

A Road Ahead For India China Friendship

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Building relations across cultures is vital to creating a good understanding among people. When people from diverse culture and backgrounds know and understanding one another as well as gain knowledge from each other which can be contributed to others.

India and China have a long-standing historical and cultural connection, both being ancient civilizations with rich traditional cultures. The exchange between the two countries date back to ancient times, blooming like flowers, Chinese civilization and Indian civilizations have made significant contributions to the development of both countries and world civilization.

India and China are neighbors with a friendship spanning thousands of years. There is a Chinese proverb that says “distant relatives are not as good as close neighbors.” Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi believes that India and China share the same development aspirations, representing “two bodies, one spirit.” Chinese president Xi Jinping pointed out that “The friendship between nations lies in the closeness of their peoples, and the closeness of the peoples lies in the understanding between their hearts.” The first two letters of the English name of India and China spell ‘inch’ together, suggesting that the two countries should promote the development of India-China relations with the spirit of “from inches to miles.”

In history, the major timeline incidents between India and China relationship are “1955, 1962, 1976, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020&2024”. These particular years had signified the major incident or their joint venture.

1950 the beginning of India China relation, 1962 border conflict over the disputed area, 1976 India and China reestablish the relation, 1988 Indian Prime Minister visited China, 1992 Indian President R. Venkataraman visited China. After the 1962 border conflict two Indian leaders visit China in the following years. Post conflict, 1996 marks the first Chinese President visiting India. Chinese President Jiang Zemin was the first Chinese head of state to visit India since the two countries' relations were established. 2000 Indian President KR Narayanan visited China, 2008 common consensus by both the country on “A Shared Vision for the 21st Century”. 2010 mark the 60th anniversary of India China diplomatic relation. 2011 “India-China Exchange Year” by signing series of exchange programs. 2012 the “Year of India-China Friendship and Cooperation”. 2015 both side leaders meeting on the sidelines of first BRICS Submit. 2018 both country leaders held an informal meeting in China setting a new design of exchange between two leaders. 2019 President Xi Jinping visit India for a second informal meeting, this meeting reaffirmed the 2018 PM Modi China visit consensus. 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of India and China diplomatic relations.

At the very year had witnessed a series of border clashes between Indian and Chinese troops, further straining bilateral relations. These incidents have highlighted the deep-seated mistrust and strategic competition between the two nations. However, several challenges and uncertainties remain, which could shape the future trajectory of this complex relationship. Beside the border issue the COVID-19 pandemic however had also impact on their relationship.

After a gap of long 4 long year India China has bring a consensus on border issue, which makes a turning point in their bilateral relationship. 2024 October 22nd marks the settlement on the border issue. Such a development could pave the way for increased cooperation, economic integration, and strategic partnership. An effective settlement of the border issue between India China will benefit both sides. This shows that these rounds of diplomatic and military exchange between India and India have been effective. Good neighborliness and friendship between India China is conducive to the overall stability of the situation and provides a fresh solution for resolving territorial disputes in other regions. The meeting of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit also marks a significant improvement on India China relationships and as well as there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

This peaceful resolution would significantly enhance mutual trust and understanding between the India and China. Creating more conducive environment for cooperation on a wide range of issues which would facilitate cross-border trade and investment, boosting economic growth for both countries. Meanwhile increased economic interdependence will be strengthening the bilateral relationship and reduce the potential for conflict. A border settlement could pave the way for a strategic partnership between India and China, focused on regional and global issues like climate change, counter-terrorism, and global health etc. this peaceful resettlement may also be contributing the regional stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region. Hence reducing the risk of military conflict and promote cooperation among other regional powers.

In the meanwhile, COVID-19 pandemic had impacted on both country direct connection by suspending direct flight from both sides, but unlikely Economic ties between the two countries have grown significantly in recent years. China has emerged as India's largest trading partner, with substantial trade in goods and services. However, India's growing economic aspirations and its desire to reduce its dependence on China have led to increased competition and strategic rivalry. Meantime some of the factors like Global Geopolitical rivalry, the role of the United States, Public opinion, Domestic politics etc. had also added a burden in their relationship. Putting aside all these uncertain challenges it would be a win-win situation if both the nation pulls full-fledged toward Cultural and People-to-people Exchange relation.

Cultural and People-to-people Exchange can increase connections, enrich and empower the global communication. Through interaction we learn from people who are from different backgrounds, so this not only give us information about that person but also we get to know more about their culture. India and China, two of the world's oldest civilizations and most populous nations, is a complex interplay of history, meanwhile it also shares a rich history of cultural exchange. In 1924 when Rabindranath Tagore first visit China, the Chinese mind where deeply impressed by his lectures on Indian Culture and Civilization, during his stay he also discussed about the exchange of scholars, and later on after coming back from China Rabindranath Tagore and Prof. Tan Yunshan established a Chinses study center (Cheena Bhavan) at Visva Bharati University in 14th April 1937, providing great ideas for enhancing the long-standing cultural ties and interfaces between India and China through direct communication and research into the two nations'. Cultural and People-to-people exchanges have their own uniqueness and offer special benefits. It is a link of growing mutual understanding and trust between nations as well as a conduit for spiritual and emotional contact between individuals. It is more profound form of exchanges and older than political exchanges. In contrast to other diplomatic methods, it is more fundamental, innovative, widespread, and long-lasting.

The world is reshaping by the youth of this generation, who are referred to as 'Gen Z', they are the digital native, they are grown up in a world dominated by technology, social media, and the internet. Therefore, this is a high time to boost the youth of this generation, to be the initiators of this non-political relation. This digital native generation will be reshaping the world. This Gen Z are social conscious, entrepreneurial spirit, short attention spans, mental health awareness, social media influence, E-commerce boom, authenticity and transparency, as well as challenges and opportunities, thus understanding their beliefs, actions and aspirations are essential. As 2020 marks the year of India China Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges, and both nations have held meetings of India-China High-Level people-to-people and cultural exchanges mechanism. The two sides have made new progress in exchanges and cooperation in the fields of arts, publishing, media, film and television, museum, sports, youth, tourism, locality, traditional medicine, yoga, education and think tanks.

Therefor both side may joint hand in boosting this Gen Z in the field of Cultural and People-to-people exchanges like cultural heritage, such as art literature, reestablishing some long lost historical relations, studying the resemblance of Hanuman and Sun Wukong (孙悟空), research on historical sites of both the side, meanwhile source from Chinese social media and news platform as well as online shopping platforms shows the growing popularity of Indian costumes among the Chinese population are quite visible, like wise popularity of Chinses Hanfu (汉服) also seen within the Indian students who are studying in China. Again we see there is lots of similarities in India kurta and Chinese Qipao (旗袍). Without a doubt, Yoga and Tai chi are also two important factor on the cultural and historical tapestry. In China, millions of individuals practice yoga, but in India, Tai chi has not yet gained popularity or spread. The two gems of Indian and Chinese culture, yoga and tai chi, have evolved unevenly in their respective nations. We must overcome obstacles and leave in order to correct this imbalance.

In the future, India-China can work together to sustain their relationship with the power of Cultural and People-to-people Exchange 'Soft Power' perse. The two countries can also conduct in-depth discussion for strengthening the relation, therefor resuming of direct flight, multiple academic exchange programs, academic cooperation, youth delegations, exchange of performing art etc.

(If cultural relations are able to promote respect for different cultures and different ways of organizing society and respect, understanding and some empathy, then it's much more likely that good, co-operative relations between countries will enjoy public support.' Building resilient bilateral relations for a more competitive world- Alison Baily, Senior Policy Analyst and Advisor, British Council).

Hence Soft Power is the key to promote the peaceful and long-term development of the relationship between the two countries, and embracing a bright and better future together.

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