



**Recent Initiatives to Promote China Studies in  
India: A Preliminary Report and Assessment**

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## **Contents**

**Introduction**

**Expansion**

**Public and private, old and new**

**Foreign collaboration**

**Opportunities**

**Building research capacity**

**Infrastructure and resources**

**Orientation and policy**

**ICS initiatives**

**Conclusion**

# Recent Initiatives to Promote China Studies in India: A Preliminary Report and Assessment

## Introduction

With almost every aspect of life in today's world feeling the impact of an increasingly powerful China, the strategic importance for India of studying China seriously hardly needs to be emphasised. Yet, although the "buzz" about China has certainly increased, it is apparent that this has not necessarily translated into a more informed understanding of China here in India. In connection with activities to mark its 50th anniversary, the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi, felt that it would be appropriate to conduct an assessment of the state of China studies in India. Hence this report, which is based on a survey that was carried out in 2019 and early 2020.

Since ICS had already in 2006 organised a conference on the theme of China studies in India and produced a report based on it<sup>1</sup>, it was decided to focus on what has been happening *since that time*. In other words, our brief was to look into initiatives taken in the last ten to fifteen years to promote China studies here and to assess how fruitful these have been as well as the challenges that remain. We were aware that this has been a period of much more dense interactions between India and China, particularly in the economic sphere. Interest in China among the wider public and coverage of it in the news media in India has also significantly increased. We wanted to see how these developments had if at all impacted the serious study of China in India.

As a start, we compiled a list of as many institutions as we could, both old and new, which are engaged in some way in teaching or in the production of knowledge about China.<sup>2</sup> In doing so, we were aware that the sites of knowledge production about China here are diverse, and are not confined to educational institutions or research institutes alone. To name just a few, government departments, business organisations, agencies within the defence establishment, and the news media also engage in research and investigation on China. However, to keep the whole exercise more manageable, our list was limited to universities and colleges, research institutes and

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<sup>1</sup>See Madhavi Thampi (ed.), *Review of China Studies in India: A Colloquium*. Delhi, Institute of Chinese Studies, *Occasional Studies* No.15, November 2007.

<sup>2</sup>See appendix for list

foundations engaged in promoting China studies in India. This last group also included foundations based abroad that have actively involved themselves in trying to strengthen the study and teaching of China in India.

We then sought to find out as much as we could about these institutions and what they have been doing in the last ten to fifteen years to advance the study of China here, with the focus on new initiatives. While using relevant material that these institutions had placed in the public domain, we also contacted people working in these institutions individually -- in person, on the phone or through email. We are very grateful to our respondents who not only spent their valuable time answering our queries, but who also shared with us their candid assessments which helped us to understand much better the real achievements as well as challenges of trying to promote China studies in India in the recent period. A workshop held in Delhi in January 2020, in which many stakeholders in the promotion of China studies in India were present, also provided very useful inputs into this exercise.<sup>3</sup> We were however hampered by the lack of manpower and other resources to carry out as comprehensive a survey as we would have wished.<sup>4</sup> Hence, it must be emphasised at the outset that this is only a report based on some preliminary findings. It is our sincere hope that this work can be resumed and carried forward to produce a more comprehensive and authoritative study and analysis in the near future.

Further, we are well aware that any serious effort to assess the state of China studies in India has to also look into the *quality* of the work being done, and not just at the number of institutions, the volume of output, and so on. In fact, the quality of the work being done here should be one of our most serious concerns at the present time, when much information and disinformation on China is being generated and circulated. However, the present exercise was conceived of as a limited one, and issues of quality per se have not been the focus here. Again, we hope that the present survey provides a basis for a future exercise in which issues like methodology, sources, reliability and originality, etc., are examined in a self-critical manner so that the quality of the work being done here on China can be improved.

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<sup>3</sup>See appendix for list of participants at the workshop.

<sup>4</sup>My sincere thanks are due to Dr. Tshering Chonzom and Samanvaya Hooda for the hard work they put into this project particularly in the early stages.

In the period since we conducted our investigations, two events of importance have taken place that could have serious implications for the subject under review. One is the coronavirus pandemic and the other is the heightened tension on the Sino-Indian border. The full fallout of these developments is not yet known, but they could certainly affect matters of great concern to the future of China studies here, such as the availability of funding, the extent and scope of interaction between Indian and Chinese academics, the possibilities for doing field work in China, and so on. Already, it appears that the dropping of Chinese from among the list of foreign languages recommended for teaching in Indian schools in the New Education Policy (NEP) is an unfortunate outcome of the downturn in India-China relations. Certainly, the repercussions can be expected to be negative, in the short run if not in the long term.

In preparing this report, the 2006 Report referred to above served as a useful benchmark to see how far, and in what direction, things have developed in the field of China studies in India since then. We revisit some of the issues flagged in that report, such as the criticism that China studies here has been 'Delhi-centered' or the language capability deficiency in the study of China carried out here. In this, we have been greatly assisted by a mid-term review presented by Patricia Uberoi in 2011 in her keynote address at the Fourth All-India Conference of China Studies held in Hyderabad.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, several new developments have taken place, which were not anticipated at the time of the 2006 Workshop, most notably the much greater role that private universities and foundations are playing in the development of China studies here.

In the following pages, we present and analyse our main findings. In this report, we take "China studies" to mean both the study of the Chinese language as well as of other aspects of China. We have adopted a thematic framework in order to highlight the commonality of the experiences faced across various institutions and agencies involved in the promotion of China studies in India, and to facilitate discussion on what needs to be done. Although ICS commissioned this project, the views expressed in the following pages are those of the author alone, as are any errors that may be found in them.

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<sup>5</sup>Patricia Uberoi, "China Studies in India - 3", *China Report* 49:2 (2013), 185-196.

## **Expansion**

We begin on an optimistic note. There has definitely been an expansion of China studies across India, as compared to the situation fifteen years ago. The following section attempts to break down where and how this expansion has taken place.

### *Public Universities*

In the last few years, a number of new central and state universities have been established which have introduced Chinese language and/or Chinese studies programmes. These include Sikkim University, Doon University, the Central University of Jharkhand and the Central University of Gujarat. The Department of Chinese was established in Sikkim University in 2010, the Chinese language programme within the School of Languages in Doon University was also set up in 2010, the programme at the Centre for Chinese Studies at the CUG began in 2011, and the Centre for Far East Languages in the CUJ started in 2012. Other central universities which have started to offer Chinese language are the Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University (Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya) in Wardha, Maharashtra, Tezpur University in Assam and The English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad. Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies in Madhya Pradesh, a state university, has also begun to offer courses in Chinese language. The timing of the introduction of so many Chinese courses suggests that there was a concerted push from the government at a certain time to make studying Chinese part of the curriculum of the new universities at that time.

Most of the new centres focus on teaching Chinese language, although Sikkim University at least offers students the opportunity to earn higher degrees in Chinese studies as well. As our respondent there noted, while the focus has been on intensive language training, "the Department was founded with a vision to revive and popularize Sinology or Sinological Studies (*hanxue*) in India." All the programmes initially at least included an integrated 5-year BA/MA course in Chinese language. However, for certain reasons, including lack of adequate faculty, the integrated programme has in some cases had to be temporarily discontinued, and admission to the BA and MA courses have been conducted separately.



Apart from these newer universities, in Delhi University the Department of East Asian Studies introduced a new Master's Programme in 2008, substantially expanding the number of students studying China and East Asia as well as the number and variety of courses offered to them. The M Phil programme thereafter was also completely revamped to make it more suitable for the graduates of the new Master's programme.<sup>6</sup> In the other older centres of Chinese studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Banaras Hindu University and Visva-Bharati in Santiniketan, major structural changes do not seem to have taken place in the period under consideration, though various measures were introduced to widen the variety of courses open to students, expand collaboration with other institutions, and help students to access scholarships to study in China and elsewhere. Some of these attempts were rendered infructuous however by funding and regulatory constraints. (See section on Building Research Capacity)

In Jamia Milia Islamia in Delhi, a UGC China Studies Programme has been established within the MMAJ Academy of International Studies. Focusing mainly on non-degree Chinese language courses, it also organises short-term courses on China studies. The University of Mumbai established a programme in Chinese language in 2013, in association with China's Hanban. It houses one of the two Confucius Institutes<sup>7</sup> in India, the other being the one in the privately-run Vellore Institute of Technology in Tamilnadu. In southern India, the Institute for Contemporary Chinese Studies at Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam, Kerala, was established in 2011 under the UGC Area Studies programme. While offering courses related to China to students of IR and other departments, it has recently started an MPhil programme in Chinese studies, and expects to develop a PhD programme as well.

A promising development is the inauguration of the first China studies centre in an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). The China Studies Centre at IIT-M in Chennai was established in 2011, within the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Centre has a doctoral programme covering various aspects of contemporary China. The Indian Institutes of

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<sup>6</sup>The MPhil programme in Delhi University's Department of East Asian Studies was however discontinued in 2014.

<sup>7</sup>Confucius Institutes, supported by the Hanban (the Office of Chinese Language Council International) under China's Ministry of Education, operate worldwide in collaboration with partner educational institutions in other countries.

Management however have so far not set up any systematic programmes for the study of China or the Chinese language, although IIM-Indore has a faculty member who has specialised in the study of China's political economy and has a doctoral degree from Beijing University.

### *Private Universities*

A significant development in recent years has been the increasing interest shown by private universities in offering China studies or language programmes.

The Vellore Institute of Technology has been offering non-degree Chinese language courses at its Chinese Language Centre since 2009. In Mumbai, the KJ Somaiya Centre for Buddhist Studies also offers a Certificate course in Chinese. OP Jindal Global University in Sonapat, Haryana, established its Centre for India-China Studies in 2014, with a research focus on law and governance. Shiv Nadar University in Greater Noida offers courses on China at the undergraduate level, and also has a tie-up with Duke Kunshan University in China to teach Chinese language. Christ University in Bangalore began to offer courses on China within its Department of International Studies and History from 2018. This followed a workshop there organised with the help of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the United Board for Christian Higher Education and the Institute of Chinese Studies, on "Teaching about China in India", which was attended by about 25 institutions, many of them with an interest in starting China-related courses. In 2019, KR Mangalam University in Gurugram, Haryana, inaugurated a BA (Hons) programme in Chinese language. Ashoka University in Sonapat, Haryana, is also in the process of setting up a Centre for China Studies. Separately, Ashoka University is developing a Mandarin Language Teaching Programme that aims to support the teaching of Chinese in other universities. Amity University in Noida also offers Chinese language in its School of Foreign Languages. As would be expected, there is a big difference in the fees charged for the courses in private and public universities.

### *Private language institutes*

Across various Indian cities, private institutes that teach Chinese language have mushroomed. It is hard to have a count of these. Offering a variety of short-term courses, these cater mainly to working people who need to know some Chinese for their work, or who feel knowing Chinese

would be an advantage to their job and career prospects. Occasionally, they also cater to students who want to pick up some Chinese without going through the more complicated and selective procedure of enrolling in a university programme. Unlike in the more established university courses, where it is rare to find native speakers of the language, these institutes use the services of native Chinese speakers from China, Taiwan or elsewhere where available, especially in the bigger metropolitan cities. Also, unlike in the regular university courses, these institutes are free to design courses and employ teachers as they like, as long as they cater to the felt needs of their clientele. The HSK certification helps to ensure a more level playing field between the students of these institutes and those of the regular university programmes.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, some universities, such as Bangalore University, are now beginning to offer similar short intensive courses in the Chinese language, aimed at young professionals, apart from their regular Chinese courses.

### *Student intake*

With the new centres and programmes in both public and private universities and the language institutes, the number of Indian students exposed to knowledge of China and the Chinese language has certainly increased. While it is nearly impossible to have a total count of the number of such students, it can be estimated to run into the hundreds. As an indication, the CUG currently has a total of 69 students in its BA and MA classes. Sikkim University has 72 students in its BA, MA and PhD programmes. The CUJ has an annual intake of about 40 students in its combined BA/MA programme. Doon University has about 25 students in each batch in its integrated BA/MA programme.

Student intake into the older China studies centres in universities began to expand significantly as early as 2001, and has mostly plateaued in the last few years. Every year, the number who apply for the language courses in these centres is many times those who actually gain admission.

As significant as the *numbers* of students taking China-related courses is their regional spread. In particular, the centres in the new central universities in Sikkim, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and

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<sup>8</sup>This refers to the *Hanyushuipingkaoshi* (汉语水平考试), a standardised Chinese language proficiency test administered by the Hanban under China's Ministry of Education.

Gujarat attract students across many states. Sikkim University has students from Sikkim, Assam, Manipur, Ladakh and Bengal, as well as from outside the region, from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Uttarakhand. While the centre at CUJ has students mainly from Bihar, UP, West Bengal and of course Jharkhand, it also has students from Rajasthan and Haryana, and from Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh as well. At the centre in CUG, the majority of the students are from Bihar, Jharkhand and UP, with students also coming from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Sikkim, Rajasthan, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

### *Research Institutes/Think Tanks*

In 2006, the Institute of Chinese Studies in Delhi was the only research institute dedicated to the study of China in the country. Since then, the Chennai Centre for China Studies (C3S) was set up in 2008, and the Centre for China Analysis and Strategy in Delhi in 2013. In 2017, the Ministry of External Affairs set up its own in-house centre known as the Centre of Contemporary China Studies.

The Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis in Delhi had been conducting studies on China for some time, but the study of China has picked up since 2008-09 according to the current coordinator of its East Asia Centre. The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies in Delhi, which was founded in 1996, continues to have a China Research Programme. The venerable Indian Council of World Affairs does not have a separate research programme on China, but nevertheless has faculty who focus on China and hosts seminars and other such events related to China.

Several other think tanks that have a more generalised focus have nevertheless taken greater interest in China in the last few years, and have one or more research fellows or analysts who regularly study and write on China. These include the Centre for Policy Research and the Vivekananda International Foundation in Delhi, the Observer Research Foundation in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata, the National Institute of Advanced Studies and the Takshashila Foundation in Bengaluru, and others.

The number of publications with a China focus brought out by Indian research institutes has mushroomed in the last few years. Although *China Report*, the quarterly brought out by ICS, remains the only peer-reviewed academic journal on China from India, a number of other institutes bring out newsletters and bulletins. These include the IDSA's bimonthly *East Asia Military Monitor* and its annual *East Asia Strategic Review*; Takshashila Institution's *PLA Insight* and *Eye on China* newsletters; the Chennai Centre for China Studies' *Bamboo Shoots* and *China Watch*; and the India China Economic and Cultural Council (ICEC)'s bimonthly *India-China Chronicle*. In addition, ORF produces a weekly web series called *The China Chronicles*, while NIAS Bangalore hosts the online "India in the Chinese Media Project". The Delhi Policy Group brings out a monthly, *China Monitor*, while VIF brings out a daily bulletin called *China: Daily Scan*.

In addition, each of these institutions brings out articles, news briefs, policy papers and analyses. While the overwhelming emphasis is on foreign policy and strategic issues, writings on the Chinese economy and business, media, leadership and other issues are also produced from time to time, depending on the thrust area of the institution. The NIAS project on "India in the Chinese Media" is somewhat unique in focusing on Chinese language materials. Although the fact that there are now a number of institutions in India that are regularly writing on China is a positive development, there is nevertheless much overlap in their written output in terms of focus and sources.

#### *Foundations and non-profit organisations*

Another recent phenomenon is the involvement of more private foundations, including those based abroad, in promoting China studies in India. In earlier decades, the Ford Foundation had played the major role in this respect, but more recently, the India China Institute (ICI) at the New School for Social Research in New York, the Harvard-Yenching Institute, and the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, based in New York and Hong Kong, have taken active interest.

The ICI has supported recent PhDs and early career professionals in India working on China through its Emerging Scholars (2010-14) and its China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative (2016-20) programmes, as well as its India China Knowledge and Capacity Building Initiative. It has offered Indian scholars opportunities to do research in China as well as hosted them for month-long residencies in New York. The Harvard-Yenching Institute has collaborated with the ICS Delhi and partner institutions in China in offering since 2013 a pioneering five-year doctoral fellowship for young Indian scholars working on China, supporting these scholars for one academic year each in China and in the US. To assist these and other qualified young scholars in the initial stages of their careers in India, and to encourage teaching on China in Indian universities, the HYI has collaborated with the China India Foundation and Ashoka University in instituting post-doctoral teaching fellowships in Indian universities from 2020. In addition, it has worked with ICS and the United Board in organising teacher training workshops to promote teaching on China at the college level.

The China India Foundation is a privately set up and managed organisation in India set up in 2019 with the aim of promoting high quality scholarship on China in India as well as knowledge sharing and cultural exchange between India and China. It has been working closely with Ashoka University and other partners in these endeavours, as noted above.

A thrust area in the work of these organisations seems to be to enhance the quality of scholarly work on China done by Indian scholars, by supporting their research and language capability, widening their exposure to the work of other scholars abroad, and supporting them in their early careers back in India. At the same time, they also aim to support and expand the teaching on China in Indian higher education institutions. Although these organisations have also worked in cooperation with public universities, it is private educational institutions that seem to be more responsive to their efforts. Since their efforts are not institution-specific, but are aimed at promoting China studies across a variety of public and private educational institutions, they hold out the possibility of scaling up the presence of China studies across India, although it is still too early to tell how far they will succeed.

### *Section summary*

One of the major shortcomings of China studies in India has been that the number of institutions engaged in the study and teaching of China here has been abysmally small, and not at all commensurate with the size of both countries and the importance of China for India. Another has been the concentration of the few that exist in one or two metropolises, particularly Delhi. In that sense, the expansion in their number and in their geographical spread in recent years has been an encouraging development.

The main driver in this expansion of interest in China seems to have been the growing economic engagement between India and China. Moreover, the growing popularity of Chinese language in particular seems to have been student-driven, and not government-driven or institution-driven, at least in the initial stages. The rapid increase in the number of students applying for Chinese language courses after 2001 was due largely to the growing job prospects in the private sector for those knowing Chinese. The students who have been drawn to these courses have not been limited to those from the big metropolitan centres; on the contrary, they come from different regions of India. The MA programme in East Asian Studies in Delhi University attracts a particularly large number of students from the north-eastern states, while the language courses in the new central universities attract a number of students from Bihar, UP and Jharkhand in particular.

Between 2010 and 2014, the evidence points to a certain push from the central and state governments to open new centres for China studies. In the period since then, however, the push for expansion seems to have come more from private institutions. The new programmes in the public universities continue to function and to attract students, but the momentum has been slowed in many cases by erratic institutional, infrastructural and financial support. The atmosphere in the private universities, in some cases backed by private foundations, appears more upbeat on the whole. However, the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy generally, and consequently on funding for such programmes in particular, remains to be seen.

The model of expansion has thus, on the whole, been driven by public demand and been unplanned (or only partially planned), with a mixture of public and private participation -- a model in keeping with the nature of the Indian economy as a whole. A downside of this model has been that there continues to be an uneven distribution of efforts across the country. For instance, in spite of the demonstrated popularity of China-related courses for students from the north-east region, there are few centres of teaching and research on China there apart from Sikkim University. Another shortcoming of this model is that initiatives begun with good intentions have not been sustained or further developed, particularly as priorities of different governments have changed. Needless to say, building up capacity in an area like China studies requires sustained inputs and long-term vision, and not flash-in-the-pan efforts. Expansion has also meant spreading resources, both human and material, thinly. A single teacher or two teaching Chinese in a university may manage to impart instruction to a certain number of students. But a critical mass of faculty and resources in one location are needed to sustain good quality research and to act as a magnet for others to interest themselves in China.

Yet another drawback of this model is that there is much overlap in terms of research and a tendency to cater to the preoccupations of the day, leading to a preponderance of courses and output focused on International Relations and India-China geo-political rivalry. In Chinese language too, departments and centres are under pressure to offer courses that would lead to remunerative employment for the students, and to curtail those that would lead to deeper grasp of the Chinese language and civilisation and to the mastery of Chinese sources to be used in research.

### **Public and private, old and new**

Theoretically speaking, a mixture of public and private institutions, both old and new ones, all active in the field of China studies seems to be a happy combination, particularly in a country like India. A diversity of institutions could be expected to engender more competitive energy and more variety in terms of focus and what is offered to students.



However, in practice things do not always work out this way. The sprouting of new outposts of research and teaching in this field has unfortunately gone hand in hand with the atrophy, and even undeclared dismantling, of long established centres of China studies. In some of these centres like the Department of East Asian Studies in Delhi University, no interviews have been held for recruitment of faculty for Chinese studies for years, even though most of the senior faculty have retired in this period and their posts are waiting to be filled. Courses are being taught with half the regular faculty strength, and sometimes by faculty without the requisite specialisation. In Banaras Hindu University, faculty strength was increased on paper from 3 to 7 in this period, but because the posts have not been filled up, the effective teaching strength has been actually reduced to just 2! Even ad-hoc appointments against regular posts have been discouraged, and instead departments and centres have had to resort to hiring guest teachers on a need basis to be able to continue with their courses. With no job security beyond the few months of their contracts, these guest teachers cannot be expected to develop a lasting commitment to their institutions or to innovate or design courses or improve their pedagogical skills. Similarly, those regular faculty who have been waiting for their promotion for years and even decades can lose hope and have little incentive to give their best.

Scholarships, research associateships and field trip grants have also been cut back. Modest scholarships that have served to attract good students to Chinese studies in the past are almost non-existent now in these universities. The position of research associate, that often served to sustain new PhDs, keep them connected with academia and enabled them to publish their research, has also been mostly done away with. The exception to this has been the recent private initiative by the China India Foundation in collaboration with Ashoka University to institute post-doctoral fellowships in China studies and locate them in different universities. Field trip grants, which are crucial for young scholars to do serious research on China, have also been reduced. In JNU, for instance, the field trip grants have been significantly reduced from 1 month to just 15 days. As those who have sought to do in-depth research in China know, this is just not enough, particularly for new scholars.<sup>9</sup> Library grants for books and journals have been reduced, or have not kept pace with the rising cost of these items. Even though access to online databases

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<sup>9</sup>Varun Sahni, "The Fallacies and Flaws of Area Studies in India", *International Studies* 46, 1&2 (2009), p.61.

have partially offset the deficiency, faculty and students mostly do not have access to Chinese databases which would be required for serious research on China.

Even if private universities are showing interest in developing China studies programmes and centres, it is unlikely that these can replace the contribution of public universities in a country like India. It is the public universities that have enabled a wide cross-section of students from different backgrounds, and especially those without much economic resources, to join the field of China studies. The fees in the private universities, however good their programmes may be, can be prohibitively expensive for many students. The old problem of China expertise in India -- that it rests on a narrow base -- will thus continue. So far, it is public universities like JNU, with a well-established tradition of China studies and a diversified student body, who have made the major contribution to staffing the new centres in different universities across the country.

Something that does not seem to strike policy makers and even university administrators is that it takes years to build up solid centres of quality research and instruction in China studies. Apart from the material prerequisites such as good library facilities and language laboratories, the more intangible aspects such as the morale of faculty and students and a tradition of teaching and research in the field, are also important. Letting established institutions stagnate or decline is an easy option, but the price for this neglect will be paid by the country later.

### **Foreign collaboration**

A factor that has positively affected the opportunities available to students of Chinese language and studies in recent years is the greater number of scholarships available from China or Taiwan. Earlier, Indian students were more dependent on the MHRD-Chinese Government scholarships to go to China for language training and research. However, even as the number of students in China studies has increased significantly, the number of scholarships available to them through this channel has not kept pace; moreover, these scholarships are now offered to a wider variety of specialisations, with the result that the number available each year to scholars of China studies has actually *decreased*.

In these circumstances, it would not be wrong to say that the scholarships offered by foreign institutions have served as a lifeline to students wanting to either do further research or pursue more intensive training in a Chinese-speaking environment. About 500 such scholarships were being offered annually from the PRC, although the number came down a little in 2019 and can be expected to decrease further given the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic and the current downturn in Sino-Indian relations. Another 25 scholarships are offered by Taiwan. The scholarships available from the PRC are the Confucius Institute Scholarships (CIS), and those from the China Scholarship Council (CSC), the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), as well as directly from Chinese universities. From Taiwan, students can avail of the Ministry of Education's Taiwan Scholarship and Huayu Enrichment Scholarship, as well as scholarships offered directly by universities. Through these scholarships, the number of Indian students getting higher level language training and acquiring direct experience of China and Chinese academia has greatly increased.

Scholarships and fellowships to pursue China studies are now also offered to Indian scholars by non-Chinese institutions like the India-China Institute at the New School for Social Research in New York and the Harvard-Yenching Institute. (See section II f. above). These initiatives have emerged from the broader interest of these institutions in Sino-Indian studies and in supporting China studies more generally. As one of our respondents there noted: "China and India, while sharing deep and complex historical connections as well as multiple common contemporary challenges, nevertheless both seem to suffer a deficit of informed knowledge and understanding of the other." Hence, supporting young scholars from both these countries who are engaged in study of the other, has emerged as a meaningful project for them to take up. Unlike the scholarships from the PRC and Taiwan, the scholarships and fellowships from these institutions are designed specifically to support young scholars who will carry on their work of teaching and research *back in India*, so as to build up the corpus of qualified China scholars in India. However, the absorption of the recipients of these scholarships in Indian academia once they return to India, in spite of their unique qualifications, remains a problem.

Along with the deepening economic engagement between China and India, and the increasing interest here in various aspects of China's growth story, collaboration between Indian and

Chinese academics has also grown. In earlier years, a relatively small number of Indian China scholars used to interact mainly with Chinese scholars of South Asia with whom they acquired some familiarity over a period of time. Now the number of Indian academics interacting with Chinese scholars has expanded outside of the small fraternity of China experts, and it is not uncommon for Indian academics from diverse disciplines to engage with their Chinese counterparts directly, whether in conferences in India, China or elsewhere, or by extending invitations for Chinese scholars to visit India. This has played an important role in the process of mainstreaming the study of China here. Joint projects between Indian and Chinese scholars are more rare. One of the more ambitious of these was the government-sponsored *Encyclopaedia of India-China Cultural Contacts* brought out in 2014. Indian academics have also been invited as visiting scholars and professors in Chinese universities. The reverse trend, of Chinese scholars being invited to teach in Indian universities, has also been taking place, though this has been mainly in private universities in recent years.

Foreign contributions have sometimes also helped to plug infrastructure and funding gaps. These have been mainly in the form of donations of books and teaching materials and language laboratory facilities, sometimes from the Chinese embassy or consulates in India. MOUs between Indian universities and Chinese universities have proliferated. These MOUs have helped to support faculty and student exchange in particular. However, it is also a fact that many of these MOUs, after being signed, remain a dead letter and eventually lapse.

In spite of these activities, Indian academic collaboration with scholars from the PRC is hobbled by policy and bureaucratic hurdles of many kinds. China's growing engagement with the rest of the world on multiple fronts has opened up avenues for academic collaboration between Indian and Chinese academia as well. However, due to geopolitical tensions, it is academic collaboration that is the first target of official restrictions from the Indian side. This has applied particularly to granting visas for even well known Chinese academics to visit India or participate in conferences here. It is very hard for Indian academic institutions to plan a conference with the participation of Chinese academics, as quite often they fail to get visas or, even if they do, these are granted at the eleventh hour. The reverse has not generally been the case, at least until now. It is hard to understand how academics from the PRC coming for short-duration conferences

pose a greater threat to security than the much larger number of businessmen, tourists or other professionals who visit India from China.

Visa restrictions are now increasingly applied to visiting teachers as well. Earlier, some of the Chinese language departments benefited from the presence of visiting professors from the PRC, facilitated by agreements between the two countries. It goes without saying that the assistance of native speakers is important in the teaching of foreign languages, particularly languages like Chinese with their own tonal and other distinctive characteristics. Now, to find native speakers, departments and centres have to limit themselves to assistance from Taiwan or else scramble to get the services of untrained foreigners who happen to be residing in India at any given time.

In October 2019, an official circular was issued which virtually put a stop to MOUs signed between Indian universities and the PRC. It was announced that each of these, including those already in operation, would be subject to scrutiny and would require government approval, and top administrators and heads of department of the concerned universities have been subject to grilling about these. Moreover, it can be expected that the recent aggravation of tensions over the border between India and China will further negatively impact collaboration between Indian and Chinese academia. Again, in the long run, the loss will also be ours if all avenues of academic engagement between the two countries are squeezed dry.

## **Opportunities**

It hardly needs to be said that China studies in India can thrive only in conditions in which young specialists in this field find employment corresponding to their qualifications. The major expansion in the demand to learn the Chinese language and studies in the last fifteen years or more has been fuelled not just by general interest in a rising China but by the real prospect of securing gainful employment.

The major source of employment for China specialists, and especially those with good knowledge of the language, has been in the business arena. This is perhaps the major departure from the situation in the earlier period. Chinese companies in India, Indian companies with

interests in China, and multinational companies more generally, are the major employers. These include companies like Tata Consultancy Services, Hewlett Packard, Oracle, Wipro, Oppo and many others. Many of the centres approached in this survey have confirmed that a good number of their students are absorbed by these companies with attractive pay packages, often through direct campus placement. Indeed, knowledge of Chinese has become a way to greatly improve one's economic status for a number of students.

The opportunities available in the business sphere are in a way a double-edged sword for China studies in India. On the one hand, these opportunities are responsible for attracting a number of young people here to the study of China and the Chinese language. On the other hand, as some of our faculty respondents have lamented, they divert many good students away from pursuing further studies.

Scholarships to pursue further studies abroad, mainly in China or Taiwan, have provided another avenue for those students who do not enter the business world directly after completing their studies here in India. These certainly help to improve the language skills of those students who avail of them. Those who join degree programmes in Chinese universities also acquire much greater familiarity with China and Taiwan. Many stay on there for extended periods, often taking up jobs there.

Ultimately, however, the health of China studies in India depends on the availability of employment in academia or in research institutes, and also in government institutions, *back in India*. The opening of new China studies centres discussed above, along with the willingness of think tanks to absorb some young scholars of China, has been a positive development in this sense. But the overall number of such opportunities are far too few to absorb even the small number of China specialists produced every year and, coupled with the brakes on recruitment in public universities, the situation is not very hopeful.

For an individual to gain an in-depth knowledge of China and master the Chinese language calls for much dedicated effort, and takes more years than many other subjects in the humanities and social sciences. Solving the problem of providing timely and gainful employment in India to

young China specialists who stay the course is therefore crucial to developing China studies here.

### **Building research capacity**

India's relationship with China has been long, complex and unique. It goes without saying that our understanding of China should not be borrowed second-hand from other countries, but must be based first of all on our own investigation and perspective. For this, the capacity for doing high quality and multi-dimensional research on China in this country needs to be built up and sustained. This is not a luxury, but a necessity, for our country, given our geographical location and the developing geopolitical realities.

However, sound research capacity takes many years and even decades to build up, and we are paying the price for having invested too little in this direction over the past several decades. The new centres of China studies that are emerging are a promising sign, but with limited faculty they are hard pressed to even teach their courses, and cannot be expected to take on additionally the burden of mentoring young research scholars, at least until they are able to develop additional capacity. In this connection, the stagnation in the more established centres and the depletion of senior faculty in some of them in recent years will certainly hit the rearing of new research scholars more than anything else. It is important to have senior faculty at the level of professors and associate professors both to guide research scholars and to make the needs of the China centres or departments heard at the top levels of administration in the universities.

The think tanks or research institutes also have an important role to play in nurturing China research scholars. However, few of them seem to be able to afford the luxury of allowing their young researchers to engage in long-term, in-depth research on China, with the opportunities for field trips and intensive language training that the university system allows when it is functioning properly. While there are exceptions, it would not be untrue to say that many research institutes are engaged in competitive production of papers on issues of the day that rarely break new ground or explore new data or sources of information.

In doing research on China here, one of the biggest hurdles today seems to be, much as it was fifteen years ago, the use of the Chinese language to do research -- whether this means using primary and secondary sources in Chinese, or conducting research in the field directly without interpreters. The number of students in India who have learnt some Chinese has gone up significantly, but the number of Indian scholars who utilise Chinese sources in their research remains low. Without this, it hardly needs to be said, very little work that is original, that contributes to the already existing scholarship on China, can be done. Incentives must be put in place to encourage researchers who utilise Chinese seriously in their research. If such scholars receive no more appreciation than those who churn out papers based on English language sources, then why should they put in the hard work? At the same time, students need to be taught how to use Chinese sources and data critically.

In several university centres, the gap between those with the required methodological training in their disciplines or fields of research, and those who study Chinese language seriously, remains as wide as ever. In the Department of East Asia Studies at Delhi University, the attempt was made -- through the new MA and revamped M Phil programmes in East Asian studies -- to ensure that those who enrolled in a PhD programme in Chinese studies would have already had three and a half years training in the language. However, with the scrapping of the MPhil programme, the crucial 3 extra semesters of higher level language training has been dispensed with. At various stages, whether in admission to PhD programmes or eligibility for research scholarships, there is pressure to water down the language competence required of candidates to the point where it becomes merely a token requirement.

Given the increasing number and diversity of Indian students who are opting for Chinese, it would be much better if language training textbooks and other materials are compiled by qualified Indian faculty to suit conditions here. Instead of teaching Chinese only through English, it would possibly be more effective if Chinese is also taught directly through vernacular Indian languages, depending on where the maximum demand to learn Chinese is coming from. It appears that, apart from a couple of early examples of textbooks compiled by some JNU faculty decades back, there are few other examples of indigenously produced textbooks which cater to the syllabi for Chinese language degree courses here. Faculty can be incentivised to



prepare and publish textbooks on Chinese suited to Indian conditions. Similarly, a programme for translating into some Indian languages key works published abroad on China suitable for undergraduate level teaching should be encouraged.

### **Infrastructure and resources**

Across many of the university centres and departments of Chinese that we contacted, respondents were almost uniformly outspoken about the lack of adequate resources to run their programmes or realise the goals of their institutions.

By resources we mean, first of all, human resources -- suitably qualified faculty, both Indian and native speakers of Chinese. As pointed out above, most departments are running with a skeletal staff who are hard put to cope with the demands of teaching, not to mention research or mentoring of research students. The central government's decision to open new centres of Chinese studies in universities is a positive step, but resources are spread thinly. Some of the centres, particularly those outside the main metropolitan cities, have difficulty finding qualified faculty willing to join them, while in others the university authorities have frozen recruitment even when posts for teachers of Chinese language or studies have been sanctioned. The plight of lone China experts in universities, particularly when they are junior faculty or they are far removed from their peers, is not an easy one. Though these individuals work with great dedication and take pride in what they are able to achieve, there is much to be frustrated about as well. Often, their voices are not heard when they put forward proposals or requests for more facilities to the higher university authorities. They also have to struggle to stay connected with the wider China studies fraternity in the country.

One contributory factor to the lack of faculty seems to be the propensity of qualified students to discontinue their studies and take up jobs in the business sector with its lucrative pay packages which are not matched in the academic sphere. Even though permanent jobs in universities and colleges have their own attraction, students have to spend many more years to qualify for these, with little promise of obtaining such jobs when they have completed their education. The

growing practice of hiring teachers only on short term contracts in universities further acts as a disincentive.

Apart from the shortage of qualified faculty, many centres are struggling with inadequate funds for field work, scholarships and fellowships for students, for faculty and student exchange, and for adequate libraries and internet resources. It needs to be adequately understood that studying a unique and complex society like China requires extra training, extra facilities and extra efforts, and that the norms that apply to regular discipline-based programmes are not sufficient. The UGC Area Studies programme was meant to address this need, but the funds available for China studies are still woefully inadequate. Without adequate library and internet facilities and opportunities to do field work in China, it can hardly be expected that young China scholars will produce original or good quality research. This in turn discourages many bright students in the humanities and social sciences with good research potential from joining China studies for higher research.

Some of the think tanks and research institutes who have taken up study and analysis of China are relatively well endowed. However, except for a few, China studies occupies only a small place in their priorities, and few have specialised library holdings or resources for research on China. Moreover, it appears that much of the expenditure related to China is spent on organising conferences and seminars rather than on supporting in-depth research or longer-term projects that break new ground. Unique projects like the "India in the Chinese media" project at NIAS in Bengaluru receive little financial support and are run on the basis of the dedicated efforts of one or two people.

The coronavirus epidemic and the related contraction of the economy and government revenues bodes ill for China studies in this respect. It is quite likely that further cutbacks will be instituted across the board, including in faculty recruitment, infrastructure and support for research.

## **Orientation and Policy**

Particularly since the 1962 border war with China, the growth of China studies in India has not been organic but has been largely mandated from the top down, with an almost obsessive focus on knowing the enemy (or potential enemy). This process of getting to know China from a nation-state and geopolitical perspective was grafted onto the early Tagorean effort to understand China as a civilisation with ancient affinities with India, without a serious effort to reconcile these two different perspectives. As a result, there is a certain schizophrenic quality to the field of China studies in India, which is informed by an unresolved and unenlightening controversy over seeing 'China-as-friend' or 'China-as-enemy'.

Despite valiant attempts by a small number of academics, in Visva-bharati University in Santiniketan and Banaras Hindu University and elsewhere, to keep alive the study of Chinese civilisation as a whole, this field has few takers. It is swamped by the tide of interest in Chinese foreign policy and present-day Sino-Indian relations on the one hand and, more recently, interest in the Chinese language as an instrument to secure jobs in commerce and industry. As a result, a holistic understanding of China and the Chinese people still eludes us. Even where claims to be 'multi-disciplinary' are made by departments and think tanks engaged in China studies, in practice the overwhelming emphasis is on China's foreign relations and how these impact India. This myopic approach to the study of China -- a neighbouring country with a deep and complex society and culture and a growing impact on all spheres of life in the world today -- is certainly one of the major obstacles to developing a holistic and informed understanding of China in India.

Forty or fifty years back, China could perhaps justifiably have been viewed as a niche area of study for a country like India, but not anymore. There have been some definite indications that this has been understood by policy makers and administrators in the period under review. The push to start new China centres in public universities in the 2010-2013 period is one such indication. The initiative taken in 2011 to start teaching Chinese language at the school level, in CBSE-affiliated schools, is another. If these initiatives had been given adequate financial and material support, and had been sustained in the face of practical difficulties, this could have had the potential to transform the face of China studies in India. Unfortunately, these have not been

given the necessary backing and push, after the initial flush of enthusiasm. Changing priorities of different governments or different policy makers have also affected them.

Until very recently, during a relatively smooth phase of India-China relations, there was a degree of official tolerance of assistance from China, with its considerable reserves of funds and resources, in plugging some of the resource and infrastructure gaps in conducting China studies in India. For instance, in 2015, 22 teachers from China had been brought to India under the auspices of the Hanban to teach children in some CBSE schools on a pilot basis, after there had been difficulties in finding enough qualified teachers in India. In 2016, however, the contract with Hanban was terminated or allowed to lapse, and the plan to teach Chinese in these schools was abruptly dropped. Similarly, assistance from the Chinese embassy and consulates had helped some China studies centres to acquire Chinese-language teaching materials and even language laboratories, while MOUs with Chinese universities had offered opportunities to students to continue their studies in China. With all MOUs with PRC institutions now 'under scrutiny' and in practice frozen, many programmes have been affected without compensatory support coming from the government here. Not only faculty and administrators, but students too, have been adversely affected and confounded by these policy directives and the uncertainty surrounding them. The key stakeholders are almost never consulted beforehand about these decisions.

### **ICS Initiatives**

The Conference organised in 2006 by ICS was by no means the first or latest effort to collectively review the state of China studies in India. Nevertheless, the issues raised by different stakeholders at that Conference, which were then compiled into a Report, have served as a basis for various initiatives taken by ICS itself to encourage the development of China studies as a whole in this country. Below we discuss some of these initiatives:

a) All-India Conference of China Studies: Since 2009, the ICS has every year organised a 2-3 day conference, inviting papers related to China from across India. The aim of this has been to facilitate informed discussion among the China studies fraternity here, as well as to encourage

younger Indian scholars coming into the field. In an effort to raise the profile of China studies in different parts of the country, the ICS has partnered with different universities to hold the conference in diverse locations. The annual conferences have been held in Delhi-NCR, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Santiniketan, Kozhikode, Banaras, Gangtok, Goa, Mumbai and Bengaluru, with the next one scheduled to be hosted by IIT-Chennai. Currently, the number of those applying to present papers at the conference each year stands at around 100. Hospitality and transport are provided to those whose papers are selected for presentation at the Conference. An interesting feature of these conferences is that a number of younger scholars working in different fields or disciplines *other than China studies* present their work that has some bearing on China. Since each of the conferences has a special theme, this encourages scholars working in fields related to that theme to bring China into their research. It thus serves to attract newer people to the study of China, and helps in that manner with the mainstreaming of China studies. At least for the duration of the conferences, China studies acquires a higher profile in institutions that otherwise do not see much activity on this front, although it remains to be seen whether the conferences have had a more lasting impact. Now, after more than a decade of experience in organising these conferences, the ICS needs to grapple with certain issues. These include reconciling the need to maintain a certain standard of quality of the papers presented with the need to be inclusive and encourage younger scholars. Another issue is to encourage greater regular participation by the full gamut of China studies scholars in India, given that the China studies community in this country is not large. One goal should be to have enough original papers of good quality that could be compiled into an annual volume that showcases Indian scholarship on China, and thereby helps to raise the bar in this field here.

b) The Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea Award: The 2006 Report had recommended the institution of an annual prize or award for the best monograph or original work on China produced by an Indian scholar that year. The prize was instituted by ICS in 2013, and named after the distinguished scholar and founding member of the ICS, the late Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea. Since then, 6 scholars have been given the prize, which has been awarded to the best paper presented at the annual AICCS. To ensure better quality and a wider range of works nominated for the award, it may be better to de-link the award from the AICCS, and award it to Indians in different categories -- such as for the best published book related to China, for the best piece of

writing (including media reports) on China, for the best thesis produced by a young scholar on China, and so on. For this, nominations for the best work in each category can be invited, and a committee of those eminently qualified to judge can be set up.

c) The ICS - Harvard-Yenching Institute doctoral fellowship: Started in 2013, this fellowship aims to give deserving young doctoral candidates of China studies in Indian universities a dream opportunity to study and do research in China and at the HYI in the US, as well as financial support throughout their course of study in India and abroad (a total of 5 years). It also gives them the chance to upgrade their Chinese language skills in China. Since a condition of the fellowship is that those who avail of the fellowship must work for at least two years in a university or research institute back in India immediately after completion of their doctorate, it aims to create a growing resource pool of qualified China experts *in India*. The selection process, moreover, ensures that candidates from a diversity of disciplines are given a chance. So far, 14 young scholars have been awarded the fellowship. With some fine-tuning based on experience, the fellowship has worked well so far, and to the general satisfaction of the sponsors and awardees. One area needing attention is to persuade more eligible candidates to apply for the fellowship. A more serious problem, over which the sponsors do not have much control, is the placement of the ICS-HYI fellows in appropriate positions in Indian universities. With the extremely slow pace of hiring of China studies specialists in universities, this has become very difficult, although the interest shown by some private educational institutions in recent times brings some cheer. It would be a serious loss of an opportunity to build up a corpus of well qualified China experts in India if this problem is not resolved soon.

d) The India Forum on China: Starting in December 2017, 3 annual conferences under the heading "India Forum on China" (IFC) have been held in Goa. The IFC, hosted by the ICS and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in cooperation with Goa University, has developed as an annual international conference where eminent scholars, practitioners and policymakers from India and other countries hold in-depth deliberations on a topical theme pertaining to China in an Indian setting, keeping in mind Indian perspectives. The first IFC in 2017 was on the theme of

'Deciphering China's Quest for Global and Regional Leadership', the second in 2018 was on the 'Changing Drivers of China's Economy and the third in 2019 had the special theme on 'China and Asia's Changing Geopolitics'.

e) Other initiatives: The practice of inviting and mentoring interns to work with the ICS has expanded significantly in this period. These short-term internships help a variety of young people to become acquainted with China-related developments and programmes. It has also encouraged them to work on limited subjects pertaining to China under the guidance of more senior scholars and experts. They have in particular contributed to the ICS Research Blog, started in 2015, and to the series *ICS Analyses*. Another initiative, started in 2018, was to hold methodology workshops for young China scholars in partnership with Shiv Nadar University in Greater Noida. The aim here was to help these scholars, coming from various universities across India, to hone their research and writing skills, particularly with a view to helping them to publish their work. In addition, an ICS Google group, with currently over 400 members has been set up to facilitate discussion among a wider circle of those interested in China and Sino-Indian relations. In the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic, the regular ICS Wednesday Seminars have also gone virtual. The webinars, often held in partnership with the media outlet *The Print*, have actually seen an increase in the number of participants during the pandemic.

Like many other independent research institutes, the ICS has had to grapple in the recent period with funding cuts and shifts in funding patterns. It has been a challenge to continue with and expand its programmes under these conditions. The conditions arising out of the pandemic and the downturn in India-China relations this year make the chances of any improvement in this respect unlikely. A way to deal with the problem of limited funds and resources has been through partnerships with like-minded institutions both in India and abroad. In fact, expanding such partnerships seems to be the way of the future in China studies in India. Another way is to fully utilise the online channels of collaborating with other institutions that have received a fillip during the current pandemic. How to maintain its own unique character, as a group dedicated to deepening and broadening the understanding of China in India from a multi-dimensional and

distinctly Indian perspective, while forging partnerships with diverse other institutions, will continue to be a major challenge for ICS in the coming period.

## **Conclusion**

As stated at the beginning of this report, the findings contained in it are only indicative, and subject to correction if more reliable data can be found. The need for such a survey and assessment was felt because, while various institutions are doing what they can to sustain and strengthen their own China studies programmes, China studies in India as a whole seems to be no one's baby. As far as we know, even the government does not seem to have a clearly enunciated policy on how to promote China studies here, despite its obvious importance even from the standpoint of national interest. Yet without a certain coordination of efforts and shared vision on this, there is unnecessary duplication of efforts, major unplugged gaps and shortcomings, as well as uneven and inappropriate distribution of resources -- something which India can ill afford.

One of the gains in the period of the last 15 years or so has been the expansion of China studies centres outside the original 3-4 main centres, to new regions of the country as well as outside the university system. Some of these are still finding their feet, but they have the potential to expand and be replicated, given enough resources and reasonably stable policy and administrative support.

Similarly, the number of Indians with some knowledge of the Chinese language has also increased significantly, if we take into account those studying in the regular universities, those studying in private institutes, and those who have spent some time in Chinese-speaking environments, together with young students learning Chinese in their schools. There is competition now to get into the Chinese language programmes in universities, which is a far cry from the situation earlier.

Yet another feature of this period has been the relatively active role played by private institutions and foundations in promoting the study of China. This development has brought a certain



momentum and can-do attitude to the field, as well as some out-of-the-box thinking about what is required to promote China studies here. Their initiatives have been less constrained by administrative restrictions or even funding limitations.

The expanded opportunities available to students to study in China and Taiwan, on a short-term or more long-term basis, have also helped to increase the pool of young people with first-hand experience of China and Chinese societies.

Among the causes for concern are the following:

- a) Inadequate funds and resources to develop and sustain first-rate China studies centres in the public universities. The special needs of China studies, whether in terms of having enough qualified faculty, special library and internet resources, provision for intensive language training, opportunities for field work, etc., are not sufficiently taken into account when decisions are taken.
- b) The inexplicable neglect of established China studies centres, most of which are struggling even to keep up what they have developed over the years.
- c) Erratic policies, which lead to the petering out or abandonment of initiatives taken with good intentions, such as that of kick-starting the teaching of Chinese in schools.
- d) Hurdles to academic interaction between Indians and Chinese, whether in the case of visa refusals to Chinese academics, disapproval of MOUs between Indian and Chinese universities, and so on.
- e) The inadequate employment opportunities in India for qualified young scholars of China.
- f) The continuing deficiencies in methodological rigour and language competence in the research done on China in India. This prevents scholarship done here on China from attaining global standards.
- g) The continued obsession with China's international relations and contemporary Sino-Indian relations as the focus of study, and the comparatively minuscule attention paid to other aspects of China. Even though recent doctoral theses produced by some of our young China scholars do encompass a wider variety of topics than earlier, it is open to question whether

these displays the necessary methodological rigour or use of Chinese language sources needed to produce quality work.

- h) The lack of inclination among the majority of students who enter the Chinese language and studies programmes to pursue higher studies seriously, particularly when they can avail of lucrative job offers in the business sector.

Clearly, there is much to do to raise the level of China studies in India to the point where we have a reliable homegrown capacity to analyse and understand a rapidly changing China in all its dimensions -- something that is so important given China's place in the world and its implications for India in particular. The question is, who can do it? The involvement of the private sector and private institutions, along with partnerships among the concerned stakeholders to mutually reinforce their efforts, are important steps in the right direction. However, without a stable well-considered official policy that not only supports and facilitates such efforts, but also pro-actively promotes and funds the development of China studies, it is unlikely that other efforts will be adequate by themselves. Perhaps the key word here is 'stable': there have been many official initiatives to encourage China studies in India, but these have not been consistent or in keeping with the need.

To change this, the stakeholders need to get together to build public support for the development of China studies in India. In the early 1960s, the border war with China had led to a concerted effort to set up China studies centres in a few universities. In the present millennium, the widening economic engagement with China and the 'rise of China' in the world has driven the expansion of study and research on China. Looking back now, from the vantage point of later 2020, it seems as if a period in the development of China studies in India may have just ended -- a period of a relatively buoyant economy and relatively smooth and expanding engagement between India and China. The current pandemic conditions involving contraction of the economy and consequently of government revenues as well, together with the enhanced climate of hostility here towards China, may indicate the coming of a new period when support for China studies here will also decrease. How do we then continue with our efforts to promote China studies here? While there is some support for research and commentary focused sharply on strategic studies, garnering support for developing a more multi-dimensional and long-term

understanding of China will be harder. It is unfortunate that those institutions and individuals that favour a broader understanding of China on these lines are often viewed here with suspicion as being 'soft' on China, or 'pro-China'. But do we really have any alternative in the present day to strengthening our understanding of China in all its aspects?

Another existential question that confronts us at this time is -- is there a need for specialised China studies here at all? Given China's thorough integration with global trends and processes today, is there really a need for a group of scholars trained to 'decode' what China says and does? While it is true that there is a need for mainstreaming the study of China and its experience, and not viewing it overwhelmingly through the prism of 'Chinese exceptionalism', it is a fact that familiarity with China as a whole, including the weight of its long history, is important to gain perspective on China's actions today. Moreover, it is important to become familiar with the discussion and debate *within* China today -- among scholars and the wider public -- on developments there and the future trajectory of the country. Only a fraction of this is accessible to those not familiar with the Chinese language. Therefore, along with the need for major disciplines like economics, political science, sociology, history and others to incorporate the Chinese experience into their research and curricula, there continues to be, and will always be, a need for a corpus of scholars who have acquired deep familiarity with China as a whole and have the ability to reflect on the Chinese experience from an Indian standpoint.

## Appendix I

### Workshop Attendees

“Assessing recent initiatives to promote China studies in India”

23 January 2020

India International Centre, New Delhi

### Speakers

- Amb. Ashok K. Kantha, Director, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Prof. Patricia Uberoi: Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Prof. Madhavi Thampi: Workshop Convener and Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Prof. Sreemati Chakrabarti, Vice-Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Prof. Tansen Sen: Director, Center for Global Asia, NYU-Shanghai
- Prof. Elizabeth Perry: Director, Harvard-Yenching Institute
- Mr. Ashish Dhawan: Founder, China India Foundation
- Prof. Mark Frazier: Co-Director, India China Institute, The New School
- Prof. BR Deepak, Centre of Chinese and Southeast Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Dr. Jagannath Panda: Coordinator, East Asia Centre, Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses
- Prof. Alka Acharya: Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Ms. Sowmiya Ashok: Assistant Editor, The Indian Express
- Ms. Anita Sharma, Pro-Vice Chancellor, KR Mangalam University
- Dr. Sonika Gupta: Associate Professor, IIT Madras China Studies Centre
- Dr. G Venkatraman: Associate Professor, IIM Indore
- Dr. C. Vinodan: Hon. Director, Institute for Contemporary Chinese Studies, MG University, Kottayam
- Mr. Prashant Kaushik: Assistant Professor, Centre for Chinese Studies, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar

## Attendees

- Mahesh Kamtham, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Hemant Adlakha, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Rohit Gupta, Princeton University
- Aishiko Daili, IDSA
- Sanjana Dhar, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Reeja Nair, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Arghya Jana, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- P.R Singh, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Madhurima Nundy, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Ravi Bhoothalingam, Institute of Chinese Studies
- RC Mongia, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Ranjit Rai, National Maritime Foundation
- Mohd. Adnan, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Uday Khanapurkar, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Ravi Bhatia, Centre for Civil Society
- MV Rappai, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Alka Acharya, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Raj Verma
- Khanindra Ch. Das, Birla Institute of Management Technology
- Manish Agarwal, Quality Council of India
- Geeta Kochhar, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- S. Narsimhan, Delhi University
- Rimli Bhattacharya, Delhi University
- Ritu Agarwal, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Chitraranjan Malik, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Suhail Thandi, China India Foundation
- Abu Zafar, Jamia Milia Islamia
- Ashish Dhawan, China India Foundation
- Avinash Godbole, Jindal Global University

- Gunjan Singh, Jindal Global University
- Nazar Khan, Jamia Milia Islamia
- Bihu Chamadia, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Partha Mukopadhaya, Centre for Policy Research
- Govind Kelkar, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Sajal Sehgal, China India Foundation
- Prakash, Hyderabad University
- Rama Baru, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Mallika Devi, Delhi University
- Suresh Panje, Journalist
- Tshering C Bhutia, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
- Snehal Ulman, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Aditya Jakki, Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses
- Mrittika G Sarkar, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Hemant Batra, Yi Chinese
- James Thomas, Ministry of Defence
- Adveetya Kachiar, Institute of Chinese Studies
- Samanvya Hooda, Institute of Chinese Studies

## Appendix II

| PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES |   |                       |   |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| No.                 | Name of Department/Centre/Programme                       | Year of Establishment | Miscellaneous Remarks                           |
| 1                   | Centre for Chinese Studies, Central University of Gujarat | 2011                  | B.A.(Hons) and MA in Chinese Language           |
| 2                   | Department of East Asian Studies, Delhi University        | 1964                  | M.A., M.Phil, PhD in East Asian Studies offered |

|    |  |                         |   |
|----|--|-------------------------|---|
| 3  | Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, School of Language, etc., Jawaharlal Nehru University | 1996                    | B.A., M.A., M.Phil, PhD in Chinese Language   |
| 4  | Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University            | Operational since 1970s | M. Phil/PhD in Chinese Studies, M.A. Level Courses  |
| 5  | Institute for Contemporary Chinese Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala                          | 2011                    | M.A., MPhil and PhD programmes in Chinese Studies; Databank on China  |
| 6  | Centre for Far East Languages, Central University of Jharkhand   | 2012                    | 5 year integrated Masters degree, Certificate course, PG Diploma course   |
| 7  | Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University                             | 1961                    | B.A., M.A., and PhD in Chinese language   |
| 8  | Cheena Bhavana (Department of Chinese Language and Culture), Visva-Bharati University                  | 1937                    | M.A., MPhil, and PhD programmes in Chinese Studies  |
| 9  | Bhasa Bhavana (Institute of Languages, Literature and Culture), Visva-Bharati University               |                         | B.A., M.A., MPhil, PhD, Certificate and Diploma Courses in Chinese language<br>M.A Programs in Indo-Tibetan Studies |
| 10 | Department of Chinese, Sikkim University   | 2010                    | Certificate Course (one semester/6 months course), BA (Hons), MA and PhD  |
| 11 | Department of Tibetan Studies, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara   | 2006                    | Certificate Course in Tibetan, M.A In Tibetan Studies, PH. D In Tibetan Studies                                     |
| 12 | Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Department of Chinese and Japanese  | 2010                    | Certificate Course in Chinese, Diploma Course in Chinese, PH. D In Chinese & Japanese.                              |
| 13 | Department of Chinese Studies, Doon University   | 2010                    | B.A. and M.A. in Chinese Language with focus on Chinese studies in Masters level                                    |
| 14 | Ji Xianlin Centre for India-China Studies, University of Mumbai  | 2016                    | Confucius Institute, Part Time Diplomas from HSK1-6, Full time B.A. Program   |
| 15 | Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, Wardha  |                         | Chinese language programme- UG 1 year diploma   |
| 16 | Tezpur University, Assam   | 2003, more developed    | Chinese Language programme- full time certificate courses and Open based credit type courses                        |

|    |   |            |   |
|----|---|------------|---|
|    |   | since 2019 |   |
| 17 | Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies,<br>Madhya Pradesh                        |            | Chinese language  |
| 18 | Dept of Asian Languages, English and Foreign<br>Languages University, Hyderabad       |            | Chinese proficiency courses (certificate and<br>diploma) introduced from 2010                     |
| 19 | MMAJ Academy of International Studies, Jamia<br>Milia Islamia                         |            | UGC China Studies Program, non-degree language<br>courses and short-term courses on China Studies |
| 20 | China Studies Centre, Department of Humanities<br>and Social Sciences, IIT-M, Chennai | 2011       | Hosts several PhD scholars, focus on Chinese<br>Studies   |

**PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

| No | Name of Department/Centre/Programme  | Year of<br>Establishment | Miscellaneous Remarks                                    |
|----|--|--------------------------|--|
| 1  | Centre for India-China Studies, O.P Jindal<br>University, Haryana                | 2014                     | Research focus on law and governance                     |
| 2  | Chinese Language Centre, The Vellore<br>Institute of Technology                  | 2009                     | Non-degree Chinese language                              |
| 3. | Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida   |                          | Undergraduate courses on Chinese studies and<br>language |
| 4  | Department of International Studies and<br>History, Christ University, Bangalore | 2018                     | Courses on China Studies offered                         |
| 5  | KR Mangalam University, Haryana  | 2019                     | B.A. in Chinese Language                                 |
| 6  | Chinese Studies Centre, Ashoka University  | 2020                     | Program under development                                |
| 7. | School of Foreign Languages, Amity<br>University                                 | 2005                     | Chinese Language   |

**RESEARCH INSTITUTES**

| No. | Name                            | Year of<br>Establishment | Location  | Publications | Miscellaneous Remarks |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Institute of Chinese<br>Studies | 1969                     | New Delhi | China Report |                       |



|   |   |      |                                     |  |  |
|---|---|------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 2 | Chennai Centre for Chinese Studies                                | 2008 | Chennai                             | Bamboo Shoots, China Watch   |  |
| 3 | Observer Research Foundation                                      | 1990 | New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai | China Chronicles   |  |
| 4 | Takshashila Institution   | 2010 | Bangalore                           | PLA Insight Newsletter - Weekly newsletter published every Friday, covers the People's Liberation Army<br>Newsletter- Eye on China |  |
| 5 | Vivekananda International Foundation                              | 2009 | New Delhi                           | Bulletin- China: Daily Scan  |  |
| 6 | China Research Programme, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies | 1996 | New Delhi                           |  |  |
| 7 | Centre for China Analysis & Strategy                              | 2013 | New Delhi                           | Policy briefs and Reports on China and Tibet   |  |
| 8 | Centre for East Asia, Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses   | 2008 | New Delhi                           | East Asia Military Monitor<br>East Asia Strategic Review   |  |
| 9 | Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies                           | 2017 | New Delhi                           |  | Established by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India |

**FOUNDATIONS**

| No. | Name                   | Year of Establishment | Initiatives   | Miscellaneous Remarks |
|-----|------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1   | China India Foundation | 2019                  | Supporting scholars in research and language capability |                       |
| 2   | India China Institute, | 2005                  | Emerging Scholars (2010-14) and                         |                       |

|   |   |      |  |  |
|---|---|------|--|--|
|   | New School for Social Research, New York                                    |      | China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative (2016-20)   |  |
| 3 | Harvard- Yenching Institute   | 1928 | 5 year HYI Fellowship in collaboration with ICS,<br><br>Post-doctoral teaching fellowship in collaboration with Ashoka University and China India Foundation |  |
| 4 | United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, New York and Hong Kong | 1922 | Teacher training workshops to promote study of China   |  |

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