



## **An Indian Scholar in China: An Insider's Perspective on China's Rise**

**Speaker:** Dr. Raj Verma

**Chair:** Ashok K. Kantha

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The speaker is a faculty at Jilin University, China and spoke about his perceptions of China as a scholar researching and teaching in China.

The Speaker talked about the three images in International Relations. The first image is of an individual who also could be a leader - his/her ideas, beliefs, perceptions, values and cognition plays a vital role. This might be a single leader or this might be a group. The second image is of the State - where the bureaucracy, executive, legislature, judiciary, state-society relationship, and so on play their role. The speaker calls it a black box of the state of how the state functions or does not function. It is a combination of realism and constructivism. The third image is the international system - which he says is anarchic and a system of self-help.

The rise of China is often talked by looking at the third image or the second image. Some have looked at the first image and said that Xi Jinping or the politburo have led China to this rise. All three perspectives would lead to different answers, and it is important to realise that there is no right or wrong answer.

There are five ways in which China's Rise is talked about. First, China is going to overtake the US, especially after 2008. At the moment this view seems to be in decline, yet prevalent. There is a concern over China's domestic economic issues. Second, China has innumerable

problems and therefore, it will never be able to overtake US. This view is said to be of Western orthodoxy and this includes Chinese who are writing about this view. Third, China will never become a superpower- it will continue to rise but it will never overtake the US. These are the realists who are aware of the domestic problems. Fourth, the imminent collapse of China, in reference to Gordon Chang's arguments. Fifth, the country which can surpass the US in the future is not China but India. These scholars argue that India's democratic credentials will favour it over China because an authoritarian regime cannot provide a neoliberal world order which is here to stay. India can head the neoliberal order. This is based on the assumption that both India and China will overtake the US as the first and the second largest economies and India will become the largest economy around 2065-70.

It is debatable when people say China is an Economic Superpower. Haft's book "Unmade in China" talks about how China is not the manufacturing hub goal that people see it to be. Haft mentions the absence of corporate laws, absence of business ethics and the perception that everything is adulterated. The income inequality gap in China is rising. The regulatory system has a major hurdle as it hinders competitiveness. Tenders can be brought for 500 yuan or less, something India has been also experiencing for a long time.

There is a general belief in China that without regime change corruption cannot be conquered in China. There is a big problem of law instability; people in China do not trust the courts as the judges or the CCP member usually take bribe. Recent assertiveness in Chinese foreign policy has undermined Chinese security in its neighborhood. The two ways in which the CCP gains its legitimacy is economic growth and stability which would bring prosperity to the Chinese and second is to protect China from external aggression. So if economic growth slows down China will move to an assertive policy.

Chinese attitude towards foreigners is characterized by the policy of non-intervention. For a country which has been closed to the outside world for long, it is viable that they do not know how to deal with other cultures that are not Chinese. Many Chinese who have stayed abroad usually have taken foreign citizenship, yet when it comes to accepting foreigners in China who have lived for many years they are skeptical. The Chinese have a preference for 'White' so somehow racial bias is prevalent. There is a soft power of being a foreigner in China.

The Chinese prefer quantity over quality in research or elsewhere Social science in China does not exist. Social science means a country's self-assessment and China with CCP regime

does not want to hear that. China has a problem of strategic culture and allies as no democratic country would voluntarily want to align with an authoritarian country.

*Report prepared by Dechen Wangmo, Research Assistant, Institute of Chinese Studies.*

### **About the Speaker**

Dr. Raj Verma is Assistant Professor in International Relations and Foreign Policy at Jilin University. He is the Series Editor of 'Routledge Series on India-China Studies'. He did his MPhil and PhD in international relations from the London School of Economics and has been Fudan Senior Fellow at Centre for BRICS Studies, Fudan University and Visiting Fellow at Centre for International Studies, LSE. He is the author of *India and China in Africa: A Comparative Perspective of the Oil Industry* (Routledge, 2017).

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