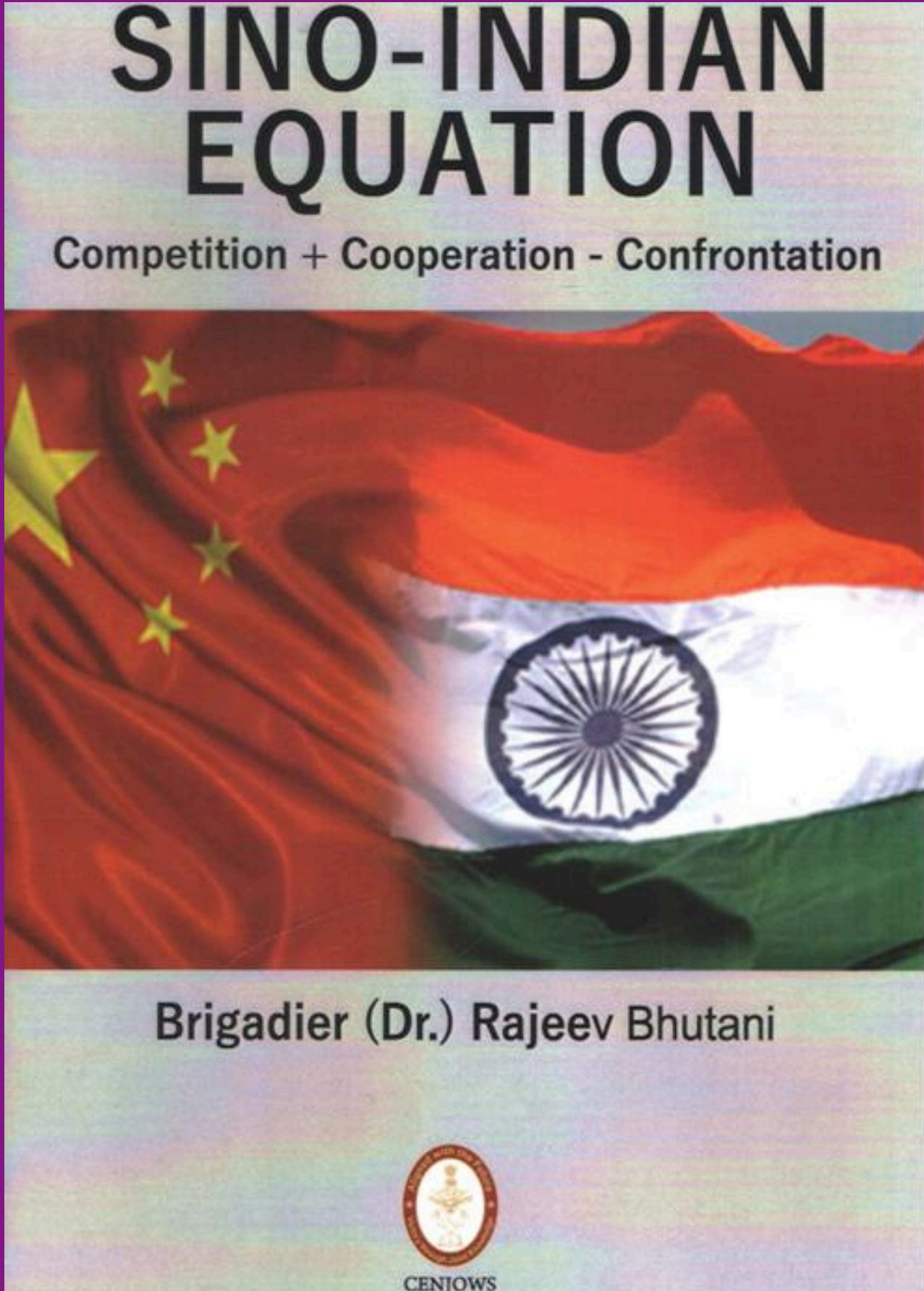


**Sino-Indian Equation (Competition + Cooperation - Confrontation)**

*By Brigadier (Dr.) Rajeev Bhutani*



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India-China relations have been through waves of unpredictability since the establishment of the two nations in the region, with border disputes, trade disparities and the spread of Chinese hegemony in South Asia. In this book, Brigadier (Dr.) Rajeev Bhutani draws a parallel between scientific equations in chemistry to the geopolitical link between the two Asian giants, having been in a state of equilibrium since the inception of communist China in 1949. This work dives deep into the political, economic and social linkages of the Chinese involvement in the global stage at large, and the implications it has for India's footprint to demonstrate themselves as a world power. The book is divided into 5 parts, with each chapter providing extensive insight into every single aspect of Sino-Indian relations and their subsequent impact on the other regional countries.

Starting with what is considered the most crucial part of our relations, the border dispute, the author reverts back in time to the beginning of the conflict along with the return of peace, calling the border as 'the longest-disputed. The invasion of Tibet was seen as a major turning point in Sino-Indian relations, with the removal of the historical buffer and subsequent 1962 conflict, the consequences were seen in the form of the evolving Indian foreign policy, which vastly sped up with the 1965 Indo-Pak war. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) was seen to be increasing their outright assertion into Indian territories, the upcoming chapter explains in key details about the progression in various aspects of the border disputes with the change in government leadership in both nations, coming to an end with the Doklam standoff in 2017.

The section continues with China's Indian Ocean approach and the PLAN's force projection with submarines, escort fleets and ships for what was disguised as routine exercises but in reality, were deployment tests in the region. The string of pearls strategy is comprehensively researched and detailed in this part, with several countries finding mention as being one of the pearls in the Chinese agenda. It further gets spelled out with the establishment of the first Chinese overseas military base in Djibouti. The country's strategic encirclement of India is shown in its Belt and Road Initiative (OBOR) in every South Asian country, with Gwadar and Hambantota ports in Pakistan and Sri Lanka respectively, the heavy infrastructure contracts with nations including Myanmar & Nepal and nifty techniques to deceive them into its infamous debt trap. Water is revealed to be another root of friction, with the Tibet rivers and the unrestricted building of dams at the centre of it.

The strategic gameplay of trade relations between the two rapidly developing economies proves to be a major point of contention, with the trade deficit being widely regarded as tilting heavily towards China, with the country financing Indian ventures such as Paytm and MakeMyTrip. The chapter goes on to explain the sectors in which China and India take their respective leads, with emphasis on the fact that India largely supplies raw materials as compared to fully finished goods. China exports while also expounding on the highly imbalanced world agricultural trade and the measures to be taken to bring down the deficit, while simultaneously preventing a full-blown trade war.

As we go further into the book, the areas of cooperation come into place between India and China while touching upon topics like climate change and the participation of both the nations in multinational organisations, where Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has been underlined due to Central Asian countries being a core part of Sino- Indian relations. Competition comes in the form of energy security, with Latin American countries like Venezuela and Brazil, and South Asian nations such as Myanmar and Bangladesh becoming a ground for battle. ASEAN nations form a core part of this rivalry, with fast-growing GDPs and population, it attracts attention with its cheap labour force and openness to trade. India's 'Act East' Policy along with China's intrusion into the South China sea allow for ASEAN nations to look towards India as an attractive alternative to reduce its dependency on the Red Dragon.

India-China relations in South Asia extend beyond mere trade strifes, and are deeply embedded in investments in infrastructure development, the need to influence domestic markets, and control the regional strategic trade routes, with India's refusal to allow China to be a full member of SAARC and the ensuing emergence of BIMSTEC, China has also failed to a great degree in spreading its soft power in the region, relying solely on giving loans and investing in infrastructure. In contrast to this, the author maps out India's soft power using media, historical ties, and cultural aspects.

A new arena of strategic competition, the space race reflects their aspirations for both geopolitical influence and technological superiority in developing fields, however China's space missions can also be viewed in light of its intention to conceivably evolve space weapons objectives. India's ISRO has achieved great feats with low budgets, with India becoming the first nation to enter into Mars' orbit in its inaugural shot.

The author having examined the various arenas of cooperation and competition between the two, now comes to the strategic measures India has taken to counter Chinese influence, with steps towards maritime domain, including but not limited to establishing political relations with ASEAN nations who lie at the heart of the Indo-Pacific, India also asserts its concept of 'strategic autonomy', being continued since the end of World War II. These initiatives also expand upon regional connectivity projects, multilateral engagements in order to maintain smooth links across the region, and much more.

In conclusion, the book "Sino-Indian equation: Competition + Cooperation - Confrontation" provides an engaging and comprehensive examination of one of Asia's most important bilateral ties. Spanning from historical agreements to contemporary constraints, this work explains in detail the multifaceted relationship between the two countries in a rapidly changing global scenario, with the act of balancing becoming crucial in maintaining their presence in various nations around the region. The author's prediction of Sri Lanka practically being trapped under debts came true when it experienced an economic fallout in 2019, the worst the island nation has ever experienced since its inception. The Galwan valley clash started a new trajectory, being a development after the publication of the book, Brigadier Bhutani has produced an extremely comprehensive and robust framework for scholars, students and laymen to understand the complexities of Sino-Indian Relations in an uncomplicated and clear manner.

**Reviewed By**  
**Ms Tarasha Gupta**  
**Research Intern, CENJOWS**