



Mains Practice Question

Q. What do you understand by “Wuhan Spirit”? Examine the reset in India-China relations in the context of Wuhan spirit and Chennai Connect. (250 words)

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Approach

- Explain ‘Wuhan Spirit’ and ‘Chennai Connect’ in the introduction.
- Examine the outcomes, shortcomings and challenges of India China relation in this context
- Conclude by signifying the importance of India China ties and how best India can work towards it,

Introduction

- ‘Wuhan Spirit’ refers to the **process of rapprochement** between India and China after an informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping at Wuhan in 2018.
- Wuhan Spirit is in line with the **five principles of peaceful coexistence** (Panchsheel) jointly advocated by China and India in the 1950s.
- This was followed by the second informal summit between India and China in October 2019 at Mamallapuram which called for ‘Chennai Connect’.
- These summits attempt to reset the India-China relationship after the Doklam crisis of 2017.

Body

Reset in India-China relations in context of Wuhan Spirit and Chennai Connect:

Positive outcomes:

- **Peace and stability:** It provided new opportunities to strengthen strategic communications so that **‘differences should not become disputes’** and avoiding any Doklam like situation in future.
- **Global partnership:** Enhancing mutual cooperation in promoting **economic globalization**, with an aim to jointly make positive contributions to global peace and development.
- **Regional security:** To cooperate, for the first time ever, on a **joint project in Afghanistan.**
- **Recognizing India’s objections to BRI:** China has indicated that India’s refusal to join the Belt and Road Initiative will not come in the way of economic cooperation.
- **Economic cooperation:** China recognizing India’s concerns of rising **trade deficit** and shall take steps to address it. Also, Chinese business and industrial houses could now choose India as a destination for **greenfield projects** and not just mergers and acquisitions.
- **Highlighting soft power:** While the city of Wuhan represented China’s economic power, Mamallapuram represented India’s rich cultural heritage symbolizing ancient linkages between China and Pallava dynasty of South India.

Shortcomings:

- **Geo-political compulsions:** The informal summits had limited success in handling major

diplomatic disengagements like China's objections related to India's move on abrogating Article 370, protests in Hong Kong, freedom of navigation in the South China Sea- were omitted.

- **Mutual distrust:** Deadlock over the land boundary issue keeps the two sides disengaged and border skirmishes keep an atmosphere of distrust. For ex: Chinese displeasure over India's military exercise 'Chang Thang' in Ladakh and 'Him Vijay' in Arunachal Pradesh near the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- **Multilateral issues:** China's support to 'all-weather friend' Pakistan has created obstacles for India to effectively take strong counter-terrorism measures against Pakistan. Similarly, India's continued accommodation of the Dalai Lama and close India-US relations are seen by political analysts as creating suspicions in China.

Conclusion

'Wuhan Spirit' and 'Chennai Connect' provides an opportunity for the two great civilizations to come together in overcoming the rising polarization and deglobalization which could lead to the emergence of '**Asian Century**'. Such Informal Summits provide an important opportunity to deepen dialogue and to promote mutual understanding at the Leaders' level in line with the 'Wuhan Spirit' and the 'Chennai Connect'.

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