



ASHOKA
UNIVERSITY

Fellow Profiles

China-India
Visiting Scholars
Fellowship

2020 – 2021

China-India Visiting Scholars Fellowship

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When we created the China-India Visiting Scholars (CIVS) Fellowship, it was with the intention of bringing together some of the best minds in the two countries together to study issues of common and mutual benefit. We received an overwhelming response and had the difficult task of choosing among extremely qualified candidates who showed a broad range of subject matter expertise. In the end, we were able to select 14 fellows, who would make the maiden cohort of the CIVS Fellowship.

However, at the time of selection, we were faced with an unprecedented challenge. The Covid-19 situation has affected us all in a way that was unexpected and difficult. However, it reinforced our belief of fostering a amicable relationship between people of the two countries. India and China need to learn from each other and collaborate, and the current global situation is a stark reminder of how interconnected our world is. We are committed now, more than ever, to ensure that we continue to build on this relationship between the two countries and create several avenues for such collaborations.

We thank the fellows for their resilience and their commitment to the vision of the fellowship. We are excited about the kind of work they will produce, and how it will help build on the relationship between the people of the two countries and contribute to increasing knowledge about China in India. It is with great pride that we present the first ever CIVS Fellows.

Best,
The Fellowship Team



Abinash Mohanty
**Council on Energy,
Environment, and Water**

TOPIC
**Financing Framework for
Mapping
the Climate Actions in China**

Abinash Mohanty is a Program Lead in the Risks and Adaptation team at The Council, where he is involved in designing decision-making toolkits for effective policymaking around the intricacies of climate change risks, sustainability, and environment resources management. His work is focused around climate change risk assessment and adaptation solutions for concerned stakeholders. He has more than 10 years of experience in evidence-based policy research on climate change impacts, risks, and financing, water management, and in managing projects.

Prior to joining The Council, he was the Centre Director at the Centre for Environment, Energy and Climate Change. He was previously a research fellow at the Technical University of Liberec and is also a member of the American Geophysical Union (AGU).

He has a bachelor's in engineering from the College of Engineering & Technology, Bhubaneswar, followed by a Masters in Ecology and Environment from Nalanda International University.

Aditi Bhutoria
Indian Institute of Management,
Calcutta

T O P I C
Mainstream and Supplementary
Education Technology (EdTech)
Interventions in China and India



Aditi Bhutoria is an education economist and her current research focuses on the design, delivery, and impact of educational policy and related technological interventions across developed and developing markets. Prof. Bhutoria is a part of the Public Policy and Management Group at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIM-C) as a faculty. She is also currently associated with the Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) group at the Harvard Kennedy School, Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre at the University of Cambridge, Open Development and Education Ltd. (UK), the EdTech Hub (UK), and the Social Informatics Group (IIM-C).

Prior to joining IIM-C, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School (USA). She has also worked as a research consultant for the Judge Business School, University of Cambridge (UK), the Government Office for Science (UK), and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), amongst others. Prof. Bhutoria's private sector experience includes working with Swiss Re Services Ltd. (London, Zurich) with their Financial Audit team; and PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd. (India) with their Social Sector Advisory, mainly engaging with state governments across the country.

She completed her Ph.D. in economics of education from the University of Cambridge (UK) and M.Sc. in economics from the London School of Economics and Political Science (UK).



Ambika Vishwanath **Kubernein Initiative**

T O P I C **Urban Water Management**

Ambika Vishwanath is the Co-Founder and Director of Kubernein Initiative, an India based geopolitical advisory that works on non-traditional security risks and aims to bridge the gap on issues that require greater intellectual questioning and curiosity. Prior to founding the Kubernein Initiative, Ambika was associated with the Strategic Foresight Group and Agora Strategy Institute. She has lead track two diplomacy efforts and consulted with governments and international organizations on the nexus between foreign policy, water security and diplomacy in Asia, MENA region and Europe. She also works in the space of new emerging concepts of multilateralism and creating a better understanding of the rapidly changing landscape of India.

Ambika has been published in over 20 global newspapers, media outlets and journals and is a member of the Munich Young Leaders of the Munich Security Conference, Germany. Ambika holds an M.A. from the American University in Cairo in Comparative Politics and a B.A. from Washington College in Political Science.

Amitabha Sarkar
Jawaharlal Nehru University

TOPIC
BRICS in Global Health
Governance



Amitabha Sarkar has submitted his Ph.D. thesis at the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and currently awaiting viva. His Ph.D. thesis is on World Bank's Policy in Health System Strengthening. Amitabha is a scholar of public health. His interests are international aid governance, health policy analysis, health system research, and public health in public policy.

He has several journal articles and newspaper op-eds as publication. He is also associated with the [French Institute of Pondicherry](#) (IFP). He has been associated with the Solidarity and Action Against The HIV Infection in India (SAATHII), the Hope Foundation, and the Indian Institute of Bio-Social Research & Development, where he has worked across projects including the urban slum community, hospice for HIV/ AIDS infected and affect people, and rehabilitation for orthopedically disabled children.

Amitabha holds a B.Sc. in Bio-Science from the Scottish Church College.



Arjun Kumar
Impact and Policy Research
Institute

T O P I C
Urbanization, Housing, and
Household Amenities in India
and China

Arjun Kumar is the Director of the Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI), New Delhi. Arjun specializes in quantitative and qualitative research methods, econometrics, and the use of statistical software to crunch big data. He has been a Visiting Faculty at the Institute for Human Development (IHD) amongst others and has been associated with several think tanks, research institutes, governments, civil society organizations, and private enterprises. He is President of a Jharkhand based NGO, *Manavdhara*, a youth social organization working for humanitarian causes in backward regions and for marginalized communities.

He has several research publications to his credit and has been involved in research projects of international and national repute. He is also a part of various government and non-government committees, groups, and advisory boards as subject matter expert. He is an avid writer and frequently writes on various dimensions of economic issues, policies, and their impact for several media platforms.

Arjun holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Jayan Jose Thomas
Indian Institute of
Technology, Delhi

TOPIC
Labor and Industrialization



Jayan Jose Thomas is an Associate Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi. Jayan's research has dealt with various aspects of Indian development, especially issues related to labor, industrialization, and the macroeconomy. He teaches courses on macro-economics, Indian economic development, international economics, among others. Since August 2016, Jayan has been serving as a Member of the Kerala State Planning Board, advising the state government on policies related to industry and employment growth. His previous academic positions were at the National University of Singapore, Indian Statistical Institute Kolkata, Madras School of Economics, and Central University of Kerala.

His research papers have appeared in reputed journals including *World Development*, *Development and Change*, and *Economic and Political Weekly*, and have also been included as part of the syllabi for undergraduate programs at Delhi University. He has worked on research assignments for the ILO and UNFPA. He contributes regularly to media outlets including the *Hindu*, *Mint*, *Frontline*, and *BloombergQuint*, and his research has been cited in the Government of India's *Economic Survey*, *Times of India*, *NDTV*, *BBC*, and *the Wall Street Journal*.

Jayan completed his Ph.D. in development economics from the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai.



Nivedita Rao Kommineni
Tata Sons Pvt. Ltd.

T O P I C

**Characterizing the New Wave of
Globalization by Mapping the
Changing Nature of China in
Global Trade**

Nivedita Rao Kommineni is a development economist with an interest in globalization, comparative development and more recently, gender and labor markets. She currently works with the Chief Economist's office at Tata Sons Pvt. Ltd., with a focus on the intersection between macroeconomics and public policy. Previously, she worked as a research analyst at PRS Legislative Research (New Delhi) tracking the education and health sector related legislations and policies, both at the central and state level in India.

She holds an M.Phil. in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge, an M.A. in Development Studies from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and a B.A. (Honors) in Economics from Lady Shri Ram College.

Oindrila Dey
**Indian Institute of Foreign
Trade, Kolkata**



TOPIC
**Optimal Contingency
Intervention Regulation**

Oindrila Dey is an Assistant Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Kolkata Campus. She teaches courses on microeconomics, mathematical economics, and business economics. She has previously been associated with FLAME University, Pune, Jai Hind College, Mumbai, the University of Calcutta, and Jadavpur University. Currently, Oindrila is interested in developing a game-theoretic model capturing the strategic interactions among trading partners in international trade. She concluded a project analyzing the perception of commuters regarding the feasibility of the electric public transport system in India, the results of which have been reported multiple times in print media. She has participated and presented papers in prestigious international conferences like the European Association of Research in Industrial Economics (EARIE) at the University of Maastricht, Netherlands and Asia Meet for the Econometric Society (AMES) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Dr. Dey wrote her Ph.D. thesis on ‘Status, Incentives and Favoritism: An Analytical Study’ from the Department of Economics, Jadavpur University. She was awarded national scholarship (UGC-NET JRF) from University Grants Commission and worked as a full-time Ph.D. research fellow at the Department of Economics, Jadavpur University. She holds an M.A. and a B.A. in Economics from Jadavpur University and University of Calcutta, respectively.



Reeja Nair
Institute of Chinese Studies

T O P I C
Migrant Workers' Housing

Reeja Nair is a Research Associate at the Institute of Chinese Studies. Her research broadly centers on issues related to labor, housing and urbanization in post-Mao China. She is particularly interested in understanding how workers navigate the city spaces in a rapidly urbanizing China, and a comparative assessment of these issues in the Indian context. In the past, she has worked as a Research Assistant at the Institute of Chinese Studies, on an ICSSR Project titled, “State Responses to Social Welfare in China and India: A Comparative Study of Workers in Small and Medium Enterprises.”

Reeja recently submitted her Ph.D. thesis titled, “Workers and Urban Spaces in Post-Socialist China: A Study of Community, Leisure and Resistance, 1994-2008,” at the Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She completed her M.Phil. from the same center. Her M.Phil. dissertation examined the making of China’s labor laws in the post- Mao period. She holds a bachelor’s and master’s degree in History from Miranda House, University of Delhi (specializing in Modern Indian History).

Sharif Qamar
TERI

T O P I C
**Potential and Impact of
Electrification of Heavy-Duty
Vehicles**



Sharif Qamar works on the research, policy analysis and project implementation within the Transport and Urban Governance area. He works as Fellow and Area Convenor, Transport and Urban Governance, TERI. Working in TERI as a researcher, he is involved in conceptualization and implementation of a number of transport and urban governance area. In transport sector, he has experience in projects related to public transportation, freight movement, EVs and transport modelling. He has earlier worked in the railways sector involving freight, national highways sector, inter-model comparison study, urban mass transit, urban freight, bike taxis, GHG calculator for logistics, among others. He is currently involved in urban governance related projects - CITIES and Urban Living Lab, Panaji.

A postgraduate in Economics from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, he has an experience of about ten years in the field of transportation research. As a committed advocate of sustainable mobility, he uses cycle for daily errands instead of car.

He is an avid photographer and loves travelling. He is passionate about gardening, cooking and DIY projects.



Sowmiya Ashok
Independent Journalist, Former
Beijing Correspondent for the
Indian Express

T O P I C
Role of the Regulatory State
in the Sharing Economy

Sowmiya Ashok is an independent journalist based in Chennai. She was the Beijing correspondent for The Indian Express in 2019. Through her stories she attempted to convey a broader understanding of China and the Chinese people to give Indian readers engaging insights apart from the official bilateral frame. She has extensively reported on environment and climate change, water resources, politics, policy and social justice. She has reported from India, US and China. She has worked in two prominent national dailies in India - The Hindu and The Indian Express - and has written for several other publications including The Atlantic, Mint, Caravan and Hindustan Times.

She is a graduate of the political reporting program for working journalists at the Columbia Journalism School, New York, where she received an M.A. in Politics and Global Affairs. She produced a long-form profile of an interracial couple set in the context of shifting ideas about race and ethnicity as defined by the US Census. She also holds a B.Com. in Development Economics from the university of Melbourne.

Presently, she reports on the Covid-19 pandemic from Tamil Nadu. She is also taking Mandarin lessons. She tweets [@sowmiyashok](https://twitter.com/sowmiyashok).

Sudhanshu Kumar
**Center for Economic Policy and
Finance**



T O P I C
**Lessons from Fiscal Federalism
in China and India**

Dr. Sudhanshu Kumar is Associate Professor at the Centre for Economic Policy and Public Finance, Patna. His main area of research is Indian Economy, Applied Macroeconomics and Public Economics. He has published in the international refereed journals and has participated in various national and international research conferences.

He has previously worked as a faculty with the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), New Delhi and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bodh Gaya. He contributed to various research projects and delivered lectures in the training programs at the NIPFP, New Delhi. He has taught, Public Finance; Econometrics; Time Series Analysis; India and World Economy; International Business Environment; and Macroeconomics, as a visiting faculty at the various institutions like Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune; IIM Lucknow; Central University South Bihar, Gaya; and TERI University, New Delhi. He has also delivered invited lectures at the National Academy of Direct Taxes (NADT), Pune.

He earned his Ph.D. and M.Sc. in Economics from the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai.



Yugank Goyal
Flame University

T O P I C

**The Role of Public
Procurement
in New Structure Economics:
Experiences of China**

Yugank Goyal is an associate professor at FLAME University in India, where he is the founding director of the Centre for Knowledge Alternatives. He was earlier the founding faculty member of OP Jindal Global University, where he had played a key role in the university's establishment. Before that, Yugank worked in a private bank in India, as a consultant to their infrastructure projects in eastern, rural India. His research engages with issues in regulation, institutions, public policy, law and development, in which he routinely consults as well. He has also been widely published in reputed international journals (most recently in *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, *Regulation & Governance*, *EPW*, *Energy Policy* (most recently in *Regulation & Governance*, *EPW*, *Energy Policy*)).

Yugank enjoys teaching and has taught economics, institutional economics, regulation, ethics and public policy. He is a visiting faculty at IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Kozhikode and FLAME University. He also sits on the board of young technology start-ups in India.

In 2012, he went to pursue his Ph.D. in law and economics from Erasmus University Rotterdam, University of Hamburg and University of Bologna. His thesis was a collection of essays on informal market institutions in India. He has also studied engineering in India and LL.M. as Erasmus Mundus Scholar at University of Manchester.



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