



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNANCE

E-ISSN: 2664-603X

P-ISSN: 2664-6021

IJPSG 2022; 4(1): 221-225

www.journalofpoliticalscience.com

Received: 16-01-2022

Accepted: 21-02-2022

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## Panchsheel: A Ray of Hope

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### Abstract

A set of five principles, popularly known as Panchsheel conceived in great measure by former prime minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, was the basis of the Agreement on trade and intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India signed on 29 April, 1954. However, after Sino-Indian war in 1962 Nehru and his Panchsheel had to face criticism. Later on in course of time a number of contentions issues like China threat theory, string of pearls, border disputes, trade deficit etc come to the fore front. Thus, it is seemed that Panchsheel is no longer in existence in shaping India-China bilateral relations. Despite such adverse situation, in 2014 the two countries celebrated 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Panchsheel and tried to show that they would rejuvenate the relationship within the framework of Panchsheel. To prove it wrong spectrum of measures has been taken by both the countries in order to iron out differences and to make 21<sup>st</sup> country Asian country.

**Keywords:** Panchsheel, sino-indian war, India, china, bilateral relations

### Introduction

This paper is to raise some contemporary questions and finding out relevant answer of those. Such questions are like

1. Whether Panchsheel is relevant today or not?
2. Whether Nehru is wrong or right person at the wrong time?
3. What is Panchsheel - means or end?
4. What find wrong with Panchsheel its projection or improper implementation?
5. Which is the alternative to Panchsheel?

“It is in no spirit of pride or arrogance that we pursue our own independent policy. We would not do otherwise unless we are false to everything India has stood for in the past and stands for today. We welcome association and friendship with all the flow of thought and ideas of all kind, but we reserve the right to choose our own path. That is the essence of Panchsheel <sup>[1]</sup>.”

Jawaharlal Nehru the architect of Indian foreign policy delivered that speech in the Lok Sabha on September 15, 1955. We are now in the orbit of 2015. Last 60 years bilateral relations between India and China have been posing through many ups and downs. Irrespective of various changes taken place in the domestic politics, economics etc of both the countries in the regional politics and economics and in the international sphere also one question is still unchanged-whether the essence of Panchsheel is relevant in today's scenario or not? As a response to this question and to the disputed issues and problems between India –China consists of five sections with five significant subheadings section-1 highlights on the genesis of Panchsheel. Section-2 treats of its implementation in Indo-China relations. Section-3 focuses on criticism of Panchsheel in shaping Indo- China relations. Section -4 is related to the points which are in favour of Panchsheel. Section -5 discuss on how to implement Panchsheel with a view to turn 21<sup>st</sup> century in to Asian century. At last, section -6 is adorned with significant conclusion.

“The guiding principles of India's foreign policy have been founded on Panchsheel, pragmatism and pursuit of national interest” <sup>[2]</sup>. (Jadav, 2000) It would not be wise to deny that Sino-India bilateral relations without uttering Panchsheel is quite impossible.

The preamble of the aforementioned five-point agreement, popularly known as Panchsheel Agreement signed in 1954 between New Delhi and Peking laid down five principles. These were

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1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful co-existence

A spontaneous but vital question arises here – Panchsheel is the brainchild of whom- first Prime Minister of Independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru? or the then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai? During his speech in 1954 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Nehru described the five pillars to be used as a guide for Sino-India relations, which were first put forth by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai<sup>[3]</sup>. These principles serve as the basis of the Non-Aligned Movement which was coined by Nehru. The origin of Panchsheel was found in the speech of Great Buddha also.

Without exaggeration, it can be said that there were so many reasons behind the genesis of Panchsheel. First and foremost, from China's point of view China intended to get rid of its isolated position caused by communist ideological base and was in search of friends in attitudes in place suspicious and aggressive communist image. Secondly, in the aftermath of independence India has endorsed Panchsheel in shaping foreign policy as these principles were already being existed here. What Nehru spoke of non-alignment in the Parliament, on December 9, 1958 is also true to Panchsheel. 'What I have done is to give voice to that policy (non-alignment) I have not originated it. It is a policy inherent in the circumstances of India, inherent in the past thinking of India, inherent in the whole mental outlook of India, inherent in the conditioning of the Indian mind<sup>[4]</sup>.' Thirdly, The Nehruvian foreign policy was at variance with such principles. He was against the doctrine of balance of power pursued by so called developed countries. On the contrary, he earnestly believed in the policy of friendship with other countries. In January, 1949 in Delhi on the occasion of supporting the cause of Indonesian independence Nehru uttered, "We do not want to form a new bloc but inevitably the countries of Asia will come closer together and India will play a leading part in this"<sup>[5]</sup>. Such Nehruvian view point laid down not only the basis of Indian foreign policy, but the genesis of Panchsheel. In one word, Nehruvian idealism paved a way to Panchsheel.

Besides, some critics are of the opinion that sudden death of the then India's Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Ballov Vai Patel created an opportunity for the genesis of Panchsheel. Panchsheel was well aware of the intension of China which was written in a letter by him. However, that letter was not emerged into public view at the appropriate time because of Patel's sudden death<sup>[6]</sup>. "Alone among the top echelon of Congress leaders, Patel had the standing and support to challenge Nehru's direction of foreign policy. His death at the age of 75 in 1950 left Nehru's direction of China policy virtually unchallenged...<sup>[7]</sup>"

It is ridiculous to see that India left no stone unturned to keep the dragon happy, though India should have taken a clear cut policy to combat China for keeping peace and tranquillity in Asia. From that stand point, many are of the opinion that Panchsheel is not fit for today's Indo-China relations.

First and foremost, critics do not find any relevance of Panchsheel after 1962 war between India and China, as all the principles of Panchsheel had been violated by China at

that time. Indian forces were unprepared and China availed of such unpreparedness so that it could establish its dominance on the disputed land. No doubt, it was China's betrayal of India's offer of friendship. With such attitude China proved that Panchsheel agreement was nothing but a lip service.

Second, China's 'string of Pearls' policy is a matter of concern for India's security in the Indian ocean, though it is an American hypothesis about China's containment of India.<sup>8</sup> But it is no longer a hypothesis, to the contrary, it is the fact that China extends its strategic hands to establish harbour in Chittagong, Bangladesh in Sittwe, Myanmar in Gwadar, Pakistan, in Hambantota, Sri Lanka etc in such a way, so that, it can dominate Indian Ocean region and becomes able to keep India under constant surveillance. It's so called 'String of Pearls' strategy is a three-pronged approach to check US naval power in the Indian ocean and to achieve strategic maritime advantage over India<sup>[9]</sup>. So String of Pearls is based on the negation of Panchsheel.

Thirdly, why China fished in troubled waters whenever India faced bilateral tensions with its neighbours?<sup>[10]</sup>-S.D. Muni's question to the panel of the conference held on the occasion of '60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Panchsheel Relevance for India'- is very significant and relevant in terms of the relevance of Panchsheel. China is always in search of a situation when will the relation between India and any of its neighbours is in trouble. Most of the time when China decides to give a lesson to India, it plays Pakistan card and set Pakistan against India, as if, and Pakistan is a balancer to India. From such point of view China provides arms and other related facilities to Pakistan. This is not only true to India-Pakistan relation, but also to India-Nepal, India-Sri Lanka, India-Bangladesh, India-Bhutan relation etc. For China, the development of relations with Bangladesh was important to keep Bangladesh away from the Indo-Soviet orbit<sup>[11]</sup>.

Fourth, in the aftermath of the infiltration of Chinese military into Doulat Beg Oldy Sector of India, it is discernible that Chinese aggression is being increased with every passing day. In April 2013, Chinese military force consists of 50 soldiers and dogs violating Line of Actual Control (LOC) and infiltrating into India stayed at the aforementioned Oldy sector. Immediate after consecutive five meetings were held, but no solutions come out. Later on 5<sup>th</sup> of May, 2013 Chinese military force left India with a relevant question – whether India should follow up Panchsheel?

Fifth, huge trade deficit is another irritant between India and China. Since, 2006 India has been facing such problem very much. The trade deficit of India for the year of 2010 stood at more than 20 billion US dollar. Most of China's exports are value-added manufactured goods. On the other hand, most of India's exports are bulk commodities like iron ore. India complains that China gains unfair advantage from an undervalued currency and from protectionism that affects India's high-end exports. India has an objection about dumping cheaper Chinese goods into Indian market. Not much more power of intellect, but common sense is enough to conceive how such trade imbalance forms the flame of India's discontent.

Sixth, China's initiatives to create a dam on Brahmaputra River are showing its aggressiveness which is not consistent with the principles of Panchsheel. New Delhi is very much concerned about the ecological impact on India of Chinese

initiative to divert the rivers of Tibet for irrigation purpose in China. For China's evil tendency to control the Tibetan plateau, the source of Asia's major rivers, a possibility of skirmish on scarce water resources is grown up. Aforementioned initiatives of China are not at variance with the principles of Panchsheel.

Seventh, to achieve advantage over India, China uses every possible card that it has. Issuing stapled visa to Indian citizens from Arunachal Pradesh is one of such cards. The fact is that China issued stapled visa on entry to Arunachal officials visiting its nation. Actually, critics are of the opinion that China's intention is to continue provocation India. In such a way China always express its lack of interest in obeying Panchsheel Agreement.

Above all, with these aforementioned burning issues, border tensions still remain as it was in 1950. India claims Aksai Chin and Trans-Karakoram Tract, as part of Jammu and Kashmir. On the other hand, China claims most of Arunachal Pradesh, a contested disputed territory of north-east India by not recognizing the Mc Mohan Line <sup>[12]</sup>. Carrying on such irritant how both the countries execute the five principles of properly- now this is a matter of debate and discussion.

“..... it is imperative for both India and China to learn to live with peace and cooperation, as it is said you can change friends but cannot change neighbours <sup>[13]</sup>.”

Point of view like that leads us to ponder over the principles Panchsheel in the context of Sino-India relation at the globalised world order and to critically evaluate the points on irrelevance of Panchsheel mentioned in the in the previous section.

First of all, many are sceptical about the relevance of Panchsheel due to its random violation. It is obvious that both China and India are in open violation of the Agreement of Panchsheel for which a section of politicians, scholars, journalists, political scientists are of the view that Panchsheel is outdated. Here 'violation' is laid down as a yardstick to judge whether a thing is relevant or not. To the contrary, in optimists' view so many cases are being held in India and rest of the world where human rights are being violated continuously. On the basis of such violations, can it be claimed that human rights are outdated or irrelevant? No doubt, the answer is "NO". In the similar fashion, it needs to remember that despite of number of fundamental of our country. Hopefully, number of violations may be increased but these will not be able to make Panchsheel irrelevant.

Second, 'A time tested diplomatic tool' <sup>[14]</sup> in this way Panchsheel is considered many a times. Here is the contradiction. On the one hand, there is a tendency to show instances where principles of Panchsheel has been violated and on the other Panchsheel is claimed as time tested diplomatic tool. Point to be noted is that violation of Panchsheel by both China and India is nothing but the deviation from the previously accepted principles of Panchsheel. Without giving any thought to such deviations Panchsheel is claimed as time tested diplomatic tool. Actually, neither China, nor India follows it up properly for which Panchsheel may be best termed as 'time-ignored diplomatic tool'.

Third, a portion of analysts get satisfaction in pointing finger at the 1962 Sino-India war which according to them, made Panchsheel outdated since its inception. They

eventually oblivious to the fact that despite seven year long war between them Britain and France coexist peacefully. Actually, relationship is formed according to the demands of situation which makes one forget everything and it is not only applicable to England-France relations, but human political history has been witnessed to a number of such instances. After World war-II keeping their warlike attitudes away Germany and France are coming close together. Very recently Cuba tilts towards USA forgetting previous tensed relations. Therefore, without exaggeration it can be thought that one month long war between China and India cannot make Actually, relationship is formed according to the demands of situation which makes one forget everything and it is not only applicable to England-France relations, but human political history has been witnessed to a number of such instances. After World war-II keeping their warlike attitudes away Germany and France are coming close together irrelevant.

Fourth, it is now fairly common place to hear that the coming years will be led by India and China <sup>[15]</sup> various economic reports opinions of experts coincide with the aforementioned statement. But will it be achieved automatically? This is the very point on which a debate is going on between the supporter of Actually, relationship is formed according to the demands of situation which makes one forget everything and it is not only applicable to England-France relations, but human political history has been witnessed to a number of such instances. After World war-II keeping their warlike attitudes away Germany and France are coming close together and those who are against it. Oppositionists always overlook the fact that the precondition of China-India relation is an environment fraught with peace, not war, competition not confrontation, faith not mistrust. Therefore, to turn the prediction into practice peaceful coexistence is the demand of the hour.

Suppose, you are suffering from a backache for which you go to a doctor who suggests some physical exercises to be practised every day at regular basis. But consciously or unconsciously you do not follow such advices regularly. After one week or one month on the basis of your irregular practice if you will come to a conclusion that doctor's way of treatment is not fruitful—will it not be a 'practical joke'? It is like the same thing which is being happened against the principles of Panchsheel.

Fifth, 'The contributions of Panchsheel were universal, as its values were replicated in the charter of UNO, SCO, ASEAN and SAARC'- Dr. Jagannath Panda in his turn uttered it at the conference on "60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Panchsheel Relevance for India-China Relations" held by Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses on June", 2014. Democracy loving people still now feel proud to be expressed themselves as the followers of peace.

Sixth, few scholars are of the opinion that nothing is in the message conveyed by Panchsheel, as the norms and ideals related to it have been existing in the international arena as common issues for debate and discussion between countries. Therefore, their simple question is –what is the use of making a framework like Panchsheel fraught with norms and ideals which are already existed. To refute such logic in favour of the relevance of Panchsheel the example of Human Development Index (HDI) can be presented. What Professor Amartya Sen with two other eminent persons have done in the name of HDI, is nothing but an attempt of putting some basic rights into a framework with a view to

making comparison between states regarding human development. Through such comparison the position of human development of a particular country can be understood better.

Apparently, it may be considered as a right think for India to stop flowing such frame work, thought ultimately no successful result will be acquired through such decision. Because-

- 1) In such a case, China may raise the issue to the world that India is deviating from its declared policy of Panchsheel and may fish in troubled water.
- 2) India will be under some extra pressure, as a the ball is in to the court of India and India has to prove that it does not have any evil intention and tough India tries to put an end to the frame work of Panchsheel, it still believes in the essence of the principles of Panchsheel. First of all, lack of strong and capable leadership is no doubt one of the vital problems India faces in the matter getting benefit from Sino-India bilateral relations within the frame Panchsheel. Second, coalition in India, particularly during last to terms of U.P.A government, proves it intense capability make India in capable of taking any strong foreign policy vis –a – vis China. Finally, India's tendency to regard China as a big brother provides China with the facility to get the upper hand in each and every part of the relationship between the Asian giants.

First of all, in a rapidly globalising world to get additional leverage from the market economy both the countries should show batter sense of understanding in future in interactions based upon the historic principles of Pancheesheel. Second, it is obligation and responsibility of China and India to prove to the international community that they could rise 'by peace, of peace and for peace'. Third, both countries should learn from each other towered stand the complex dynamics of human sustainability systems. India should learn a lesson from Chinese experience in the field of poverty alleviation, urbanization etc. On the other hand, China has to follow India's experiences in environmental system quality. Thus the test of mutual benefit will be sweet. Forth, China should take the responsibility to clarify its hidden intension behind the policy of string of pearls, staple visa to the people of Arunachal Pradesh, a province of India etc. In order to remove the environ of suspicious and mistrust and to create a sane and sensible atmosphere conducive to growth and development in Asia. Fifth: India has to be less emotional and pragmatic in case of making and pursuing a Foreign policy vis-a-vis China. It is the history of Sino-India relations which conveys a message that to be a successful negotiator in bilateral relations the mixed of hard power and soft power is very much essential. The attractiveness of ideas, Values and norms are at the core of soft power, where as hard power indicates military power. As India looks like a soft power by default, it must going hard power capacity for the better implementation of soft power imitative. Sixth, a suitable environment was responsible for the birth of Panchsheel, though absence of such environment in today's scenario makes outdated. Such conception lacks proper consideration about the international environment as well as Panchsheel. In 1950's there was situational demand to find out a new passage in order to protect the hard own freedom of the so called third world countries. To fulfil such

demand India and other third world countries followed Nehruvian idealism which was based on Panchsheel. No doubt, situation has changed now, but demand for Panchsheel remains unchanged in today's changed situation also which calls for a mutual journey particularly for India and China to make the best use of 21<sup>st</sup> century for the sake of development of the people of India and China.

Above all, we should keep in mind the fact that Panchsheel is just a means, not the end. Therefore, if you would like to counter it, you must have an appropriate alternative, though it is ridiculous as well as pathetic that no one is in a position to offer such an alternative. To the contrary, some raise a question-Is alternative always essential? It is no exaggeration to call Panchsheel as a by default consensus making tool kit for India-China relation, because during last sixty years in spite of the ups and downs in the relationship, whenever the leaders of both India and China have not for discussing bilateral issues, they have shown faith in Panchsheel. Recently Dai Bingguo, the state councillor in the previous Hujintao-led administration said "Peace is in China's DNA" Thus, Panchsheel has been providing at least a stage of consensus which will give both the countries additional leverage at the rapidly globalizing world where interdependence between the states is in dispensible. So, the alternative of Panchsheel is inevitable, though, it is too difficult to find out.

At the end of the whole Debate and discussion we can come to a conclusion that the secret world wide acceptance of divers India lies in the principles, values and ideals which are best reflected on the principles of Panchsheel. Moreover, at the age of globalization interdependence is considered as an urgent need in order to be a great part of the globalised economy. In such a case Panchsheel has the capability to create an initial environment on which two or more states can go on negotiation Panchsheel has a potentiality to be a bridge between theory and practice. Now, what is to be done is to keep on debate and discussion over how such negotiation get the ultimatum and how all the countries should materialize Panchsheel as a successful diplomatic tool kit. Principles of Panchsheel can be considered as five determinants by which the intention of states towards peaceful world order can be measured better. That is why Panchsheel should be accepted as a set of determinants in order to make relations (among states) fruitful and dynamic.

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