

# CHINA INDIA SCHOLAR-LEADERS INITIATIVE

## Final CISLI Seminar

**THE NEW SCHOOL**

# INDIA CHINA INSTITUTE

**THE  
NEW SCHOOL**



**FORD FOUNDATION**

This initiative was made possible by a  
generous grant from The Ford Foundation.

**March 18-19, 2021  
New York City**



**THE NEW SCHOOL**

---

**INDIA CHINA  
INSTITUTE**

**China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative**

**SESSION 1**

**Welcome & Roundtable with the CISLI Fellows, Mentors, and ICI Team**

**THE NEW SCHOOL**

---

**INDIA CHINA  
INSTITUTE**

**China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative**

**SESSION 2**

**Aveivey Dahrii, Ping (Sophie) Sun, Wenjuan Zheng, Tshering Chonzom Bhutia**



## **Education and Gender Inequalities in Yunnan and Manipur: A Sociological Study**

China and India host the largest ethnic minorities and scheduled tribes in the world respectively. Ethnic minorities constitute about 110 million population in China and India constitutes about 105 million Scheduled Tribes. Thus, the study on these communities is crucial as they make up a sizeable proportion in both the countries. The words such as ethnic minorities, inequalities, indigenous, etc. are very sensitive and remain protected in both the countries. Likewise, the very word 'gender' is not a favourable concept for all genders. Therefore, in-depth study is required in this area as it is under-researched. At the same time, the topic may appear perennial for the social sciences and other related disciplines. However, no empirical study has been made in the case of Miao ethnic minorities in Yunnan and Poumai Naga tribes in Manipur where the study focuses.

Having said this, the purpose of the paper is to understand both the communities from the micro level study. It will explore from the sociological lens on how their identities are determined and categorised as ethnic minority and schedule tribe. Further, the study will also try to understand how their identities are held; perspective from self and others. This study attempts to understand the prevailing education and gender inequalities from the sociological lens. It also explores why there is gender-based inequalities in both the regions despite the high literacy rate and active women activists in the regions. The paper will also examine the indigenous notion of gender and the question of representation. The research seeks to understand how far these communities have fared well in terms of education and gender. The paper will also examine the role of states and civil societies/NGOs to address the indigenous issues in terms of education and gender and the responses from the concerned communities.

**Aveivey Dahrii**



## **The Technopolitics of Gender: A Comparative Study of Female Programmers between India and China**

By comparing the work practices of female technicians in China and India, the article explores the gender-technological politics in the information technology industry. Information technology has the dual attributes of social culture and labor politics. By comparing the IT work practices of women in China and India, the article attempts to show how gender issues are defined, reshaped and changed under the framework of globalization and urbanization. Due to the differentiated labor control and patriarchal mechanisms shown by China and India in the technical field, female programmers face completely different work practices, life fate and identity constructions. A cross-border technological production comparison helps us to reintegrate the gender-technology relationship into the tide of global development of information industry and digital society in the Global South.

**Ping (Sophie) Sun**

## **Transnational Collaboration Falling Short for Covid-19 Crisis: The Unintended Consequences of International NGO Law in China and India**



**Wenjuan Zheng**

Under conditions of extreme events such as the global health crisis followed by state failures, transnational collaboration that works across national boundaries seems to offer a natural and viable solution to the global challenges. Yet, “global civil society” fails to live up to their promise because they have been under attacks by the global rise of political conservatism. Using comparative case studies of a notable international NGO (INGO) working on women and labor issues across India and China, this paper provides preliminary results of what factors promote and hinder transnational collaboration in the age of pandemic. I argue that the enactment of INGO laws prior to the crisis have destroyed the foundations for effective collaboration. The comparative cases demonstrate that China ramped up a regulatory regime to curtail INGOs’ activities via a rigid and comprehensive law reform in a short period of time. Whereas India as a democratic country adopts adaptive control that targets different organizations and implements the policy change in a gradual way. The approaches result in different dynamics of response to the crisis at the local level, but both are detrimental to the civil societies. This study makes a significant contribution to our understanding of transnational collaboration during extreme events in a comparative perspective.



## **Tibet as Border Region and a “National Security Screen”: Implications for India**

It has been a decade since China’s leader Xi Jinping visited the Tibet Autonomous Region. That visit in July 2011, though not his first, was undertaken on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the 17 Points Agreement when he was the Vice President of China. In his speech in Lhasa, Xi remarked: ‘For our country, Tibet serves as an important national security screen.’ High sounding at one level, it is not immediately clear what he meant by it. This paper is based on content analysis of leadership statements and government policy documents, as well as discussions, declarations, and so on at various government led meetings/forums etc. at the national level as well as regional level.

**Tshering Chonzom Bhutia**

**THE NEW SCHOOL**

---

**INDIA CHINA  
INSTITUTE**

**China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative**

**SESSION 3**

**Anand P. Krishnan, Wenrui Chen, Yang Lu, Shuxi Yin**





**Anand P. Krishnan**

## **Common and Different?: Analyzing the Amorphousness of State in its Interface with Labour in Leather Goods Manufacturing in Wenzhou and Mumbai**

The economic and industrial reforms, and transformation of production wherein capital gains primacy over labour has changed the nature of state and labour in China and India. While leading to labour dualism and the rise of informal sector and work arrangements, this has also altered the role of the state in its interface with labour – from being a direct actor, this ranges to varying degrees: from being just a facilitator, non-interference, or simply being an absentee. State capacity – or incapacity – is a useful peg to understand the relationship of the state with labour, and to look at the former’s responsiveness to the latter. While the overarching framework and logic to state’s withdrawal or off-shouldering in both countries is common, there exist divergences that condition and constrain state’s responsiveness differently. Based on comparative research on leather goods workers in Wenzhou and Mumbai, I attempt to look at the state’s amorphousness, and how social and cultural factors shape or determine it. In the process, I analyze why state capacity plays out differently in both countries, and their degrees of successes or failures.



**Wenrui Chen**

## **Tight-knit Webs and Telescoping Families: Conversations with Psychological Experts in India & China**

The rapid and uneven economic growth enjoyed by middle-and upper-class families in India and China has also brought with it substantial anxiety and guilt. Families that have attained certain social and financial status, must now wrestle with how to best facilitate their children's success and family's future class reproduction. Although therapists in Delhi, India and Beijing, China report similar concerns and family dynamics among their middle-and upper-class clients, there are also striking differences, such as the greater participation of men in therapy in Delhi. These differences reflect the political, social and economic landscape of each country.

## China's NTS Strategy Towards South Asia

The paper reviews China's relations with SAARC and the development of the NTS agenda in the context of China-SAARC cooperation. By using "co-governance" theory to explain the power configuration of South Asia, it argues that South Asia can be characterized as a situation of moderate competition between India and China in separate domains. Since India has a preemptive advantage in the normative and institutional set-up of regional organizations in South Asia and excludes China's further involvement in regional multilateral platforms, multilateralism may not be an effective means for China to address common NTS threats with South Asian countries. Instead, bilateralism could be more effective for China's NTS strategy towards South Asia.



**Yang Lu**

## **Economic Inequality and Growth in India: An Analysis at the State Level**



**Shuxi Yin**

In recent decades, economic inequality has risen dramatically in the US and to a lesser extent in West Europe. The situation in the developing world is less clear. Living standards have risen for the majority of the population along with massive gains for elites. Possible causes include free trade and capital movements, technological change, tax and welfare policy, and changes in social norms. As well as the purely economic dimensions, these changes have affected democratic processes, as well as the sense of social solidarity and trust. I strive to shed light on why certain states have excelled and others floundered since the initiation of India's robust growth in the 1980s. I analyze the factors that may have been responsible for these divergent growth trends by using a balanced random-effects panel data model spanning the observation period from the 1990s to 2010s. My results provide evidence to support the notion that human capital investment (proxied by literacy rates), Gini coefficients, and macroeconomic volatility (proxied by the coefficient of variation of each panel period's output growth) are leveraging statistically significant impacts on state specific period averaged growth rates. More specifically, it appears that literacy rates were positively related to my dependent variable period average growth rate, while volatility and Gini coefficients were negatively linked.

**THE NEW SCHOOL**

---

**INDIA CHINA  
INSTITUTE**

**China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative**

**SESSION 4**

**Liu Peng, Qudsiya Contractor, Xiaowen (Effie) Hu, Chandra Sen**

## **ODA with India' Characteristics: Imbalance Between Donors and Recipients**

India's profile as a donor provider in the international community has drawn unprecedented attention in so called vaccine diplomacy. Media coverage and commentary has failed to revile the long history of India's way of providing assistance since its very beginning of establishment, its complex relations between donors and recipients, and its characteristics as one of the emerging donors different from traditional donors like OECD countries. The continuity and evolution of India's ODA policy (preferably to be called Development Partnership in Indian official policy documents) both reflect the logic of Indian's balance of domestic and international need, Indian's perception of inequality among nations, and the way forward to reduce the gap.



**Liu Peng**

## **Tourism and Urban Transformation in Shanghai**

In this presentation, I will discuss how modes of city planning create a narrative about Shanghai's history and its way into the future. City planning in Shanghai over the decades has been geared towards transforming it not just as an international centre for trade but also a global tourist destination. Through insights from fieldwork conducted in Shanghai as part of the fellowship, I will discuss how Shanghai's contemporary urban history as presented through its key tourist destinations and urban transformation projects celebrates the city's journey into the future as a triumph of modernity that was made possible through societal transformation brought about from within. This has meant simplifying a complex history that converges over differences in regional affiliations and ethnicity.



**Qudsiya Contractor**

## **Accountable or Unaccountable? The Changing Role of Think Tanks in BCIM Cooperation**



**Xiaowen (Effie) Hu**

BCIM is a sub-regional cooperation which was initiated by think tanks of China and India in 1999. At the early stage, think tanks from China and India have made active efforts in promoting the mechanism and their proposals have received feedback from the government. BCIM was mentioned in the joint statement of China and India in 2013, which makes BCIM a typical case where think tanks can play a role. However, in the recent years this cooperation mechanism is becoming marginalized, especially in India. Since their access to policy making is limited, think tanks find it difficult to play a proper role and their capacity has been restrained. Think tanks are playing a role of observers rather than an advisor or promoter which they used to be in BCIM cooperation.

The changing role of think tanks in this case reveals a common phenomenon that think tanks are not always an “advisor”. The ideal nature of “independent” think tanks is also arguable. How think tanks work depends on various factors, and it makes us rethink the nature and function of think tanks, especially China and India think tanks, which are still in their infant stage.



## **Representation of Ethnic Minorities and Dalits in their Respective Higher Education: A Case Study of Beijing and Sichuan University and JNU as well as University of Allahabad**



Education, particularly higher education in China and India, is an emerging issue of the twenty-first century globally. To understand China and India, or any country for that matter, its domestic politics, and social setting is very important. In this presentation, I would be discussing the concerns of marginalised communities in their respective societies. Historically, ethnic minorities and Dalits of China and India have been at the receiving end, respectively. The inclusion and the mobility of the historically marginalised communities could be seen in the context of their representation in higher education. The historical evolution of the education system in both China and India has some congruences and diversion that both the countries can learn and unlearn from each other. The two universities from each country have been taken as a site to understand the pedagogy, curricula and academic discourse of China and India. How did Chinese and India states have devised its education system for its nation building process would be discussed at a length to understand the issues of ethnic minorities and Dalits in both the societies.

**Chandra Sen**

**THE NEW SCHOOL**

---

**INDIA CHINA  
INSTITUTE**

**China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative**

**SESSION 5**

**Vijayanka Nair | Joe Thomas Karackattu, Marina Kaneti**

## Face Value: The Social Life of Biometric Payment Systems in China

In 2017, Alipay introduced facial recognition-based payment systems to retail stores in China. "Smile to Pay" allows shoppers to make payments using facial recognition kiosks, obviating the need for cards, wallets, and indeed cellphones. Alipay is part of the world's largest financial technology company, the Ant Group. This article ethnographically tracks and analyzes how "newish" technologies are introduced to populations, and in turn, how intended audiences respond to these technologies shortly after they are launched. While people across China are familiar with biometric technologies, over the past few years consumer transactions have settled into the QR Code mobile payment mode. I examine how potential users engage, become accustomed to, or steer clear of "Smile to Pay" kiosks. Based on fieldwork in Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai, this article follows facial payment systems being unveiled in fast food restaurants, malls, and bakeries. I pose two main questions. First, against the backdrop of Chinese state capitalism, how is trust manifested, reconstituted, or withheld at the moment of engagement with "Smile to Pay"? And second, (how) does biometric payment articulate with morally and aesthetically charged ideas relating to the face in China? In this context, I argue that it is fruitful to put social science scholarship on security, consumerism and value in the financial world in conversation with work on culturally specific ideas relating to the "face," embedded in such Chinese terms as *mianzi* (status) and *lian* (morality).



**Vijayanka Nair**

## **Latent Opportunities for Agglomeration at the India-China Border Regions**

The paper aggregates the quality of ‘bordering’ obtained in the India-China border regions – specifically the northeast of India and the South/Southwest of China. While this transborder region has been the focus of existing informal regionalism initiatives such as BCIM, the actual gains have not been substantive owing to political challenges (including an outstanding border dispute and securitization of ties between India and China).

The paper draws on alternate parameters applicable to the region, borrowing on concepts drawn from network analysis, to offer insights into newer forms of collaboration that are/could be pursued over the short to medium term to allow for a reimagination of the transborder regions between India and China.



**Joe Thomas Karackattu**



**Marina Kaneti**

## **China's Vision for Multilateralism: A Relational Interpretation**

This paper interrogates China's multilateral engagement and global ambitions in the context of a multipolar world. It contends that assessment of multilateral interactions requires an understanding of how and why Chinese propositions for mutual cooperation and common future resonate with prospective multilateral partners. This does not simply mean an evaluation of soft power influence whereby the focus is on the ability of A to influence B without the force of coercion. Rather, my contention is that analysis of multilateral interactions hinges on an understanding of both the degrees of convergence and mutual construction of common aspirations; as well as an assessment of the extent to which China, in its role as a global leader, is willing to accommodate different propositions and points of view.

To develop these arguments, the paper draws on the case of a multi-partner exhibit staged in Beijing in 2019. To frame the links between the theoretical and empirical, as well as the broader inquiry around resonance in multilateral engagements, the paper draws on Qin Yaqing's relational theory. His discussions on the topic of difference and harmony provide insights into the value of multiple opinions in ensuring dynamic interactions. Far from suggesting that the exhibit addresses the vast range of issues associated with Beijing's global agenda and multilateral objectives, the paper contends that this multilateral event provides a compelling source for understanding the mechanics of collaboration. These pertain to the spaces for difference, the power of participation, and the evolving nature of multilateralism.

**THE NEW SCHOOL**

---

**INDIA CHINA  
INSTITUTE**

**China India Scholar-Leaders Initiative**

**SESSION 6**

**Beyond CISLI: Sustaining Friendships, Research, and Networks**

**A Roundtable Conversation**