



# Conference Report

## The 7<sup>th</sup> All India Conference of China Studies

### Special Theme:

“Emerging perspectives in Chinese Thought and Culture  
and its Global Implications”

14-16 November 2014, BHU, Varanasi, UP

### Introduction

The 7<sup>th</sup> AICCS was organised by the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi in collaboration with the Department of History, BHU, from the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> November 2014, at the Science Complex Auditorium, BHU. More than 120 scholars responded to the Call for Papers out of which 30 scholars were invited to the Conference. There were seven sessions in the Conference, in addition to a special joint Indian Congress of Asian and Pacific Studies (ICAPS)-AICCS panel. A new feature introduced in this conference was Special Lecture Sessions by foreign scholars.

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**Day I: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

**INAUGURAL SESSION**

The Conference began with the traditional salutations – rendering of the university anthem, lighting of the lamp and garlanding the bust of the university founder, Mahamana Madan Mohan Malaviya ji. Dr. Ranjana Sheel, the BHU convener of the Conference, initiated the process of welcoming the participants from various parts of the country as also attendees from the BHU by outlining the purpose and focus of the conference. Prof. Alka Acharya, the Director of ICS also welcomed the august gathering on behalf of the Institute of Chinese studies and highlighted the importance of holding this conference, with its special focus on Chinese Thought and Culture, in one of the historically important universities of the country. Prof. R.R. Jha, the Dean of the social science faculty and Prof. A.S. Singh, Head of the Department of History also welcomed the participants and applauded the collaboration between the ICS and BHU. Prof. M. Mohanty, Chairperson, ICS, provided a brief outline about the purpose and nature of the conference particularly focussing on the issue of culture and its dynamics in the global context by comparing the India and China situation. Culture is not monolithic and an ‘intercultural’ focus would facilitate a better understanding of the role of culture and history in modern political developments. Historically speaking, culture is plural and dynamic and in this connection he raised various problems and issues related to such theories as ‘Sinocentrism’ and Huntington’s thesis of the ‘clash of civilisations’.

Prof. Prasenjit Duara, Director, Asia Research Institute, NUS, delivered an extremely erudite and thought-provoking keynote lecture on the theme “Is the concept of Secularism Relevant to China: A Comparative analysis”, which was based on his recent book, *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future* in which he has traced the concept of secularism, its nature, growth and social praxis as it was prevalent in various parts of the world cutting across time. Taking off from the argument made by Charles Taylor in his magnum opus *The Secular Age*, Prof Duara went on to critique what he described as the internal contradictions of Taylor’s concept of secularism. In analysing the imperatives of secularism, he advanced the idea of ‘Circulatory History’ which implied connectedness and which enabled one to understand the spread of ideas across space and time. He also focussed on the notion of ‘confessionalised nationalism’ in regard to the promotion and political articulation of one’s own identity. His main concern was to stress the shared historical values of secularism across the world, and that every religious tradition had its own way of accommodating different cultural practices within its domain, while attempting to homogenise them. He argued that though *western* secularism is itself a kind of localised secularism, its aims to elicit hegemonic consent by universalising it were evident. Prasenjit Duara also dwelt on the idea of transcendence that has occupied centre stage in the formation of various religious traditions in China, viz, Confucianism, Taoism,

Buddhism, Islam and Christianity and which has also contributed to the appropriation of this concept in the Chinese social context. His focus was on the utilitarian value of secularism in relation to the civic sense, and its redemptive role in this context. Secularism thrived more as a pragmatic practice than a dogmatic religious approach by creating space for different cultural expressions. In the concluding section of his lecture, he critically analysed the three different strands of religious response during the colonial period in India, as a result of the exposure to European cultural values. These may be summed up as: reformation from within, 'confessionalisation' of Hinduism and the political articulation of the identitarian representation. Thus, *dharma* becomes the moral base for a cultural and political assertion.

Prof. Kamal Sheel, Rector, BHU, in his presidential remarks stressed the need for a deep intellectual engagement between China and India in the areas of medicine, religion, philosophy and sciences. These interactions have played a significant role in the mutual enrichment of the two societies and culture. The inaugural session ended with a proposal of vote of thanks by Prof. Keshav Mishra of the Department of History, BHU.

## **Day II: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

### **SESSION I: ECONOMY AND FOREIGN POLICY - I**

The second day of the 7<sup>th</sup> AICCS opened with a session on *Economy and Foreign Policy*, which was composed of speakers from different backgrounds, who presented the audience with different theoretical, conceptual and empirical insights and views, both at national level and global comparative level. It gave a good impression and understanding of the many perspectives that can and should be taken into account when defining and engaging in studies on China.

The presentations in this on the first day's first session covered different perspectives on interpretation of prevailing political ideologies in present China, historical perspectives on India and China's modernization processes, globalization and regionalism.

The first presentation by Pratinashree Basu titled "Tracing the Chinese Imagination: From 'Peaceful Development' to the 'Chinese Dream'", discussed the Chinese imagination and the political metamorphosis. Her presentation highlighted the difference between various themes and its significance by taking 'peaceful development' and 'China dream' as the sample cases.

Rakesh Pandey presented his paper on "Comparing Chinese and Indian Modernization in the Second Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century", a historical research on a version of modernization theory as a method or tool to maintain control over an increasingly economically developed society.

The debate over the correlation between globalization and the type of regime was examined by Shiv Poojan Prasad Pathak, who presented his research on "Globalization and Regime Type: A Comparative Study of China and India". The paper tried to analyse the impact level

of globalization on the state and how the regime type plays an important role in regulating the relation between the two.

Konthoujam Sarada, presented a paper on “India-China in Re-drawing the Regional Economic and Security Architecture”, which focussed on factors which would motivate India and China to collaborate in maintaining the regional economic and security architecture in the region and also explored the emerging synergy between India and China.

Prof. Alka Acharya chaired the session and Prof. Keshav Mishra was the discussant.

## SESSION II: SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Session II was a parallel session on the theme of China-Society and Culture. It had five presentations chaired Prof. Kamal Sheel and Prof. Charles Willemen as the discussant. The first presentation was by Dr. Binda Paranjape on ‘Goa-China from the Eyes of a Gandhian’. The presentation gave an account of the contribution of Ravindra Kelkar in the contemporary understanding China, emerging from his experiences during his visit in the early 1990s. Kelkar had written extensively in Konkani, a regional language of western India, about promoting mutual understanding of China in Goa, and its immense historical value in research about India and China.

Dr. Kamal Dutta presented a paper on ‘China’s Migrant Workers: A Perspective’ which attempted a comprehensive examination of the issue of migration in China vis-à-vis rapid urbanization and industrialisation. He also tried to analyse the *Hukou* system and its anomalies in both hindering and enhancing the population migration within China and focused on state policies to capture such transformation.

The third paper was by Dr. Kunaljeet Roy on the Chinese diaspora in India. ‘From Achipur to Tangra: A Detailed study toward the journey of Ethnicity, Occupation, Violence and Survival for the Overseas Chinese Community in Kolkata’. It was a historical analysis of the lives of this community since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The paper tried to focus on the possible reasons behind the gradual decline of Chinese enclave in the city of Kolkata due to uneven socio-economic conditions especially after 1962.

Dr. Gopabandhu Mohanty’s paper on ‘Representation of Transformation in China in Chittaranjan Das’s travelogue “Bharataru Chin (China from China)’, began with the subjective notions and understandings of the author. The paper narrated the visit of Prof. Das to China in the 1980s and delineated the political cultural and economic transition through introspection and subjective cultural reflections.

The fifth presentation was by Ms. Sanu Tiwari on a comparison between Daoism and the philosophy of the Bhagwad Gita.

### **SESSION III: ECONOMY AND FOREIGN POLICY-II**

The third session on *Economy and Foreign Policy-2* comprised speakers from the field of economics, legal studies and management. Prof. Prasanjit Duara chaired the session and Prof. N. K. Mishra was the discussant.

Debamitra Mitra's paper titled "Regionalism: Sino-Indian Dynamics in Himalayan Neighbourhood", covered a variety of issues concerned with the prospects of Sino-Indian regionalism, its impact, significance and the future in the Himalayan neighbourhood.

Hema Narang delved into the important issue of China and India's rise in Africa and gave a comprehensive overview of the aspects involved. Proceeding from a comparative perspective, her paper titled "Chinese and Indian Footprints in Africa, 2000-2013", aimed to understand the 'strategic advantages' of one over the other. She also made a detailed study of the political and economic footprints of India and China in Africa over the past one decade and debated the nature, similarities and differences of Chinese and Indian engagements in Africa.

Vijay Jayswal presented a paper titled "A Comprehensive Study of the China Model of Development for Asia: Can Nepal be benefitted?" His basic thesis was that Nepal could play a critical role in providing substantial cooperation and mutual benefit in Asia. He argued that it was Nepal's rise as an important actor in regional diplomacy, which had led Nepal to rethink its traditional foreign policy.

The subsequent paper by Vijaya Chamundeswari, focused on Xinjiang. It was titled "Contested Frontiers of China: A Study of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region", and structured around the political construction of the term 'frontier region' and how it had been imagined and represented in the nationalist discourse of China, i.e. how to locate the problem of Xinjiang frontier region within the larger territory of China. The Chinese Minority Nationality policy and its implications for the region provided the framework to study the integration of frontier regions like Xinjiang into mainstream China.

The final paper in this session was presented by Neelam Rani and was titled "Changing Paradigm of Internationalization Strategies: A Review of the Strategies of Emerging Market Firms from India and China". It surveyed the changing paradigm of international strategies of corporates in emerging markets and delineated the patterns of internationalization strategies pursued by Chinese firms.

### **SPECIAL SESSION I: LECTURES BY VISITING FOREIGN SCHOLARS**

In post-Lunch session, there were two special lectures conducted in the main hall. In the first lecture Prof. Mark Frazier, of the New School, New York spoke on "Weighing Welfare in China: Theory, Practice and Prospects". China is undoubtedly one of the states which spends robustly on its ageing population in the form of pension and retirement benefits. The pension expenditure even outweighs military and other

schemes. China pays utmost attention in establishing various schemes on account of increasing local protest across the state. It is largely driven by historical and cultural forces, and the increasing rural-urban divide has also created a necessity for the state to undertake various schemes. He also spent spoke at length on the need to understand the civic/social citizenship more than political, as it directly concerned with the material needs of the people.

In the second lecture “SOE Reform, Vested Interests and Party Business Relations in China” Prof. Kjeld Eric Brodsgaard, of Copenhagen Business School, highlighted the relationship between the political and business class by mainly focussing on the state-owned enterprises. China’s model of industrial development was largely driven by the state owned enterprises which enjoyed greater autonomy in the conduct of its business affairs. The CEO’s of these enterprises were paid handsome emoluments and in fact are considered to be the super managers of China. The inter-relations between Party and the business is so intertwined with each other that the Party functionary can become the CEO of the company anytime and vice- versa. Many Chinese companies came into limelight through this Party-business nexus; the business elites in fact became the brain driving Chinese industrial development and political affairs through CPC. ‘Integrated Fragmentation’ provided the theoretical framework for explaining the nature of the nexus and practices of the business-party in China.

### **Day III: 16<sup>th</sup> November**

#### **SESSION IV: (ICAPS-AICCS PANEL) SOCIETY & CULTURE-CHINA AND ASIA**

A special session of the Indian Congress of Asia & Pacific Studies was also held.

#### **SESSION V: POLITICAL ECONOMY**

The 5<sup>th</sup> session on Political Economy was held on the third and final day of the Conference with Prof. K. E. Brodsgaard in the chair. 6 papers were altogether presented followed by a lively discussion hour. Industrial development, Labour relations, management practices, currency manipulation and many other interrelated issues were raised and discussed with appropriate data.

The first presentation by Aravind Yelery titled “Evolving Narratives of China’s Industrial Outlook and Patterns of Its Foreign Trade Responses from 18th to 21st Century”, traced the evolution of China’s commercial outlook towards foreign trade engagements throughout this historical period. His basic hypothesis was that in modern decentralized China, the state, managers and market constantly anticipate and respond to evolving threats and opportunities, faster than in preceding centuries. Furthermore, the paper also looked at the recurring dilemma of the Chinese rulers and

leaders: the demands of modernization and self-esteem requiring western assistance and a self-reliant model of development.

The second paper titled 'China's Textiles Sector: Performance and Challenges' by Anil Kumar Kanungo examined the policies and the structural adjustments in China and looked at the integration of the textiles sector with the world trading system. The paper largely focused on China's entry into the WTO during the global financial crisis and the challenges it faced.

The third paper by P.K.Anand, titled 'The Changing Labour Relations in China and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU)' examined the ACFTU in the context of changing labour relations in China and analysed its role as well as functions, to understand the complexities involved. It also looked at the avenues or alternatives available for the workers in the event of confrontation with enterprise managements, than merely depending on the ACFTU.

The next paper by Prachi Agarwal was titled "China's Textile Sector: Performance and Challenges". This paper attempted to draw a general framework of the various HRM (human resources management) and GSCM (green supply chain management) practices. She further tried to incorporate the western concept of CSR (corporate social responsibility) with the cultural values of Confucian China.

The fifth paper co-authored by Samar Tyagi and Anjali Bansal titled "A Comparative Study of India-China Trade: Demystifying the Currency Manipulation Myth" was presented by Samar Tyagi. It made a detailed analysis of the burgeoning trade deficit between both countries with the objective of uncovering whether this was on account of currency exchange rate manipulation or some other factors.

Finally, Jigme Yeshe Lama presented a paper on "Economic Liberalization in China's Tibet and its Impact on State-Society Relationship". His presentation talked about one of the core aspects of the withdrawal of the state especially from welfare activities, as evidenced in the increased marketization towards the larger community and the growth of non-state actors involved in welfare activities. In the Tibetan region, this is seen in the form of a secularization of the religious institutions, which came in for detailed examination. In addition, the paper also studied the effects of marketization in the Tibetan regions of China and its impact on the State-Society relationship in China's Tibetan regions.

## **SESSION VI: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY**

The 6<sup>th</sup> session, which ran parallel to the 5<sup>th</sup>, was on Environment and Society during which 3 papers were presented. Prof. Mark Frazier chaired the session and Prof. Ashok Kaul was the discussant. The first paper by Dr. G. Venkat Raman was titled

*'Environmental Governance in China'*. The paper focused on issues of environmental governance as witnessed in the vertical/horizontal relationships and networks in the government and the various ways in which the state today engages with non-state actors like civil society organisations and the corporate sector.

The second paper by Mr. Mrutyunjay Swain was titled *'Historical Perspectives, Impacts and Adaptation with Drought in India and China'*. This paper argued that both India and China were affected by the increasing occurrence of climate induced natural disasters. It compared the droughts faced by India and China historically and the intervals at which they occurred. It concluded by arguing that China had more efficient systems to manage droughts in place, better early warning systems and drought risk management strategies than India.

The third paper by Dr. Madhurima Nundy was titled *'Non-governmental Organisations in the Social Sector in China'*. This paper looked at the re-emergence of NGOs during the reform period as part of internal political and social transformations, as well as in the context of the growth of NGOs globally. It focused on the relationship between the state and the NGOs in China today and analysed the contentions and debates over whether the independence of the NGOs was curtailed by state authoritarianism or whether there was a third sector that was still in its nascent phase.

## **SESSION VII: COMPARATIVE ECONOMY**

In the 7<sup>th</sup> session on comparative economy, altogether 5 papers were presented on issues such as GDP, FDI, medium and small scale industries and innovative practices in China and India. The first paper by Usha N Patil titled "Comparative study in India and China: Special reference to GDP in economic development" stressed that a comparative study of India and China, the two largest agrarian economies in the world and accounting for a substantial share of the world's poor, was central to the Asian debates. At the same time in terms of economic development in recent decades, both countries have achieved major strides, in the sense that China is the second and India the fourth largest economy in the world. Patil's presentation attempted a comparison of several parameters underlying the two economies using graphical analysis as also SWOT analysis.

The second paper titled "Comparative Trade Performance in China and India: Strengths and Challenges", was co-authored by Falendra K. Sudan and Ishita Singh and presented by the former. The paper focused on India's competitive advantage in the global market, its strategic strengths and challenges and broadly argued that China and India are often portrayed as competitors in a race for economic power but there are also opportunities for the two economies to grow together, learn from one another and collaborate to overcome shared problems and achieve shared goals.

The next paper by Khanindra Ch. Das, titled "Outbound Foreign Direct Investment from China and India", examined the outbound investment experiences of Chinese and Indian multinationals and compared the investment development trajectories of both countries. Comparison was made with respect to government policy, motivations for outbound investment, financing of investments, success rate in overseas acquisition, sectoral composition, characteristics of multinational enterprises, challenges and impact of such investments in the light of differences in economic and institutional parameters between the two countries.

## **SPECIAL SESSION II: LECTURES BY VISITING FOREIGN SCHOLARS**

In this special lecture session, the first was delivered by Prof Pankaj Mohan on the Chinese influence in the Koguryo kingdom. The second lecture by Prof Charles Willeman discussed the relationship between Sinology and China studies. Starting with definition and etymology, he went on to explain the inter-relation and differences between the two. Sinology had once been more popular than China studies and it flourished even in India at Vishva bharti, Santiniketan. He also explored the influence of Indian Buddhism in generating intellectual ideas for public consumption in China. Many questions were raised in response to his lecture and it was suggested that India should also explore the connections between East and Central Asia through Buddhism and the silk route.

## **VALEDICTORY SESSION**

The Valedictory session comprised a brief report on the conference by Dr A. Gangatharan, Dept of History, BHU. In her concluding remarks, the ICS Director and Co-convenor, Prof Alka Acharya pointed out that the AICCS conferences were truly the need of the hour at this juncture in India. As Chinese studies are steadily expanding, the AICCS are a remarkable demonstration of the productive synergy between universities and research institutes. Even in the course of seven such conferences, three striking developments have been observed: One, there was a distinct shift in the areas and themes of research - from the macro to micro comparative studies in Political Economy and Developmental issues; from the bilateral to regional dynamics in foreign policy and from the traditional to non-traditional security issues. Two, the importance of History and Culture in the India-China context is gaining ground. Finally, larger numbers of scholars from the Social Science and Humanities backgrounds are now taking up the study of China. She stressed the need to keep the momentum of China research by harnessing the synergies between research institutes and the university system. Dr. Moromti Baroowa from Deptt of Chinese studies, Central University of Sikkim extended a formal invitation for the 8<sup>th</sup> AICCS Conference to be held in 2015 in Sikkim University. Prof Ranjana Sheel, co-convenor of the conference rendered a formal vote of thanks.

## **APPENDIX: List of Presenters and Participants**

### **Day I: 14 November 2014**

**Dr. Ranjana Sheel**, Dept. of History, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) & Local Convenor 7<sup>th</sup> AICCS

**Prof. Alka Acharya**, Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi (ICS) & Co-Convenor 7<sup>th</sup> AICCS

**Prof. Anand Shankar Singh**, Dept. of History, BHU

**Prof. R.R. Jha**, Faculty of Social Sciences, BHU

**Prof. Kamal Sheel**, BHU

**Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty**, ICS, Delhi

**Prof. Prasenjit Duara**, Asia Research Centre, National University of Singapore

**Prof. Keshav Mishra**, Department of History, BHU & Local Co-Convenor 7<sup>th</sup> AICCS

### **Day II: 15 November 2014**

**Pratnashree Basu**, Observer Research Foundation, Kolkata Chapter

**Rakesh Pandey**, Dept. of History, BHU

**Shiv Poojan Prasad Pathak**, Bharati College, University of Delhi

**Konthoujam Sarada**, Department of Political Science, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong

**Prof. Aditi Jha**, Dept. of Foreign Languages, BHU

**Binda Paranjape**, Dept. of History, BHU

**Kamal Dutta**, Dept. of Foreign Languages, BHU

**Kunaljeet Roy**, Vivekananda College Madhyamgram, West Bengal State University (WBSU)

**Gopabandhu Mohanty**, Independent Scholar, Varanasi

**Sanu Tiwari**, Dept. of Philosophy, BHU

**Prof. N.K. Mishra**, Dept. of Economics, BHU

**Debamitra Mitra**, Institute of Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Development, West Bengal University of Technology, Kolkata

**Hema Narang**, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies (SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi

**Vijay Pd. Jayshwal**, Kathmandu School of Law, Nepal

**Vijaya Chamundeswari**, Centre for Inner Asian Studies, SIS, JNU

**Neelam Rani, Surendra S Yadav & P K Jain**, Post-Graduate Government College, Chandigarh; Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi; Department of Management Studies, IIT, Delhi

**Prof. Swaran Singh**, CIPOD, SIS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

**Prof. Sanjay Kumar**, Dept. of English, BHU

**Reena Marwah**, University of Delhi

**Sharad Soni**, Centre for Inner Asian Studies, SIS, JNU, New Delhi

**Charles Willemen**, International Buddhist College, Bangkok

**Mr. Ravi Bhoothalingam**, ICS, Delhi

**Prof. Mark Frazier**, New School, New York, USA

**Prof. Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard**, Asia Research Center, Department of International Business and Management, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

### **Day III: 16 November 2014**

**Aravind Yelery**, ICS, Delhi

**Anil Kumar Kanungo**, Research Division, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi

**P.K.Anand**, ICS, Delhi

**Prachi Aggarwal**, Centre for East Asian Studies, SIS, JNU

**Samar Tyagi & Anjali Bansal**, Dept. of Economics, BHU

**Jigme Yeshe Lama**, Centre for East Asian Studies, SIS, JNU

**Prof. Ashok Kaul**, Dept. of Sociology, BHU

**G. Venkat Raman**, Humanities and Liberal Arts Area, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kozhikode

**Mrutyunjay Swain**, Agro-Economic Research Centre, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat

**Madhurima Nundy**, ICS, Delhi

**Mr. M.V.Rappai**, ICS

**Pankaj Mohan**, The Academy of Korean Studies, Seoul, South Korea

**Mr. Moromti Baroowa**, Dept. of Chinese, School of Languages and Literature, Sikkim University

**Dr. A Gangatharan**, Dept. of History, BHU