



Scholars from the *China Centre for International Economic Exchanges*, Beijing, visited CSIRD on 23.07.2016 for an academic interaction on issues related to deepening cooperation between India and China. The delegation comprised of Ms. Chen Wenling, Chief Economist of CCIEE, Deputy Executive Officer, Former Director of State Council Research Office, PhD of Economics, Xu Zhanchen, Deputy Director of Strategic Research Department, PhD of Economics, Li Feng, Deputy Director of Planning Office at Consulting Research Department, PhD of Economics, Mei Guanqun, Researcher at Strategic Research Department, PhD of Economics. CSIRD was represented by Shri Subir Bhowmik, eminent journalist and scholar; Prof Ratan Khasnabis, eminent economist; Dr. Gorky Chakraborty, IDSK; Dr. Ishani Naskar, Rabindra Bharati University; Dr. Arpita Basu Roy, CSIRD, Dr. Mou Bhattacharya, Dr. Bhagban Behera and research interns of CSIRD. The discussion focused on *One Belt One Road* policy of China, Convergence of OBOR and Indian Mausam project and general issues of cooperation and academic exchanges. The delegation was invited to the 12<sup>th</sup> K2K Forum that is scheduled to take place in Kunming in November 2016.

Below are some of the points discussed during the meeting:

- OBOR is a unique geo-political, geo-strategic initiative. India and China need to harmonise interests and commonalities need to be found out. American interference is not welcome in Asia and the two Asian giants must find ways of harmonizing their interests. (Subir Bhowmik)
- OBOR should not be merely seen as a route for trade and commerce. The interests of the small populations along the route are very important and should be given due importance. (Subir Bhowmik)
- Kolkata, the gateway of the East offers immense possibilities for cooperation between India and China. Economic cooperation between India and China is a win-win situation. For Kolkata port, investments are needed and Chinese investments are most welcome. If Chinese goods are imported through Kolkata port, goods will be cheaper. Even Haldia port is a viable option as it has first class facilities and there is a possibilities the big ships can remain in high seas (Economist Prof Ratan Khasnabis)
- Use of Kolkata port would be cost effective for China and research should be done on cost of logistical movement. Kolkata is now the 5<sup>th</sup> largest port in India but it was once the No. 1 port and there is a lot of capacity but it is underutilized and investments are needed. It is supposed that the cost will be reduced by 30-40% if Kolkata port is used instead of Mumbai port (RK).

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- A pilot study or cooperative study can be initiated by both Institutes with CSIRD doing the local component of the study. (Ishani Naskar)
- India shares high principles of harmony and inclusiveness. Csird invites delegates from CCIEE to participate in the 12<sup>th</sup> K2K initiative
- BCIM and Kolkata Port issue will be taken forward by CCIEE. Advantage of OBOR is that the Maritime Silk Road will be part of this area. The land route is advantageous and the highways costs much less. A road through Bangladesh upto Kolkata would be advantageous.
- The road connectivity is already planned, sea connectivity is to be explored.
- With regard to the Project Mausam, the Chinese enquired whether Kolkata is included in the plan or not.
- India and South East Asia has civilizational contact and deep cultural exchanges. Bengal was important as very old relations existed between India and South east Asia with regard to architecture and language. Connectivity, culture and commerce are key to the Project. From Look East we are moving to Act East which will include South east Asia and China and also Japan and Korea. Emphasis on cultural links with China is very important. (Ishani Naskar)
- The Chinese put forth that the BCIM corridor would develop this area and promote cultural connect and civilizational contact. References were made to Confucius and Sakhya Muni. Connect could be revived through Buddhism.
- It was mentioned that geo-culture could promote geo-politics and geo-economics. Hence, emphasis on cultural and historical connect could help in breaking the trust deficit existing between the two countries and contribute to developing economic ties. (Arpita Basu Roy)
- The Chinese were informed about the Nalanda University and how the cultural connect is being promoted. It was suggested that K2K should reach Beijing now. India and China being old civilization needed teacher exchange programmes.
- The emphasis should also be in the border areas – drug trade, arms trade, women's trafficking, criminal networks operate in these area. The corridor is porous, criminal network active so special emphasis should be given to the border areas (Mou).
- Japan and China are very important partners of India and we want to emphasise Asian cooperation. Border issues should be solved and tension curtailed or else other powers will take advantage of our vulnerabilities. We want China's and Japanese investments and want the border to be a border of peace and not of war. Emphasis should be on border trade and the socio-economic status of the communities. (Gorky Chakravarti)