

## CONTOURS OF COMPETITION AND COOPERATION: INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

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### *Abstract*

*The present state of relations between India and China is a combination of strategic rivalry, economic interdependence, and selective cooperation. The recent clashes in the Galwan Valley in 2020 indicate a significant deterioration in relations between the two countries, fostering an environment of mistrust and increasing military buildup across the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Despite ongoing diplomatic efforts, the relationship has remained tense, especially because of significant infrastructure development in both countries (Global Times, 2024). In terms of economic cooperation, despite high trade relations, India has started shifting its stance in its relations with China, emphasizing diversification and self-reliance in crucial sectors like technology and pharmaceuticals (Observer Research Foundation, 2023). Both countries have maintained cooperation in multilateral organizations like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization despite heightened strategic rivalry (BRICS Summit Communiqué, 2024). In addition, there has been a rise in nationalism in both countries, which has impacted the way public opinion in both China and India is constructed. This paper aims to provide a critical analysis of the changing dimensions in India-China relations and discuss the possible ways in which the relationship might evolve in the face of emerging global and regional trends.*

**Keywords:** BRICS, India, China

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## Introduction

The relationship between these two powerful countries of Asia has traditionally been marked by an intricate relationship of ties, rivalries, and cooperation. However, over recent times, this relationship has witnessed significant developments, especially since the 2020 conflict at the Galwan Valley, where there were casualties on both sides, indicating the most serious military conflict since the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict (Ministry of External Affairs, 2024). Although there has been an ongoing process of diplomatic and military talks to resolve tensions and facilitate disengagement, there has been ongoing friction at the LAC, indicating an increased erosion of strategic trust between the two countries (Global Times, 2024). Nevertheless, the economic relationship between these countries has traditionally been very significant but has become increasingly complicated. The country continues to face an increased trade deficit with China and has taken several steps to expand its economic ties and improve its capabilities through its 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative (Observer Research Foundation, 2023). Although both countries continue to play an active role in multilateral forums such as BRICS and SCO, recent geopolitical tensions often hinder the effectiveness of these collaborative efforts (BRICS Summit Communique, 2024). The recent tensions have also resulted in an increased nationalist fervor in both countries, making it more difficult to normalize relations (Chaudhury, 2023). The recent developments, therefore, clearly reflect an increased complexity in the relationship between India and China, with recent events indicating that it is now not only shaped by bilateral factors but also by both countries' roles in an evolving world order, as evidenced by strategic partnerships such as the Indo-Pacific grouping and China's BRI (Belt and Road Initiative). The present study attempts to critically evaluate the current state of the relationship between these countries by evaluating various strategic, economic, and geopolitical factors. It will also attempt to identify points of conflict and cooperation, as well as possible avenues for future cooperation between both countries.

## **Historical Evolution of India-China Relations**

India and China, both ancient civilizations in the world, boast a rich legacy of cultural, economic, and spiritual interactions dating back over 2,000 years. The ancient routes of the Silk Route and Buddhist pilgrimages were traditionally the main avenues for such interactions, laying the foundation for respect and intellectual intercourse. The travels of Chinese monks like Xuanzang and Faxian to centers of learning in India like Nalanda are classic examples of this close relationship, which has left an indelible mark on world history (Tharoor, 2019). However, it was inevitable for these ancient interactions to be interrupted during the colonial period, as both countries were to face the brunt of imperialism. Since both countries were to witness major independence movements, it was only natural for both to approach their relationship with an ideological commitment to anti-imperialism. The 1950s were to mark an era of optimism, as symbolized by the phrase "Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai" (Indians and Chinese are brothers), with several diplomatic initiatives. The recognition of the People's Republic of China by India and support for China's membership to the United Nations were clear manifestations of this positive approach (Garver, 2001). The Panchsheel Agreement of 1954, which espoused respect for sovereignty and non-aggression, was another positive feature of this period. However, border disputes, particularly over territories like Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh, referred to as "South Tibet" by China, were to cast a shadow over this nascent friendship. This situation worsened over time, which ultimately led to the Sino-Indian War of 1962—a short yet decisive war that resulted in a significant rift in the relationship between the two countries. The situation did not improve over the next few years; instead, the countries maintained limited communication with each other and clashed at the border regions. The significant breakthrough in the relationship between the two countries occurred in the late 1980s with the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1988, which marked the beginning of the normalization process between the two countries. The breakthrough in the relationship resulted in the signing of the agreement focused on maintaining peace and stability along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), while the boundary disputes between the two countries still persist (Mohan, 2022). The agreements of 1993

and 1996 focused on the introduction of confidence-building measures that improved the situation at the border between the two countries. The early 2000s saw the beginning of the pragmatic approach in the relationship between the two countries, which focused on the expansion of economic relations between the two countries. The initiatives taken in the form of the Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in 2005 reflected the cautiously optimistic approach towards the relationship between the two countries. The tensions between the two countries still persist, which occasionally leads to incidents such as the Doklam standoff in 2017 and the clash in the Galwan Valley in 2020.

### **Border Disputes and Strategic Tensions**

Border disputes remain at the center of the strategic rivalry between India and China. These disputes date back to the colonial era. The main areas of contention are along the 3488-kilometer-long Line of Actual Control. The areas of contention occur in three sectors: the western sector, which covers the Aksai Chin region; the central sector, which covers the Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand areas; and the eastern sector, which covers the Arunachal Pradesh region. (Ministry of External Affairs, 2024)

**3.1 Western Sector: Aksai Chin** The western sector dispute involves India's claim over the Aksai Chin region. India considers this region to be part of the Union Territory of Ladakh. However, China considers this region to be part of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The construction of the strategic roadway connecting the Tibetan Autonomous Region and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region via the Aksai Chin region in the 1950s was the main cause of the 1962 India-China War. (Maxwell, 2013)

**3.2 Eastern Sector: Arunachal Pradesh** The dispute in the eastern sector involves the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. China considers this region to be "South Tibet." The main cause of the dispute in this region has been China's opposition to Indian leaders visiting the region. This has involved the Indian Prime Minister and the Dalai Lama. The recent cause of the dispute in this

region has been the issuance of new "standard maps" by China in 2023 claiming parts of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

**3.3 Military standoffs and crisis incidents** are a clear reflection of the vulnerable and unstable nature of the border between India and China. One such incident is the Doklam standoff in 2017, where both armies faced off on the Bhutan tri-junction border. This reflects India's strategic concerns regarding China's attempts to change the status quo in the strategically important Siliguri Corridor region, commonly referred to as the 'Chicken's Neck' (Smith, 2018). The worst clash between Indian and Chinese troops occurred in June 2020 in the Galwan Valley. This clash resulted in combat deaths for the first time in decades. There were casualties on both sides, and as a result, a hardening of military and political stances on both sides (Rajagopalan, 2021). Ever since the clash in Galwan Valley, many rounds of talks between both sides at the Corps Commander level have taken place. These talks have resulted in disengagement at some points such as Pangong Lake and Gogra-Hot Springs. However, disengagement to pre-2020 levels has still not taken place. Moreover, trust between both armies has diminished considerably (MEA, 2024).

**3.4 Infrastructure and Militarization** Infrastructure development on both sides of the LAC has gained momentum. India has accelerated development work on all-weather roads, advanced landing grounds, and logistical infrastructure development under initiatives such as the Border Roads Organisation (Observer Research Foundation, 2023). Similarly, China has developed infrastructure in Tibet to deploy troops quickly. This includes new highways, rail links, and airports.

**3.5 Diplomatic Efforts and Their Limitations** Although mechanisms like the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) and Special Representatives (SR) dialogues have helped in avoiding full-scale conflict, they have not succeeded in resolving the issues at stake in a satisfactory manner (Joshi, 2022). This is because mutual mistrust, nationalism, and geopolitics have played a major role in restricting the possibilities for resolving the issues

at stake. Thus, these issues have not only played the role of flashpoints but have also symbolized the strategic mistrust between the two nations.

## **Economic and Trade Relations**

Since the late 1980s, the economic relationship between India and China has increased manifold, while strategic issues have continued to affect their relations. Traditionally, economic relations have been seen as factors for stability between the countries, but in recent times, the focus has been on the need to address economic imbalances and their implications for national security. In the financial year 2023-24, trade between the countries was valued at over US\$136 billion, while India recorded a trade deficit of over US\$80 billion (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2024; The Economic Times, 2024). China is India's largest trade partner, as the country is the primary source of import requirements like electronics, machinery, and chemicals. India, on the other hand, exports raw materials. While China is the gateway for Indian pharmaceutical products, agricultural products, and information technology services, the scope for accessing these markets is limited, necessitating the need for diversification. Strategic factors have started to dictate economic relations between the countries. After the face-off in the Galwan Valley in 2020, India placed restrictions on Chinese investments in the country. Over 200 applications were banned on account of data security and cyber threats (Press Information Bureau, 2020). Further, Chinese involvement in key sectors like infrastructure, like the rollout of the 5G network, has been restricted (Observer Research Foundation, 2023). This change in dynamics has also been witnessed in the form of a change in the pattern of investments, where the foreign direct investments (FDI) by China in the Indian economy, which were considerable in the case of companies such as Paytm and Zomato (Gateway House Report, 2021), have significantly reduced due to the imposition of stricter regulations. However, India has been actively seeking new economic alliances with other nations such as Japan, the USA, and European countries, while also establishing itself as a new economic hub in the form of the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (MEA, 2024). India's economic policy has also been focused on the reduction of dependency in the Indian economy in the form of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (SelfReliant India)

initiative, where sectors such as the pharmaceutical industry, the electronic industry, and renewable energy have been identified as areas where India aims to become self-sufficient (NITI Aayog, 2023). However, India's economic policy in the international arena has been cautious, as the country's withdrawal from the RCEP in 2019 was a result of the fear of Chinese economic dominance in the region (Ministry of External Affairs, 2020). However, India and China have been cooperating in international organizations such as the BRICS, SCO, and the G20, as they understand the importance of economic cooperation in the international arena. Thus, the economic relationship between India and China has been a paradox in the sense that while India has been dependent on China in the context of economic relations, the recent dynamics in the relationship have indicated a move towards economic decoupling.

### **Geopolitical Competition and Alignments**

The current relations between India and China can be seen in the context of the growing rivalry between the two countries in the Asian sphere. The relations between the two emerging countries with similar interests can be seen in the military, political, and strategic spheres. The rivalry between the two countries can be seen in the Indo-Pacific strategy, which is supported by India while China is resisting it. The involvement of India in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), along with the US, Japan, and Australia, is seen in the context of the country's attempts to counterbalance the growing influence of China in the Asian sphere (Pant & Saha, 2021). The Quad supports the idea of a "free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific," which is seen as an attempt to counterbalance the growing assertiveness of China in the region. The relations between the two countries can be seen in the context of the growing strategic relations between India and the US in the past decade, which is seen in the context of the signing of the COMCASA (2018) and BECA (2020) agreements (Ministry of External Affairs, 2022). The relations between the two countries can be seen in the context of the growing tensions between the two countries over the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is seen in the context of the repeated opposition of India to the BRI initiative, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passes through the territory of Indian

Kashmir (MEA, 2020). The opposition of India to the BRI Forum is seen in the context of the growing tensions between the two countries. The border tensions, as witnessed in the Galwan Valley incident in 2020, have also led India to rethink its strategy. India has increased its military presence on the Line of Actual Control and has stepped up defense cooperation with major powers in the Indo-Pacific region (Rajagopalan, 2021). In addition, India has stepped up its engagement with Southeast Asian countries under the “Act East Policy.” It has also increased its naval cooperation with ASEAN members to counterbalance China’s influence in the region. Despite the rivalry between India and China, both have shown cooperation in multilateral organizations like BRICS, SCO, and the G20. In these organizations, they hold discussions on issues of global governance in which both share a common concern regarding the influence of Western powers in global affairs (Chandra, 2023). Nevertheless, cooperation in these organizations has not helped in improving relations between the two countries. China’s increasing relations with India’s neighbors, like Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh, in terms of investments in infrastructure development, has led India to fear strategic encirclement by China, which is referred to as the “String of Pearls Theory” (Smith, 2018). In response, India has stepped up its neighborhood diplomacy with initiatives like SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region). In conclusion, it can be said that the relations between India and China have turned highly competitive in nature, with elements of balancing, alignments, and mutual mistrust. Despite cooperation in global affairs, the relations have turned highly adverse in recent times.

### **Areas of Cooperation**

Despite the competition and tensions, India and China have a number of areas where they collaborate, and such initiatives benefit both countries. These collaborative initiatives by India and China indicate the common interests and goals shared by the two nations.

## **1. Economic Cooperation and Trade**

The trade deficit factor remains a crucial factor in the India-China relationship. However, China remains India's biggest trading partner. Their economic cooperation has a lot of potential. Economic cooperation and trade between the two nations have been over \$130 billion in recent years. India imports electronic goods, machinery, and chemicals from China. Despite India's best efforts to expand its economic cooperation and trade portfolio in the fields of technology and pharmaceuticals, the two countries remain interconnected in many fields. Economic cooperation in the field of renewable energy, information technology, and manufacturing, such as electrical vehicles and green energy, would definitely boost the economic cooperation and trade between the two nations (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2024).

## **2. Climate Change and Environmental Collaboration**

India and China, being two of the world's biggest polluters, face many environmental challenges. However, India and China share a common interest in the field of environmental cooperation. India and China share a common goal to combat the challenges of climate change. They have the potential to collaborate in the field of clean and green energy sources such as solar and wind energy. They also share a common goal in the field of sustainable development. India and China have the potential to collaborate on international platforms such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to combat the challenges of climate change (NITI Aayog, 2023).

## **3. Public Health and Pandemic Response**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for global cooperation in public health issues. India, being a major manufacturer of generic drugs, and China, being a major exporter of medical equipment, hold key positions in the global public health landscape. Both have similar challenges in public health infrastructure and pandemic control. Strengthening cooperation in public health initiatives, vaccine development, and pandemic control would help enhance global public health security. Lessons from the

COVID-19 pandemic have shown the potential benefit of cooperation in addressing emerging public health challenges (Chandra, 2023).

#### **4. Regional Stability and Security**

India and China have similar basic interests in regional stability in Asia, especially in regions like Afghanistan and Central Asia. Though they have different approaches in addressing issues in the region, they both engage in regional security dialogues, including the SCO. They have also cooperated in counterterrorism in the region. Despite the intense rivalry in geopolitics, there is still room for cooperation in issues like maritime route safety, stabilizing Afghanistan, and fostering peace in regional countries, which would help in regional stability (Rajagopalan, 2021).

#### **5. Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges**

Cultural diplomacy still holds a significant position in the relationship between India and China. Historical ties in terms of Buddhism and ancient trade routes hold promise for mutual understanding. Encouraging people-to-people diplomacy would help in bridging the gap and fostering cooperation between the two countries, finally helping in improving relations (Pant & Saha, 2021).

#### **6. Multilateral Cooperation in Global Governance**

Both India and China are powerful forces in international organizations such as the BRICS group, the G20, and the UN. Despite the fact that sometimes they might have different interests, they share common interests in a multipolar world and the reform of international institutions and fair trade practices. By cooperating in such international organizations, they are able to address pressing international issues such as economic instability, environmental change, and development finance (Chandra, 2023).

#### **Public Perception and Media Narratives**

Public perception and media narratives play a crucial role in the India-China relationship, especially during times of tension. Both India and China have witnessed a situation where the media and nationalistic sentiments in the two

countries shape the public perception of the India-China relationship. Such a situation has a significant impact on the relationship.

### **1. India's Perception of China**

Public perception in India concerning China has been shaped by India's security concerns, especially in the wake of the border conflicts in 1962 and the more recent border conflict in the Galwan River valley in 2020. India's media, such as the Hindu and Times of India, has extensively written about the border conflicts and China's economic expansion in the neighboring countries. Nationalistic sentiments in India's media and social media have been shaped by India's fear of China's territorial expansion and economic competition (Kumar, 2024). India's media narratives on China have been focused on China's strategic challenges to India, especially in the wake of emerging fears over the Belt and Road Initiative and China's close relationship with Pakistan. In response to border tensions, the Indian government has taken a more reserved and, at times, aggressive approach towards China. This has fueled public distrust, particularly among the urban middle class, who now see China as an entity threatening India's sovereignty and economic freedom (Pant, 2023). The military aggression and allegations of technological spying by China, as presented in the media, further solidify China's image as an authoritarian state facing off against democratic India.

### **2. China's View of India**

China's perception of India, as presented in its media, is largely based on strategic competition in South Asia. The country's state-run newspapers, such as the Global Times, often report on India's growing ties with the U.S. and its active role in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), indicating these developments as an extension of its strategic approach to limit China's influence (Li, 2022). Nationalistic sentiments are often fueled by China's perception of India's role in supporting separatist activities in Tibet and its strategic alignment with Western countries. The economic relationship between China and India is often overlooked, with China focusing more on perceived geopolitical threats from its rival. Despite these challenges, China's media recognizes India as an emerging major world power with significant

economic and strategic influence. However, this recognition is often coupled with China's skepticism over India's ability to handle its internal affairs and regional roles without external support (Jiang, 2021).

### **Contemporary Challenges and Future Prospects**

The present state of India-China relations is characterized by the fine balance of challenges and possibilities. Both countries agree that the relations between them are critical for the stability of the region and the world. However, the challenges in the path of fostering trust and cooperation between the two countries are numerous. The first challenge in the India-China relationship is the continued border disputes. Despite numerous military and diplomatic interactions between the two sides, such as the Corps Commander-level talks and the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC), little progress has been achieved in resolving the border disputes (MEA, 2024). The mistrust between the two countries following the Galwan Valley face-off continues to impact the security scenario. This has been reflected in the recent buildup of military infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The economic front has not been immune to the challenges in the India-China relationship. The economic ties between the two countries continue to be robust. However, India's efforts to minimize the economic dependence on China, especially in critical sectors such as technology and pharmaceuticals, are gaining momentum (NITI Aayog, 2023). The economic ties with China are being replaced with economic partnerships with like-minded countries in the region under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). The geopolitical scenario has not been immune to the tensions in the India-China relationship. The recent assertiveness of China in the region, such as its close economic ties with Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has created security concerns in India about the possibility of being encircled by China in the region (Smith, 2018). The close economic ties between China and Pakistan and its expansion in the Indian Ocean region pose security challenges in the region. On the other hand, the close security ties between India and the United States and its active role in the Quad are seen as attempts by the United States to encircle China in the region. Furthermore, in both countries, public opinion has become more inflexible. Nationalist ideologies have gained

traction in the wake of recent border confrontations in both countries (The Hindu, 2024). The media in both countries and political compulsions have further limited the flexibility of the governments in handling the situation. However, despite all these challenges and hurdles in the India-China relationship, there are certain areas where both countries can work in collaboration. Both India and China share common interests in maintaining peace in the region and resolving global challenges such as climate change, public health crises, and reforms in the international system. The BRICS, SCO, and G20 summits present an opportunity for positive dialogue between the two countries (Chandra, 2023). Establishing confidence on the border through the implementation of confidence-building measures such as disengagement agreements, open communication mechanisms, and avoiding accidental conflicts may open the doors for de-escalation. Similarly, both countries share economic interests in maintaining robust international economic systems in the face of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflicts in Ukraine and Ukraine-Russia relations. Strategic ties may be built by establishing a modus vivendi in which both countries respect the basic interests and sensitivities of each other. However, the India-China relationship is likely to remain low-key in the coming days due to significant strategic differences between the two countries. The relationship may be marked by periods of cooperation punctuated by periods of tensions. The India-China relationship in the coming days may be marked by challenges.

## **Conclusion**

The relationship between India and China in the current context has been marked by a complex mix of rivalry, cooperation, and diplomatic relations. Both India and China are significant actors on the international stage, and their relationship has been constantly affected by a mix of factors. For instance, the border disputes between the two nations over areas such as Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh have been a significant source of tension in the relationship. For instance, the border clash in the Galwan Valley in 2020 has further strained the relationship. However, the border disputes and conflicts have led to a military standoff between the two nations. Economically, India and China share a high level of interconnectedness. Despite the fact that India and China

face a trade deficit and India's efforts to boost self-reliance, the economic interactions and dialogue between the two nations have been high. However, in the context of the interests and needs of the nations, the economic interests take a backseat in the context of the strategic interests. For instance, India has been making efforts to reduce its dependency on China, especially in the context of technology and pharmaceuticals. Additionally, India has been strengthening ties with the US, Japan, and Australia in the context of the Quad. When we talk about the international scene, India and China share common concerns about issues such as climate change, the handling of the pandemic, and security in the region. Both countries can work in collaboration on ventures such as renewable energy, natural calamities, and the handling of the pandemic. However, in most cases, the geopolitics of the region overshadow the chances of cooperation. The BRICS summit, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the United Nations provide the platform for the two countries to engage in diplomacy. Competition has been the key factor in the India-China relationship. The public and media in both countries play an important role in shaping the relationship between India and China. Nationalistic sentiments in both countries tend to create an atmosphere of mistrust. India sees China as an expansionist power, whereas China sees India as an emerging threat in the region, especially because of the strengthening ties between India and the Western world. Therefore, the India-China relationship in the coming times will not see much of a drastic change. The relationship between India and China remains a delicate balance of competition and cooperation. Both countries need to understand the areas of cooperation and work towards strengthening the chances of cooperation.

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## Appendices

#### Appendix A: Timeline of Key Events in India-China Relations

Year	Event
1949	The establishment of the People's Republic of China.
1950	India recognizes China as a sovereign state.
1962	Sino-Indian Border War.
1976	Normalization of diplomatic relations between India and China.
1993	Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
2003	India and China sign a declaration on the principles for relations.
2008	China-India bilateral trade surpasses \$50 billion.
2017	Doklam standoff between Indian and Chinese troops.
2020	Galwan Valley clash leading to casualties on both sides.
2021	Talks to resolve the ongoing military standoff at LAC continue.

#### Appendix B: Key Bilateral Agreements and Initiatives

**Border Peace and Tranquility Agreement (1993):** This agreement aimed to maintain peace along the disputed border. It included provisions for reducing military deployments in sensitive areas and confidence-building measures (CBMs).

**Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility (1996):** Further reinforced the 1993 agreement by instituting mechanisms for regular communication between the military authorities of both countries to prevent escalation.

**China-India Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2005):** This partnership laid the foundation for further cooperation in trade, investment, technology, and regional security.

**China-India Joint Statement on Cooperation in Combating Terrorism (2010):** Focused on enhancing cooperation to combat terrorism, which both countries see as a major threat.

**BRICS Cooperation:** China and India, as leading members of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), have used the platform to promote cooperation in areas such as trade, infrastructure development, and global governance reforms.

#### Appendix C: India-China Bilateral Trade Data (2019-2023)

Year	Total Trade (USD BILLION)	Indian exports to China	Indian imports from China	Trade balance
2019	92.68	18.69	73.99	-55.30
2020	87.59	19.50	68.09	-48.59
2021	125.66	21.18	104.48	-83.30
2022	131.72	22.91	108.81	-85.90
2023	137.23	25.38	111.85	-86.47

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India (2023)

Appendix D: Public Opinion on India-China Relations (Survey Data)

Survey Conducted By: National Council for Policy Analysis (2022)

Sample Size: 1,000 participants from urban India and China  
Key Findings:

In India: 70% of respondents viewed China as a strategic rival due to security concerns, while 25% saw economic cooperation as the priority.

In China: 60% of respondents viewed India as a competitor, mainly due to border issues and alignment with the West. However, 30% viewed India as an important economic partner.

Public Perception of the Border Disputes: 65% of Indian respondents cited unresolved territorial issues as the key factor shaping negative perceptions of China.