

A Conceptual Analysis on the Border Disputes between India and China

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Abstract

The two Asian behemoths China and India as world powers play major roles in contemporary world politics. One of the main factor which time to time shapes up bilateral relations between these two behemoths is the decades old territorial disputes prevailing between them. Time to time these disputes have turned their relation into tensions. The main objective of this study is to present a conceptual analysis regarding afore said territorial disputes which influence two state`s diplomatic relations. To achieve aforesaid objectives qualitative approach has been adopted and secondary data is the main type of data obtained from various sources such as books, journal articles, newspapers, government records and other relevant documents available in both printed and electronic versions. Document analysis and theoretical analysis are used to analyze data. In document analysis documents are interpreted to give meaning and it collects available data related to the study and interprets them to find out specific issues. Concepts derive from literature review and theoretical analysis helps to develop broader understanding on those issues and collect new knowledge. The research findings conclude Chinese influence over the other entities seems inevitable with its rise as a global economic and military power which is perceived as a threat by India. India is also trying to match Chinese rise resulting suspicion and fear psychosis among one another`s achievements. Border disputes consider as one of the main factor which is shaping their bilateral relations.

Key words: India, China, Territorial disputes, Great power, Super power

1. Introduction

Every state has their own distinguished national interests, but some of interests are primarily common

for all the states irrespective of their power status in the system. The claim for sovereignty power, territorial integrity, and wellbeing of the citizens are such commonalities in the formation of any state`s national interest. There are other interests directly or indirectly relating to above mentioned. Based on their power status in the international system such interests of a state will vary in accordance with their high profile which they are experiencing in the international system. Thus, interests of a powerful state could range from primary interests to the maintenance of status quo as dominant state in global politics. These states could be identified as regional powers, Great powers or major powers and also the super powers according to their impact over the behavior of other states. Interests of these states will also be based on different concerns such as resources, geo strategic locations and etc. These states around the world use different types of strategies in order to achieve the specific interest. Power is one of the main concepts which determine their capability of fulfilling the task of achieving interests. If a state has an ability to control the behaviors of other states by using their capabilities such countries could be identified as powerful nations.

India and China are two Asian giants and also major players in international politics. In another way India is a regional hegemon in South Asia and China is the Asian hegemon¹ and Great power of the world. And also both are emerging Super powers of the world. Therefore, the disputes between these two giants have made South Asian, Asian and also the world politics more controversial. When achieving the national interests and security concerns, both states works with a Mutual distrust and lack of cooperation. Therefore both are locked in a traditional IR concept security dilemma. In effect territorial and border standoffs are one of the main factor which shape their relations.

¹ Leadership or dominance, especially by one state or social group over others (*Oxford dictionary*).

Thus it will be more helpful to have a profound understanding about the situation and interrelationship between concepts and each and every incident regarding the matter of territorial disputes.

2. Regional Power

Region is a particular geographical entity which consist two or more states. If a state possess economic, military, and political capabilities to influence a states in the region than any other state in the region, it could be considered as a regional power. Thus, through these power implications such regional powers always try to achieve their interests in regional level and also in the global level. Regional power always endeavor to become a world power. Since the end of the Second World War several states emerged as regional powers.

When we come to regional leadership, it focuses mainly on comparatively high military and economic capabilities. Regional powers can be distinguished by four pivotal criteria as claim to leadership, power, resources, employment of foreign policy instruments, and acceptance of leadership [1].

According to Østerud (1992), regional power is defined as a state which is geographically part of the respective region that has the ability to stand up against any coalition of other states in the region and a considerably powerful country which can highly influence regional affair [2]. Contrary to a middle power, a regional power can also be a great power on the global level in addition to its regional standing.

The global power changes time to time. No one can dominate the power in this world continuously. So when there is any transition of power between two major powers in global level it is a very critical turning point and their regional status and interest are also very important in this situation [3].

3. Great Power

Great power is a state who can employ its power directly on world to achieve its targets and influence the behavior of other nations. In order to consider a state as a Great power, a state must need great economic and military capabilities including high profile of diplomatic and soft power² implication abilities. Firstly this term has been used in post

² "soft power" - the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion (www.foreignaffairs.com)

napoleon war period with the involvement of great powers in the 'concert of Europe'³. In today world, United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia and China have gained their status as Great powers.

Flemes (2007)has stated, Great powers or major powers are those states that have great economic, military, political profile and through this great economic, political and military strength they are able to maintain power over world diplomacy. Under this situation other nations must be careful in taking actions against their opinions. Before taking any diplomatic or military action other states should greatly consider the responses of great powers. Basically, they have the ability to intervene militarily, almost in anywhere.

There is no universally accepted characteristics for a great power. But according to Hurrell (2006) there are four criteria characterizing a great power: First one is the capacity to contribute to the international order; secondly the internal cohesion to allow effective state action; Third one is the economic power, such as high levels of economic growth or a large market; and finally the military power, which is the ability to compete with other dominant powers in a conventional war [5].

As per (Mearsheimer: 2001), we are in a world in which there is little chance that the major powers will engage co-operatively in security competition [6]. Great powers fear each other and they always compete with each other for power. Every great power wants to increase their share in the world power. There are no status quo powers in the international system that are saved for the occasional hegemon that wants to maintain its dominating position over potential rivals.

4. Territorial disputes

Concerning the territorial disputes, first we need to identify the importance of a territory. A recognized state consist four main factors as territory, government, sovereignty, population. In effect territorial factor is one of the main concern of a state. Therefore states always try to protect their territories from internal and external threats. That can be identified as the 'Territorial integrity'.

³ The Concert of Europe or congress of Vienna was formed to maintain a balance of power and preserve the political and territorial integrity of European nations after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. It was established in 1815. Founding members included the United Kingdom, Russia, Austria and Prussia (www.reference.com)

Territorial dispute means a disagreement over the land or border between two or more states. When consider about the territory, its location is very important. If a territory is strategically located, it is a source of power. And also if there is any dispute over a territory, it is one main factor which lead the states in to a war. Over 50% of wars are based on territorial disputes. Therefore if a state is located in a strategical location with border disputes, particular state may happen to face complicated situations and different challenges [7].

Thus, there is no any doubt about importance of the territorial factor. As mentioned above if there is any dispute taking place between two countries based on a territory or its boundary, without any resolute solution, that may lead the both countries in to a war. Territories have particular meaning and value for particular state in particular historical and international settings.

Territorial disputes are extremely difficult to resolve peacefully and enduringly. The outcome of solutions taking over a border dispute are unpredictable, and political leaders are often unwilling to accept the risks of losing a territory [8].

Then territory is one of a main part of the country. Therefore, a state has a responsibility to protect its territory from internal and external threats. If there are any clashes between states based on any territorial factor they are really difficult to get solved through resolute solutions as it's a sensitive issue which is based on their sovereignty.

5. Bilateral Diplomacy (Relations)

Diplomacy is the art of managing international relations. There are various methods of handling diplomacy, such as negotiations, alliances, treaties, discussions etc. Hence, through the diplomacy nations conduct their relations in a peaceful manner without any violence in order to achieve their national interests⁴. Therefore 'Bilateral diplomacy' can be defined as the way of conducting relations between two sovereign states to achieve their national interests in a peaceful manner.

Diplomatic services are there to safeguard the interests of their respective countries when going to international. This is like promotion of political,

⁴ "The meaning of national interest is survival—the protection of physical, political and cultural identity against encroachments by other nation-states"—*Morgenthau*.

economic, cultural or scientific relations, as it does international commitment to defend human rights or the peaceful settlement of disputes.

When things go wrong in international affairs, as an example when something difficult is needed to be accomplished, we frequently find people talking about a failure of diplomacy. Because the diplomacy guides to gain own national interest in peaceful ways. Especially it covers national security concerns and it covers safety and survival of a state including political and economic benefits. Furthermore the nature of relation can change according to the situation.

Thus, under the context of Indo-China border disputes there were many diplomatic attempts to reduce the tension and solve the problems.

6. Security dilemma

The concept of Security dilemma was introduced by John Herz in 1951. According to Herz, security dilemma is "a structural notion in which the self-help attempts of states to look after their security needs tend, regardless of intention, to lead to rising insecurity for others as each interprets its own measures as defensive and measures of others as potentially threatening" [9].

If a certain state consider the strategies which are implemented by another state for the sake of their security as a threat and if that particular state also work out their security capabilities similarly as a response to the other, it creates a security dilemma between two states. In this manner, between two or more states, a circumstance like this can be taken place. The cold war between USA and Russia, the tension between North Korea and South Korea, First and second world wars are some much quoted examples for this.

Therefore if there is a security dilemma between two or more states, such types of states implement various measures to maintain their security. As an example those states are intended to heighten their security like by increasing its military strength, committing to use weapons or making alliances. This can lead other states to respond with similar measures, producing increased tensions that create conflict, even when no party really desires it.

Also Security dilemma is one of the main assumption of defensive realism. The theory of Defensive realism is a part of neorealism or structural realism which was presented by Kenneth waltz. As waltz stated the world has no common government and anarchic. This circumstance makes states to pay more attention towards the security of their states. So they always try

to maximize their security by improving their capabilities. As a result of that states become distrustful about each other. This mutual distrust can lead to a war.

7. Indo-China relations

When taking into consideration the context of Indo-China relations there are many literature done by different scholars in different areas. Under this literature review we could get some ideas about overall range of the study area. Following literature as determined by the researcher is based on the overall research question and developing construct.

According to Jain (2004) 'Flourishing relations' between India and China in the early 1950s were based on peaceful co-existence. But these withered and faded in an atmosphere of mutual hostility following the 1962 war between the two countries. As a result of the failure of accurate diplomatic relations, both nations engaged in a short war to conquer their border lines [10].

As a result of that, the war led to a fundamental transformation of India's defense policies, contributed to a major program of military modernization, and shattered long-held Indian hopes of amity with its behemoth northern neighbor. This controversial situation between two states highly occurred until 1990s'.

As per Hsu (2008), since the 1990s, there has been some progress in the development of China-India relationship. But the progress has been slow due to disagreements in the past and always having suspicious eye on each other. Several times two countries also had visits to rebuild up their relations [11].

But with the nuclear test of India in 1998 the tension were gradually increased. In the year 1998 India mentioned china as its main strategic enemy in a move to justify its nuclear test and this marked the deterioration of two country's bilateral relationship. Despite this situation however, bilateral discussions on border issues were continued.

Border issue has become an obstacle in the development of a friendly relationship between India and China. According to Goswami (2011) recent Chinese aggressiveness is a response to India's rising power status in the Asian regional order; a space that China covets as its own sphere of influence. Hence, China is engaging in balancing against India through territorial aggression and military prowess that privileges power projection against peer competitors

[12].

But when consider about the last decade Indo-China relations have turned into a significant level. China and India agreed to put aside border disputes to facilitate development in other fields, by enhancing cooperation in economy and trade [13]. Therefore, this economical factor is very important to establish firm relations among these Asian giants.

As emerging global powers, Power struggle is another major factor which exist between their relations. So with the above mentioned border disputes, it became a significant issue which shape their competition over global power. When comparing the capabilities and high profile advantages receiving by china, it makes them more potential to become a super power. However India also has an opportunity of achieving it. But china shows signs of gaining this position first. In order to develop its society and economy, there is a strong sense of directions coming from the Chinese leadership and this can be considered as an asset for a growing superpower.

As per Pardesi (2015), India has emerged as a great power because of the criteria followed by them in Southeast Asia. India's transformation from a South Asian power into one capable state can change the regional order in Asia. And also Pardesi emphasized the demand for the great power status and it is need the acceptance of other great powers and the regional states [14].

Hall (2012) stated India's 'emergence is very slow compared to the china in early days. But later India presented significant development economically and also gradually emerged as a powerful nation. Therefore, in near future it is possible that India becoming a powerful global power. But India needs more potentials and capabilities to achieve its status as a Great power [15].

As per Ingersoll & Frazier (2010) presented, India's impact is limited because of its failure to play leadership and custodianship roles. It does serve as a protector of the region from external threats, doing so through a unilateral, status quo, and reactive orientation. For India to be hegemonic, it would have to play these roles in a comprehensive manner [16].

According to Tarapore (2017) India has a slow emergence as a regional security actor. Hence, before becoming as a global power, India has to establish their position more stably in regional level. As one could identify India involve with disputes and rivalries among its neighbors like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. This led to mistrust about Indian leadership in the South Asian region. Therefore to become a

hegemonic power in the world India has to maintain its relations and also capabilities in a comprehensive manner [17].

In effect border standoffs around India with its territory has reached in to a more comprehensive level and one of the major challenge for its emergence. So India must need to find Absolute solution for those issues which prevail between its neighbors. India's global aspirations are fully contrasted by the enormous difficulties it faces both at home and outside of its borders.

That there are factors within and outside between China and India which still impacts their relations. For instance, border and Tibet issues are more prominent and recently, the water issue has also surfaced in the bilateral relations between China and India. These bilateral issues will not only effect on their present relations but have a negative impact on their future relations as well; it will also affect the process of their rise and the peace and stability in and outside of the region. Therefore, the better and absolute resolution for the border issues between India and China will lead to strong emergence as world powers and also will lead to the sustainable peace between two states.

Egreteau (2012) concludes on the importance to settle the territorial dispute, bridge the psychological gaps between the two societies, and he emphasized the importance of increase democratization trends in China, if a rivalry termination between the two rising powers is to be envisioned [18].

According to Gratius (2008) this century will belong to Asia, under the shared or contested leadership of China and India and, China is an emerging global power and probably a superpower of the future. As stated by Gratius both China and India are emerging as global powers. Therefore their present context has reached to a very crucial point in world politics. Because of their interests and competition [19].

Thus, those literature have touched the areas which consist various perspectives, ideologies, conceptual and theoretical backgrounds. Accordingly, here we could identify vast range of literature studies about indo-China border disputes and also the nature of their relations.

8. Conclusion

China emerged as a super power of the world and in last few decades it has increased its military and economics capabilities. China possess a strong position in its relations with other nations in global level. So influence of China on other countries and regions all

around the world is inevitable. Then their interests spread in vast range with their high profile of capabilities. In another hand India also giving their competition to reach the super power status in near future. So both states interests are seem to be alike. As a result of that both states are suspicious about each other and consider each other as a threat. When formulating Chinese interests and its implications, India consider it as a threat. But China explain their emergence is peaceful and does not has any threat to the peace of the world. Although when it's concern with India, they consider China as a threat to wellbeing of India and its interests because of the Chinese influences over its emergence. When conducting the relations with other states China has high profile of capabilities compared to India. And also China tries to hinder capabilities of India as India has become the major concern as a competitor with China in the path of becoming a super power. So China always make whatever the attempt they could to counter the emergence of India. The unresolved border disputes between China and India cause further demolition of two country's relations. Although at the beginning both states maintained good relations it get demolished due to aforesaid border disputes. As mentioned above, China as a great power and India as a regional power in order to have their sovereignty and territorial integrity follow competitive and challenging measures against one another. Thus time to time diplomatic relations between two countries were broken up due to this. Under this circumstance both states take account behavior of one state as a threat to their security. This is being considered as security dilemma when it comes to the international politics. These critical circumstances between two world powers fire up regional and international politics time to time.

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