annexation of Tibet by China. The attempt of expansion of territory by China is present since ages. After Sino-India war of 1962, the range of border issue was subsiding and Chinese economy was boosting. At 2014, the ruling party of India changed. Soon Asia's two largest countries India

and China were seen entangled again for border disputes and economic growth declined in both the countries. F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous statement, "The test of a first-rate leader is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi ostensibly embody powerful centralized leadership (W. Antholis, 2007). The media were seen to be suddenly covering only specific news issues and huge part of



Indian population supported all the changes. With this there are many questions which arises such as question about had India took a strong action against China by banning the Chinese products and promoting “Make in India”? Did COVID years improved economic condition of China? Are people aware of the trade share of China with India? According to an article of The Hindu (26 October 2022), India imported \$89.66 billion worth of goods from China in the first nine months of 2022, the highest on record for three quarters in any year. Two-way trade has crossed \$100 billion. Can Indians still expect anything steps to promote Indian products? The Media which is playing a huge role in showing the current border scenario and shaping thoughts of people. is it really presenting the issues correctly?

This research is done to study the knowledge and perception of common public while discussing different scenarios between India and China.

#### Objectives:

Objectives of this research are- 1) to know people’s awareness about the skirmish and current border issues, 2) to understand the outlook of people for the international and national media showing Indo-China news, 3) to know the political and economic understanding of people about issues of India and China, 4) to look into people’s expectation from India and China.

#### Methodology and Data Collection:

The data for this research has been collected through primary source. A questionnaire survey was conducted via telephone and personal interview with 30 interviewees belonging to the age group of 15 to 75. Three interviewers took survey from 10 different interviewees each. Interviews were conducted in

English and Hindi depending on respondent preference. Secondary data was used to support this ethnographic research.

#### Study Area:

The research aims at understanding the outlook of people belonging to different age and economic criteria. Out of 30, 54% of the interviewees are the students of University of Mumbai and rest belong outside university. Most of them were the working age group people who are considered as the youth of society. This age group was focused more because they are believed to shape nation’s future. Some teenagers and senior citizen were interviewed too, to know the awareness among youngsters and knowledge among the senior citizens. Those interviewees from University of Mumbai are mainly students, native to different states of India. Diversity in thoughts of people be in different age, gender, socio-economic base had been maintained to understand the various viewpoints on present geopolitics of India -China.

#### Result and Discussion:

Through the questionnaire survey, it came into light how people are aware of the current India and China scenario. In this some general questions were asked such as about people using Chinese product, knowledge about LAC and current border issue were asked. The reason this question was asked is to know how much we are bound by the Chinese products and to recognize the awareness of people. Questions about people using any Chinese products in their daily life and if yes how many of it were asked. The survey showed that about 80% of the people still use Chinese product and only 20% of people responded that they either don’t use Chinese product at all or use less than 2 Chinese products.

Graph showing use of Chinese products by interviewees

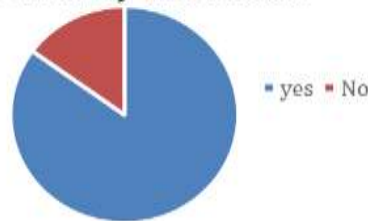


Figure 1: Use of Chinese Products

Source: Questionnaire Survey

Some of the important findings which justifies our objectives were-

1. Almost all the interviewees who have participated in our survey told us that the use of some kind of Chinese products in their day to day life was unavoidable. Chinese products ranging from less than 2 to more than 6 have been used regularly in their household.
2. More than half of the interviewees know the difference between the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and Line of Control (LOC).
3. There were mixed responses from the people who

- we interviewed regarding about the skirmish. 70% of them were saying the country's response was good enough and 20% of them were saying it was not good enough and remaining 10 % we're saying that it was politically motivated that the government on both the side were playing this skirmish card so that people attention can be diverted from vital issues.
4. 80% of interviewees were found to be aware of skirmish and border issues of China and India. They opined that India should fight back for their territory and felt that border issues are one of the biggest obstacles in relation of both countries.

GRAPH SHOWING PEOPLE'S RESPONSE ABOUT MEDIA UNDERPLAYING OR OVERPLAYING THE SKRIMISH

■ underplaying ■ overplaying ■ other



Figure 2: Response About Media

Source: Questionnaire Survey

5. Most of people accept that international and national media is showing the right information about Indo-China. Still there were few who considered otherwise.
6. According to the survey, people think India should produce more goods and they are aware of the “Make in India” project. Almost half of the interviewees wanted that both countries should

work together for the betterment of people.

7. Exactly 50% of people responded in support of India and China working together for the development of both countries.
8. Almost half of the interviewees don’t trust China, more than half considered war was not as a final solution and expected that India would surpass China in less than 50 years.

*Graph showing people's response on question of how long will it take for India to surpass China and be more powerful.*

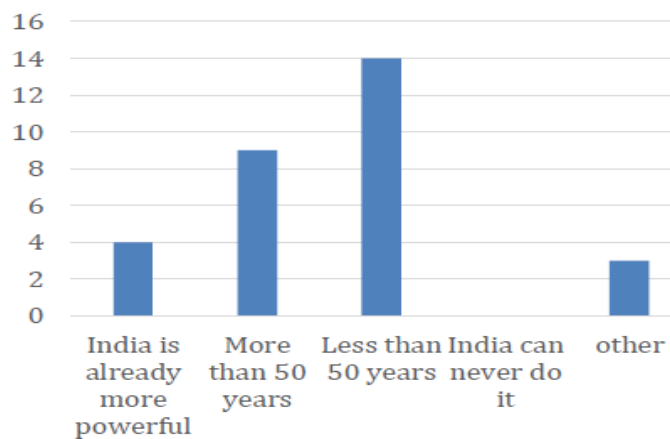


Figure 3: People’s expectations from India  
Source: Questionnaire Survey

### Conclusion:

India and China are rivals, but not enemies but it is observed that public opinion is somewhere being influenced by national politics and what media is showing. At the time of COVID-19 China dominated the market again by suppling personal protective equipment to revive its economy where as India excelled at pharmaceuticals. Hence, India and China should always look for the mutual cooperation because these two are power houses of Asia and of this world so if any conflict takes place between them the whole world will suffer and have to pay a huge price. India needs to be more pro-active, consistent, and realistic when engaging with China. China is not

a malevolent, sinister international entity (Markovits, C. 2017).out there to demolish Indian Foreign Policy but a state which is simply pursuing its own strategic interests in a hard headed fashion on its way to its status of a great power (Markovits, C. 2017). It is time for India to realise that India’s great power aspirations cannot be realised without a similar cold-blooded realistic assessment of its own strategic interests in an anarchic international system where there are no permanent friends or enemies, only permanent interests (Markovits, C. 2017). And only way to peace is by taking reciprocate action in order to assure peace with China.



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