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China's Economic Statecraft towards South Asia: Concerns and Prospects

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Abstract: This paper aims to study China's economic statecraft in South Asia, as it appears to be an integral part of China's strategy to advance its commercial interests as well as expand its political influence. The study also focuses on economic statecraft, which means the use of economic might for strategic objectives. More specifically, economic statecraft is understood to be a state-market nexus. In addition, the study investigates the institutional arrangements and multilateral mechanisms that China has adopted to achieve its grand strategy. These are major components of Chinese economic diplomacy, or, in other words, using the economy to promote politics. Regarding China's economic diplomacy, two approaches were also explored. Firstly, Chinese policy is to use diplomacy to achieve economic goals and benefits. Secondly, Chinese policy is to use economic means in pursuit of political objectives. Thus, the study explores China's growing economic expansion and political influence, which have become important tools in Chinese foreign policy. This leads to addressing one vital question: under what circumstances can China's economic dominance be translated into political dominance, and whether this will result in a new dynamic in the world? Qualitative approach and secondary data used to address the research questions.

Keywords: Economic Statecraft, South Asia, Economic Diplomacy

Introduction

In recent years, the increasing economic power of China has emerged as a pivotal concern within the realm of international politics. Indeed, the exponential growth of Chinese foreign investment has garnered significant scholarly interest. However, the region of South Asia encompasses various countries, and China's economic statecraft towards each of these countries may entail distinct methods and objectives. This approach will capitalise on the ongoing research efforts by conducting a comparative analysis of these strategies instead of treating them as a single entity. China has distinct methods towards India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. India has demonstrated a clear resistance to the economic influence of China after the fatal confrontation that occurred at their shared border on June 15, 2022.

In relation to Nepal, the foreign policy pursued by the Chinese government has exhibited a greater emphasis on strategic considerations than ideological or emotional factors. The existence of a 1,690-kilometre open border between India and Nepal has fostered a more intimate relationship between the two countries compared to that between China and Nepal.

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China demonstrates a high level of awareness regarding the veracity of the prevailing circumstances. The diplomatic ties between Nepal and China mostly revolve around capital-to-capital interactions, with China always prioritising stability over immediate considerations of cost and benefit in their bilateral relationship with Nepal. Once more, an examination of the potential impact of China's rise on the current global order can be enhanced by analysing its interactions with the neighbouring region as a valuable framework. Will the engagement shift towards a normative perspective focused on conflict resolution, or will it persist in approaching the region with a unilateral, self-interested, commercial, and strategic stance? Will it begin to adopt a perspective that emphasizes norms and dispute resolution? The ongoing territorial disputes between India and its neighboring countries, Pakistan and China, exacerbate the country's already delicate geopolitical circumstances. Despite the extensive number of rounds of border negotiations conducted with China, it appears unlikely that a full deal will be achieved. Furthermore, intermittent instances of Chinese military intrusions into Indian-administered regions have contributed to heightened political tensions between the respective capitals. India expresses apprehension regarding a substantial element of contemporary Sino-Pakistani relations, namely the augmented trilateral alliance involving Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China. China is strategically growing its influence in the region by implementing its forward-thinking "New Silk Road" programme and providing economic and development help to Pakistan. Moreover, Beijing is increasingly engaging in initiatives commonly known as "conflict management" throughout the region. These activities encompass the role of a mediator between the Afghan government and the Taliban, as well as the organization of trilateral strategic conversations, including Afghanistan and Pakistan.

China's extensive network of partnerships and coalitions with regional governments underscores the increasing strategic significance of the South Asian area and its adjacent maritime spaces. At first glance, the nature of these partnerships appears to rely on interdependence; yet, it is the enduring political, economic, and strategic interests of the involved parties that ultimately motivate their formation and continuation. The use of economic diplomacy by the Chinese government as a strategic tool within its foreign policy framework has become increasingly indispensable. It is evident that Beijing has extended significant incentives in the form of aid and investment to several developing nations in South Asia. Additionally, China has been strengthening its trade ties with the countries of South Asia through the implementation of its 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) initiative.

There has been extensive discourse, conjecture, and even concern among international analysts regarding China's utilization of economic statecraft and its assertive exercise of hegemonic influence. However, there has been a notable dearth of comprehensive examination pertaining to the underlying motivations, contextual factors, and efficacy of these alleged statecraft endeavors. China's political-military realism assigns considerable significance to Bangladesh as a key actor within the South Asian region. The establishment of a strategic partnership with Dhaka provides Beijing with an enhanced capacity to restrict the operations of Indian military troops. The evident nature of the close relationship between the two nations is underscored by their frequent political engagements and the heightened level of military collaboration they engage in. The principle of fostering friendship with all and harboring no animosity towards any is a fundamental tenet enshrined in the Constitution of Bangladesh. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh has embraced a diplomatic approach that aligns with this guiding philosophy. Nevertheless, Bangladesh's dependence on China has escalated due to their efforts to accomplish this objective. Both nations have pledged to enhance their collaboration in order to uphold their enduring and steadfast bilateral relationship, characterized by long-standing friendship, equality, and reciprocal advantages.

The economic diplomacy of China has undergone changes in reaction to the modified domestic dynamics within the country. China's burgeoning economy and enhanced material capabilities have given rise to a novel perspective on economic diplomacy within the country. During the Cold War, the field of economics was required to priorities the objectives of foreign policy, but during the period of reform and opening up, foreign policy was obliged to priorities economic interests. In the contemporary global landscape, the interconnection and intricacy of economic and diplomatic concerns have escalated, hence demanding a foreign policy approach that concurrently pursues economic and diplomatic interests. Consequently, economic diplomacy, in contrast to its conventional and prudent methodology, necessitates a more assertive attitude when pioneering novel initiatives. The inclusion of a citation is necessary to support the information provided. The inclusion of a citation is necessary to support the information provided. Nevertheless, despite the growing significance of economic collaboration, there exists a dearth of scholarly investigation elucidating China's economic statecraft vis-à-vis the global community and South Asia. Prior scholarly investigations have predominantly focused on China's economic policies in connection to the global context, with only a limited number of noteworthy deviations. There is a lack of scholarly study that specifically examines China's use of diverse soft power instruments as a means of implementing economic statecraft on a global scale. As a result, the arguments put forth in these studies often exhibit a tendency towards excessive specificity, posing a challenge for scholars to grasp the broader scope of China's economic statecraft.

According to Mearsheimer (2001), the continual growth of China's economy may lead to its pursuit of dominance in Asia, akin to the manner in which the United States exerts its influence over the Western Hemisphere. Golley and Ingle (2018) have observed that China intends to leverage its One Belt, One Road program as a means to exert dominance over the area. Similarly, Glaser (2018) has discerned China's intentions towards its periphery and neighboring states. In 2013, President Xi Jinping of China reiterated China's overarching strategic objective of fostering robust relationships with neighboring nations, emphasizing the need to engender a sense of security and facilitate their developmental progress. It has been observed that, subsequent to assuming state power, the President of China implemented a shift in their strategic approach. The individual indicated that China intends to uphold a favorable attitude towards neighboring nations while simultaneously asserting its unwavering stance on matters pertaining to territorial sovereignty and economic interests. Additionally, the author suggested that China will use a dual strategy, utilizing both incentives and punishments, in order to dissuade states from following policies that are detrimental to China's interests. Chinese scholars have employed the term "economic diplomacy" to encompass two distinct concepts. Firstly, it refers to the utilization of diplomatic strategies to attain economic aims and advantages. Secondly, it pertains to the application of economic methods to pursue political objectives, which is closely associated with the concept of statecraft.

Research Question

1. What are the strategies provisioned within the model of economic statecraft of China that outline for gaining economic power in the world?

2. To what extent, Chinese economic statecraft cohesively promotes the country's economic growth and development for escalating influences on the South Asian Countries?

4. Why China's strategies incur different outcomes in different countries of South Asia?

Methodology

The research design followed qualitative approach and secondary data used for this research. Secondary data collected from books, journals, newspaper reports, articles. Literatures consulted to construct the theoretical framework of economic statecraft and to build normative arguments for the research.

The study attempts to analyze the apparatus and dimensions of economic statecrafts of the government of China in order to understand the implication of economic diplomacy on South Asian countries. In this regard, Google Scholar online directory and Scopus followed to find referred books and journals, documents and legal stipulations related to different tools of economic statecraft. National and international newspapers, policy papers, legal provisions related to Chinese economic statecraft towards the world also consulted.

Theoretical Concept of Economic Statecraft

The process of forming a nation's economic policy in a way that supports the nation's interests, as well as the use of a range of different strategies, both positive and negative, to exert political or economic influence over other nations, is referred to as economic statecraft. Baldwin is credited with originating the concept of economic statecraft, a notion that swiftly garnered favour among political leaders. Baldwin's literary contributions exemplify the efficacy of state actors in exerting worldwide influence and authority by employing economic mechanisms within a realist framework. The proponent formulated the theory of economic statecraft with the aim of examining the manner in which a country formulates its policies to exert influence on another nation. The concept of "economic statecraft" encompasses all endeavors undertaken by foreign policymakers to exercise economic influence over other actors in the global arena. A study conducted by Ahuja and Kapor (2018) examined China's economic statecraft and determined that China strategically utilizes specific economic instruments to achieve both geopolitical and economic goals. Furthermore, they demonstrated the impact of commercial development on China's economic strategy.

Baldwin (1985) delineated many methodologies that could be employed in the practice of economic statecraft. Embargoes, boycotts, tariff escalation or discrimination, revocation of most-favorable nation (MFN) status, suspension of aid, and import-export restrictions are among the primary mechanisms of economic statecraft. In the context of the Belt and Road Initiatives, China is employing many constructive methods of economic statecraft. These include granting most-favored nation status, reducing tariffs, facilitating direct purchases, offering subsidies for exports and imports, and providing aid and investment guarantees, among other measures.

Findings and analysis

Chinese economic policy is varying from country to country. Some political scientist or economist considered it as a business model. In that case, some countries like to receive the benefit of their investment and some countries fall in debt trap due to mismanagement and corruption. In this phase I analyzed South Asian countries position after getting Chinese loan or how China is getting benefit and making influence in South Asian countries by using economic statecraft policy.

China’s Economic Statecraft Towards South Asia

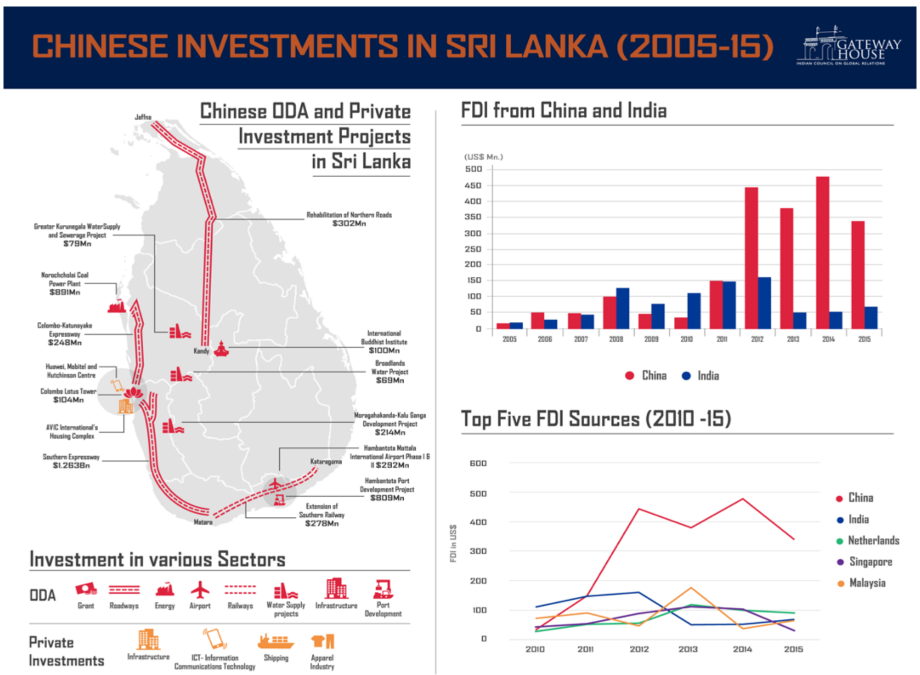
This paper examines the institutional structures and multilateral procedures employed by China in pursuit of its overarching strategic objectives. The following elements are key components of Chinese economic diplomacy, which can be defined as the utilization of economic means to advance political objectives. This paper examines two methods of China's economic diplomacy. First and foremost, the Chinese government uses diplomatic strategies to attain economic objectives and advantages. Additionally, the Chinese government uses economic strategies to achieve its political goals. The present paper examines the phenomenon of China's expanding economic growth and political influence, highlighting their significance as strategic instruments within the framework of Chinese foreign policy. This inquiry pertains to the circumstances under which China's economic supremacy may result in political supremacy and the potential implications this may have on the global landscape.

Nevertheless, the region of South Asia has a diverse array of countries, and China's economic statecraft towards each of these nations may necessitate distinct techniques and objectives. This approach will capitalize on the ongoing research efforts by conducting a comparative analysis of these strategies instead of treating them as a single entity. China has several techniques in its relations with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. India has exhibited a clear response in opposition to the economic influence of China following the fatal confrontation that occurred on June 15 along their shared border. The foreign policy of China towards Nepal has exhibited a greater emphasis on strategic considerations rather than being driven by ideological or emotional factors. Firstly, it is worth noting that China does not possess the same level of interpersonal connection with Nepal as India has, mostly due to the presence of a 1,690 km open border between India and Nepal. China demonstrates a clear understanding of the prevailing situation. The bilateral relationship between Nepal and China mostly revolves around capital-to-capital diplomacy, with China consistently placing a higher emphasis on stability than short-term calculations of loss and gain. Once more, China's involvement with the region might be regarded as a valuable model for conjecture regarding the potential impact of its ascent on the global order. Will the engagement shift towards a normative and conflict-resolution perspective, or will it persist in its unilateral, self-interested approach to the region, driven by commercial and geopolitical considerations? The presence of territorial disputes between India, Pakistan, and China remains a persistent source of insecurity inside the Indian nation. Despite the occurrence of 18 rounds of border discussions with China, a full agreement has yet to materialize. Furthermore, intermittent intrusions by the Chinese military into Indian-controlled territory have exacerbated political tensions between the two capitals. An aspect of the current Sino-Pakistani relationship that concerns India is the enhanced trilateral collaboration between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China. China is progressively expanding its regional influence through the implementation of its innovative "New Silk Road" strategy, alongside providing economic and developmental aid to Pakistan. Beijing is progressively involved in regional "conflict management" endeavors, assuming the role of mediator between Kabul and the Taliban and coordinating trilateral strategic engagements involving Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The strategic significance of the physical region comprising South Asia and its adjacent marine areas is increasingly recognized by China, as evidenced by its extensive network of partnerships and alliances with neighboring countries. The apparent dynamics of these interactions are seemingly rooted in interdependence; however, they are fundamentally propelled by enduring political, economic, and strategic interests. The use of economic diplomacy has emerged as a significant instrument within the framework of China's foreign policy. It has been observed that Beijing has offered substantial incentives in the form of aid and investment to numerous developing nations in South Asia. Moreover, China has been augmenting its commercial connections with South Asian countries through its 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) plan.

The topic of China's utilization of economic statecraft and its perceived hegemonic influence has generated considerable discussion, conjecture, and concern among international observers. However, there is a noticeable dearth of comprehensive examination of the underlying motivations, contextual factors, and actual efficacy of these alleged statecraft strategies. Bangladesh holds a significant position among the South Asian states in terms of China's political-military realism. The strategic cooperation between Beijing and Dhaka offers an additional means for Beijing to exert influence over the Indian military. This is apparent from the constant political interactions and heightened military collaboration observed between the two nations. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh has embraced a diplomatic perspective that aligns with the fundamental value enshrined in the country's Constitution, which emphasizes amicable relations with all nations and the absence of ill will towards any. Nevertheless, in its pursuit of achieving this objective, Bangladesh has seen a growing reliance on China. Both nations have made a commitment to enhance their cooperation with the aim of fostering a lasting friendship characterized by equality and mutual benefit, thus upholding their longstanding and resilient relationship.

The domestic conditions in China have undergone transformations, thus impacting its approach to economic diplomacy. The evolving perspective on economic diplomacy in China can be seen as a manifestation of the nation's economic progress and its growing material capabilities. During the Cold War, economics was compelled to priorities foreign policy objectives, while during the era of reform and opening up, foreign policy was driven by economic interests. However, in the present context, the relationship between economic and diplomatic interests has become more intricate and interdependent, necessitating a foreign policy strategy that simultaneously pursues both aspects. Therefore, it is imperative for economic diplomacy to adopt a more proactive stance in order to explore uncharted territories, as opposed to its previously cautious approach. Nevertheless, despite the increasing significance of economic collaboration, there has been a dearth of scholarly inquiry into elucidating China's economic statecraft vis-à-vis the global arena, particularly in relation to South Asia. The majority of prior research has predominantly concentrated on China's economic policy in relation to the global context, with minimal deviations from this focus. There is a lack of scholarly attention to the use of various soft power instruments by China as a means of implementing economic statecraft on a global scale. Consequently, the arguments presented in these studies have frequently exhibited a limited scope, thereby posing challenges for academics in comprehending the comprehensive landscape of China's economic statecraft.



Source: Bhatia, 2016

The Colombo Port Project and the Hambantota Port Development are two of China's most notable construction initiatives. Both of these projects are loan-financed and located at key seaport crossings. A considerable proportion of the funding for infrastructure projects is derived from entities linked to the Chinese government. The China Machinery Engineering Corporation is now engaged in the development of the Norochcholai Coal Power Plant, which has been allocated a budget of $1.3 billion. Furthermore, the financial support for the development of Hambantota, totaling $1 billion, is being supplied by the China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd. and Sino-Hydro Corp., entities that bear responsibility for the port's construction. Projects of such scale and scope serve to support Beijing's endeavors in incorporating Sri Lanka into its 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative, which holds significant importance as a key element of the One Belt, One Road strategy.

Recent Trend to Chinese Economic Statecraft

In recent years, China has increasingly prioritized investment in various regions across the globe. More precisely, within the context of many African countries and certain South Asian countries The Chinese government is employing its economic policies as a means to exert influence in countries within the South Asian region. Instead of employing negative tools of economic statecraft, they are utilizing positive means of economic statecraft. As an illustration, they employ foreign aid, foreign investment, support, and their soft power to cultivate a favorable perception among the nations of South Asia. However, China has encountered certain setbacks in its relations with South Asian and African countries in recent years. Concerns regarding the increasing visibility of Chinese acquisitions are gaining prominence in public discourse. In the preceding year, the dissemination of information on a 99-year lease agreement for the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka to a Chinese corporation gave rise to public demonstrations in the southern region of Sri Lanka. These protests were driven by concerns pertaining to potential displacement, dispossession, cultural dilution, and alterations in demographic composition. Public discontent, motivated by the same emotions, has manifested in other South Asian nations where Chinese capital holds significant influence.

Source: Bhandaria, 2017

China's Economic Statecraft Towards Bangladesh

In the year 2021, the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) from China into Bangladesh witnessed a notable surge, reaching a total of $418 million over the course of the past seven months. This represents a substantial year-on-year growth of around 200 percent. China has emerged as the predominant economic partner of Bangladesh, surpassing all other trading counterparts. Based on the data presented by the Bangladesh Bank, there was a notable surge in net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow from China during the January–March 2021 period. Specifically, the FDI inflow from China had a substantial growth rate, surpassing three times and reaching a value of $45 million. This represents a significant rise compared to the corresponding period of the preceding year, where the FDI inflow from China amounted to $13 million. The net outflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) from China had a significant decline of 85 percent, reaching a value of $91 million in the latest fiscal year. This figure represents a notable decrease from the previous fiscal year, which recorded a net outflow of $625 million. China has extended around $1.03 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) to Bangladesh since the latter's attainment of independence. Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, bilateral commerce and investment between China and Bangladesh have persisted, defying global trends. This serves as a compelling illustration of the resilience and vitality of the partnership between the two nations during this crucial period. The bilateral trade volume between China and Bangladesh over the period of January to July of the current year reached a total of $13 billion, indicating a substantial growth of 58.9 percent compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. In the corresponding time frame, Chinese contractors engaged in operations within Bangladesh documented a turnover of $3.18 billion, indicating a substantial year-on-year growth of 59.5 percent. Due to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, both India and Bangladesh are presently going through a crucial phase of rejuvenation and progress.

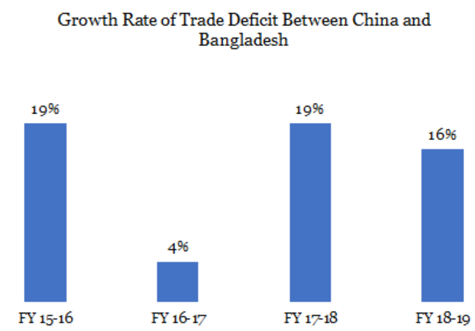
Furthermore, subsequent to the introduction of the zero-tariff advantage granted to 97% of Bangladesh's exports to China, there has been a notable increase in the volume of Bangladesh's shipments to this East Asian country, with growth rates reaching double digits. According to Jiaming, there was a significant increase of almost 38 percent in Bangladesh's exports to China over the period of January to July when compared to the previous year. As of March, this year, the aggregate worth of foreign direct investments (FDIs) in Bangladesh amounted to almost $20 billion, with China accounting for approximately $1.4 billion of this sum. Based on data sourced from the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the bilateral trade volume between China and Bangladesh for the fiscal year 2019–20 amounted to over $12 billion, with China dominating a significant portion of this overall figure.

Currently, Bangladesh is actively implementing several megaprojects, facilitated by investments from China. The aforementioned megaprojects encompass the Dhaka Metro Rail Project, the Karnafuli River Tunnel, the Payra Deep Sea Port, and several other megaprojects.

The implementation of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project in Bangladesh is regarded as one of the most prominent initiatives undertaken by China. The primary aim of the project is to provide a railway connection between Dhaka and Jessore, utilizing the infrastructure of the Padma Bridge. The financing for this project, with an anticipated expenditure of approximately BDT 40,000 crore, will be a collaborative effort between the Exim Bank of China and the government of Bangladesh. The commencement of the project occurred in 2016, with its anticipated completion set for 2024. The Padma Rail Project has been divided into three distinct phases. The initial phase aims to establish a connection between Dhaka and Mawa. Subsequently, the second phase focuses on linking Mawa to Bhanga, while the third and final phase concentrates on connecting Bhanga to Jessore. The provision of connections through railways plays a crucial role in facilitating the growth of Bangladesh's burgeoning market. The significance of the Padma Bridge Rail Project in Bangladesh lies in its potential to enhance connectivity between Dhaka and locations in the center and south-western parts of the nation. This infrastructure development offers a shorter option to the existing Dhaka-Jessore-Khulna railway connectivity, thereby improving accessibility to these areas. The predicted impact of this project on Bangladesh is of great significance, as it is expected to contribute to socioeconomic progress and address regional imbalances. Both of these factors are of utmost importance to the nation of Bangladesh. China's involvement in this endeavor mostly manifests through its provision of financial support. The project's funding is mostly being provided by China, accounting for 85 percent, with the remaining 15 percent being contributed by domestic contractors from Bangladesh. It is noteworthy to mention that in April 2016, the project was designated as being on the "fast track," highlighting China's dedication to ensuring prompt advancement and delivery. This action could be interpreted as an endeavor by China to position itself as a more favorable option compared to India within the given geographical area. The deficit in New Delhi's delivery has been identified as a significant problem by the majority of countries in India's neighboring regions. China is endeavoring to position itself as a more favorable option compared to India in the area. The establishment of infrastructure in Bangladesh is a strategically significant industry for China, as it would contribute to strengthening China's presence and influence in the region by increasing Dhaka's reliance on Beijing. The expansion of China's involvement in this particular industry would result in a heightened level of reliance on China.

Geo-Administrative Benefits (Integration of Financial Interests)

In the 20th century, nexus has been distinctive to improve shared engagement. Bangladesh-China has been preparing a roadway activity to the confluence of C-K through Myanmar. This expressway would enable Bangladesh a transit into the Mekong subentries, which in the current times inculcates China, in order to escalate exchange and instigate people-to-people communication. Different global policy experts in Bangladesh have observed the magnitude of elective advancement in the department of Global Affairs exhibited with the subvention of the 'Look East Scheme' (Kibria, 2006).



Source: Bangladesh Bank

The concerned scheme of Bangladesh is primly aimed to oust its dependency on India and advance new methods of cooperation with Chinese states (Garver, 2010). The heads of Bangladesh acquired such elective perspectives in compliance with the fundamental aspect of the country's constitution which signals to maintain geniality with all and toxic with none. Nonetheless, during the period invested in securing this condition, Bangladesh's dependency on China has increased in a prolonged way, eventually offering China a more significant power in their bilateral context. Both countries have promised to engage in future cooperation, assuring a prolonged companionship, consistency, and shared benefit to assist the attempted and climate fellow feeling (Mannan, 2018).

The topographical region encompassing Southern Asia and its peripheries is of immense importance to China, as mirrored in the country's snare of leagues with states in that region (Garver, 2013). The constituents of such alliances depict on an apparent level to be grounded on dependence. Nonetheless, these are actually controlled by prolonged administrative and economic benefits. Such a rudimentary alliance with Dhaka city provides China with supplementary control to supervise Indian authorities. This instance is evident from the quality of ministerial trade and ameliorated army alliance between the concerned countries. Therefore, in this context, the assertion by Faiz Ahmad, Bangladesh's spokesman in China, to maintain a realistic all-climate fellowship can be considered relevant (The Habib, 2005).

Belt and Road Initiative and China's influence towards South Asia

The "One Belt, One Road" plan, initially introduced by Xi Jinping, the incumbent President of China and General Secretary of the Communist Party, underwent a subsequent rebranding by China, resulting in its present designation as the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) in 2013. The primary source of finance for this infrastructure initiative originates from the capital city of Beijing in China. Its principal aim is to enhance China's connection across Central, South, and Southeast Asia, extending towards the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Xi Jinping juxtaposed this ambitious endeavor with the "hide and bide" approach employed by Deng Xiaoping, the former preeminent leader of China. Deng's strategy focused on bolstering domestic capabilities while refraining from active involvement in overseas affairs. Currently, Xi Jinping holds the position of leader of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping's primary foreign policy endeavor revolves around the objective of positioning China as a leading global power.

Despite the presence of shared characteristics such as language, politics, economy, culture, and administrative and legal systems among its member nations, South Asia cannot be considered a homogeneous region. Consequently, during the post-colonial era, the manner in which South Asian nations have engaged with China has exhibited distinct variations, thereby mirroring the prevailing trends in the region's international interactions. The patterns under consideration encompass the competitive dynamics between India and Pakistan, the geopolitical location of both nations vis-à-vis China, the internal political landscapes inside each country, and their distinct economic circumstances. The present discourse concerns the stances adopted and prerequisites articulated by South Asian nations with respect to China's Belt and Road Initiative. India and Bhutan are the sole countries in South Asia that have not yet expressed their participation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal, and Afghanistan have all conveyed their endorsement for the aforementioned proposal. The hostility exhibited by India can be attributed to the adversarial dynamics inherent in its relationship with China, which has been predominantly marked by rivalry rather than partnership. China experiences a multitude of dichotomies in South Asia, similar to the other regions within South Asia. China shares land borders with all South Asian countries that are contiguous, except for Bangladesh. In contrast, Sri Lanka and the Maldives are sovereign nations located in the Indian Ocean. South Asia serves as the geographical region wherein the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stands as the most prosperous undertaking of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Additionally, inside this region, India holds a position of utmost significance as a key participant in the BRI. South Asia is the geographical region where the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is situated. India is the primary recipient of loans from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which is led by China, despite its opposition to the Belt and Road Initiative. Moreover, it is worth noting that South Asia accommodates a significant proportion, specifically one-fourth, of the global population. Furthermore, this region has consistently sustained an average annual growth rate of around 6% throughout the previous two decades (Gong, 2020). South Asian countries possess considerable untapped potential for economic expansion due to the relatively youthful composition of their populations. The characteristics of this region render it very suitable for incorporation into the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Approximately 20% of the overall population consists of individuals belonging to the younger demographic within the South Asian community. The numerical value provided by the user is 8. The burgeoning market in South Asia, currently encompassing a population of 2.5 billion individuals, presents an enticing prospect for investment and engagement. However, it is important to note that this particular region is also facing significant risks because to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has the potential to severely disrupt the promising growth prospects of South Asia in the coming decade. There is also the potential for China's lofty aims to be impeded by ethnic and religious turmoil. In the regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, there are ongoing Islamist insurgencies that are causing significant disruption. Additionally, in China's Xinjiang region, which has a predominantly Muslim population, there is a notable escalation of ethnic tensions. Furthermore, the nationalist political landscape in India is contributing to the exacerbation of tensions between the Hindu and Muslim communities. This situation has the potential to escalate into extensive religious violence and may have repercussions that extend beyond India's borders, particularly affecting China's unsettled Xinjiang province. The observed outcome can be attributed to the prevailing trend of growing nationalism within India's political landscape. India and Pakistan are both recognized as nuclear-armed states, possessing the capability to deploy nuclear weapons. Additionally, it is noteworthy that both countries share a contiguous border with the nation of China. India and Pakistan are currently involved in a prolonged and acrimonious territorial dispute with China, alongside a longstanding historical enmity. A potential military confrontation between India and Pakistan could pose an immediate threat to China's diverse economic initiatives. Despite China's proactive efforts to avoid conflict, the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects has the inherent risk of embroiling China in a military confrontation. China's potential involvement in a clash between India and Pakistan may arise from its role as Pakistan's principal military ally and provider of arms. China views South Asia as a potential means to secure its access to the Indian Ocean, a crucial route for moving goods. This is due to China's strategic limitations in the eastern region, where it faces constraints from two island groups and a significant vulnerability in the Malacca Strait. The concepts of insight, hindsight, and foresight are significant in various academic disciplines. These concepts pertain to the ability to see, understand, and anticipate events or situations. Insight refers to the capacity to gain In retrospect, taking into account the matter of security in the Indo-Pacific region. The transportation of oil from Africa and the Middle East to China. There exists a potential for establishing economic corridors and maritime motorways connecting China's landlocked southwestern regions, namely Yunnan and Sichuan, to the coastal region through South Asia. China's capacity to extend its influence beyond its borders and discourage potential external threats could potentially be enhanced through the acquisition of ownership in strategically significant ports situated in South Asia. Liu Jinxen, a prominent advocate of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC), posits that this initiative can be interpreted as a component of a country's "bridgehead" strategy, wherein cities or regions with advantageous geographical locations are identified to exert influence over resource movement along global trade pathways. This approach entails the identification of urban areas or geographical locations that possess a key location within a logistical and supply chain network, enabling them to exert control over the movement of resources. The number 10. These points of interest are not solely isolated occurrences. The South Asian nations, excluding India, hold the belief that China's presence in the region is advantageous to their own national interests. China has been embraced by Pakistan as a viable option to the United States, which has traditionally served as Pakistan's primary economic support system. The number 11. Despite the longstanding role of the United States as Pakistan's principal economic supporter, there exists significant skepticism regarding the continuity of this crucial assistance following the conclusion of the United States' "war on terror" and subsequent withdrawal of its military from Afghanistan. In addition to Pakistan, the smaller nations in the region have harbored a longstanding aversion towards India's regional dominance. Consequently, individuals may be inclined to adopt a cautious approach by favoring China as a viable alternative. Nevertheless, despite the anticipation of economic benefits from China's involvement in this region, the countries remain cautious. There is a concern over the potential negative impact on their standing with India, the predominant power in the region, and consequently with the United States, due to an excessively amicable association with China. Consequently, the nations in South Asia endeavor to extract advantageous outcomes from China, while simultaneously endeavoring to prevent any provocation towards the United States and India. Moreover, the implementation of China's exploitative economic strategies in recent times has rendered Sri Lanka and Pakistan susceptible to financial challenges, so diminishing the excitement of other nations contemplating accepting aid from China. China has adopted a unique and distinctive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) approach in the South Asian region. China has adopted individualized strategies on a country-by-country basis, notwithstanding the enduring significance of South Asia for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a geographical area. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) possesses the capacity to achieve certain geopolitical objectives in South Asia due to China's enduring and amicable relations with Pakistan, a country armed with nuclear capabilities. India, which assumes the role of the de facto leader in the region, expresses opposition to this proposal. Due to the resistance encountered by the dominant power in the region, China may be compelled to use an alternative approach in order to achieve its long-term objectives pertaining to the said region. China perceives the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a strategic tool to accomplish its enduring geopolitical objectives, notwithstanding its portrayal of the BRI as an extensive infrastructural investment endeavor. The number 12 is the numerical representation of the quantity that follows 11 and precedes China is seeking to involve India in many dimensions of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), notwithstanding India's refusal to participate in 164 South Asia development projects associated with the BRI. China is optimistic about its ability to convince India that establishing a partnership with China would serve India's self-interest, or at the very least, that India should cease its opposition to China's regional influence. The aforementioned instances, namely India being the primary beneficiary of a loan from the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) among the 78 member nations, the increased frequency of personal meetings between Xi and Modi, and China's withdrawal from the India-Pakistan brinkmanship, collectively exemplify China's inclination towards favoring India. China has undertaken efforts to enhance its public diplomacy by intensifying its social and cultural engagement with India. In pursuit of this endeavors, the Chinese government has boosted the quantity of scholarships provided to Indian students and artists. The nature of China's relationship with the six smaller South Asian countries, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Maldives, also exhibits certain degrees of variation. The aforementioned nations encompass Bhutan, Maldives, and Nepal. These nations, each of which is situated at a unique stage in their relationship with China, are deriving advantages from the process of learning from the experiences of one another. The number 13. The establishment of the Hambantota port, financed by China, in the economically distressed country of Sri Lanka has raised concerns among neighboring nations. The government of Bangladesh has expressed apprehension on the extent of Chinese engagement in the region. China has adopted a nuanced strategy in Bangladesh, progressively increasing its involvement across several sectors in a tactful manner, encompassing domains such as education and culture. China has demonstrated a keen awareness of this issue and has implemented a highly intricate approach. Additionally, it is noteworthy that China holds the position of being the primary supplier of military equipment and supplies to Bangladesh. The number 15 is the subject of discussion. As an integral component of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the People's Republic of China is currently engaged in the construction of the Padma Bridge, a monumental infrastructure project set to become the longest bridge within the nation, spanning an impressive distance of 6.4 km. The number provided by the user is 16. In contrast to India's perceived role as a responsible and mature entity, China has adopted a distinct and innovative approach in its interactions with Nepal. China has extended an offer to Nepal, granting them access to its four primary ports, with the aim of mitigating Nepal's excessive reliance on India. Due to geographical constraints, China has encountered difficulties in establishing a port within a landlocked nation. Consequently, China has extended an offer to Nepal in this regard. The number 17. Chinese President Xi Jinping announced a series of substantial investment promises amounting to billions of dollars during his official visit to Nepal in 2019. The tourist industry holds significant importance in the economic framework of the Maldives. As a consequence, China has the capacity to utilize tourism as a mechanism for both incentivizing and penalizing the nation. Despite their backing for Chinese policies, 18 is facilitating the transportation of Chinese tour groups to the Maldives. China's adherence to its "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence," including the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations, has been called into question due to its recent deployment of a naval vessel to the Indian Ocean. This move can be interpreted as a signal of China's readiness to safeguard a government in the Maldives that aligns with its interests. Notwithstanding the fact that non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations is one of China's "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence." The number 19. The nation of Afghanistan presents a potentially significant and urgent challenge to China's national security. The number 20. The most recent accord achieved between the United States and the Taliban establishes a pathway for the eventual withdrawal of US military personnel. The creation of a void as a consequence may potentially pose a security threat to China's foremost interests. The numerical value provided is 165. The concepts of insight, hindsight, and foresight are fundamental to understanding various aspects of human cognition and decision-making processes. These cognitive abilities play a crucial role in our ability to perceive, interpret, and anticipate events in retrospect, taking into account the prevailing security conditions in the politically unstable region of Xinjiang, situated inside the Indo-Pacific. Given the Taliban's demonstrated sympathy towards the Uighurs, there exists a potential for an escalation in their support for a nascent insurgent organization, as they consolidate their political authority and exert influence within Afghanistan. China is presently engaged in the development of contingency plans to effectively address any threats to its national security. The contingency plan incorporates China's increasing engagement in Belt and Road Initiative projects, aimed at facilitating post-conflict reconstruction and advancement. There is an ongoing discourse on the potential extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Kandahar through the establishment of a railway network. Following the withdrawal of American troops, Beijing may advocate for multilateral measures, such as United Nations-led peacekeeping missions, as a means of stabilizing the situation. The number provided by the user is 21. The security implications of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) for South Asia

US-China and India’s policy towards upcoming national parliamentary election in Bangladesh

Ahead of Bangladesh's 12th national parliamentary election, the United States is concentrating on labor and human rights concerns. They ask for all parties' participation in what they call a free, fair, and credible election in Bangladesh. In December 2021, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed human rights sanctions on Bangladesh's paramilitary group, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), and six of its senior officials for undermining the democratic election process. Subsequently, travel bans were threatened by Bangladeshi officials. The U.S. State Department has additionally enforced visa bans on two officials, one of whom was already included in the Treasury Department's list of sanctioned individuals. Human rights advocates and opposition parties overwhelmingly supported these verdicts. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made a public statement alleging that the United States is actively attempting to overthrow her government in response to pressure from the U.S. She refuses to expose her popularity to a just and trustworthy election. During the last ten years, her government has been unable to arrange any election that is considered to be both impartial and unbiased by individuals not affiliated with her party or administration (Hasan, 2023).

The United States, being a significant market for Bangladeshi ready-made garments, has stated that it will not stand by passively. At the same time, Hasina tries to hold another election under her government to maintain her authority. In contrast, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has supported Hasina, condemning dominance and power-driven politics. Furthermore, India is also endorsing the incumbent government based on its strategic approach.

Research Implications

The research findings have the potential to contribute to the examination of the impacts of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on the expansion of China's soft power diplomacy in the South Asian region. The study will reveal the extent to which the economic development of South Asian countries can be enhanced through funding from the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The present endeavors holds significance for policymakers as it enables the establishment of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a paradigm of international collaboration, offering novel prospects for regional connectivity. Moreover, the study's findings will present a mutually beneficial opportunity for China and South Asian nations to reassess their trade relations in order to enhance mutual interests through economic collaboration.

Conclusion

It can be inferred that the aforementioned points collectively support the notion that...

The global impact of China is steadily growing over time. In particular, it is observed that a majority of South Asian nations have displayed a receptive attitude towards Chinese investment. However, it is worth noting that certain countries, such as Sri Lanka, have had challenges in managing their financial affairs, resulting in their entanglement in a debt trap. Bangladesh stands to gain advantages from its association with China, particularly in terms of fostering stability and enhancing its capacity to adapt in unpredictable circumstances. In the contemporary era, with the emergence of the global pandemic, China made a commitment to provide Bangladesh with the necessary antibodies, contingent to the latter's adherence to the SCA plan. The Communist Party of China (CPC) has been credited with originating this ideology and ensuring the enduring strength of its political tenets. Previous studies have provided evidence to support the notion that the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and China are expected to continue expanding in the future. In light of the escalating tensions between China and India, it is imperative for Bangladesh to uphold a nuanced diplomatic equilibrium in order to sustain its access to enhanced economic prospects from both nations. The implementation of commercial accords and reciprocal visits may serve as supplementary diplomatic endeavors to partially redress the prevailing imbalances. The implementation of Chinese exclusions has the potential to positively impact the national economy, thereby mitigating the adverse effects of reduced commerce resulting from the deceleration of the COVID-19 outbreak. The potential long-term economic and diplomatic consequences of these opportunities remain uncertain at present. However, by implementing appropriate measures and adopting a strategic vision, the country has the potential to derive significant advantages from these opportunities.

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