

A Descriptive Analysis on Sino-Indian Geostrategic Relations in the Context of South Asia and Indian Ocean

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Abstract: The rise of China and India has restructured relations and shaped a wider area of economic cooperation in South Asian countries, where both India and China have kept their eyes on growing trade and economic progress as a security implication for long term. However, South Asian geostrategic, political and economic activities are now being pressurized that it can lead to a change in geopolitics and geo-economics in the region. Political crisis in the Indian Ocean country, Maldives, and China's interest in constructing a naval base in the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean region are an important indicator of geostrategic change in the region. China's huge investments in the Indian Ocean countries are not just about economic development but also about China's aspiration to present itself as a "local power" in the Indian Ocean region. Mutual worries on China's armed presence in both South China Sea and Indian Ocean have inspired both Indian and Indonesian governments to come up with the plan of constructing the Sabang port. Although many observers think that the China's presence in the region is peaceful and for ensuring the security of navigation. However, this study has described about the geostrategic relations of China and India in the context of their interests in South Asia and Indian Ocean. It is a descriptive study based on secondary data. At the end of the study, some strategies have been suggested to improve the relations between China and India through promoting trade and investment in the region instead of confronting each other in South Asia and Indian Ocean.

Key Words: China, India, South Asia, Pakistan, Geostrategic Relations, Indian Ocean, Border, Security, Economic Interests.

I. INTRODUCTION

In terms of geostrategic location both China and India are located in center point of East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, South East Asia and Russian Federation. These two countries are the largest countries taking into account of their size of population. China is now number one country in relation to its GDP by purchasing power parity (PPP) and the size of population. China's development has great implication for India along with other South Asian countries. China has always considered developing nations as first priority of its development cooperation including South Asia and Africa. Former president Hu Jintao declared that, previously, the periphery was limited to Northeast Asia,

Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia, now it has been extended to Africa, Middle East and Europe (Eisenman, 2019). China now considers itself as both a developing country and as a key power. It intends to promote the 'multipolar' international world order for the balance of powers among the different nations. The middle-income and low-income countries are also important for China's efforts to defend its 'territorial integrity' and economic expansion throughout the world particularly in Asian countries bordering South Asian countries (Rousset, 2018). Many countries in the world do not want China to be an economic and political power in the region. China is being threatened by some global powers to contain its activities in South China Sea and everywhere. Therefore China is very self-defensive in protecting South China Sea amid the US and its allies' threat to contain China in the region.

Currently China has appeared as a vital factor not just in the geopolitics of South Asian region but in the geostrategic and geo-economics too. China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean region is a new component that is putting logic of growing discomfort for India. Whereas the other nations seek Chinese investments in the infrastructure construction, most Indian people see it as an attempt to encircle Indian Territory and to undermine Indian geostrategic and geo-economics interests (Yuan, 2019). It is a little bit suspicious about the intention of China in South Asia in the context of political, strategic and security issues that China may use some South Asian territories against India through ports and regional connectivity. Moreover, many observers regard the BRI as a "Game Changer", a "Scheme of the century", China's "great drama to seek world dominance" not just for China, but the world." Also, it will not only challenge India's sovereign rights on disputed border territories, but also put India in a disadvantageous position in future negotiations on boundary and other security interests' vis-à-vis China and Pakistan.

India has also invested a huge amount of money in Myanmar's oil, gas and infrastructure development projects. It also tries to control the foreign policy of Bangladesh, Nepal,

Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives along with Bhutan. China is also keenly interested in influencing the region through infrastructure development, financial assistance and military ties along with building connecting roads in the region. The article argues that China is firmly committed to ensure a positional competition for regional influence, at the same time, China seeks to improve its relative position in the IOR and South Asian countries; India also tries to continue its moderately strategic and pre-eminent position in the Indian Ocean region, Sino-Indian border areas and South Asian countries. But many scholars think that both China and India should come ahead to address the socio-economic problems remaining in the region instead of confronting each other either on border issue or on Indian Ocean region for ensuring peace, prosperity and development.

This article aims to explain Sino-Indian strategic competition for regional influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and South Asia. It has examined China's efforts to increase its strategic and economic influence in South Asia through making strong economic and military ties with neighboring countries like Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, including Bangladesh, and some connectivity projects like CPEC and BCIM-EC as a part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Ozgun et al, 2017). And the study also examines regarding India's counter initiatives as a part of the 'Act East Policy' and 'Neighborhood First Policy', for reinforcement of its political, economic and military ties with the USA and its neighboring countries such as Iran, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and some connectivity infrastructure projects such as India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (Ozgun et al, 2017).

Map 1: China, India and South Asian Map



Source: Dhaka Courier, 2020

The above map shows that China and India have long border; and Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan have also direct land border with China. The geographic location of China and South Asia has strategic importance in the region. Chinese

growing economy is significant for South Asia for the expansion of trade and investment in the region. India which is neighbor of China has the equal rights to be benefitted from China's rise. Other countries of South Asia such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives are important countries for both China and India. Therefore China has to cooperate with these countries particularly in terms of foreign direct investment and regional connectivity.

II. SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH ASIAN REGION

There are many common interests of China-India regarding trade and economic relations. In spite of having strategic rivalry between these two nations in geopolitics and strategic issues such as border disputes and conflict in Indian Ocean, bilateral trade has grown by leaps and bounds in the past decade. As a sign of closer ties and easing of tensions along the border, three border passes have been open for trade now: Lipulekh is the primary border post opened for trade in 1992. This was monitored by the opening of Shipkila in 1994 and Nathula 2006. Given their extra economic strengths, there is much potential for deeper cooperation in trade and investment between China and India (Zhu, 2011). The two large economies which depend heavily on energy imports and both are anxious about energy security. They have cooperated each-other within the international energy market in recent years (Zhu, 2011).

China and India have a typical interest in combating other non-traditional security challenges like terrorism and cross-border drug trafficking. They have managed to keep up a typical position on climate change, arguing that developed countries should accept historic responsibility for climate change and developing nations shouldn't be pressured for taking steps to reduce carbon emission. However with each other's support, China got the observer status within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and India the observer status in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Srivastava & Rajan, 2008).

China and India are keenly interested in the Asian region as both countries have individually accepted faster economic relations through joint and regional contracts. Main essential thing is that both nations have now signed the Framework of Economic Agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Srivastava & Rajan, 2008). Eventually, both China and India are going to be a part of the Asian Free Trade Area (AFTA) and possibly key actors for the foundation of a "common Asian market" (Kaplinsky & Messner, 2008 & Rahman, 2020). In total, countries within the region are expected to be largely benefitted differently through development of China-India trade relations. The security dilemma within the China-Indian relationship is that the appearance of Asia's maritime domain as a platform for interaction and potential competition between the both states. The growing interest of the nations as a serious trading and

resource-consuming powers has raised the strategic importance of the maritime domain. Around 90% of the entire external trade of India by volume and 77% by value are now transited through the maritime domain (Bajpae, 2015). Both China and India even have ambitious plans for the event & achievement of platforms aimed toward strengthening their blue-water naval capabilities.

China and India are emerging as key trading and resource-consuming powers and both the countries are playing vital role in the strategic geography of Asia and in the maritime domain. The rise of India as a new geopolitical power may be a replication of the abilities of India and China to surpass their respective region (Smith, 2011). Increasing maritime interests of India and China is changing the strategic geography of Asia and also shifting the aspect of their mutual relationship (Medcalf, 2014 & Rahman, 2020). The relationship between China and India has also implications for the US policy towards Asia, because the USA is very actively involved in both China and South Asia regarding trade and investment, and geopolitics (Scott, 2012). Therefore, it is very important to maintain friendly relations between China and India for the greater socio-economic, political and development interests of China and South Asian countries instead of rivalry between the two countries. If China and India work together for the development of the region, there will be no poverty and hunger in this region. China has achieved substantial economic progress in the last few decades. India can be a big development partner in South Asia along with China's massive economic capacity.

Map 2: Map of China and South Asia



Source: www.mapsofindia.com

The above map shows that South Asia and China are close neighbors with bordering with India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan. Geostrategic ally Bangladesh is also very close neighbor of China, and China's southern province, Yunnan is only 1000 kilometers away from Cox's Bazar. Therefore China is keenly interested to build a deep sea port

in Sonadia of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh to be connected with Yunnan Province of China for exports and imports purposes. The above map shows the closeness between Bangladesh and China. Bangladesh is connected to both Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean through which China can be connected as well by building deep seaports, building connecting roads between China and Bangladesh through Myanmar, and other infrastructure.

III. THE SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF BORDER CONFLICTS

China and India are two regional powers and neighboring countries that share a vast territorial border. Relations between China and India have been characterized by border disputes leading to three military conflicts, the Sino-Indian War in 1962, the Chola incident in 1967, and also the Sino-Indian skirmish dispute in 1987. The clashed between China and India in the early 2017 at the Doklam plateau along the disputed Sino-Bhutanese border. The border dispute is the major barrier to improve trade relationships and accelerate the trade volume. The settlement of trade disputes through ICJ could be a setback of improving trade relations between the two economic superpowers which will be a potential breakthrough to develop Sino-Indian socio-economic, strategic and political relations (Rahman, 2020).

The protracted boundary dispute could be a major source of aggravation between Beijing and New Delhi, it can be defined probably the ugliest aspect of the relationship. India largely sticks to an actual boundary supported by McMahon Line, drawn by British Indian administration and imposed on the Tibetan authorities in 1914 under the Simla Accord. The successive Chinese governments never recognized such a boundary. From both of the perimeters, a successful border settlement requires compromise and cooperation (Fravel, 2008 & Rahman, 2020).

There was a deadly war between China and India which occurred in 1962. The main reason of the war was based on a dispute along Himalayan border claimed by China. There were a series of fierce border clashes between the two countries after the mass revolution of Tibetan in 1959, when India approved shelter to the Dalai Lama, a religious and political dissident leader of Tibet. India initiated a defensive Forward Policy from 1960 to tackle China's military presence where they set up outposts along the border area, together with several north of the McMahon Line, the eastern portion of the Line of Actual Control proclaimed by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1959 (Hoffman, 1990).

Chinese military took actions when India rejected proposed Chinese political settlements of the disputes between 1960 and 1962, then China started military operation in Ladakh from 30 April 1962 (Van, 2018). China invaded undecided territory along the 3,225 kilometer (2,000-mile) long Himalayan border in Ladakh and along the McMahon Line (Global Security, 2017). Chinese military had moved into the Indian Territory where they seized Rezang

La in Chushul, as well as Tawang. When China announced a ceasefire on 20 November 1962, the war was ended.

There were also a series of clashes in 1967 between India and China in the border of the Himalayan Kingdom of Sikkim, later it was annexed by India. Later the war was ended through military withdrawal of China from Sikkim. In 1975, the Sikkimese monarchy held a referendum, in which the Sikkim's people voted prodigiously in favor of joining India (Abschaffung der Monarchie, 1975). But China objected and identified it as unlawful. However, the Sino-Indian Memo of 2003 was signed as a de facto China's recognition of the seizure of Sikkim. But later China included Sikkim as one of the states of China in their map (Rajan, 2008). However, the Sikkim-China border area will continue to be the issue of battles and military movements (Scott, 2011). In June 2020 there was a deadly clash between China and India along the border area in Ladakh where twenty Indian troops were killed, but China denied that any of their soldiers was died in the clash. Therefore, the clashes and conflicts would never be stopped along the border areas between China and India, unless there was a way to put an end to the disputes amicably.

IV. SECURITY CONCERNS OF INDIA REGARDING THE ECONOMIC CORRIDORS BETWEEN CHINA AND PAKISTAN

India considers CPEC as a big threat for India's strategic interests in South Asia. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) where China has committed to invest US\$54 billion until 2030 (Small, 2017 & Kumar, 2019). This corridor attempts to connect China's Xinjiang autonomous region with Pakistan's Balochistan Province. The corridor runs through the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), which is claimed by Pakistan as 'Azad Kashmir'. In addition to Pakistan has deployed 15,000 security personnel, and China also wants to deploy around 30,000 armed forces for the CPEC, which is now being considered as security concern for India (Singh, 2017a: & Kumar, 2019). Apart from this, the Line of Control is not yet accepted by both India and Pakistan as transnational boundary.

Moreover, it will not only undermine India's sovereignty claims on disputed border territories, but put India in a disadvantageous position in future negotiations on boundary and other security interests' vis-à-vis China and Pakistan. Apart from the CPEC, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor has also serious security concerns for India, as attempts are made to connect China's Yunnan province with India's Northeast region and it is assumed that China will enhance its influence in the northeast region.

V. SINO-INDIAN STRATEGIC CONFLICT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

The Indian Ocean widening from the Persian Gulf and the coast of East Africa to the Malay Archipelago and the shores of Australia together with all its tributary water bodies (Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Malacca Strait, and so on), each of its

coastal states, as well as the land-locked states for which the transit to and from the sea is mostly preoccupied with towards the Indian Ocean which constitutes the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) (Bouchard & Crumplin, 2010, & Ozgur et al, 2017). It is a strategically significant region which was emphasized by a quote ascribed to an American naval officer and strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan stating that "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This Ocean has an access to the seven seas in the twenty-first century, the prosperity of the world will be decided in these territorial waters" (Yoshihara, 2012). The region is rich in natural resources, containing 62% of the world's proven oil reserves, 35% of its natural gas, 40% of its gold, 60% of its uranium, and 80% of its diamonds (Erickson et al., 2010). Moreover, it is vital to global energy flows and therefore has a major place in the supply side of global energy security (Cordner, 2010).

This route is playing as a key transit point for oil imports from the Persian Gulf to the countries in European and Asia countries (Erickson et al., 2010). 17 million barrels of oil a day, constituting 20% of the world's oil supply and 93% of oil exported from the Gulf, transits by tanker through the Strait of Hormuz and into the western reaches of the Indian Ocean (Erickson et al., 2010, & Ozgur et al, 2017). Although a large portion of oil is transported to Europe and the Americas via the Suez Canal and the Cape of Good Hope, the route towards Asia is more important, as Gulf countries' oil meets the demands of nearly 75% of Asia's imports needs. Due to this importance, the route is identified as the "new silk road" (Erickson et al., 2010, p. 216). The region with such rich energy resources and huge trade volume is essential for Asia's two rising powers, China and India.

China's rapidly expanding presence in the Indian Ocean in recent year's underlines the emergence of Beijing as a new player in the region. Sino-Indian race in the Indian Ocean has triggered into geopolitical attention for the rest of the world. It has been reported in the different newspapers that China is very active in exports and imports and its military presence across this ocean have protracted the geopolitical competition beyond India to other global powers in these seawaters for example the United States, Australia and France, where India is already there. (Barua, 2019). We know that Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius and the less-known Vanilla islands and other sea-zones are located in the Western Indian Ocean. Being aware of their own geopolitical and geostrategic significance, these island countries have been outspoken in underlining their economic and geostrategic priorities and challenges (Barua, 2019).

India, which regards itself as a predominant power in the Indian Ocean, is uncomfortable with China's growing influence over the region and its close partnership with littorals of the Indian Ocean through BRI. According to some Indian geopolitical specialists, China's regional foreign policy and its relations are focused to undermine India in the region, and China further wants to encircle India regarding maritime affairs (Brewster, 2014; Ozgur et al, 2017). They believe that

the expansion of China's strategic depth in India's backyard is, of course, a threat to India (Pant, 2012). China's presence is a great challenge to India's predominant position in the Indian Ocean, and the ports China has been building and upgrading in the IOR would be used for not purely economic and commercial purposes but also military and strategic purposes.

In order to mitigate this challenge, New Delhi decided to implement a balancing strategy to neutralize Chinese growing influence over the region and maintain and consolidate Indian pre-eminence in the region. Since growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean is a common concern for both India and major powers such as the USA and some littoral countries in the Indian Ocean, India has deepened its cooperation and partnership with the USA, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, to make balance strategically against the suspicious military presence of China in the Indian Ocean. In response to China's geopolitical and economic influence with the plan of BRI, and to increase India's scope of geostrategic influence, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken two important foreign policy strategies such as the 'Act East Policy' and the 'Neighborhood First Policy', through which India would be connected to South East Asian countries, where a huge trade and investment, and regional connectivity can be ensured in the region (Ozgun et al, 2017).

Approximately two-thirds of the global 50 main seaports are either possessed by China or have been provided with some Chinese investments (Kynge et al. 2017, & Mohan, 2018). The People's Liberation Army's naval forces have taken steps to militarize the first island chain, which stretches from the Japanese Islands to parts of the Philippines' archipelago and Malaysia and covers the whole South China Sea. China is now busy to increase into the second island chain advance into the Pacific Ocean. It can be supposed that within a decade, China will ensure the biggest marine and oceanic navies in the world (Mohan, 2018).

China has acquired through leasing the Hambantota port of Sri Lanka for 99 years, Pakistan's Gwadar port for 40 years, Greece's Piraeus port for 35 years, Djibouti port for ten years, the Maldivian island of Feydhoo Finolhu for 50 years, and around 20 percent of Cambodia's entire coastline for 99 years, Beijing has put pressure on Myanmar to increase China's share from 50 percent to 75 or 85 percent in the Kyaukpyu port which has been built on Chinese investment and it is located on the Bay of Bengal. At least if Myanmar does not want to pay a penalty for defaulting on the US\$3 billion Myitson energy dam deal. A military base of China in Myanmar is now threatening India's naval power in the Bay of Bengal (Mohan, 2018).

A military establishment in Djibouti, major port development schemes in Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, Myanmar, Malaysia, and Cambodia describe the outlines of China's Maritime Silk Road plan (MSR), which is

a sea connectivity plan that is an essential part of the BRI centered on the Indian Ocean. New Delhi's long inherited naval influence is now under serious security challenge in the Indian Ocean. China's rapidly growing economic weight has already substituted India as the most significant geopolitical player in South Asian countries and Indian Ocean.

Map 3: China, India, South Asia and Indian Ocean



Source: <https://www.google.com/search>

The above map shows that South China is very close to Indian Ocean for exports and imports purposes compared to the East China Sea. Bay of Bengal is also connected to Bangladesh and Myanmar which from where China's Yunnan province is only 1000 kilometers away. Therefore the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean are very crucial for China's geostrategic and geo-economic interests. This Ocean is similarly important for India and other nations, thus both China and India are confronting each other in the Indian Ocean to control it.

VI. CHINA-INDIA RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SINO-PAK MILITARY CO-OPERATION

Sino-Pak missile co-operation, particularly with providing expertise to the former in production of nuclear weapons and also providing it with missile. Pakistan's entire nuclear and missile program is being assisted by China. China covertly provided high tech tools for use in Pakistan's unsafe nuclear facilities. It is alleged that the furnace would be used to melt plutonium and uranium to make compact missile war heads. Pakistan has established the missile factory at Fatehjung, where Chinese experts are working on guidance and control system, solid fuel and M-II variants. The integration of nuclear and missile capabilities is high on Pakistan's agenda and she is also making efforts to achieve missile delivered nuclear capability. China is on the other hand also training Pakistan's personnel on assembly and uses of M-11 missiles which are at present stored at a sub-depot near the central ammunition depot at Sargodha (Kirana Hills). Pakistan is also fast developing a nuclear warhead for its medium range missiles with active assistance from China.

Pakistan's nuclear missile program involves not only the

miniaturization of the nuclear warheads for the missiles but modifications on the ballistic missiles to carry nuclear warheads and indigenous production of short range ballistic missiles. According to Indian intelligence services, Pakistan's defense communication terminals for missiles deployment are located at Gujranwala, Okara, Multan, Jhang and Dera Nawab Shah (The Tribune, 1998). An alternative satellite communication network for the missiles is also in the pipeline. Communication terminals are used in guiding the trajectory of the missiles to a pre-determined target. Pakistan bought the Chinese M-II missiles after repeated failures in its indigenous missile development program. It apparently paid US \$ 516 million to China for technology transfer and another US \$ 185 million for the purchase of 64 missiles. China is helping Pakistan to build a new ballistic missile near Rawalpindi. Pakistan has two problems regarding ballistic missiles. First, it has a few short range M-II missiles given by China, but wants its technology transfer for an indigenous manufacturing capability to match India's Prithvi for a conventional war (The Tribune, 1998).

Second, it wants a few long range missiles for matching with nuclear warheads. It is well known that sometime in 1986-87 Pakistan with Chinese assistance has opened up both the uranium and plutonium fissile material routes and is making compact nuclear warheads and seeking technology transfer to make battle field ballistic missiles. Missile related developments in south-Asia, causing a great deal of concern in the region. While New Delhi remains pursued close to deploying its indigenously developed missile systems. Pakistan, has been secretly trying to redress the balance by seeking to deploy Chinese supplied M-II missiles as a response. This action-reaction syndrome between the two South Asian countries have heightened suspicions about the others intentions. Missiles development in South Asia has gradually taken root since the mid-1980 (The Tribune, 1998). India started its missile program much earlier than Pakistan. Keeping with these developments of Indian program, Pakistan started its missile program with the help of China.

According to the reports by Pakistan media Pakistan's missile program started in the early 1980's. It would be seen that Pakistan has systematically and with single-minded devotion gone ahead. Unlike the Indian program, which may have to an extent been derived from the space program that had international collaboration. Pakistan's indigenous ballistic missile program has been based upon bilateral co-operation with China though some French in puts in terms of sounding rockets and technology were available (Koshik, & Kesri, 1998). It is now believed that China have assisted Pakistan in the full range of missile development activity from transfer of sub-systems, technologies for propellant production and inertial guidance system related to Hatf program to outright supply of missiles. This was confirmed by CIA reports. The Pakistani ballistic missile program suddenly comes into limelight on April 25, 1988, when it was announced that the country had tested two missiles named.

India and its people are very concern about Pakistan's nuclear program, particularly when it comes to the hands of extremists or radical army personnel. On the contrary, the people of Pakistan are also worried about India's nuclear weapons that if any deadly conflict arises between the two nations, people of the these two countries would be devastatingly died. Therefore both countries should be careful about the use of nuclear weapons in any future conflicts.

VII. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND INDIA

To promote trade, socioeconomic and diplomatic relations, establishing a trade taskforce involving the members of two countries could be very effective. The task force will monitor the areas in which the two countries jointly can involve themselves. The task force also can formulate the required strategies to develop business environment to achieve trade goal and purpose. Infrastructure is one of the most significant components to remove trade barriers. To promote the trade volume and minimize the trade deficit between China and India, infrastructure, mainly, roads and highways, seaports and airports and entrepreneurship education and training institutes could be very effective. Creation of ombudsman is also needed for investigating into and resolving objections of maladministration or a violation of rights through which trade and investment could be promoted between the two countries. The ombudsman is entitled to receive the objections from the applicants if business rules are violated and can take initiatives to settle the dispute through judicial process (Rahman, 2020).

Trade and investment, connectivity, reducing trade imbalance between the two countries are very crucial to make a friendly relation between the two nations. To tackle the current political stalemate between China and India, there is no other option except bilateral negotiations and promotion of trade and invest in the region. Political and strategic impasse can be resolved through accelerating the trade and investment and, of course, through diplomatic relationship between China and India. If the two countries are encouraged to be involved with business interests and activities, they will, definitely stay away from any conflict including the border ones.

VIII. CONCLUSION

To contain separatist impulses in Tibet and Xinxiang China periodically uses rhetorical intimidation and sanctions against countries and organizations that host the Dalai Lama (Eisenman, 2019). However, China's relations with developing states emphasize countless collaborative enterprises including foreign aid, educational and cultural exchanges, media cooperation, military assistance and training, and political cadre training (Eisenman, 2019).

In addition, Asia's old rivals, China and India, each a rising power in its own right with a distinct vision of regional order, are now competing furiously to establish bases for the forward

deployment of their naval assets and to gain relative advantage and leverage over the other. Speaking at the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on June 1, 2018, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a veiled criticism of China, called for the Indo-Pacific region to embrace freedom of navigation and over flight, territorial integrity, and respect for all nations, regardless of their size: 'We will promote a democratic and rules-based international order in which all nations, small and large, should be evaluated as equivalent and independent. We will, of course, work with other nations to keep our seas, space and airways free and open from any attack or unacceptable influence (Gallo, 2018).

However, though China and India have strategic and geopolitical problems, but promotion of trade and investment between the two countries can decrease tensions and unfriendly relations. Till 2017 Chinese trade volume to India was almost four folds than that of India's. But since 2018 followed by a trade agreement between the countries, the trade volume between the countries has been enhanced significantly and trade deficit has been narrowed dramatically in recent years. China and India have pursued various comprehensive and traditional strategies including bilateral treaties, foreign direct investment (FDI), constituting Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and Export Processing Zone (EPZ), regional cooperation and infrastructure development which have promoted business and investment activities. As the countries are the most populated and are rapidly growing economies, and they are confronting the same geopolitical and global challenges including border dispute, global terrorism, global climate change and large population. The Sino-Indian effective and flexible trade relations are very effective for socio-economic and political development. But border disputes, frequent regime changes in India, poor infrastructures, bureaucracy and corruption, absence of good governance, lack of good microeconomic policy and lack of good business climate are the major impediments to improve the relations. The study has summed up that pursuing the comparative advantage policy, comprehensive and effective bilateral treaties, free economic zones, joint venture trade, settling border disputes, good microeconomic policy, good governance, simplicity in doing business, and strong commitment to work jointly in resolving regional and global problems, which fruitfully can promote Sino-Indian geopolitical and geostrategic relations. Also India can follow the Chinese development model as to how transform a developing nation into an industrialized nation with egalitarianism and provincial justice.

South Asian and Indian Ocean have drawn global attention for geopolitical position and vast natural resources, thus both China and India are confronting each other in the region to establish their geopolitical influence and for expansion of their respective business interests. But bilateral trade and investment, regional connectivity, reducing trade imbalance and improving mutual trust can reduce tensions and conflicts between the two nations in the South Asian region.

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