

lucky, ready-for-anything gallant young officer for one—but also depicts the reality shorn of gloss. Verma's cites his own father's words,

The fear of the unknown plays a great part in conditioning the behavior of men, even if as soldiers they are meant to be able to face uneven odds at times... Patriotic ideals recede into the background, what now counts is the next man and JCOs and officers. They're in it together and while fear has a numbing effect, a conscious effort has to be made to conceal it (p. 154).

Another reality that is often forgotten is of the dependence of young officers on their older, more experienced junior commissioned officers has come out in this exchange between Major BK Pant and Subedar Dashrath Singh of 2 Rajput during the Chinese attack at Namka Chu, 'Ab mein kya karu? Aap to purane aadmi hein' (p. 158).

All wars are political exercises, not least Mao Zedong's conflict with India in 1962, and success or blame both in the final reckoning belong to the political masters. But it is the duty of the generals to be prepared when the call comes and to ready themselves not for the war they want but for the war the enemy would in all likelihood thrust upon them. The same principle applies to the bureaucrats, the diplomats and the analysts in their respective lines of work. The author makes a telling remark towards the end in his discussion of how the Indian Air Force never ended up being used in the conflict that shows up all four groups—'the problem probably lay in the difference between availability of intelligence and the ability to interpret it (p. 384).

In 1962, the reality is that India's troops, successful in two world wars across multiple theatres and kinds of terrain, came up short. The failure was not just the result of lack of political foresight and diplomatic acumen but also of military leadership, of insufficient research and study of the Communist regime on the northern borders, and yes, of the citizenry that clamoured for 'action' and 'results' despite the desperate odds faced by their soldiers. Over 50 years on and despite successes against Pakistan, events down to the present show that all sides concerned in India continue to prefer dealing with the 'familiar enemy' of Pakistan and ignore or delay the steps required to face up to the longer-term and substantive challenges posed by China—military and otherwise.

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Unfolding Dynamics In China

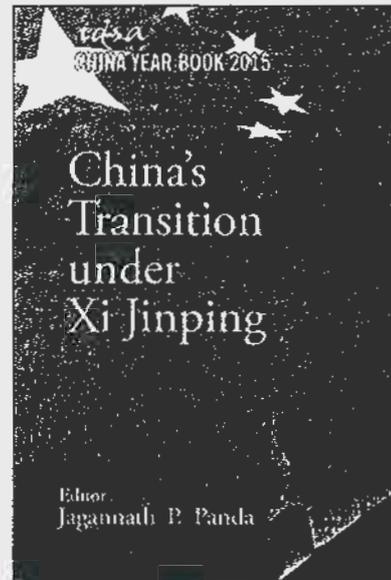
Amrita Jash

CHINA'S TRANSITION UNDER XI JINPING
Edited by Jagannath P. Panda
Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 2016, pp. ix + 427,
₹1995.00/\$59.95

'China under Xi' has become a dominant catchphrase in the International Relations lexicon. Wherein, the symbiotic connect has truly become the definition of a new form of China, which is confident, strong and does not prevail in the shadow of Deng Xiaoping's old dictum of 'keeping a low profile'. What can be rightly argued is that China under Xi categorically 'dreams' of rejuvenating the nation to its erstwhile powerful status as reflected in its uncompromising attitude. In this context, Jagannath P. Panda's quintessential query; 'Is China emerging as a "new power" under the leadership of President Xi Jinping?' (p. 3) forms the crux of the book. That is, the assessment lies in exploring the unfolding dynamics in China which is undergoing a constant flux as a result of continual transformation and initiation of reforms and policies both internal and external under the command of Xi Jinping.

Do these policy initiatives signal the emergence of China as a 'new power'? Given this pertinent query, the book is focused on assessing the developments of China's overall domestic and foreign policy behaviour, especially under the time period of the year 2015. What the book significantly points at is that Beijing is cautiously taking steps forward to emerge as a 'new power'. Understanding the strategic calculus between Xi Jinping and China and its transitional outcomes—forms the central theme of this vast volume. To validate, the volume approaches the given topic from an eclectic perspective, which categorically treats China no more as a black box. In this context, the significant query lies in understanding how Xi Jinping factors in China's changing political discourse.

The book is divided into five sections: 'Politics and Security'; 'Economy and Reforms'; 'Foreign Policy and Strategy'; 'Engaging the Major Player'; and 'Regional Outreach'—each reflecting on the transitional aspect of China's changing politics in the race to great power status. In doing so, this book traces the changing domain of China's political scenario from the vantage of a leadership perspective, wherein the 'Xi Jinping' factor looms large in the discourse. In understanding the transition, each sec-



tion takes a definitive approach. The first and second sections address the issue by taking into account China's internal institutional adjustments and reforms, which point at the ongoing debate of China's 'new normal'. These mainly include tightening security laws and regulations, limited liberalization within an established socialist structure, and promotion of the Party's developmental works in problematic areas. The third, fourth and fifth sections reflect on the external factors, mainly China's foreign and security policies as well as diplomatic equations. In here, Xi Jinping's magnanimous 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) initiative, the operation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and China's relations with neighbouring as well as remote countries form the fulcrum of enquiry. However, to note, OBOR forms the central crux that helps explain China's external transformation under Xi's operational directives. To further justify the undergoing changes, the book reflects on China's emerging regional and global profile, as mainly visible in the Asia-Pacific region where China's emerging clout is tough to ignore. The essence of the book lies in its broad based contextualization of the subject in understanding the transition that is under process. However, the trajectory of the transition remains open ended in the chapters discussed.

To conclude, the volume makes a strong case for bringing to attention how the Xi

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“What the book significantly points at is that Beijing is cautiously taking steps forward to emerge as a ‘new power’. Understanding the strategic calculus between Xi Jinping and China and its transitional outcomes—forms the central theme of this vast volume.”

factor is changing the contours of China’s geopolitical cartography. The strong point of the volume lies in its eclectic perspective that provides a comprehensive outlook. However, although the book justifies that China is embarking on a transitional path that leads to power, there still remains a marked uncertainty in predicting what the trajectory would look like. To say so, as there still remain significant caveats over identifying the critical parameters that help gauge the transition. This perceptual gap, therefore, raises certain critical questions that need deliberation, such as: will the transition be rough or smooth, how effective is the transition, is the transition pragmatic and feasible, and so on. These critical interventions raise further uncertainties over the query: is China admittedly changing under the command of Xi Jinping?

The book is comprehensive, well-articulated, written in lucid style and makes a significant value addition to the existing literature on Xi Jinping and China.

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Book News

Book News

India And Central Asia: Geopolitics, Economy And Culture, a collection of essays edited by Nasir Raza Khan, explores the shared values of Central Asia and India and the common approach of a non-conflict model of international relations. The two regions could collaborate in sharing natural resources like minerals and the transmission of oil and gas, in which Central Asia abounds, leading to a shared security and prosperity, and cultural exchanges.

Primus Books, 2016, pp. 218, ₹1495.00

Analysing Entrenched Patriarchal Attitudes

Sumita Dawra

TOO MANY MEN TOO FEW WOMEN: SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER IMBALANCE IN INDIA AND CHINA

Edited by Ravinder Kaur

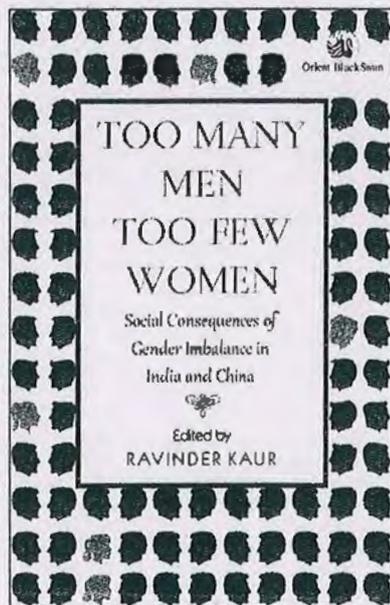
Orient BlackSwan, Hyderabad, 2016, pp. 352, ₹995.00

Over the last three decades and more, China’s growth miracle has economically transformed the nation, catapulting it to become the second largest economy in the world. Interestingly, over roughly the same period, China also saw a deterioration in its gender ratio, with a resultant sex ratio at birth (SRB) (2010–15) being ‘dangerously high’ at 116 boys for every 100 girls. A Chinese population of 700 million men and 667 million women (2014), meant China has 33 million more men than women.

The Indian economy too witnessed rapid growth rates post economic reforms in the 1990s, and is the fastest growing major economy in the world today, expected to be the third largest in the world in the next decade. However, in terms of gender balance, India has seen an equally dangerous transformation as China—SRB showed India had 111 boys for every 100 girls (2010–15), and a sex ratio of 943 women for every 1000 men (2011). An Indian population of 624 million men and 586 million women (2011), means 38 million more Indian men than women.

What do the adverse gender ratios and increasing masculinity of population in two of the most populous nations in the world, which are also growth engines for the global economy, mean for their own future as well as for the rest of the world? What would it mean for the social and economic status of the women themselves? What impact would it have on the health of the men folk, on regional development and also on government spending on social welfare programmes? These are relevant and interesting questions explored by the book *Too Many Men, Too Few Women* edited by Ravinder Kaur. The book is a collection of 11 research-based, analytical essays written by eminent scholars, working on the sex-ratio imbalance in China and India, and is an outcome of a two day seminar organized by The Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS) in November 2012 at New Delhi.

The book under review fills an important gap in literature on the subject of gender imbalance, as it addresses the consequences of deeply-entrenched traditional attitudes that have resulted in seriously



imbalanced gender ratios in two most populous countries of the world, namely, India and China—two countries that have been ‘preventing the birth of daughters for close to three decades.’

The book opens with a comprehensive introductory chapter by Kaur addressing the socially crucial question of the ‘marriage squeeze’, which refers to a mismatch in marriageable population as a consequence of bride shortage. Estimating the number of men likely to be left without brides in India and China, the introductory chapter outlines the consequences of a large number of men, predominantly from socially disadvantaged sections of the country, being left out of the marriage market and consequently foregoing the benefits of marriage. China is already witnessing marriage related migration of young women out of the poorer, rural areas to marry the richer, more educated men in urban areas. Similarly in India, brides are seen to move from the poorer eastern regions, and the higher dowry areas in the south, to the more prosperous regions in northern and western parts of the country—a ‘demography subsidy’ that is leading to the better-off regions being able to import brides from many of the poorer areas.