Unfolding Dynamics In China

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CHINA’S TRANSITION UNDER XI JINPING
Edited by Jagannath P. Panda
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Chin a under Xi has become a dominant catchphrase in the International Relations lexicon. Wherein, the synonymous 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—from 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 Players’, and ‘Regional Outreach’—each reflecting on the transitional aspect of China’s changing policies 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 section 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, namely 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 inquiry. However, in note, OBOR forms the central crux that helps explain China’s external transformation under Xi’s operational directives. To further justify the underlying changes, the book reflects on China’s emerging regional and global profile, as mainly visible in the Asia-Pacific region where China’s emerging power is slowly but surely gaining a foothold among the countries. 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...
What the book significantly points out 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.

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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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, ₹1995.00

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 the roughly the same period, China also saw a de-factorisation 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 790 million men and 657 million women (2014), meant China has 35 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 585 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 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 of the 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 marriable 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.

The Book Review / December 2016 9