

Abstract

Bhutan's engagement with China, although limited, has been increasing since the 1970s. Bhutan today has moved from its earlier Strategy of Defiance to the Strategy of Limited Engagement with China. Contacts at various levels between China and Bhutan have increased since the 1970s. Simultaneously, there has been significant progress in the boundary negotiations. This has been of particular concern for India. India's recognition of Bhutan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in contrast to China, has greatly influenced Bhutan's foreign policy towards China. However, at present, the public perception is changing in Bhutan. There have been some challenges in the relationship between India and Bhutan, and in the backdrop is the China factor.

The research aims to understand the growing China and Bhutan relations, the emerging politico-security discourse within Bhutan, and the various foreign policy options that may have an impact on India. An in-depth examination of China-Bhutan relations seeks to comprehend the various factors influencing their relationship. The study also concerns itself with the boundary dispute, the Doklam standoff, the Chinese and Indian motives, the strategies adopted by the three countries, and the developments in the bilateral relationship post-Doklam standoff. Furthermore, since most of the scholars concentrate on formulating a strategy to counter China, it is crucial to understand that Bhutan is expected to encounter numerous challenges and prospects in its interactions with China. As a result, the study focuses on the dynamics of India and Bhutan relations, the challenges faced by them in the present context, and the challenges and opportunities that Bhutan is likely to face while developing its relationship with China. Attempts have been made to examine the prospects in India and Bhutan relations and the policy options for India.