



14th All India Conference of China Studies Report

Special Theme: Society and Culture in China

Organised by
Institute of Chinese Studies
&
Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University
in partnership with the
India Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

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Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi
&
Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan

in partnership with

India Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

November 11-13, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The 14th All India Conference of China Studies (AICCS) was held from November 11-13, 2021, in hybrid mode. The Conference was organised by Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS) and Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, in partnership with the India Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS); the Special Theme of the Conference was “**Society and Culture in China**”.
- A record number of individual abstracts and panel proposals were received in response to Call for Papers. Of the 147 abstracts received, 80 abstracts and of the 9 panel proposals received, 4 proposals were selected. Of the abstracts selected, only about 49 full papers were received and of these, 21 were selected by a board of reviewers for final presentation. It is important to note that 14th AICCS saw representation of close to 45 institutions and more than one thousand registered participants. In other words, the platform brought together scholars from diverse discipline and training, universities- central and state-, research institutions and think-tanks.
- In the Inaugural Session, the Director, ICS, Ambassador Ashok Kantha and the Vice-Chancellor of Visva-Bharati, Prof. Bidyut Chakrabarty, made opening remarks that dwelt on the inception and development of ICS and Cheena Bhavana respectively, both unique yet complementary in their historical trajectory and research objectives, and their contribution to China Studies in India.

- In his opening remarks, Mr. Peter Rimmele, the Resident Representative to India of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, discussed about the rise of nationalism in China, the diverse schools of thought that contributed to its present manifestation and maintained that in order to interpret and understand the actions, policies and ideology of Communist Party of China comprehensively, it is imperative to first examine the history, society and culture of the *Red Dragon*.
- The Keynote Address was delivered by practitioner and scholar of eminence Ambassador Shivshankar Menon; the title was “**Internal Drivers of China’s External Behaviour**”. Bringing together several threads of enquiry, Ambassador Menon argued that though in other powers, public opinion and populist politics drive external behaviour, in China, regime survival and calculations of internal stability and economic growth, seem to count for more in China's external behaviour.
- The 14th AICCS had four Special Panels reflecting diverse interest and concerns, namely *Family Dynamics in the Twenty-First Century Chinese Society*, *Chinese Influence in South Asia*, *Social Dimensions and Disruptions caused by Covid-19 in China and India*, and *Media, Society and Culture in Today’s China*.
- A Special Lecture was delivered by Prof. Frank Pieke; the title was “**Governance, Culture and Superpower in the Transformation of CPC Rule**”. Prof. Pieke argued that new modalities of all-encompassing dominance used by the Party will turn the Party into the embodiment of the Chinese nation, never to be challenged and will prime China to become the strongest power in the world.
- There were five Thematic Panels on *Cultural Diversity and Identity Formation*, *International Trade and Foreign Policy*, *Society and Politics*, *History and Cultural Linkages*, and, *Social Practices and Cultural Dimensions*. There were a total of 21 papers in the Thematic Panels, selected from the 49 full papers submitted; these papers were indicative of an extremely wide range of interest, discipline and training of scholars, and reflect the new innovative interdisciplinary approach that has broken through conventional categories.
- It is from these 21 papers that a paper will be selected for the *MSB Award*, awarded each year in AICCS in celebration of the legacy of Late Prof. Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea, an iconic Indian scholar of China Studies. For this edition of the AICCS, the *MSB Award* was given to Mr. Madhurendra Jha, Assistant Professor,

Department of Chinese Studies, School of Languages, Doon University, for his paper titled “**Involution or Alienation? Visiting the Issue through Jia Zhangke’s ‘Hometown Trilogy’**”. Ms. Diki Sherpa, PhD Candidate, Department of History, Chinese University of Hong Kong, won **Honorable Mention** for her paper title “**Native Administration in Early Colonial Hong Kong: Appointing Native Chinese Peace Officers**”.

- The Valedictory Address was delivered by Prof Shih Chih-yu; the title was “**State and Society in the Studies of China's Democracy: A Critique of Libertarian Resilience**”. In this lecture, Prof. Shih looked at the CPC’s attempts to institutionalize and professionalize political control through the notion of *authoritarian resilience*.
- The three lectures- the Keynote Address by Ambassador Shivshankar Menon, the Special Lecture by Prof. Frank Pieke and the Valedictory Address by Prof. Shih Chih-yu laid out important set of principles and frameworks for the study of China today.
- It was announced that the 15th AICCS will be held in Guwahati in November 2022, in collaboration with the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, with active participation of Department of Political Science, Gauhati University and other academic institutions of Guwahati. Dr. Pahi Saikia, Representative of Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Guwahati, co-host of the AICCS next year, welcomed the collaboration and invited the scholars to participate in the 15th AICCS.
- The 14th AICCS continued with its tradition as ICS’ flagship event and came to fruition this year too, albeit in a virtual mode. It was a successful conference in all respects. This year the ICS received a record number of abstracts and a record number of institutions, almost 45, participated during the three days of the conference. The total number of academics, research scholars and practitioners who presented at the conference was around 75. On an average, every session had 200 participants from all over, thus ensuring a wider outreach. The keynote address by Amb. Shivshankar Menon received extensive coverage in the media.

CONFERENCE REPORT

The 14th All India Conference of China Studies (AICCS) – an annual flagship event of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi (ICS) – was jointly organized by the ICS and Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, in partnership with the India Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and was held in the virtual mode on November 11-13, 2021. The principal objective of the AICCS is to spread interest in and strengthen research on China in India; it promotes active networking among scholars and raises awareness about research and study of China in India. Each conference has a special theme. The special theme of the 14th AICCS was ‘Society and Culture in China’.

Another notable feature of the AICCS is the Mira Sinha-Bhattacharjea Award – instituted in the memory of one of the finest China scholars of India, a founding member of the ICS and its former Director - for the best original paper at the AICCS. The selection is made by a group of senior scholars, based on methodology, argument and presentation.

DAY 1: Thursday, 11 November 2021

Inaugural Session 12:00 – 13:30 P.M.

The Inaugural Session, on November 11, 2021, began with the **Vedic Hymn** sung by the students of Cheena Bhavana, as is the tradition in Visva-Bharati.

It was followed by **Welcome Remarks** by **Ambassador Ashok K. Kantha, Director of ICS**. In his address, Amb. Kantha mentioned that since it began in 2006, AICCS has expanded into an annual gathering, bringing together China scholars from all over India. Each year it is organised by ICS in partnership with a leading university or research centre of India. It is a privilege that the 14th AICCS is being held in collaboration with Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, in the centenary year of the University. Cheena Bhavana has played a pioneering role in promoting China Studies and in nurturing cultural and civilizational links between India and China. ICS, now in its fifty second year, has carved a niche for itself, as a vibrant research institute, committed to promoting interdisciplinary research on China and East Asia; it is a meaningful platform to generate public discourse on a region of great significance to India, an active forum which bring together China scholars and a catalyst to nurture China Studies in India, and contribute to capacity building. While rise of China is the most important geopolitical development of the past quarter century, it is also a country at an inflection point. Economically, politically, diplomatically and militarily, it is undergoing multiple transitions with uncertain outcomes. Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated these trends. Maintaining a complex bilateral relationship amidst a global reconfiguration of great-power equations and continuous contestation for strategic space, makes it

imperative for India to develop a nuanced approach to dealing with China. It is necessary to have a holistic understanding of history, culture, society, economy, politics and international relations of China and of India-China relations, in order to forge an Indian perspective of China Studies. With a new generation of China scholars actively contributing, we are at a turning point in the development of China Studies in India. It is encouraging to note that over the last decade or so, China Studies have been expanding in India, with several public and private universities establishing China Studies program and Chinese language teaching centres. At the same time, the discipline is also faced with challenges, including constraints of funds, talent, language deficiency and low engagement outside of India. The 14th AICCS carries forward the effort to bring together China scholars, exchange ideas on China Studies and deliberate on emerging areas of research.

In his **Remarks, Mr. Peter Rimmele, the Resident Representative to India of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung**, said that the rise of neo-nationalism in China under the leadership of Xi Jinping is a topic of great contemporary relevance. What we now refer to as Chinese nationalism has emerged from various ideological sources, including traditional Chinese Confucianism Marxism and Western Liberalism and it has been influenced by internal and external actors, wars, civil wars, relations with Western countries, leaders and intellectuals. Chinese nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon which emerged from what the Chinese Communist Party leadership and the majority of Chinese people refer to as the century of humiliation. This is the period of intervention and subjugation of the Qing dynasty and the Republic of China by Western powers and Japan from 1839 to 1949. Against this backdrop of sweeping defeat, Chinese elites began to develop the notion of “saving the Chinese” which paved the way for the concept of nationalism taking root in contemporary China for the first time. In the decades that followed, nationalism took various, often contradictory forms - from a centralist state-controlled form of nationalism under Mao’s leadership, to a more pro-western, liberal nationalism, when there seemed to be a desire in China to learn from the West, from 1976 - 1989. In the aftermath of Tian’anmen Square incident of 1989, there emerged an anti-Western pragmatic nationalism. As there is a realization that economic growth cannot remain its primary source of legitimacy forever, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under the leadership of Xi Jinping has embraced nationalism as a central source of legitimacy and unity. This phase that is expected to last until the hundredth anniversary of the People's Republic of China in 2049, when Xi Jinping’s political campaign of the *great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation* will come to an end. The most important task for him and the Party, is to restore past glory and thus realize the dream of great power nation. In order to comprehensively interpret and understand the actions, policies and ideology of the Party today, it is important to examine the history, society and culture of the *red dragon*.

In his **Opening Remarks, Prof. Bidyut Chakrabarty, Vice-chancellor of Visva-Bharati**, said that Cheena Bhavana is a jewel in the crown of Visva-Bharati University. Unlike many of India’s nationalist leaders,

Rabindranath Tagore never looked at the West to derive knowledge, to understand discourses. He preferred to draw upon the ideas that flourished in the countries around India. Tagore believed that culturally, we are very close to the countries in our vicinity. Therefore, it would be better and perhaps judicious to be intellectually connected with these countries. Setting up of Cheena Bhavana in 1937 showed that Rabindranath Tagore was keen to pursue Chinese Studies in India with a strong will. There are some emotional connections between Indians and their Chinese counterparts. It is important for scholars to understand the relationship between these two great nations, between these two great people, and also between these two great ingredients of humanity. Conferences like AICCS serve as an important platform for new ideas from young scholars; it also enables young scholars in the field of China Studies to listen to experts and provokes them to explore new areas of research.

In the **Convenor's Remarks**, **Prof. Sabaree Mitra, Convenor of 14th AICCS**, reiterated that AICCS, as a flagship event of ICS, held each year in collaboration with universities and institutions across India, has the objective of generating interest in, and strengthening research on China studies. The conference showcases enduring and emerging themes in China studies, while providing a platform for young scholars and promote active networking. Over the years, AICCS has travelled literally the length and breadth of India, collaborating with Central and State Universities, such as Central University of Hyderabad, Banaras Hindu University, Jadavpur University, University of Mumbai, Goa University, private universities such as Christ University, O.P. Jindal Global University and institutions such as IIM-Kozhikode and IIM-Chennai. Most collaborations have gone beyond AICCS, maturing into other initiatives and projects.

It is a coincidence of great significance that the fourteenth AICCS has come to Cheena Bhavana in the centenary year of Visva-Bharati. Given the core research interest of Cheena Bhavana, it was appropriate that *Society and Culture in China* was chosen as the Special Theme for the 14th edition of AICCS. Apart from the Special Theme, 14th AICCS received individual abstracts and panel proposals on a wide range of themes pertaining to China, many of which are products of recent scholarships of critical relevance. Four Special Panels, reflected diverse interest and concern covering themes of international relations, social transformation, new culture formations and comparative study of how different countries dealt with the challenges of Covid-19 pandemic. Papers in the Thematic Panels covered a wide spectrum, ranging from contemporary social and cultural manifestations, to bilateral and multilateral economic factors, challenges of governance and historical linkages. Through this exercise, it is expected that different components of China studies will be reshaped through interdisciplinary research and new niche areas will assume significance and claim scholarly attention.

The **Keynote Address** was delivered by practitioner and scholar of eminence **Ambassador Shivshankar Menon**; the title was “**Internal Drivers of China's External Behaviour**”. While noting that in the last decade, China's foreign policy has alienated or worsened relations with most of her neighbours, the exceptions being Pakistan,

Cambodia and possibly Russia, he explored the possible reasons for this. Scholars of International Relations tend to focus more on systemic level issues, as a result the traditional explanations for China's external behaviour are often reduced to consequences of shifting international situation, China's changing global interest, great power rivalry, US push back etc. By not peering inside the state and evaluating domestic factors, these explanations prove insufficient to clarify the change or its timing. He felt that the traditional explanations external to China are not sufficient and maintained domestic factors now play a greater role in driving China's foreign policy than before. The shift in China's external behaviour goes beyond just the manner in which they conduct themselves, and also includes the extent of their evolving international goals. Chinese diplomacy extends to seeking discourse power internationally. China now demands loyalty, not only from its own citizens, but also from Chinese origin citizens of other countries. The China Dream is for the Chinese race - *Zhonghuaminzu*, which is translated and equated with the nation and not with citizens - *Gongmin*.

Significantly for India, since 2008 China has chosen to assert herself in disputes in her periphery, and to use her power to change facts on the ground and at sea. This has also caused repeated tensions along the India-China border and even led to new territorial claims on Bhutan. Some of this can be explained as a direct response to the new security demands created by China's integration into the global economy and her export-led growth. Her turn to the oceans makes her desire to secure the near seas logical. However, interpreting territorial issues as matter of sovereignty, eliminates any chance of benefiting from a negotiated cooperative framework. The South China Sea dispute is a prime example.

Every country's foreign policy is shaped to a certain extent by domestic determinants. In China's case, they seem to have led China to follow external policies which no longer serve the goals that China claims to have set for her foreign policy, like the *community of common destiny*. While, in other powers, public opinion populist politics drive external behaviour. In China, regime survival and calculations of internal stability and economic growth, seem to count for more in China's external behaviour. Four factors that have shaped China's recent external behaviour, and make it different from that of other powers are Geography, increasing complexity in domestic governance, China's rapid pace and pattern of development and Centralised decision making within CCP and securitisation of state policy.

Legitimacy of the Communist Party of China has shifted over time from ideology, to commitment to Communism in the 50s, which was shaken by the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, to economic growth in Deng's period, and now nationalism, to ultra-nationalism or nativism. The records of the National Library of China show that there were no books on the subject of national humiliation, published in China between 1947 and 1990. It was only after Deng's call for patriotic education campaigns in 1992, following the Tian'anmen Incident of 1989, that this narrative was revived. Xi Jinping has adopted this Meta narrative as his own, linking it

to China's rejuvenation. In the long run, this will affect the way China deals with the rest of the world. It portrays a sense that China's place in the international order is ordained and natural.

China today is more powerful than ever before, but she's also more dependent on the world at the same time. Due to this dependency, international primacy is necessary for China to ensure that she keeps rising towards rejuvenation. This two-way dependence drives China to try to consolidate Eurasia, while also attempting to become a maritime power. While China is not isolated, she is trying to cut her dependence on the world though she needs to engage with the world for markets, commodities and technology. The only remedy is for China to attempt a double transition to becoming an externally engaged but internally driven economy, and secondly to becoming a maritime power after being a continental power for all of her history.

Domestic needs of legitimization, of inequality, have prompted Xi Jinping to turn left - common prosperity, dual circulation, etc. These suggest that China will further turn inward under Xi, and will return to earlier ways of mobilizing the Party and society, and of managing the market economy. Whereas if she wants to continue to grow, it would require her to engage abroad. Thus, there is a tension today between where her society would like to go and what the regime will need to do in terms of dealing with the rest of the world. The problem of course is that Xi's China Dream is a parochial vision. China was successful when she was flexible and experimental under Deng but not when she followed the set model as Mao did, and as currently Xi seems to want to.

It's hard to say where the internal factors are going to lead China's external behaviour, but it's certainly true that her assertive behaviour is based on strong internal factors and developments and is probably driven by them. It's unlikely that this is going to change soon. Today China's ethnic nationalism and authoritarianism are both a strength and a weakness. China is displaying both great confidence and a sense of victimhood. She claims that the East will prevail over the West, but she also signals that we are undergoing the greatest change in a century.

While the proposition that domestic drivers are influencing China's external behaviour does not offer much in terms of reassurances, one can take solace in the fact that normal laws of physics, economics and politics do apply in China as well. It remains to be seen how they do so, and how differently.

In the **Vote of Thanks**, **Prof. Avijit Banerjee, Co-Convener, 14th AICCS & Professor, Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University**, mentioned that the 14th AICCS has three key characteristics: it covers a broad spectrum of subjects; it is truly contemporary; its participants are equally diverse in training and interest as the platform brings together scholars from different places under one roof at the same time. He extended gratitude to all the distinguished guests and speakers present in the Inaugural Session of the Conference: Ambassador Ashok Kantha, Director, ICS, Mr. Peter Rimmele, the Resident Representative to India of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Prof. Bidyut Chakrabarty, Vice-Chancellor, Visva-Bharati University, Prof. Sabaree Mitra,

Convener, 14th AICCS, Professor, JNU & Honorary Fellow, ICS, and Ambassador Shivshankar Menon, Visiting Professor of International Relations, Ashoka University, Chairman, ICS Advisory Board, former NSA and Foreign Secretary, GoI, as well as all other participants from universities and institutions across India.

Special Panel I: Family Dynamics in the Twenty-First Century Chinese Society, 14:30 P.M. – 16:00 P.M.

The panel was chaired by **Prof. Patricia Uberoi, Emeritus Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

The panelists were **Prof. Emiko Ochiai, Professor of Sociology, Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University, Kyoto; Prof. Mary E. John, Professor and Acting Director, Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi; Ms. Song Yuanmeng, Doctoral Candidate, Kyoto University, Kyoto, and Dr. Usha Chandran, Assistant Professor, JNU, & Adjunct Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

This panel attempted to study the transition in family structure and the issues therein in contemporary Chinese society. It explored the traces of traditional beliefs on family clashing with modern ideas and youthful aspirations, through the lens of child marriage, care regimes and gender role, family planning and demographic imbalance and its impact, state response in the form of policy and propaganda as well as culture, customs and way of life followed by the people. The panel discussion sought to view the family dynamics in multi-dimensional ways of beliefs, social norms, economic development, demographic changes as well as governmental intervention and control.

After a ten-year longitudinal study of child-care and elderly-care regimes in China, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Japan and Vietnam, Prof. Emiko Ochiai, in her presentation on “**Transforming Familialism: Changing Care Regimes and Gender Roles in the 21st Century East Asia**” established that Asian familialism is nothing more than a myth. Defamilialization is progressing along axes of state and market and the landscape of care work manifests differently depending upon availability of provisions and finances while maintaining a balance between state, market, relatives and community.

In her presentation on “**Child Marriage: Reflections on India and China**”, Prof. Mary E. John, argued that while underage marriages in India and China are on the opposite ends of statistical visibility spectrum owing to societal and policy-based reasons, the so called ‘harmful practice’ of child marriage still persist in large numbers in both countries and is seen especially among teenagers from localized, vulnerable groups.

In her presentation on “**The Resistance to State-Controlled Reproduction: Varieties of Media Responses to China's Two-Child Policy**”, Ms. Song Yuanmeng revealed that Social Media platforms like Weibo show a diversity of public opinions on this issue. These opinions range from questioning the praises of the two-child policy to voicing direct criticism of the policy, extending to discussions about the nature of the state and the

society. The birth rates have continued to decline despite the two-child policy put in place by the government in China, although the state controlled media have painted a happy picture in this regard.

Going through the history of last hundred years in her presentation on "**Family as the Core: The Chinese Society Turning a Full Circle in the Twenty-First Century**", Dr. Usha Chandran argued that the Confucian idea of a harmonious society, key to the prosperity of the country, based on hierarchical family relationships has seen a resurgence as part of state policy to keep 'family at the core'. She concluded that this may stultify the progress made on gender issues.

Thematic Panel I: Cultural Diversity and Identity Formation, 16:15 P.M. – 17:45 P.M.

The panel was chaired by **Prof. Tejaswini Niranjana, Director, Centre for Inter-Asian Research & Dean, Online Programmes, Ahmedabad University, Ahmedabad.**

The panelists were **Ms. Biatrisha Mukhopadhyay, Research Scholar, JNU, New Delhi, Kaustav Padmapati, Assistant Professor, The Royal Global University, Guwahati, Assam, Daveirou Lanamai, Assistant Professor (Chinese), Tezpur University, Assam, and Md. Yasin, Doctoral Candidate, JNU, New Delhi.**

In the presentation on "**Intricacies of Religious Identity in China in Xi Era**", Biatrisha Mukherjee explained that China's religious identities primarily adhere to ancient philosophical schools of thoughts, such as Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism and of the five religions recognised by the Chinese State, Buddhism, Taoism and folk religions are regarded as authentic Chinese religions compared to Islam or Christianity which were imported from outside China thousands of years ago. Legal positions of certain religions have often been a problem and there have been multiple persecution on religious front. Stricter restrictions on religious activities and practices in the Xi Jinping era include monitoring of religious activities online, places of worship being destroyed and violence by security forces on people of certain faith. In 2017, the Communist Party of China warned members not to believe in any religion, calling it as 'spiritual anaesthesia'.

In the presentation on "**Democratic Transition, New Taiwanese Identity and Queer rights movement in Taiwan: Assessing the Linkages**", Kaustav Padmapati looked at Taiwan as a new vibrant democracy, with an awareness of liberal principles such as gender equity, where residents have a pluralistic and inclusive experience. Taiwanese embraced human rights and multiculturalism enthusiastically, and based on the principle of self-determinism. Taiwan is the first Asian country that legalised same sex marriages. Feminist and queer movements in Taiwan first started with the Feminist movement of 1990s, paving way for LGBTQ rights and the Queer movement. NGOs and Civil society supported the movement, including the Queer movement. Padmapati argued

that the New Taiwanese identity encapsulates political awareness, participation, newly acquired freedom; it was a multi-layered collective identity that was preserved consciously, to move away from authoritarian KMT's efforts to mould Taiwanese Language, culture etc. similar to Mainland China where identity is more primordial.

Ms. Daveirou Lanamai, in a presentation on “**Sinicising naming practice of selected ethnic minorities in China**” explored how identity is constructed through personal names, and naming practices and analysed the impact of Han culture on this process. She argued that naming is a political act, through which a person can have identities of gender, class or ethnicity. Through case studies of three minorities ethnic groups, namely Mongols, Tibetans and Wa people, she found that naming practices of these peoples have undergone Sinification through widespread adaptation of Chinese words. She concluded that in the wake of Chinese government's initiative towards modernization and preservation of ethnic minority groups, imposition of Chinese language poses a threat to the minorities.

In the presentation on “**Pravasi Bhartiya and Huaqiao-Huaren: Explaining the Similarities and Differences of the two Diasporas**”, Md. Yasin argued that there has emerged a ‘newness’ in the two countries’ diasporic rapprochement, especially with the rise of PM Modi and President Xi respectively. Overseas Chinese are divided into *Huaqiao*, *Huaren* and *Huayi*, and similarly, Indian diaspora is divided into NRI, PIOs, and OCI etc. Yasin found that both countries seek to rigorously cultivate emotional citizenship and an active reengagement process. Leaders of both countries are engaging into Transnational Governance through various schemes and policies. However, the scholar identified two irritants in this process of ‘emotional connect’ i.e. Homogenisation in China and Hinduising of India. Apart from this, social, cultural and linguistic complications are true for both countries.

DAY 2: Friday, 12 November 2021

Special Panel II: Chinese Influence in South Asia, 10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The panel was moderated by **Ambassador Shivshankar Menon, Visiting Professor of International Relations, Ashoka University, Sonapat; Chairman, Advisory Board, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), New Delhi.**

The panelists were **Mr. Amish Raj Mulmi, Author, *All Roads Lead North: Nepal's Turn to China* (Context India/Hurst UK 2021), Kathmandu, Dr. Antara Ghosal Singh, former Research Associate, Centre for Social and Economic Progress, New Delhi, Ms. Chulanee Attanayake, Research Fellow, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, and Ms. Shahtaj Mahmud, Senior Coordinator, Projects and Program, The Institute of Policy, Advocacy, and Governance (IPAG), Dhaka.** The discussant was **Dr.**

Constantino Xavier, Fellow in Foreign Policy and Security Studies, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), New Delhi.

As pointed out by the moderator Ambassador Shivshankar Menon, Centre for Social and Economic Progress has been running a project on China's influence in the subcontinent and the panelists as members of this research project had examined China's growing role across a range of sectors. The sectors involved not just the government-to-government relationship, but extended to education, media, public diplomacy, technology, social media, civil society, religion, governance and so on. Methodology followed was to work with colleagues, partners, scholars across the sub-region, across the subcontinent.

Amish Raj Mulmi's presentation on **“Charm Offensive: Shaping Chinese perception in Nepal”** was a qualitative study of soft power diplomacy practices that China has adopted in Nepal in recent years. Growing Chinese influence has been evident in Nepal since its declaration as a republic in 2008 and included the government and administrative engagements, party level political engagements and engagements in influencing public opinion in Nepal about China. The process had reached a new height during President Xi Jinping's visit to Nepal in October 2019. Efforts were also made to go beyond economic and strategical ties. An attempt of emphasizing the narrative on peaceful liberation in Tibet has been pushed and promoted in Nepal continuously. Different conferences and exhibitions are being organized to show the livelihood and development of Tibet and its people since the Communist regime took power. Efforts are being made to comprehensively tell the China Story and to seek support on One China Policy, and Xinjiang and Hong Kong issues. Besides the political circles, China is continuously making efforts to win the hearts of common Nepali citizens and intelligentsia. This is a prominent example of creating an international narrative which is friendly towards China.

Antara Ghosal Singh's presentation on **“China's Approach to South Asia: Characteristics and Lessons”** argued that the importance of South Asia in Chinese scheme of things was self-evident by the fact that it was the only region in the world where China has planned three major land corridors and one maritime corridor. This region hosts maximum number of China's early harvest projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Over the last decade, China has developed new mechanisms like China-South Asia Expo, China-South Asia Think Tank Forum, China-South Asia Technology Transfer and Innovation Cooperation Conference in order to strengthen China's ties with the region. This indicates that South Asia has climbed up significantly in Chinese strategy outlay. China's approach to South Asia is predicated on a step-by-step strategy that starts with focusing on the easiest or the friendliest first. China uses multiple entry points or facades, takes various strategic detours and builds up various high profile demonstration project despite the lack of economic viability. It carries out power projection exercises, both, along LAC, as well as in the Indian Ocean region to build up pressure on India, and to compel it to give in to Chinese demand.

Chulanee Attanayake's presentation on "**China's Buddhist Influence in Sri Lanka**" analysed China's use of "faith diplomacy" or its religious connections with countries in near and far periphery with a special reference to Sri Lanka. China using Buddhism as a tool is not the first-time that a country has used religion as a tool of soft power. However, what was unique about this approach, was that a self-proclaimed atheist country was increasing its soft-power arsenal by using Buddhism. China's desire to use Buddhism as a tool of soft power is derived from China's desire to maintain and expand its leadership role within this part of the world, and portray itself as a benign and peaceful power. One outcome of China's faith diplomacy in Sri Lanka is evident in the island nation's continuous refusal to issue visa to Dalai Lama, despite being predominantly Buddhist nation. Moreover, chief monks in Sri Lanka avoid discussing this, or even opposing the government's decision. When assessing the success of China's faith diplomacy in Sri Lanka, while it is apparent that it has managed to convince the Sri Lankan government and some Buddhist monks to support Chinese position, there is no evidence to suggest that this is a commonly accepted position among the larger Buddhist community of Sri Lanka.

In the presentation on "**Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis and China's Growing Clout in Bangladesh**", Ms. Shahtaj Mahmud has traced the beginning and complexities of the Rohingya crisis and China's increasing involvement in shaping a possible resolution. China's three-point plan to resolve the crisis also showed that the country was slowly moving away from its non-interference policy. China has deep strategic and economic interest in Myanmar as it shares a 2000-kilometre border with Myanmar and wants to ensure peace and stability along this border. China holds prospects of playing an instrumental role in the mediation process between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Because of its compulsions in favourably resolving the crisis given its investments in Myanmar, Bangladesh prefers to have China on the mediation table. Under pressure from China, Bangladesh and Myanmar did initiate a mediation process twice, however repeated attempts at resolution failed due to Myanmar's unwillingness to take back Rohingya people.

The discussant **Dr. Constantino Xavier** pointed out that two themes stood out in the session. First, instead of a big Chinese juggernaut, the assessments point to a flexible People's Republic of China capable of dealing with the media, political conflict and conflict resolution, religion - something one would not expect from an atheist state - with incredible ease. Second, we see a China that is learning and is reflexive. China is not only engaging with rather unfamiliar new countries and sectors that are beyond its comfort zone, but also adopting models to engage with different cultures of thinking, and a challenging political system in the case of South Asia. After an interregnum of over a century, China is now moving out of its comfort zone and trying to decrease its knowledge gap of the region, deepen economic ties, while being conscious of its own limitation.

The main dilemma China faces in Myanmar is confronting its own principle of non-interference and framing a compatible strategy, while also being cognizant of its imperative to increase its political footprint by participating

in the mediation process, in order to protect its economic interests. The peace dividends China offers in mediating the conflict in Myanmar need to be explored. China's strategy to contain any damage to its reputation as it increases its participation in mediating international conflicts needs further assessment. Given China's reliance on faith diplomacy in Sri Lanka, and the modest return this strategy has earned, it will be worthwhile to assess, the gap in governmental perception and popular perception in order to truly understand the success of China's outreach.

In South Asia, China is not only following a sequential approach, but rather a parallel approach, whereby it maintains a strategy of reaching out to smaller countries in the region, while also pursuing its strategic interests with India. The anarchy of democracy, pluralism and diversity in South Asia is something China will have to confront as it engages the region further.

Thematic Panel II: International Trade and Foreign Policy, 11:45 A.M. – 13:15 P.M.

The panel was chaired by **Prof. Alka Acharya, Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Honorary Fellow & former Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

The panelists were **Sunaina Bose, Masters in Development Studies, IIT Madras, Research Associate, Museum of Art and Photography, Bengaluru; Shree Jain, UGC Junior Research Fellow, Symbiosis School of International Studies, Symbiosis International (Deemed) University, Pune; Sukalpa Chakrabarti, Associate Professor and Deputy Director, Symbiosis School of International Studies, Symbiosis International (Deemed) University, Pune; Rahul Nath Chaudhry, Research Fellow, ICWA; Pravin Jadhav, Assistant Professor, IITRAM, Ahmedabad; Malini Tantri, Assistant Professor, CESP, ISEC, Nagarabhavi, Bengaluru and Varadurga Bhat, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru.**

In the presentation on **“Turning the Gaze: Understanding the deployment of the ‘Debt trap’ narrative in Western Media”** Sunaina Bose explored the Chinese lending practices that have been received with negative response in Western media. Such criticisms and hesitancy towards Chinese lending practices have been captured around this catch-all phrase called **“Debt Trap Diplomacy”**, coined in 2017 by Indian political strategist Brahma Chellaney who argued that China extends unsustainable loans to vulnerable economies that are located in geographies aligned with China's geopolitical interests. The formulation was a direct response to Hambantota Port case, which was reported in a very peculiar manner in Western media, in which contradictory claims about the deal within the same publication could be found. Some publications called it both **“dead equity swap”** as well as an **“asset seizure”** often in the same article. While assorted reportage has resulted in manufacturing this

discourse, what was more interesting is the complex nexus of think tanks, academics, policy makers, political representatives who employ the media to talk to each other as much as they talk to the people reading these reports. The scholar argued that the debt trap diplomacy narrative, when looked into critically, effectively posits the peaceful rise of China as oppositional to the status quo of the existing international state system.

The objective of the presentation by Shree Jain on **“The Dualistic Trends of Sinophobia and Sinophilia: Impact on Foreign Policy towards China”** was to illustrate how public opinion on China — positive or negative — can impact policy preferences towards China, and at the same time, how existing political and economic relations with China could influence the public opinion in host countries. The most recent instance of fear and hate towards China was witnessed during Covid-19 pandemic; it was not only a health crisis but also an economic one, and a psychological and social hazard. The pandemic showed the various ways China is feared today. Moreover, China’s increasing trade and investments have led to mushrooming presence of Chinese companies, traders, migrant families, bringing insecurities of jobs, resources and opportunities for the local population. On the other hand, there are also reasons to admire China, one of them being its phenomenal economic success. Besides its economic attraction, it is China’s unique culture that charms people across the globe. Mandarin, considered the “language of the future”, opens a lot of doors, and leads to commercial success. Summing up, the scholar argued that China should not forget that in a complex interdependent world it needs the support of other countries and must recognize the significance of public opinion and turn it toward its favor by boosting its soft power efforts.

The objective of the presentation by Rahul Nath Chaudhry on **“Capturing the Growth of Chinese Investment in India”** is to analyze the growing trade and investment relations between India and China. There has been an exponential growth in Chinese investment in India in the last few years, especially after 2010. India-China relations went sour in 2020 during the pandemic and yet their economic growth rose in 2021. Naturally, there are questions as to why China is investing so much in India and what is the nature of the Chinese investments. It is evident that Chinese investment has penetrated in almost all the sectors in Indian economy and Chinese portfolio investment is much more in India than US or other developed countries. India is a huge market to invest especially in the technological sector, therefore it helped the Chinese investment also to go deep into the Indian market. Chinese are also investing in startup ecosystem in India, as it’s one of the largest and they can make ‘windfall profit’ in this. Major factors influencing Chinese investment in India are business freedom, trade freedom fiscal freedom, financial freedom and investment freedom

The objective of the presentation by Malini Tantri on **“Pollution Intensive Products in India’s Bilateral Trade with China”**, was to look into the debate of economic growth vis-à-vis environment between the two countries. It looks at the composition and trend of trade between the two countries in terms of environment. In other words, the paper explores trade in terms of pollution intensive industries; which country is on the side of trade demand

in the context of pollution intensive products and which is on the side of supply. In terms of export, they are chemicals, chemical products and mining products, coal and petroleum products, and in terms of imports they are chemicals, chemical materials and manufacturing metals, iron and steel products. India has a comparative advantage in few products like chemical, iron, steel and leather, while China is the major supplier of polluting products amongst the two countries. The scholar shows that the growth rate of total trade in polluting products is higher than the bilateral trade. The paper is based on secondary data on trade, emissions of greenhouse gases and economic growth.

Thematic Panel III: Society and Politics, 14:00 P.M. – 15:30 P.M.

The panel was chaired by **Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, Emeritus Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi.**

The panelists were **Prateeksha Tiwari, Doctoral Scholar, SIS, JNU; Shruti Jargad, Research Assistant, ICS, New Delhi & Yenching Scholar (2019-21), Peking University, Beijing; Niharika Ravi, Student, School of Law, SVKM's NMIMS (Deemed to be University), Navi Mumbai, and Snigdha Konar, Doctoral Candidate, CC&SEAS, JNU, New Delhi**

In the presentation on “**Imagining the Digital Public Sphere in Xi’s China: Looking at the #MeToo Movement through the Eyes of Castells and Habermas**”, Prateeksha Tiwari explored how with social information and the technological development, online spaces were being widely used by Chinese citizens for expression and resistance. *#Rice bunny*, *#woyeshi*, *#metoozaizhongguo* etc. are symbols deployed by young feminists to alliance with journalists for expressing and mobilizing public support through social media. Unlike the West, which uses social media to supplement the physical protest, Chinese heavily rely on online platform since physical protests are not allowed; it signified that a campaign originated in the West can emerge, develop and adapt in an authoritarian context. Though it is acknowledged by authorities that there should be policies against sexual harassment at work, but measures are taken to amply crack down on the online *#metoo* campaign. Fundamental dilemma for the CPC is how to balance promotion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for economic development and prevent or control its usage for social and political mobilization. Public sphere has become the main platform and it is very important for analysing political implications of internet revolution. But in case of China it shows a fragmented structure of public sphere in political culture. *#metoo* movement in China is a fragmented campaign, however it establishes beyond dispute the existence of network society in China, and that the success of the movement is limited but significant.

In the presentation on “**Recruitment Strategy of the Chinese Communist Party in the Xi Era**” Shruti Jargad explored the changing strategies of recruitment for the Communist Party of China. For the Party, it is a method of political mobilization and is based on political screening and political qualifications. In Xi era, amendments in recruitment are even more than the previous two regimes put together. Both hard and soft requirements have been amended. The Sixteen-character guideline emphasizes on improving quality, lowering numbers, and stricter regulations. As a result, recruitment has become a complicated process that lasts for a year. Data shows a decline in recruits from 2012 and 80 % of the recent recruitments are under 35 years of age. While total membership is increasing, the rate of increase is decreasing in Xi's era. Besides the number of applicants have also declined from 2014 onwards. The rising number of professionals including college graduate and entrepreneur indicate a degree of elitism. Implications of the higher qualitative membership are crucial so as to grow institutional roots, the most important being the need to study Xi Jinping's thought, with centrality given to political loyalty. Xi hopes to pass on his legacy through these members, who will be in the Party for the next 30-40 years and will be in line with Xi Jinping's ideas and thoughts.

In the presentation on “**Feminism, Expansionism, and Population Control in China: How the Utilitarian One-Child Policy is Still a Women’s Rights Nightmare**”, Niharika Ravi argued that One Child Policy (OCP) was a manifestation of ideological expansion and was used as a tool to propel China into its hegemonic status in the global political arena. The utilitarian feature of OCP is detrimental to women's rights and the efforts of family planning have failed to defend women's interest. Abortions and sterilizations were forced upon women in the most horrifying manner in China even as late as 2007; meticulous chart on monthly reports, pelvic examination etc. on every woman was maintained. Every act towards procreation and reproduction of a child remains political in China where the state controls and owns women bodies and treats it as an instrument to control population. Neither the nature nor the outcome of OCP has been feminist in nature.

In the presentation titled “**Womb Politics in China: Abortions, Sterilizations and Surrogacy in Sheng Keyi's Fiction**”, Snigdha Konar introduced Shen Keyi's novel, *Northern Girls*. The story is about a migrant worker who has had to move Shenzhen. She had a tough life, entering into relations with men for survival and ending up pregnant. She had to undergo abortions and was dumped by her boyfriends. In real life, just to fulfill the quota of numbers, the incidents of forceful sterilization of women who are not married and the unequal treatment based on class were rampant. Though surrogacy is illegal, it is common in underground market, and even here a male child is preferred.

Shen Keyi's narrative of women losing their womb, even though it is believed the 'value of rural women is in their womb', and victimization of surrogate mothers, has resulted in most of her work not getting publishers; however, Shen Keyi continues to use creative fiction to bring out her narrative.

The Three Child Policy, is yet another measure to keep wombs under surveillance, amounting to renting of wombs for demographic balance. The carriers of the wombs become the victim of the policies as women are encouraged to fulfill domestic roles to save China by saving the basic unit of family. Summing up, the scholar argued that CPC is controlling women through its womb policy and thus womb has become a public property.

Special Lecture, 15:45 P.M. – 16:45 P.M.

The Special Lecture was chaired by **Ambassador Gautam Bambawale, former Indian Ambassador to China, Bhutan and Pakistan; Distinguished Professor, Symbiosis International University, Pune; Adjunct Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

Prof. Frank Pieke delivered a Special Lecture on “**Governance, Culture and Superpower in the Transformation of CPC Rule**”, which was part of a manuscript that he was currently working on. He argued that many of the changes in CPC looked like a return to old Maoist times but were, in fact, profound transformations which used old ideas and old tools for completely new purposes. Viewing vibrancy as corruption, freedom as chaos, and openness as exposure to foreign facts, CPC was aiming to control and rule Chinese society much more directly. The Party’s mobilization and organization structure has expanded and tightened by emphasizing loyalty and allegiance over critical thinking and innovation. The current leadership’s singular focus is on national unity and national strength while the room for local improvisation and policy adjustment continues to shrink. Party building, which has been stepped up in order to maintain its own unique nature is about “how the Party must manage the Party” in order to enhance its organizing power and strengthen its political function. Party discipline and party supervision now pervade the entire administration and persecution of corrupt individuals have reached the highest levels, including members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo itself.

The Party has created a new infrastructure of comprehensive structures revolving around law-based governance, performance-based audit and surveys, and top-level design and thereby has put itself on unprecedentedly solid footing. CPC rules through ideology that helps its logical pronouncements to penetrate deep into Chinese culture, and even into religion, which, in turn, was termed as naturalization of CPC legitimacy. Therefore, it was argued that the Party is rebranding itself deliberately as the heir, guardian and embodiment of the Chinese nation and Chinese civilization.

CPC governance can no longer be pigeonholed as socialist, nationalist, developmentalist, or good governance, nor is its chief concern limited to avoiding unrest or dissent. In the recent plenary session, the CPC reiterated its original mission of “the happiness of the Chinese people, and the revival of the Chinese nation”. CPC’s turn to traditional Chinese culture was therefore very much in tune with the times. More than any other aspect of traditional Chinese culture, Confucianism lends itself very well to the purposes of the CPC.

The Party has returned to the fundamental question of a century ago, about how to approach the challenge of Western imperialist encroachments. The CPC, like so many other parties, rulers, intellectuals, and other groups around that time, incorporated two diametrically opposed answers to this question. The first was a radical rejection of Chinese culture as sick, corrupt, and low match for the West. The other was accepting that China was weak but its culture nevertheless was its essence containing many elements worth preserving for the preparation of the nation for competition with other powerful countries.

Ideological security as part of overall national security plays an important role in shoring up legitimacy and providing an effective defense of the system and the regime. Culture and ideology have become a matter of comprehensive national security, and for party's long-term dominance. China's cultural conservatism has gradually become mainstream as it is regarded as a way to build a stable governable and cohesive society. Both Chinese cultural and socialist ideology have been promoted as an alternative to Western Liberalism, democracy and human rights, and its spiritual emptiness. CPC is pushing the claim that it has broken the old dynastic cycle in which each dynasty, eventually succumbs to its internal weaknesses and external threats. However, the CPC through its culture innovations and its domestic and international successes has laid the foundation for the perpetuation of socialism, heralding in a new era of peace and prosperity that will never end. As a self-proclaimed inheritor and carrier of Chinese civilization, the Party now reserves the authority to determine what exactly Chinese culture is and what isn't. The ultimate objective was to nationalize the Party's rule making it an unquestioned, and unquestionable fact. If successful, this will, in the long term excuse the Party completely from having an ideology and ultimate mission, or possibly even any legitimizing ideas.

Special Panel III: Social Dimensions and Disruptions Caused by Covid-19 in China and India, 17:00 P.M. – 18:30 P.M.

The panel was chaired by **Dr. Madhurima Nundy, Assistant Director & Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

The panelists were **Prof. Biao Xiang, Director, Max Planck Institution for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale); Dr. Cody Abbey, Project Manager, Stanford China Center on China's Economy and Institutions, Stanford University, Stanford; Dr. Bhim B. Subba, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science/School of Social Science, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad & Visiting Associate Fellow, ICS, New Delhi, and Ms. Sowmiya Ashok, Independent Journalist, former Beijing Correspondent, Indian Express.**

The discussant was **Prof. Rama Baru, Professor, Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

This panel specifically looked at disruptions and social dimensions by Covid-19 in China and India by bringing a select group of speakers who have looked at the massive disruptions caused by Covid-19 in the last two years on lives and livelihood globally and locally especially in India and China. While the pandemic was a lesson for humanity, the pandemic has also been a lesson in social sciences.

Prof. Biao Xiang presentation on **“Immobilizing capabilities”** focused on mobility and immobility during the lockdown in China with a focus on infrastructure and logistical powers used to sustain these restrictions and mobility. His presentation was based on his observations of China but with India as an implicit reference point. He observed two key features to stop mobility – redistribute and securitize mobility. Redistribution meant the government should assign mobility work to some population (essential, delivery workers) in order to stop mobility related chaos in the society. It is not possible to control large scale mobility in such big populations hence the questions should be more about redistribution rather than lock the whole population. Securitization of mobility means interventions that will minimize threat associated with Covid. It meant designing protocols that protect key workers through the use of digital applications. His main inquisition revolved around the question of capabilities and how do such capabilities of stocking mobility function and at the same time how is redistribution and securitization of mobility achieved? This leads to the whole idea and use of E-Mobility Infrastructure as an important platform to explore. This particular platform in China is complex. He identified three important components in this structure in China that enable the redistribution of mobility – digital apps, commercial intermediaries and residential organizations. Explaining these three aspects in detail, he deduces logistical power as a new form of power which has developed dominance over society in the form of circulation of information which is perpetuated by controlling how things move around.

Dr. Cody Abbey’s presentation on **“Tracking the effects of COVID-19 on rural China over time”** gave a highlight of Covid-19 disruptions caused in rural China over a course of study taken between January to April 2020. This study aims to assist in policy making processes in regard to Covid-19 over a large rural economy. The period of study also coincides with China’s lunar new year where large-scale migrations takes place over the course of months. This research attempted to fill the gap in research studies of Covid-19 impact on rural populations. With 726 informants representing an approximately total population of 700,000 rural residents, this study explored the disease control measures of the Chinese government and its effectiveness. The three rounds of data collection excluded officials, doctors and teachers. The study attempted to investigate the rural perspective and observations around education, healthcare and employment during the period of draconian laws where China’s bureaucracy facilitated strict and wide control measures. The results of the study indicated reduced infection rates with falling employment opportunities. The falling employment opportunity indicated lower wages which led to decreased food intake. Telemedicine was available with small rural clinics in regard to healthcare.

However, in access to education, China being one of the largest digitized economies lacked digital services for school education.

In his presentation on “**Serving the People’ in Crisis: Pandemic Philanthropy in India and China**” Dr. Bhim S. Subba, outlined the philanthropic landscape during Covid-19 in China and India locating and identifying various actors and players and motors of generosity, charity and outcomes and its relationship with the state and what are the departures and crisis in such philanthropic efforts. His presentation contrasted the different philanthropic entities that came up during the Covid crises in both the countries by studying the various consultancy reports that were published over the last one year. One acute observation was; the Huron philanthropic list was not published in the intended time which also shows how the state was trying to shape perceptions about these consultancy firms. Another important contributor to his study was the Tsinghua University Global Research Centre which was established with the contribution from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He contrasted the role of institutions and state during Covid in both the countries. His study highlighted the role of technology platforms that played a prominent role in the philanthropic image building in both China and India during the Covid crisis. The role of the state in administering the philanthropic mechanism was much more apparent in China than in India. Whereas in China, a proper system was designed in place to disperse the philanthropic charities, in India there was a lack of institutional mechanism to oversee philanthropic activities. One important similarity observed in this philanthropic mechanism was the 2016 charity law imposed by the Chinese government and the non-renewal of FCRA by the Indian government which did create some amounts of hurdles in the overseas philanthropic undertakings.

Ms. Sowmiya Ashok’s presentation on “**Algorithmic Governance and the Platform Economy through the Covid-19 pandemic**” investigated the role of the big tech companies with a specific focus of food delivery platforms and its role during the pandemic and how did this transform the company, its effects on the delivery workers and the government response. Her investigation looks at official company policies, Chinese government reports, and journalistic writings around delivery workers in China by keeping India as a contrasting point for comparison. One important observation which was uniformly observed throughout the world during the pandemic was how the delivery workers were propelled into frontline workers picturizing them as ‘saviors’. For a point of reference, the study looks at the Chinese super app ‘Meituan’. Her study explains three important aspects in detail – The Chinese State, The Company and The Labour. The state created new rules for gig workers and pushed the platforms to take on more workers. The pandemic propelled more workers into the informal sector which was backed by top Chinese leaders. Key findings from her study suggest – direct effective public policies framed through meaningful interactions amongst all parties involved in important, concerns and trust issues expressed by delivery workers for equitable livelihood within the digital economy should be taken into consideration.

The discussant **Prof. Rama Baru** mentioned that uncertainty of the pandemic threw a lot of issues for the uncertainty of the response. There was this uncertainty of science, governance, and therefore there were a lot of common grounds between the two countries and very specific differences. Prof. Xiang's theoretical input on mobility, immobility and securitization was extremely important in understanding two important aspects of the pandemic – question of mobility and immobility. Sowmiya's work alludes to this fact where the idea of who is a frontline worker marries very easily to commercial interests. The pandemic and the under-related notions of pollutions which are easily connected to the low-level workers who are at the greater risks of being labelled. Both Sowmiya and Prof. Xiang's presentations show how markets are accessed by state power to accommodate a situation like a lockdown. The digital tech giants get certain legitimacy from the state creating what is called a formalization of informal workers. Cody's presentation highlights the urban and rural contrast in a Chinese society which goes against the popular notion of higher social living in the Chinese context. The more important link would be unemployment, reduction in wages and what it does to food security at the household level which is an important area that needs to be explored and at the same time becomes very critical for a public health study. Dr. Bhim Subba's study on Philanthropy during Covid would be very interesting if it delves more into the packaging of multiple levels and various actors involved in the philanthropic activities. The Corporate Social Responsibility in the Indian context is an important area and it would be interesting to see if there are any parameters for comparison in the Chinese context.

DAY 3: Saturday, 13 November 2021

Thematic Panel IV: History and Cultural Linkages, 10:00 A.M. – 11:45 A.M.

The panel was chaired by **Prof. Kamal Sheel, Professor (Retired) of Chinese, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi; Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

The panelists were **Divya Pokhriyal, Doctoral Candidate & Guest Faculty, DEAS, University of Delhi, Delhi; Diki Sherpa, PhD Candidate, Department of History, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; Tiasangla Longkumer, Doctoral Candidate, SSS, JNU, New Delhi & ICS-HYI Fellow (2017); Jana Chaudhuri, Founder, Institute of Heritage Research, former Deputy Director, Delhi Urban Heritage Foundation, DDA, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India & Fulbright Fellow 2010-2011, and Premmi Wahengbam, Doctoral Candidate, Department of History, Gauhati University, Guwahati.**

Divya Pokhriyal's paper titled “**Evolution on Queenship as an Institution in Imperial China**”, attempted to reassess the links between gender and power by drawing examples from Chinese history, highlighting the

evolution of queenship as an institution in Imperial China, the power struggles of Empresses who were often either neglected or vilified, and the tools used by them to craft their narratives and legitimise their authority. The normative ideal in Chinese imperial tradition marginalized women to the domestic sphere in the palace. This did not stop powerful women from becoming de-facto rulers who handled the affairs of the state. This paper made a modest attempt to contribute to the scholarship on the institution of Queenship in China and the relationship between gender and power in Chinese history by highlighting the factors that enabled/affected the evolution of Queenship in China.

Diki Sherpa, in her paper titled “**Native Administration in Early Colonial Hong Kong: Appointing Native Chinese Peace Officers**” discussed the early attempts towards adopting native institutions by the colonial government, with a special focus on the appointment of native Chinese officers as part of the police administration in Hong Kong, revealing the contentions over transfer of jurisdiction and also revealing how on one hand the colonial state encouraged non-intervention in the maintenance of traditional order yet, on the other hand necessitated the intervention to meet its larger concerns. In particular, this paper looked into the aim and rationales for creating of Native Chinese Peace Officers in Colonial Hong Kong in early 1844.

Tiasangla Longkumer, in her paper titled, “**Scientific Medicine in Colonial India and Imperial China: A Study of Rockefeller Foundation Philanthropy in Medical Education**”, discussed the extent and development of medicine in India and China and Rockefeller Foundation's engagement in medical philanthropy in India and China. Her paper also highlights how such experiments were influenced by the Nationalist movements and the growing demands for autonomy and authority in matter of public health. Using archival resources, secondary literatures and in-depth interviews, this study attempted to trace the impact of RF on knowledge construction, the role it played in shaping knowledge production in health and medicine, and the ideological and institutional implications of this knowledge production in the framing of modern scientific medical education in China and India.

Jana Chaudhuri's paper titled, “**Historic Urban Landscape Approach: Application in China**”, studied the application of Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) principles in the restoration, preservation and conservation of heritage sites in China. Her paper highlighted how HUL principles provide the basis for conservation and management of identified historic urban landscapes within an overall sustainable development framework and how these principles are being applied in the four pilot cities of Shanghai, Suzhou, Tongli and Dujiangyan. This paper offered a systematic and logical analysis to understand the adaptation of the HUL in these Pilot cities of China and made an attempt to assess the rationale behind selection of these cities. The author made a comparative analysis to layout generic principles from the findings for further research. The paper was based mainly on secondary sources.

Premmi Wahengbam's paper titled “**Peking Opera and Shumang Leela: Bridging the Arts**”, compared and contrasted two popular art forms of China and India, Peking Opera and Manipur's Shumang Leela, taking into consideration various elements of both foreign as well as indigenous culture, historical sources and relevant texts on both the art forms. Using historical and cultural perspectives, the paper examined any cultural linkages and influences between China and India's North-eastern state of Manipur.

Thematic Panel V: Social Practices and Cultural Dimensions, 12:00 P.M. – 13:30 P.M.

The panel was chaired by **Prof. B. R. Deepak, Professor, Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.**

The panelists were **Subham Dutraj, PhD Candidate, Sikkim University, Gangtok; Shubhendu Ghosal, Ph.D. Scholar & Guest Faculty Department of Chinese Language & Culture, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan; Nishit Kumar, Ph. D. Candidate, Jawaharlal Nehru University & ICS-HYI Fellow (2018), and Madhurendra Jha, Assistant Professor, Department of Chinese Studies, School of Languages, Doon University, Dehradun.**

Subham Dutraj's paper on “**Confucianism and Applications: Retracing the Evolution of Confucian Ideals and its Practical Implementation in Contemporary Chinese Society**” looked at the intellectual history of pre-modern China with a specific focus on the topic. His paper argued that Confucianism is not a static orthodox ancient school of philosophy but rather a dynamic system of thought which has evolved from ancient to the present times to the changing social, cultural, political reality of China. Confucianism through centuries has travelled out of Chinese classical texts and into everyday lives of the common people, reorienting its fundamental principle in order to survive within the emerging trends of modernization and globalization in contemporary China. The resurgence of Confucianism in the past two decades is a significant marker in understanding China's current political theory and practice. To support this argument, the paper mapped the evolution of Confucianism, both as a system of thought and way of life for the Chinese people and attempted a study of its application in contemporary Chinese society and polity.

Subhendu Ghosal's paper on “**Voices of Netizens: Understanding China in the New Era**” discussed the words and vocabulary that Chinese netizens use online to communicate with themselves and address different issues within or outside China. These words are not available in conventional Chinese dictionaries but are in popular use specifically via online medium. His paper discussed words like *Di Touzu*, *748*, *Wu Maojun*, *Aizu*, *Fangnu*, *Zhanzhandian*, *Neijuan*, *996*, etc. The paper also looked at the popular and the most common online platforms for such discussions and provides well-established data of online users and its relevance to the problems faced

by the Chinese people. Subhendu believed that the factors behind such online voices are digital outburst of human emotions, influence of socio-political factors, digital monitoring, and censorship. His paper also looked at socio-political, cultural, ideological factors which have played an important role in coining of neologism in Chinese language. These newly coined terms and phrases have become a tool for netizens to express their views online and highlights the dynamic changes of language and changes in the Chinese society.

Nishit Kumar's presentation was titled "**Mo Yan as China's Cultural Capital: Why and How**". Since 2012, when Mo Yan was awarded the Nobel Prize, Chinese people and the party celebrated this as a long overdue of Chinese literature. However, it brought its own share of controversies with it at home and abroad. The Party tried to use Mo Yan's achievement for enhancement of its own image abroad. Given this background, Nishit's paper explored whether Mo Yan and his works could successfully be used by Chinese state as a cultural capital and if so, to what extent. His paper discussed China and Noble prize, Mo Yan and his works, 2012 Nobel Prize in Literature in the context of China's increasing focus on soft power through various measures in the past few decades. In the early years of his career, Mo Yan followed the literary trends and framework well established in the post-Mao China, which is evident in his early works. However, with the passing of time, Mo Yan started experimenting with new techniques and the hallmark of his writing is that he combined written literary style with popular oral traditions to address contemporary social issues. After receiving the Nobel Prize, he faced both compliments and criticisms for his political stance from around the world. Nishit argued that since 2012, the CPC by now, would have used Mo Yan's achievement as a soft power if they needed. Looking at the recently published 2021 Red Writers list by China, it is interesting to see that Mo Yan doesn't seem to find a spot on that list, which confirms CPC's stand on Mo Yan, his works and overall political stance.

Madhurendra Jha's paper on "**Involution or Alienation? Visiting the Issue through Jia Zhangke's 'Hometown Trilogy'**" argued that the new sociological phenomenon of involution is not a new phenomenon. However, if we approach it through the theories of alienation, and if we critically analyze the works of famous Chinese director Jia Zhangke, we find that Involution is in fact, an old wine in a new bottle – that is Alienation. His paper discussed the emergence of the term involution in the last few years, from being an academic term to now being used as a buzzword. As per the paper the term involution was used as an academic concept to convey the economic or political or social or cultural estrangement and to mark a sense of growth without development. However, cut to year 2020, the involution has taken a great leap forward to become a lexicon of the masses although with a change in its essence. It is being used to convey a subjective feeling or a psychological tiredness in the ever-intensifying competition to survive in today's China where state capitalism has resulted into the proliferation of consumerism, materialism and commodity fetishism. Likewise, as per Melvin Seeman, the term alienation refers to powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement. Therefore, Madhurendra argued

that the fear of no upward social mobility among the Chinese youth is manifested in a pattern of behavior which can be reflected through involution. Being in a market driven rat-race, the blue and white collars workers are bound to lose; this realization has filled them with a sense of meaninglessness which is now termed as involution or alienation.

Special Panel IV: Media, Society and Culture in China Today, 14:15 P.M. – 15:45 P.M.

The panel was chaired by **Dr. Hemant Adlakha, Associate Professor, Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

The panelists were **Ananth Krishnan, China Correspondent, The Hindu; Lance Gore, Senior Research Fellow, East Asian Institute, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, Singapore; Arun Teja Polcumpally, Research Assistant, Centre for Security Studies, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat; Doctoral Fellow, Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat & Vatsala Mishra, Threat Analyst, Barclays Joint Operations Command Centre, Bengaluru.**

The discussant was **Mr. Ravi Bhoothalingam, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; Founder and Chairman, Manas Advisory, Gurgaon.**

The proposed panel examined the social media “comments” and digital media “commentaries” to highlight the growing influence of Chinese social media in society and hence the more stringent implementation of the Cyber Security Law i.e. Chinese (cyber) censorship. It also examined the different tools used by the Party to exert authority through public morality. Another question that was examined was if and how the Chinese citizens were surrendering their freedom in return of stability and security.

Mr. Ananth Krishnan in his presentation on “**Social Media in the India-China Conflict**” observed that Social Media (Weibo) has emerged as a new battleground in China, where accessing, analysing and interpreting the information becomes an important task. As an e-platform, Weibo was used to get reports and information on real time, like when the case of Bo Xilai came to public attention. In Xi Jinping era, Weibo was defanged as it became a serious threat to the party’s monopoly on information, since a large number of people were sharing posts on sensitive topics. After Twitter, Facebook and Youtube were banned, in 2013 Weibo became a site of surveillance and to control people by extrapolating any social protest. The Party calls it ‘guidance of public opinion’, which indicates how the party wants to use social media. Subsequently, Xi Jinping came out with the idea of telling China’s story well by properly conducting external propaganda (using social media to reach a wider foreign

audience) and by innovating external propaganda methods. In case of the recent Galwan dispute, after being silent for a long time about the 15th June 2020 standoff with India, China reacted on all Social Media in Feb. 2021. That the strategy was successful in China was evident by the fact that the Indian embassy in Beijing saw in its Weibo account many abusive and emotional outpouring messages and images in order to offend sensibilities. PLA daily has also using Weibo to spread their news, like leaking videos as was seen during the Doklam standoff. Summing up, the scholar argued that Social Media transcends different level of authoritativeness, indulging in leaking information, fake information etc. and hence can't be put at par with media organizations in terms of authenticity.

In the presentation titled “**Socialism without Social Development in China**”, Dr. Lance Gore spoke about the *fifth modernization*, i.e. modernization of the governance and governing capability, which has been added by Xi Jinping to the existing ‘four modernizations’. While all the modernizations are state led efforts to realize state’s purposes, the extremely important component of social development is missing and remains a weakness in China’s rise. The Party wants its members to be an example of morality, role model of the people; its atheist ideology makes it wary of organized religion and it prohibits its members from participating in religious activities. Building *guanxi* (relation) networks remain the dominant strategy among the people, especially ties with people in positions of power are regarded as social capital. As per Confucian and Taoist philosophy, people should undergo self-cultivation so that they can serve the society, which contradicts the present money worshipping trend. If China does not change its self-image and its image abroad, it will be very difficult to gain respect no matter how hard they strive.

In the presentation titled “**Current CPC Regime's Extreme Censorship Control using Technology**”, Arun Teja Polcumpally and Vatsala Mishra traced the history of censorship in China. They observed that media censorship in China dates back to Ming dynasty, where the scholars were forced to work in their offices and work was censored. The example of the public execution of *Gao Qi* embodies strict censorship over people by the administration. In the present time, CPC imposes media censorship for a better control over the people, to play with their psyche and to have a strict surveillance system in place. The ambiguous articles in the constitutional provisions give the government powerful control over its people. On one hand tools like Snapchat, Facebook, Google etc., have been prohibited and have been replaced by local tools, media and networks developed by the Party. On the other, in the name of studying individual behaviors, a lot of data have been collected, which again gives more power to the government. People also have voluntarily given up their freedom in the name of state security. In order to build a society with the highest forms of patriotism, dutifulness towards the state and intolerance towards criticism of the state, censorship is being normalized as China is trying to exert control over the next generation.

The discussant **Mr. Ravi Bhoothalingam** maintained that any advancement in technology has a bright and dark side; in China we can see both the sides. There are many evolutionary phases a country goes through and China is now going to their extreme before they amend themselves. Creativity of netizens is magnificent, creating a new language that reflects the thinking of the society. Creativity of the billion people of China can't be suppressed forever. China is struggling how to handle many things, and we all should observe them and see how they will conduct their actions in future.

Valedictory Session, 16:00 P.M. – 17:30 P.M.

The Valedictory Session was chaired by **Professor Sreemati Chakrabarti, Chairperson and Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.**

Prof. Chakrabarti introduced Professor Shih Chih-yu as a scholar who has produced a range of academic work which consistently challenged the mainstream views on the law of human behavior, agencies, ethnic community, developing countries, poverty etc, and one who has worked on significant transnational projects to compare scholarship on China in different countries. Prof. Shih was then invited to deliver the Valedictory Address.

The title of the Valedictory Address delivered by Prof. Shih Chih-yu was “**State and Society in the Studies of China’s Democracy: A Critique of Liberal Resilience**”. The lecture was divided into six sections:

Authoritarian Resilience?

Studies of Chinese democracy are preoccupied with the question of China being an authoritarian or totalitarian state, which suppresses the emergence of an autonomous civil society, dampens the democratic prospect, and establishes a bad example. The slow, unsuccessful, or reversed democratization of the Chinese state, as perceived, is understood as authoritarian resilience. State and society are two role structures that coexist in our mind, this dichotomy is, accordingly, spurious. The composite of state and society is not a problem while their imagined binary is.

State and Society as a Cosmological Relation

To the extent that the state and society overlap in their spatial scope, the state is a territorial state. A territorial state is, at the same time, a sovereign state. So-called sovereign states are potential candidates for inclusion on either the list of failing states or the list of resilience states in the studies of democracy due to their inability to meet the expectation of democratization. China, likewise an alleged sovereign state, is another case that

exemplifies a population that is not ready to give consent to be governed. It is huge in size, though. This is because the ruling legacy of Confucianism was so widely, enduringly, and deeply shared for two thousand years by the population and its governments. China shares one thing in common with other postcolonial societies; namely, the felt need of the population for a leader that has its confidence and protects it from all sorts of external as well as internal enemies, either real or imagined.

Confucian Cosmology and its Critical Translation

Confucianism is a highly apparent cosmology in the preparation of mutual dependency between the population and its leaders. The dichotomous discourse of the state and society, as a libertarian premise shared by Marxism, is a modern acquisition in the People's Republic of China. The premise has made the relationships between the state, party, class, and people constantly confusing and yet somewhat inviting to liberal watchers, who can romanticize a democratic prospect according to the Libertarian historiography.

Democracy is uncritically 民主 (minzhu) in Chinese in modern times. Linguistically, 民主 assumes neither the state of nature or anarchy nor the rights of nature. Most importantly, 民主 does not connote a civil society that autonomously participates in public policy. 民主 easily gives a liberal watcher the impression of a population lacking the agency to form opinions, preferences, or rationality. From the linguistic point of view, 民主 is meant to convey the idea of the people, i.e., 民, as their own master, i.e., 主. Given Marxism, the proletarian class composed of peasants and workers is the qualified master. Classic references in paper, reveal a rather familiar logic of Confucianism and inform the contemporary references to 民主 that testify to the contribution of critical translation.

民主 in the Confucian Classics

The references of 民主 in the Confucian Classics suggest that the agency of the people lies in: a readiness to distinguish a Prince as a capacity from the persons who actually took the role, the assessment of Princes/Emperors on their benevolence toward the people and conformity to role decency, the internalization of the mandate of heaven embedded in the people's confidence, the affirmation of the people's confidence in those Princes who did not indulge themselves, neglect propriety, lose their officials, or spoil their families, their reluctance or opposition to inform the Prince of their feelings in full, action in union as the time demands, and a readiness to desert or embrace a kingdom and/or a Prince by migration as well as shaming.

The People's Master vs. the People as Master

These references to “the people’s master” are essentially in line with Confucius and his disciples’ warning to Princes everywhere. The references were tantamount to a reminder of the people, instead of the selves or the families of the princes, being in need of care. A liberal who sees the government as a necessary evil cannot help but ask why a prince should care about being benevolent. Patience, instead of participation, suggests: 1) No population could do without a prince, nor impose one, but they do not need to since no dictatorship can last forever; and, 2) the people had no direct say about the choice of the prince, whose mandate comes from heaven.

Compared with the imagined social contract, through which the population gives its consent to be governed in the libertarian tradition, the notion of “the natural contract” can be a parallel in the Confucian context to denote the accountability of the leaders for the lives and welfare of the people as well as everything else.

The Liberal Resilience

The aforementioned discussion connects the classic 民主 (“the people’s master” as a person) to the contemporary 民主 (“the people as master” as a relation) and supports a critical translation of Confucian 民主 in terms of the spontaneous following of the most benevolent leader by the people. This can parallel a critical translation of liberal democracy in terms of exercising the natural rights to government by consent. The Chinese state faces both challenges. Inside the borders, territorial China includes groups whose following of the Confucian regime used to fluctuate. The sovereign jurisdiction deprives them of legitimacy for quitting and restoring their following according to their governmentality and counter-governmentality. To ensure their integration and unity, leaders acting on behalf of nominally sovereign China are obliged to show benevolence to all that constitutes the people’s heart. Historical imperialist forces, e.g., Japan, the UK, US, or Russia, could easily take advantage of the ambiguity of the sovereign identity to devastate the nation building of such a China and disguise the cosmological muddiness of their own sovereign identities.

Imperialism also creates new conditions of benevolence in territorial China. To defend sovereignty, Chinese nationalism transforms governmentality, with the population demanding unity, in addition to welfare. Continued Confucianism is exemplified in various ways:

1. Marxist attention to the material welfare of the subaltern population is consistent with Confucian benevolence;
2. The people’s heart is still central to governmentality in the contemporary discourse;
3. The statist discourse intends mainly to inspire integration as elsewhere in the postcolonial world, so the rhetoric of participation in the capacity of an autonomous (i.e., self- protective) civil society remains superficial.
4. Patience and alienation, instead of participation, continues to characterize the political attitude toward abuse.

The drive for unity almost guarantees a split society in most of the postcolonial world, though. Ironically, perceived authoritarian resilience of this sort as well as the imagined threat to liberalism that it incurs reflect more of a kind of liberal resilience, embedded in Christian cosmology, political science, and China studies. In this sense, authoritarian resilience is neither the abuse of the state, nor the incapacity of civil society. It is both the blind spot of the liberal cosmology and the disguise of the guilt about colonialism by the former colonial powers that together inspire the theory of authoritarian resilience. Indeed, liberal resilience is destroying 民主.

The Convenor's Report was presented by **Prof. Sabaree Mitra, Convenor, 14th AICCS; Professor, Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.** To begin with Prof. Mitra mentioned that there was a record number of individual abstracts and panel proposals submitted for presentation in the 14th AICCS, many of them were good in terms relevance- both contemporary and enduring, methodology, content and research focus. Of the 147 abstracts received we chose about 80 odd abstracts and of 9 panel proposals received we chose 4. Of the abstracts selected, only about 49 fifty full papers were received and of these 21 were selected by a board of reviewers for final presentation through a rigorous process based on importance and singularity of theme, academic standard, feasibility and pan-Indian representation. It is important to note that 14th AICCS saw representation of close to 45 institutions and more than one thousand registered participants. The end result was that this platform brought together scholars one may not commonly find at the same location at the same time. The exchange of perspectives under the aegis of AICCS would most likely grow into something more with the passage of time.

The 14th AICCS had four Special Panels reflecting diverse interest and concerns. There were five Thematic Panels comprising of 21 papers selected from the 49 full papers submitted. These papers were indicative of an extremely wide range of interest, discipline and training of scholars, covered a rainbow spectrum by way of topics and reflected the new innovative interdisciplinary approach that has broken through conventional categories. We have had titles such as “Democratic Transition, New Taiwanese Identity and Queer Rights Movement in Taiwan”, “Pollution Intensive Products in India's Bilateral Trade with China”, “Imagining the Digital Public Sphere in Xi's China: Looking at the #Me Too Movement through the eyes of Castells and Habermas”, “Historic Urban Landscape Approach: Application in China”, “Involution or Alienation? Visiting the Issue through Jia Zhangke's *Hometown Trilogy*” and many more that has captured the attention of the emerging scholars of China Studies in India. It is from these papers that we will select a paper for the **MSB Award**, awarded each year in AICCS in celebration of the contribution and legacy of Prof. Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea, an iconic Indian scholar of China Studies.

In conclusion, she thanked the Team AICCS, that included multiple groups from ICS and Visva-Bharati especially Cheena Bhavana for the seamless experience of this conference, the rapporteurs who volunteered from different

institutions and the office and technical staff of ICS and VB. She also expressed her gratitude to all the Chairs and Discussants and of course the presenters who were the intellectual core of this conference. Prof. Mitra appreciated the efforts and commitments of the Core Committee, the Joint Organizing Committee, Director, ICS, Ambassador Ashok Kantha, Assistant Director, ICS, Dr. Madhurima Nundy and the Co-Convenor of the Conference, Prof. Avijit Banerjee, that made the 14th AICCS a fantastic experience with rich takeaways.

Dr Pahi Saikia expressed gratitude on behalf of Department of Political Science, IIT, Guwahati, Guwahati University and Omeo Kumar Das Institute, for being invited to collaborate with ICS for the 15th AICCS. She drew attention to the fact that the papers presented in the 14th AICCS, as well as the lectures delivered, were rich and diverse and reiterated that as co-organizers they were committed to enhance the scholarship in the next year's Conference. Dr. Saikia extended formal invitation to all present to the 15th AICCS in Guwahati in 2022.

Mr. Chiranjib Sinha, Assistant Professor, Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, proposed the Vote of Thanks. He started by conveying deep regards and hearty thanks to Prof. Bidyut Chakrabarty, Vice Chancellor of Visva-Bharati, for gracing the Inaugural Session. He conveyed his deep appreciation to Ambassador Shivshankar Menon for delivering the Keynote Address. Mr. Sinha also expressed gratefulness to Director Ashok Kantha, Professor Sabaree Mitra and all members of the ICS for making the event a grand success, both intellectually and organisationally. He thanked the India Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for helping to organise the 14th AICCS. He also expressed his deep appreciation to Prof. Shih Chih-yu for delivering the Valedictory Address and to Prof. Sreemati Chakrabarti, Chairperson of ICS for chairing the Valedictory Session; to all chairs, panellists and discussants who were the foundation and pillars of the conference; to research faculty, administrative and technical team of ICS, for a seamless virtual Zoom conference experience. Mr. Sinha expressed his gratitude to all rapporteurs, including faculty and students of Cheena Bhavana, ICS, JNU and CJU for volunteering for the important task of recording the conference procedures. He thanked the Registrar of Visva-Bharati, faculty and office staff of Cheena Bhavana and Sangeet Bhavana for continuous support in organising the conference, the staff of Computer centre, VB for technical support, and print and electronic media for presence and coverage. He observed that the event has been organised and backed by motivated and dedicated colleagues and students of Cheena Bhavana. He also registered deep appreciation for Prof Avijit Banerjee, co-convenor, who took significant initiative to bring AICCS to Visva-Bharati. Lastly Mr. Sinha thanked all participants from India and abroad for joining this conference.

To conclude, the 14th AICCS continued with its tradition as ICS' flagship event and came to fruition this year too, albeit in a virtual mode. It was a successful conference in all respects. This year the ICS received a record number of abstracts and a record number of institutions, almost 45, participated during the three days of the conference. The total number of academics, research scholars and practitioners who presented at the conference was around

75. On an average, every session had 200 participants from all over, thus ensuring a wider outreach. The keynote address by Amb. Shivshankar Menon received good coverage in the media.

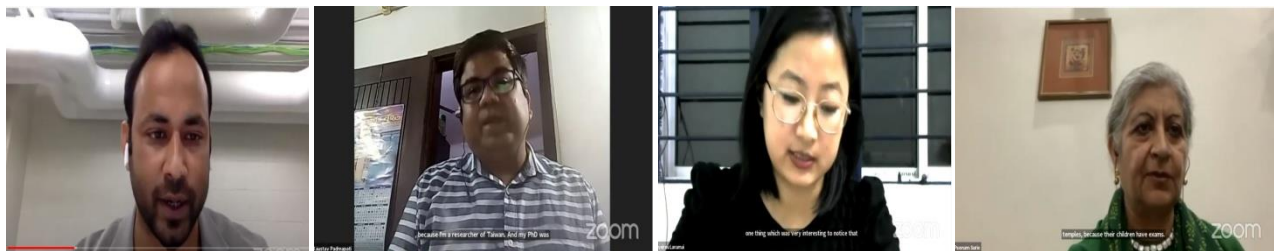
Media Coverage

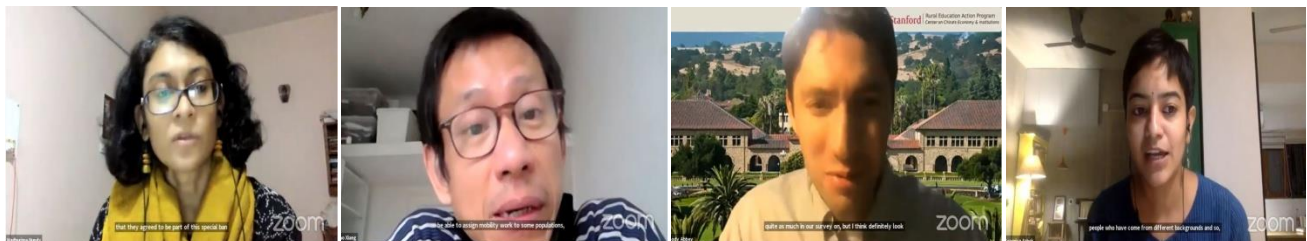
The 14th AICCS received extensive coverage in both traditional and social media. In addition to ICS' own social media handles on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), other platforms such as Economic & Political Weekly, [H-Net](#) and [The International Chinese Studies Virtual Events Clearing House](#) of Fairbank Center of China Studies and WhatsApp were extensively used to provide publicity for the Conference.

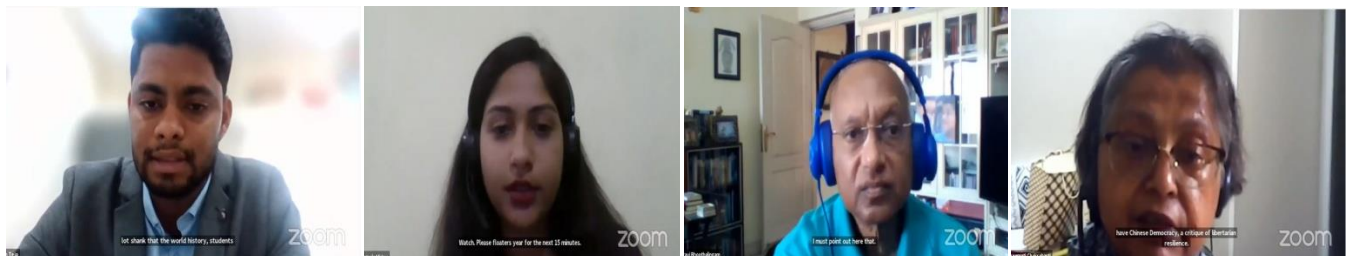
ThePrint India was the Digital Partner for the Conference this year and published articles titled, '[Chinese Communist Party now derives legitimacy from ultra-nationalism, says Shivshankar Menon](#)' on 11 Nov 2021, '[Tibet, Buddhism, India-Pak tension — 3 factors that define China's foreign policy in South Asia](#)' on 12 Nov 2021, '[Migrant exodus during Covid due to lack of 'immobility infrastructure' in India: Expert](#)' on 13 Nov 2021.

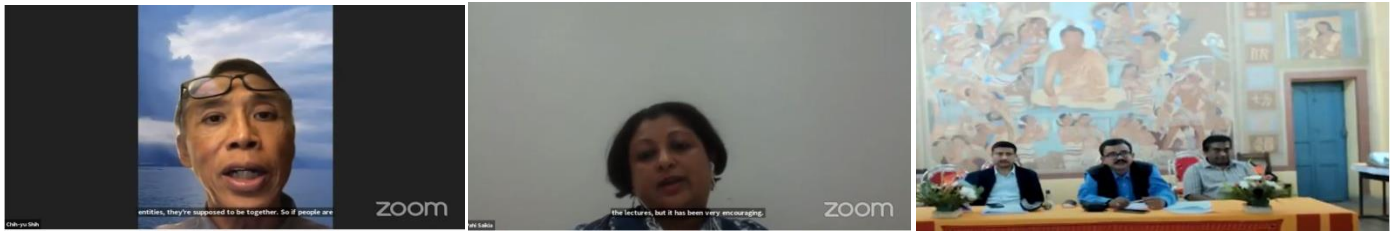
The next edition of the AICCS will take place in Guwahati in 2022 and ICS looks forward to yet another successful event in the coming year – this time in an offline mode.

IMAGE GALLERY



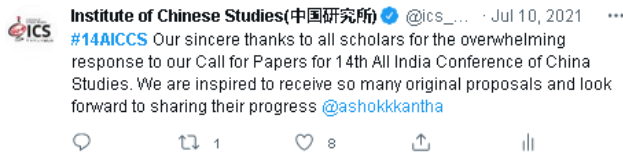






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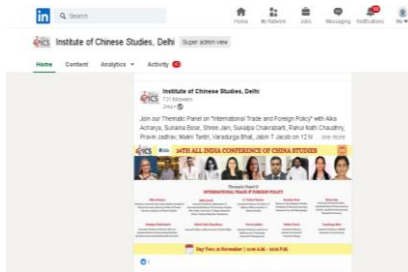




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The Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi is an institution engaged in and committed to interdisciplinary research on China. Apart from the annual AICCS, the Institute undertakes various collaborative research programs and multilateral initiatives with prominent institutions in India and abroad, and brings together leading and upcoming scholars through multiple fora. Among its many legacies, it has been conducting the iconic Wednesday Seminar for over 50 years and publishes *China Report*, a peer-reviewed quarterly journal on China and East Asia, currently in its 57th year of publication.



Visva-Bharati was founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921 and was declared a central university and an institution of national importance by an Act of Parliament in May 1951. Cheena Bhavana (Department of Chinese Language and Culture) was established by Rabindranath Tagore and Tan Yun-Shan in 1937 to strengthen India-China civilizational dialogue. Over the years, the institution has been engaged in knowledge-building and exchange of scholars that has deepened the cultural understanding between India and China.



Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a German foundation established in 1955, with its headquarters at Sankt Augustin near Bonn, and also in Berlin. Through political education and counselling, the foundation campaigns worldwide for peace, freedom and justice. Its principal aim is to preserve and promote liberal democracy and strengthen international dialogue. The KAS India Office was established more than 50 years ago and it has been working with Indian partner institutions such as Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), The Energy Research Institute (TERI) and the Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS).
