



# Building a Sustainable, Interdisciplinary Research Ecosystem

Explore disciplinary intersections with creative collaborators and progressive mentorship.

## About IDEAS

The vision of IDEAS Office of Inter-Disciplinary Studies at O.P. Jindal Global University is to create a university-wide incubator for interdisciplinarity research and pedagogy. We provide an interdomain space for cross-pedagogical learning and research, based on core principles of interdisciplinary thought and praxis across social sciences.

Our main (research) mandate is to host and sustain new constellations of research themes that contribute to a dynamic interdisciplinary thought-architecture that goes beyond the normative, applied axes of mainstream scholarship.

## Our Mission

Our goal at IDEAS is to identify and match disciplinary interests, and build a supportive environment for ideation and execution of innovative and cutting-edge research that is led both by academic thought and praxis-informed priorities. Our aim is to take our research practice beyond disciplinary and regional silos to make impactful change and policy.

Our platform will serve as the foundation on which researchers can explore and build sustainable multidisciplinary connections, both within the University, and also with civil and international partners and reputed institutional collaborators.



**Innovative ideas**

Partnering the intellectual diversity within JGU with innovative thinking to address research gaps and needs from the field.



**Expanding Networks**

Being part of a interdisciplinary research ecosystem through collaborations and mentoring opportunities that guide the mission.



**Capacity Building Programs**

Ensuring dissemination of research to relevant stakeholders and capacity building programs for researchers and institutional partners & organizations.

# MEET THE TEAM



## PROF. DEEPANSHU MOHAN

Dean, Offices of Interdisciplinary Studies (IDEAS)  
Director, Centre for New Economics Studies, (CNES)  
Professor of Economics, Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities (JSLH)  
Senior Research Fellow, International Institute for Higher Educational Research (IIHED)

## ASSISTANT DIRECTORS



### Dr. Namesh Killemsetty

Assistant Director (IResearch)  
Assistant Professor (JSGP)



### Dr. Kaushalya Bajpayee

Assistant Director (Research)  
Associate Professor (JGLS)



### Poulomi Bhadra

Assistant Director (Research Development & International Collaboration)  
Assistant Professor (JIBS)



### Dr. Preethi Krishnan

Assistant Director (Institutional Partnerships-Civil Society)  
Associate Professor (JGLS)



### Dr. Sarni Jain

Assistant Director (Training & Capacity Building)  
Assistant Professor (JGLS)



### Dr. Mrinalini Jha

Assistant Director ( Training & Capacity Building)  
Associate Professor (JSBF)



### Dr. Swapnil Dhanraj

Assistant Director (Institutional Partnerships)  
Associate Professor (JGLS)

## SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWS



**Dr. Namesh  
Killemsetty**

Assistant Professor &  
Assistant Dean- Program  
Strategy & Academic Affairs  
(JSGP)



**Dr. Kaushalya  
Bajpayee**

Associate Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. Avanindra Nath  
Thakur**

Professor (JSGP)



**Dr. Gagan Kumar**

Associate Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. Ambreen Agha**

Associate Professor (JSIA)



**Dr. Preethi Krishnan**

Associate Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. Chetan Sinha**

Associate Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. N. Chandra  
Bhanu Murthy**

Assistant Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. Swapnil Dhanraj**

Associate Professor (JGLS)

## RESEARCH FELLOWS



**Dr. Vidya Subramanian**

Associate Professor and Associate Dean - Planning and Strategy (JGLS)



**Dr. Ruchira Sen**

Associate Professor and Assistant Dean - Admissions & Outreach (JSJC)



**Dr. Abhisek Sur**

Assistant Professor (JGLS)



**Haifa Peerzada**

Assistant Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. Mrinalini Jha**

Associate Professor (JSBF)



**Dr. Gunjan Singh**

Associate Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. Sriti Ganguly**

Assistant Professor (JSLH)



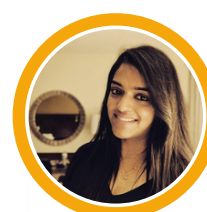
**Poulomi Bhadra**

Assistant Professor (JIBS)  
Assistant Director, Criminology & Forensic Studies (CCFS)  
Fellow, Centre for India-Australia Studies (CIAS)



**Dr. Sarni Jain**

Assistant Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. Dalia Bhattacharjee**

Assistant Professor (JGLS)



**Sharmin Khodaiji**

Assistant Professor (JGLS)



**Dr. Vikash Vaibhav**

Assistant Professor (JGBS)

## JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOWS

IDEAS, in collaboration with the Office of Doctoral Studies at JGU, has nominated the following PhD scholars as Junior Research Fellows to join the ongoing research at our Constellations.

Tushar Sharma (JGLS)

Simanta Ghosh (JSBF)

Priyanshi Choudhary (JSGP)

Seerat Arora (JSIA)

Mohit Vasisth (JSIA)

Aarash Pirzada (JSIA)

Shalika Rajesh (JGBS)

Nikita Vats (JSIA)

## MEMBER ASSOCIATES

In this role, early career scholars at JGU and expert scholars from organizations outside of JGU can be associated with IDEAS (and its constellations) in collaborative research and knowledge building and outreach initiatives. We are

### **Experimental Research Design and Pedagogy (Methods Lab)**

Dr. A. Sadananda Reddy, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of Psychology & Counselling

Dr. Soumya T. Verghese, Assistant Professor, Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences

Dr. Ashish Aman Sinha, Assistant Professor, Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences

### **Justice, Urban Systems and Technology**

Dr. Angel Selvaraj, Assistant Professor, Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences

Dr. Shambhavi Agarwal, Assistant Professor, Jindal Global Law School

Dr. Soumya T. Verghese, Assistant Professor, Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences

Mohammed Aquil, Lecturer, Jindal Global Law School

### **Politics, History and Society**

Dr. Samiparna Samanta, Associate Professor, Jindal Global Law School

Dr. Srabani Chakraborty, Centre For Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Dr. Arun Kumar, Department of History, University of Nottingham

### **Understanding Indian Economy**

Dr. Kranti Nanduri, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of Banking & Finance

### **Transitional Spaces, Culture and Media Studies**

Dr. Smriti Singh, Assistant Professor, IIIT-Delhi

Suprita Acharya, Lecturer, Jindal Global Law School



O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL  
INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE DEEMED TO BE  
UNIVERSITY  
*A Private University Promoting Public Service*



I.D.E.A.S.  
OFFICE of  
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

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# Introducing IDEAS Research Constellations

The IDEAS Constellations include scholars based across JGU schools, who will work closely to broaden the contours of knowledge production and dissemination. The Constellations are structured to provide a platform for them to converge (and develop) their respective research from multidisciplinary perspectives within a larger umbrella that offers institutional support, mentorship and creative autonomy.

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# Understanding Indian Economy

This constellation strives to investigate various micro and macro issues of contemporary relevance pertaining to Indian economic growth and development. It will bring together meaningful research focusing on aspects of the Indian economy, viz evolution of the economy from a historical perspective, measurement of poverty and inequality in household and individual outcomes, labour market dynamics, and issues relating to Indian agriculture, among others. To achieve this, the constellation attracts economic historians, development economists, applied microeconomists, macroeconomists, and other academics interested in deepening their understanding of the Indian economy through different lenses.

Our broad areas of inquiry are i) history of economic thought —both, Indian economic thought and the work of western thinkers applied to India's development experience, and ii) contemporary economic issues of agriculture, labour market dynamics, inequality, poverty and debt. Our research strategy is to work backwards from our 'very long term' goal. Our very long term goal is to bring out an edited volume, *Is there an Indian School of Economic Thought?* The volume will invite research on all aspects of thought on the Indian economy. The broader vision is to present a unifying narrative of pluralism and living with disagreements/seeing other points of view/imbibing tolerance while retaining the skepticism of a critical thinker. We believe that such a project will make the conceptual questions and issues around the Indian economy accessible to a broader audience. We also believe that this project will be in line with the 'idea of India' as a space of diversity and acceptance.

**Leads:** Avanindra Nath Thakur, Mrinalini Jha

**Members:** Ruchira Sen, Sharmin Khodaiji, Abhishek Sur, Vikash Vaibhav, Kranti Nanduri, Simanta Ghosh, Priyanshi Choudhury, Suresh Govindapuram, Tejendra Pratap

## Projects

### 1 The biopolitics of data in India: Does data create society or merely measure it?

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This project is a deep-dive into India's experience with creating and collecting data. We inquire whether collecting and analysing data simply provides an objective analysis of the Indian economy —or whether the process of data collection foregrounds certain narratives and invisibilises others.

**Project Members:** Sharmin Khodaiji, Avanindra Nath Thakur, Ruchira Sen



## **2 Visible and invisible hands: How the State created markets in early-neoliberal India**

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This project is inspired by Karl Polanyi's essay, *Aristotle discovers the Economy*. Polanyi shows that market economies have evolved as a historical process where States have constituted institutions of governance and regulation and have since, withdrawn from economic activities —thus, making way for markets. The process is a 'double movement' of the takeover of common and public resources by private players accompanied by counter movements of parochialism, relativism as well as emancipatory movements such as ecofeminism, socialism etc. We will apply this understanding to India's experience with neoliberal policies in the 1980's and 1990's.

**Project Members:** *Avanindra Nath Thakur, Ruchira Sen, Sharmin Khodajji*

## **3 Estimating economic costs of terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir**

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In this study we attempt to quantify the effect of terrorism on economic activities in the erstwhile Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir. The most crucial problem in any such study is of finding a counterfactual. The practice, generally, has been to compare the affected state/region with carefully chosen comparison unit based on Mill's method of difference. But a single comparison group has the problem of its own, in addition to choosing that one comparator. We intend to create a synthetic control group based on a weighted average of other states. This method has the advantage of being free from the subjectivity of researchers, as the choice of control states and weights assigned to them is data driven.

**Project Members:** *Vikash Vaibhav & Akhilesh Kumar Verma ((ESRI, Dublin)*

## **4 Debt in contemporary India**

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Recent reports by rating agencies and international organizations suggest India to be one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world, aided by prudent macroeconomic policies. Nonetheless, the economy faces global headwinds, including a global growth slowdown in an increasingly fragmented world. Another area of concern stems from the rising debt levels in India. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cautioned that India's general government debt may exceed 100% of its gross domestic product (GDP) in the medium term (IMF 2023). The study will capture the nature and consequences of the rising debt levels in the economy. It envisages exploring the broad trends and changes in the nature and composition of India's debt. It will also investigate the potential implications arising from the rising debt level, taking cues from the dynamics stated. This research will investigate issues pertaining to the financial stability of the Indian macroeconomy and draw insights from a regulatory and policy perspective, which can potentially shape India's experience in dealing with debt.

**Project Member:** *Abhisek Sur*

## **5 Understanding Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES 2022-23)**

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The Government of India (GoI) released its long awaited results of consumption expenditure survey in the form of a 27-page factsheet in an uncharacteristic Saturday evening press release (Feb. 24, 2024). Since its release, it has attracted attention from policymakers, public intellectuals, and economists. There have been a few methodological changes, both sampling and non-sampling ones, which are expected to change its comparability with earlier such surveys, notable of 2011-12. We are working towards gaining a deeper understanding of this survey results, compared with earlier rounds (2011-12 and 2004-05). We are working towards comparability of surveys, rural-urban changes in comparison, and how does household consumption estimate compare with national account estimates. Various new questions could be asked, with the arrival of unit-level data.

**Project Members:** Vikash Vaibhav, Varun Kumar Das (DSE), Kalai Arasan (MIDS, Brown)

## **6 Labour Market Inequalities - Undercurrents beneath the overall trends**

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This project unpacks the broad trends in the Indian labour market at the all-India level. Even as the overall, all-India levels and trends are important in themselves, the numbers often tend to hide more than they reveal. This project focuses on different dimensions of household and individual identities to gauge the long-term patterns emerging over time - both in employment and earnings.

**Project Members:** Mrinalini Jha

## **7 How do inheritances shape wealth inequality? Evidence from India**

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Drawing on the three decades of All India Debt & Investment Survey (AIDIS) dataset, we attempt to map the drivers of wealth inequality across caste, class and region in India. While studies have examined patterns of inequality in household consumer expenditure, incomes, and wages, wealth inequality particularly of its driving factors has not received much attention, especially during the high economic growth period since the 1990s. We plan to use decomposition and/or regression analysis to understand the evolution of different components of wealth contributing to overall wealth inequality in India.

**Project Members:** Vikash Vaibhav, Kalai Arasan (MIDS, Brown), Akhilesh Kumar Verma (ESRI, Dublin)

## **8 How does caste and gender affect labour force participation in contemporary India?**

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This project will look at publicly available datasets such as Periodic Labour Force Survey data or Time Use Data to inquire into questions of caste and gender. Through this we will try to identify the doubly disadvantaged groups with respect to the labour market outcomes in terms of both employment and earnings.

**Project Members:** Avanindra Nath Thakur, Mrinalini Jha, Vikas Vaibhav

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# Politics, Society & History

As societies have become culturally, religiously, and ethnically diverse, the politics of identity has assumed greater importance as well as taken new forms. Given the diverse manifestations of identity politics in today's time, this constellation aims to draw insights from different disciplines like history, sociology, political science, philosophy, and economics to explore and understand the ever-evolving field of politics, its impact on issues vital to society and their roots in historical processes. Adopting a critical social inquiry approach, constellation research will combine empirical research, theoretical reflection, and archival work to problematize ideas and raise questions pertaining to the political.

The PSH Constellation is divided into three sub-tracks and independent and collaborative projects undertaken as part of the overall constellation goals. The main objective of the constellation is to build a broad, nuanced and inclusive understanding on issues of social concern, historical relevance and political discourses and contexts.

**Leads:** Ambreen Agha, Kaushalya Bajpayee

**Members:** Swapnil Dhanraj, Gagan Kumar, Dalia Bhattacharjee, Hiafa Peerzada, Samiparna Samanta, Srabani Chakraborty, Arun Kumar, Seerat Arora, Aarash Pirzada

## Projects

### Sub-track: Politics & Society

#### 1 Pasmanda Politics in India: Beyond the Quest for Representation?

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In the run-up to the 2024 elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government has made conscious political outreach to Pasmanda Muslims, who constitute 85% of Muslim population in India. With an eye on backward Muslims, the BJP planned a *sneh* (affection) and *samman* (respect) *yatra* in the year 2023, highlighting the plight of Pasmanda Muslims and Muslim women. However, these overtures belie the everyday violence that underpins the demonization of Muslims by the majoritarian government, with the majority of victims belonging to the Pasmanda community. Highlighting the issue of disproportionate violence inflicted on Pasmanda Muslims, the All India Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz report Bihar Caste Survey 2022-2023 and Pasmanda Agenda stated, "Ninety-five per cent of the victims of mob lynching and excesses by government bulldozers belong to the Pasmanda community." This contradiction complicates the categories of caste and religion in the (Indian) Muslim context. This study aims to explore the interplay of caste and religion in the backdrop of Hindu majoritarian politics that produces Muslims as homogenous category while at the same time projects itself as the messiah of the backward Muslims. in its politics of exclusion, and (mis)representation.

Through ethnographic fieldwork in Muslim-dominated Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh where BJP won in civic polls, this study will investigate how do Pasmanda Muslims reconcile with BJP's duplicitous politics that promises to empower them on the one hand and systematically targets them on the other?

**Project Members: Ambreen Agha & Swapnil Dhanraj**

## Sub-track: History & Politics

### **2 Colonial Penal Regime and Surveillance of Women's Sexuality**

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In the year 2018, the Supreme Court of India struck down section 497 of the Indian Penal Code which punished adulterous men for having intercourse with another man's wife "without the consent or connivance of that man". The Court argued that this law treated men and women differently where a man could be punished but a woman was not an abettor in crime. Notably, as one of the judges argued: the law "perpetuates subordinate status of women, denies dignity, sexual autonomy, is based on gender stereotypes" and sought to "control sexuality of woman (and) hits the autonomy and dignity of woman". This remarkable judgment shed light on some of the early debates on the formulation of laws on adultery in colonial India and their continuation in the modern period. However, this document doesn't tell us anything about how the laws on adultery were practiced in the frontier regions of India. This research project addresses this lacuna. We will attempt to show how the colonial discourse on questions of adultery and elopement was different in the northwest frontier region of India from the so-called mainland region. Notably, in Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan where Frontier Crimes Regulations were imposed by the British to govern the 'ungovernable', women were considered partners in crime and thus punished for adultery. We will examine why this was the case.

**Project Member: Gagan Kumar**

### **3 Frontiers as theatres of 'small wars' in 19th century colonial India**

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The best-known paintings of nineteenth-century wars in the Indian sub-continent depict vast marshaled troops marching against each other or engaged in direct combat. Such battles certainly played a critical role in the early expansion of the British empire in the subcontinent. Yet, this paper will show that regular warfare was not the most dominant form of war-making for a large part of the 19th century. From the 1840s onwards, and even more so after 1857, most wars took place in the shifting frontier regions of the British Empire. This was particularly true in the north-western frontier regions of British India. In these regions, the most pervasive form of war was 'small wars.' Colonial authorities used it to refer to the wars that they undertook against people whom they considered to be 'absolute barbarians', who were supposedly 'beyond the pale of civilized diplomacy.' 'Small wars' elicited retaliation from local populations, which kept the British presence fragile in these areas. Recent scholarship has largely focused on how colonial authorities sought to legitimize, through new legal regulations, the use of violence against frontier people who were adept at the 'art of not being governed'. By contrast, this research project will look at the specific nature of violence exerted in frontier regions during these wars. We will address the following questions: What were the repeated patterns behind the violence exerted both by colonial representatives and local populations? How do we interpret these specific forms of violence? What scale did this

violence reach? To what extent did these repeated violent acts become normalized practices in official discourse as well as in popular imagination? We will also attempt to understand how the specific history of wars in frontier regions can contribute to our wider understanding of the construction and expansion of the British empire in South Asia and beyond.

**Project Member: Gagan Kumar**

## Sub-track: History & Society

### 4 **Chhath & Subalternity: Dismantling Hegemonies?**

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Chhath is traditionally a festival of the masses, celebrated mainly in Bihar, Jharkhand and eastern Uttar Pradesh. A marker of socio-cultural identity, this festival is an expression of indigeneity that resists any attempts at homogenisation of identity, rituals and tradition. However, over the years, Chhath has moved out of its geographical confines into urban cities due to rapid migration. In these urban spaces, the celebrations of Chhath have led to its mainstreaming alongside other popular festivals like the Durga Puja. Primarily a subaltern festival that prevent(ed) appropriation by the social elites, today Chhath is marked by a “reverse trend” with its entry into metropolitan cities wherein the elites have adopted the subaltern culture. Given this change in the social aspect of Chhath, this study aims to explore the continuities and changes that exist in the performance of the rituals in this four-day festival across the urban and the non-urban social settings. Does ritual performance enthrone hegemonic Brahmanical practices with the ‘priest’ as the centre of activity or does it dismantle the Brahmanical performativity? It has been observed that Chhath celebrations blur the social boundaries across religious, caste and gender lines in its traditional non-urban spaces. How are these social boundaries navigated in urban spaces? Does the celebration of Chhath in metropolitan cities, continue to blur social boundaries or rigidify them? Taking a multi-site ethnographic approach and Chhath as the subject of study, this paper advances the argument that there is a link between human migration and mutation of socio-religious traditions.

**Project Members: Ambreen Agha & Kaushalya Bajpayee**

### 5 **Veil & the Ruling Elite: Affective Politics, Sartorial Choices, and the Misreading of Muslim Women**

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The hijab controversy in India, where the southern state of Karnataka upheld the High Court’s verdict on banning hijab in educational institutions, opened up questions about fundamental rights and ‘normative’ Islam with the issue of Muslim women’s agency at the enter of the ensuing public debate. This intense contestation over hijab further reveals the underlying tensions that exist between the (Muslim) community and the (Hindu majoritarian) state with Muslim women’s substantive position as citizen-subjects in the public realm. The Indian state’s treatment of the hijab as an ahistorical entity reinforces stereotypes about Muslim women as “passive victims of oppression” and actively pushes them to the threshold of invisibilisation. Historically tracing the ever-changing and multifaceted meaning of hijab across time and space, this paper argues that visual body politics is central to communal polarisation in India. Here, the public sphere emerges as a site that produces hegemonic masculinities articulated in the patriarchal language of discipline and domination. This article aims to excavate the imbrications and the changing meaning of hijab in Muslim societies by

arguing that there exists a direct relationship between political transition and the gendering of quotidian Islam. Taking the discourse beyond the visual performance of religion, the paper explores the active public presence of “alternative agencies” that co-inhabit the Muslim mosaic, thus problematising the rigid binaries of liberal and conservative Islam/Muslim.

**Project Member: Ambreen Agha**

## **6 “Anger”: Political Emotions, Feeling Publics and the Global Rise of Conservative Politics**

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In recent years, the role that emotions play in public life has taken center stage in debates and discussions around the rise of populist leaders across the world. These debates have delved on the productivity and counter-productivity of anger as well as relating it to ‘dialogical politics’. In the philosophical traditions, anger has been relegated from the political sphere, that is primarily identified with “reason”. This dichotomy of reason and emotion is further problematized with the rise of right-wing populist parties that employ emotions and feelings of fear, anxiety, powerlessness and anger in their political rhetoric. For anger to be channelized, political parties create internal or external “enemy”. However, anger is not monolithic. Understood as a political emotion, anger is a heterogenous expression - an ongoing dialectical process that is both individual and collective, historical and social. This paper aims to conceptualize anger both as an expression of resentment that is mobilized by populist parties and an expression of resistance from below that challenges the dominant political narrative and hegemonic ideologies. In doing this, the paper will explore the manipulation and mobilization of resentment into collective political anger by the conservative parties and the existence of resistance movements to the exclusionary politics that comes with the resurgence of conservative politics, globally.

**Project Members: Ambreen Agha & Aejaz Ahmad Wani**

## **7 The Personal is Political: Reproduction, Politics & Justice in India**

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Feminist theory, within its varied frameworks, has been dealing with motherhood as a concept of inquiry. Feminist scholars like Adrienne Rich, Andrea O'Reilly, Shulamith Firestone, Carole Pateman, and Sara Ruddick, among many others, saw motherhood as a key site of oppression of women in a patriarchal structure of power relations in the society. The American family researcher Margaret Movius argued that “the childfree alternative” should be viewed as “women's ultimate liberation”. Studies adopting a qualitative approach to voluntary childlessness have identified a wide range of motivating factors for women, such as; lack of “maternal instinct”; dislike of, or disinterest in, children; fear of painful childbirth; humanitarian concerns about population growth; career orientation, and; a more satisfactory marriage. The feeling of freedom runs in the arguments for remaining childless. Research on voluntary childlessness demonstrates how childfree women are stereotyped as selfish, abnormal, immature, bitter and a child-hater. Patriarchal societies promulgate the dogma of motherhood which confines women’s mobility and makes it certain that they are compliant in delivering their duties to breed and rear children.

**Project Members: Kaushalya Bajpayee & Dalia Bhattacharjee**

## **8 Fiscal decentralization and voter turnout in national and state-level elections across socially fragmented India**

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It is observed that voter turnout in national elections (Lok Sabha elections) in India, the world's largest democracy, is about 55-60% on average, but it varies across states in state-level (Vidhan Sabha) elections over time. According to the Election Commission of India, Indian citizens tend to vote higher in state elections than in national elections, which is unique as the trends are opposite in countries such as the United States and Canada, where turnout in national elections is approximately 40 percentage points higher than the state elections.

For an economy like India, political participation in the form of voter turnout is important for the legitimacy of democratic elections. In context of state elections, social networks have become increasingly intertwined with political participation. Second, the local leaders make decisions that are state-specific, which can have a direct and immediate impact on the community. The potential ramifications or ostracization that may result from abstaining from voting encourage voters to exercise their franchise. Also, populous constituencies with diverse interests might pose a challenge both for the political candidates and parties to effectively tailor their manifestos in a manner that resonates with the diverse perspectives of their potential voters. Lastly, citizens are more prone to voting when the government to be elected has more power in the form of a degree of fiscal decentralization (devolution of fiscal powers from national to regional governments). Among the rapidly developing economies of the world, India's federal constitution is characterized by a relatively higher extent of fiscal decentralization. There might be the possibility that higher fiscal autonomy to states leads to higher voter turnout in the state. There is no empirical study that has tested this relationship for India's regional economy.

The link between fiscal decentralization and voter turnout gap can be direct or indirect. India, being a diverse economy, has a high level of social fragmentation across caste, linguistics, and religious lines characterizing the voters. More autonomy to states in terms of fiscal powers in a largely divided state can influence voter turnout participation at national and state elections as it may involve more polarization and lesser participation in civic engagement from the communities. For others, community cohesion and homogeneity promote higher participation in elections, with voters typically participating more when surrounded by others who are similar to them. This could be a consequence of social pressure to participate that inspires homogeneity. Although this effect is usually attributed to neighbourhoods, it may be reasonable to extend it to larger communities whose members share a common and distinctive identity.

Given the above background and context, this research will examine how voter turnout in national and state elections is conditioned by social fragmentation and fiscal decentralization in the form of the transfer of resources from the center to the states. This work offers insights and perspectives on the impact of fiscal devolution on the electoral participation of citizens for national and state elections in regions that exhibit a heightened level of heterogeneity. This study will use information based upon diversity across social groups to capture the diversity covering 28 states of India from 2001-2021, covering three census periods.

**Project Members: Nupur Nirola, Atrayee Choudhury, Ambreen Agha**

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# Transitional Spaces, Culture & Media Studies

This constellation brings together critical interdisciplinary theories and research focused on the interplay between socialization, spatial dynamics, new media, the construction of everyday norms, and cultural topologies. It is positioned at the nexus of cultural studies, sociology, architectural theory, anthropology, geography, media studies, and diasporas in the digital spaces. Research under this constellation delves into a nuanced exploration and critique of the intersection between new media and our everyday environments, highlighting dialogues and contestations surrounding power dynamics, virtual identities and citizenships, internet socialities, cultural norms, and public moralities and consciousness.

The constellation's primary vertical is to investigate the use of new media tools to understand the transitional spaces between the physical world and the virtual space, juxtaposing and proposing new theories of how socio-cultural norms and values are reflected, both temporally and spatially, between the two worlds. The lens through which the projects will be assessed includes feminist studies, victimological theories, political theories and Space Transition theory. A sub-track within the constellation is the study of popular culture and its relevance to socio-cultural, religious or political themes. The long term goal of the research agenda is to explore the role of new media and popular culture in social construction of perceptions, ideologies, identities, public moralities and consciousness.

**Leads:** Poulomi Bhadra, Sriti Ganguly

**Members:** Smriti Singh, Suprita Acharya, Tushar Sharma, Sramana Majumdar\*

## Projects

### 1 Young India on Social Media

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This is an exploratory study of social media engagement among low-income youth in Delhi, their self-presentation strategies and how it relates to their aspirations of social mobility. These aspirations will be studied vis-a-vis the socio-spatial transformation of Delhi and how and where these young individuals position themselves in this evolving landscape. The main aim is to explore social media (gendered) usage and internet socialities among low-income youth in Delhi. Some of the questions posed are: What are the ways in which they present themselves? What aspects of social life and physical settings do they incorporate in these presentations? How does this engagement reflect their desires for mobility and pursuit of cultural capital? In what ways does the city feature in these desires?

**Project Members:** Sriti Ganguly & Sakshi Chindaliya



## **2 Online Misogyny & Victimization of Female Opinion**

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The perceived anonymity that lends a lack of accountability, and the easy accessibility to social networking sites has provided increased opportunities to target women, the harassment not being limited to only those who participate in online discourse but also those who exist in public eye or catch their attention. This project explores cyber harassment as a phenomenon at the intersection of (perceived) age, gender, religious, cultural and political identities. The study will be conducted on a diverse group of women - students, young academics, public figures, journalists, activists, and community leaders and will explore their usage of social media and their experiences in the digital space in India. The project will explore multi-fold angles of research gaps - understand the kinds of harassment experienced, the typology of the perpetrators, the impact on victimization on female victims. (changes in risk perception, experience of access to justice, impact on awareness and usage of legal recourse, attitude and behaviour changes, challenges in access to education, digital opportunities, professional and personal life etc.)

**Project Members: Sriti Ganguly, Poulomi Bhadra, Smriti Singh (IIT Delhi), Sakshi Chindaliya**

## **3 Building China in eight decades of Bollywood**

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This project is a cross-collaboration between constellations. It includes a socio-political commentary on cultural diplomacy, particularly in regards to inter-industry collaborations and representation of China and its people in Bollywood. The paper studies how these collaborations and movies have contributed to a media-driven construction of public opinion regarding China, and how this has changed (or not) in context of the changing geopolitical relationship between the countries. It seeks to understand why unlike Bollywood, China has not been able to encash its film industry's soft power in the global platform (which remains Western dominated), and also particularly in India. The study elucidates the soft power of both the film industries in enforcing political relations in public consciousness and thereby, their opinion on foreign policies.

**Project Members: Poulomi Bhadra & Gunjan Singh**

## **4 Unveiling public morality in the social constructionism of the Hijab controversy**

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The new cyberculture has allowed for multimodal creation and sharing of information, leading to a number of bottoms-up discourses and a supposed democratization of public participation in the cybersphere. Through the Hijab controversy of 2022, this project studies the unrestrained, participatory nature of social media communication that has enabled expression and dissemination of various discourses and beliefs that reinforce feminist, patriarchal and religio-cultural identities, that in turn build social norms, values and public morality. This study feeds into another cross-constellation project on the same theme.

**Project Members: Poulomi Bhadra & Ambreen Agha**

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# Justice, Urban Systems & Technology

The constellation is an interdisciplinary research group that draws on urban studies, social psychology, science and technology studies (STS), and sociology to understand the complex interplay between technology, inequalities, and social justice within the ever-evolving landscape of urban spaces. Urbanisation, while providing opportunities, has also seen rising concerns related to health, housing, education, and water, exacerbated by existing social relations of gender, caste, class, religion, and ability. Moreover, the convergence between state, capital, and technology, while claiming to address these concerns, has often turned out to be a double-edged sword where efficiency and scale are accompanied by surveillance, exclusion, and exploitation. Yet, the social and physical fabric of cities hold the potential to be sites for justice as well - through collective mobilization, public space design, and technology.

The overarching questions that guide our research are: How do we understand urban development through a critical lens? How have processes of urbanisation and globalisation shaped the experiences of urban residents? What role does the nexus between state, capital, and technology play in the surveillance of labour? What are the challenges and possibilities of technology in enabling people's access to health? How does the design of public spaces in our cities exacerbate or challenge existing social inequalities? How might we envision a city that cares, in spite of the atomisation and anonymity that is inherent to cities?

**Leads:** Preethi Krishnan, Vidya Subramanian

**Members:** Namesh Killemsetty, Chetan Sinha, Angel Selvaraj, Soumya T. Verghese, Shambhavi Agarwal, Mohammed Aquil

## Projects

### 1 Human Development Index (HDI) for cities

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We propose a "People's HDI" focusing on resident experiences. Going beyond income and health, it will measure factors like access to technology, accessibility, safety, and community engagement. This resident-centric approach aims to identify thriving urban spaces and inform policies that prioritize well-being for all, especially the marginalised.

**Project Members:** Preethi Krishnan, Vidya Subramanian, Namesh Killemsetty, Chetan Sinha

## **2 Exploring the Significance of Spaces for Urban Underprivileged Children**

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Through this project, we plan to examine play spaces as experienced by children from construction workers, *safai karamcharis*, and slum dweller families as compared to those occupying gated community parks within our cities. Without traditional public parks, economically disadvantaged children utilize alternative spaces for play around their neighbourhood, imbuing meaning into those environments, even in resource-limited contexts. We examine how environments – gated communities and alternative spaces – influence how children navigate play and community and the crucial role of city planning in children’s lives.

**Project Members: Namesh Killemsetty, Chetan Sinha, Preethi Krishnan, Vidya Subramanian**

## **3 Sidestepping Aarogya Setu: Exploring Non-Adoption in India’s Covid-19 Tech Landscape**

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This project intends to investigate how digital interventions for health play out in an urban space, by studying the nature of non-adoption of Aarogya Setu. As the Covid-19 pandemic raged on in India, and the use of the app became mandatory in several settings (air travel, entry into some offices, etc), several people did not use the app for reasons of privacy and quality of the app, several others did not use or have cellphones and therefore could not use the app, and yet others simply did not need to use it. The use of this app in a tightly controlled situation such as the Covid-19 lockdown can provide useful insights into the public attitudes in India to the politics of technologies.

**Project Member: Vidya Subramanian**

## **4 Delhi Evictions: Reshaping Space, Displacing Lives**

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This project investigates the socio-spatial impact of evictions in Delhi over the past decade. It explores the complex interplay between urban development, forced displacement, and global economic forces driving these evictions. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research will analyse past large-scale evictions using secondary literature. This analysis will map demographic shifts caused by these evictions and identify areas most affected. To capture the lived experiences of these evictions, the study will then delve deeper through ethnographic research in select case study slums. By engaging with communities displaced or facing imminent eviction, the project aims to capture their narratives and understand the long-term repercussions of evictions on their lives. This combined approach will shed light on the spatial dimensions of urban inequality in Delhi, revealing how evictions not only displace people but also reshape the city's social and economic landscape.

**Project Member: Namesh Killemsetty**

## 5 Claiming Care, Claiming Equality

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This project examines the Anganwadi as a social reproduction site where inequalities of gender, caste, and class are both reinforced and challenged. The project addresses the question: How does gender, caste and class structures influence how women claim entitlements of care from the state? Ethnographic fieldwork for this project was conducted in Anganwadis in Tamil Nadu. Primary data for this study includes (1) ethnographic notes and observations at the Anganwadis, official meetings, and rallies (2) semi-structured interviews with Anganwadi workers, mothers, Anganwadi union leaders, and state representatives. (3) archival data, including policy documents, training manuals, newsletters, government orders, and documents from the Anganwadi workers union.

**Project Member: Preethi Krishnan**

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# Geopolitics & Strategies

The constellation will discuss the developing debates around the developments in South Asia as well as international politics. It will attempt to provide a nuanced perspective on the region while discussing the changes in the overall narratives surrounding the regional and global politics. It will also look at the bilateral and multilateral institutions and their role in the region. Research under this Constellation will be focused on the ongoing developments in the international system while also trying to locate these under thematic and historical narratives.

**Lead:** Gunjan Singh

**Members:** Nikita Vats, Mohit Vasishth

## Projects

### 1 China Taiwan Relations under CCP and DPP

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This will study the China-Taiwan relations, especially under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) since 2016. The project will focus on studying how the DPP has changed the dynamics of the cross-strait relations and how this has affected the peace in the region. The paper will discuss the various factors which have led to the increasing assertion within Taiwan.

**Project Member: Gunjan Singh**

## **2 Unravelling China's Mineral Hegemony: Implications for Global Energy Security and Strategic Operations**

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The project aims to examine China's evolving role in the global energy transition, particularly its dominance in critical mineral supply chains. Focusing on implications for geopolitical dynamics, it analyses present and emerging challenges in the global mineral supply chain and assesses potential future developments. Additionally, the research explores critical minerals' role in fortifying national security, with a focus on India, uncovering vulnerabilities and proposing a policy framework for risk mitigation and consistent supply. Drawing from recent events, it proposes strategies for diversification, technological advancement, and international collaborations to strengthen critical mineral supply chains, thus enhancing India's defence manufacturing capabilities and consolidating national security amidst geopolitical uncertainties.

## **3 Leveraging Brisbane Port's Success for Kolkata Port's Sustainability**

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This project seeks to conduct a comparative study between Brisbane Port and Kolkata Port, with the goal of developing policy suggestions to enhance the sustainable operation of Kolkata Port by leveraging successful strategies from Brisbane Port. It entails analysing the operational challenges of Kolkata Port, juxtaposing them with Brisbane's achievements, and proposing policies centred on upstream restoration, river boundary maintenance, dredging modernization, efficient sediment disposal, and eco-sensitive practices. The overarching objective is to furnish a pragmatic roadmap for Kolkata Port Trust and stakeholders to bolster efficiency, curtail costs, and advance environmental sustainability. Through the synthesis of Brisbane's lessons and the customization of solutions to Kolkata's unique riverine landscape, this project aims to furnish original insights for effectively addressing port challenges.

## **4 Building China in eight decades of Bollywood**

---

This project is a cross-collaboration between constellations. It includes a socio-political commentary on cultural diplomacy, particularly in regards to inter-industry collaborations and representation of China and its people in Bollywood. The paper studies how these collaborations and movies have contributed to a media-driven construction of public opinion regarding China, and how this has changed (or not) in context of the changing geopolitical relationship between the countries. It seeks to understand why unlike Bollywood, China has not been able to encash its film industry's soft power in the global platform (which remains Western dominated), and also particularly in India. The study elucidates the soft power of both the film industries in enforcing political relations in public consciousness and thereby, their opinion on foreign policies.

**Project Members: Gunjan Singh & Poulomi Bhadra**

Experimental Research  
Design & Pedagogy

# Methods Lab



## ABOUT THE HUB

The constellation intends to co-ordinate and support research, focused on experimental designs but not limited to. This cluster will serve a variety of purposes and can take a number of forms depending on faculty need and interests. It also aims to support for members' ongoing research and projects. This constellation will provide opportunity for cross- disciplinary collaboration and a platform for structured exchange of methodologies across disciplines. This constellation will provide a space for sharing insightful ideas and initiate discussion about their research methods.

**Lead:** Sarni Jain

**Members:** Sadananda Reddy, Ashish Aman Sinha



## OUR FOCUS AREAS



### Consumer Behaviour

Develop an insight into consumers taste and preferences by exhaustive profiling of an end-product, from evaluating the alternatives to finally purchasing the product.



### Decision Making & Consumer Behaviour

Understand the consumers cognitive mindset which deals with selecting various alternatives against the given set of product line.



### Interdisciplinary Pedagogy Series

This is an archival project that documents the various interdisciplinary pedagogical methods used in a curated repertoire of courses.



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# Introducing IDEAS Collaboration Opportunities

IDEAS is looking to diversify its research portfolio by collaborating with experts from different fields. Our civil society partnerships allows us to learn from grassroot blueprints and use research evidence to identify best practice and research gaps and support organizations with evidence-led capacity building and action research. Likewise, IDEAS is keen on being recognized as a global platform for cross-collaboration opportunities in South Asia. As we expand our Constellations profiles in the coming years, we hope to establish a well recognized research network within India and abroad.

# IDEAS

## Visiting Fellowship

This is an opportunity for external scholars with exemplary professional experience and mutual research interests with Constellations to visit campus for a short period of time (2-4 weeks). This opportunity can be used for knowledge exchange, to foster collaborations with researchers at JGU-IDEAS and to co-ideate alongside our networks for knowledge and capacity-building. These Fellowships will be awarded on the basis of merit and competitive applications from abroad. The Fellows will strategic appointments for enabling cross-collaboration of research partnerships with practitioners and international organizations.

Fellows will have to arrange for their own airfare to India, if not born by their parent institution or covered under a travel grant. Once you arrive in India, JGU will provide accommodation and meals on campus, transport from Delhi airport to campus and back, an office space and access to JGU facilities, including an email ID and all library resources for the period of their stay.

Visiting Fellows will be involved in working closely with all Fellows of the respective IDEAS-research constellation to take the work and research plan of the group forward, as per the shared timeline. They will also be engaged in making external-grant applications along with Fellows of a given research constellation. Additionally, they can also offer seminars, workshop courses of smaller research/academic credits during their period of association with JGU.

## How can we work together?

### Collaborative Research

We are looking to add to the diverse expertise to our constellations and to expand the purview of our research to underexplored areas. We are happy to partner on complementary projects at partner institutions as well.

### Grant Partnership

We aim to curate a small selection of research partnership with individuals and academic institutions, think tanks and NGOs that will result in sustainable research goals, including but not limited to, joint grant applications on interdisciplinary research.

### Research Exchange

We would like to create and participate in two-exchange of exemplary researchers to visit partner organizations. These exchanges would be designed to enrich academic and research ecosystem through network engagement and lay the grounds for ideation and development.

### Academic Diplomacy

We are interested in partnering with Embassies and International Organizations in contributing to global datasets and conducting research on questions of common relevance and importance. This is a research-led engagement in bridging global gaps of knowledge creation.

## Our Areas of Interest

### Sustainable Development Goals

- Climate Action Science & Policies
- Inequalities & Migration Studies
- Responsible Consumption & Production
- Sustainable Cities & Communities
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

### Other Priority Research Areas

- Misinformation and Disinformation
- Conflict and Security Studies
- Media Literacy & Public Understanding of Science
- AI technology, ethics and benefits
- History, Medicine & Law

*This is a non-exhaustive list indicating our priority areas of interest. We are always open to discussing other research ideas, and can draw upon institutional or network peers to supplement expertise and resources.*





## COLLABORATIVE EVENTS

IDEAS is open to collaborating with partner institutions in knowledge dissemination and stakeholder consultation events such as joint-workshops, joint-symposiums and Conferences etc. Besides these, potential collaborators are also welcome to explore the spaces within the flagship events listed below that are scheduled throughout the year. These are meant to both showcase the Office's research and expertise, as well as create a platform for cross-fertilization of interdisciplinary exchanges.



### IDEASx

An **online capacity building initiative** launched for conducting research training, methodology, and pedagogy-based workshops and short courses, through our expertise within the core research team and external collaborators.

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### Nazariya

A **Critical Dialogue Series** that provides a platform for building knowledge dissemination and connection opportunities for Constellations to external expertise and resources

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### Sāmagāna

In-house **working paper seminar series** to promote in-depth discussion on ongoing IDEAS research and encourage critical engagement and support for the Constellations' work.

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### Swaroop

An **annual conference** feature of JGU-IDEAS. This will provide a platform to showcase the Constellations' work, reinforce the Office's outreach to relevant stakeholders and collaborators, and facilitate new interest and growth in the IDEAS membership and networks.



# IDEASx

This an innovative online teaching and learning platform designed as a space for providing online research training, skills-learning, methods training, assessment skills, pedagogy training (with a focus on capacity building for civil society partners and early career scholars). These live workshops are open to anyone, anywhere in the world.



## IDEASx Capacity Building

Each month, the platform offers online workshops over a weekend, which is conceptualized on issues across interdisciplinary research fields, and anchored by scholars, practitioners and inter-domain experts from across disciplines.

We welcome our collaborators to co-ideate joint workshops or short courses on this platform for their students, faculty and staff.

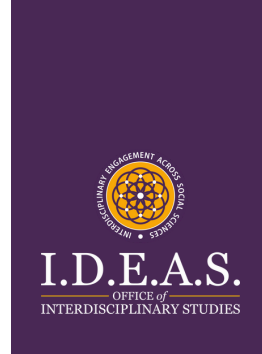
### Highlights of IDEASx

- Structured learning on contemporary topics
- Live learning experience with real time interactions
- Interact & network with like-minded people from across the world
- Certificate of completion

### Our Current Workshops

- ✓ Data Visualization and Interpretation
- ✓ Interdisciplinary Methods in Social Sciences
- ✓ Digital Ethnography
- ✓ Using Ztree software for economic experiments

# Institutional Partnerships



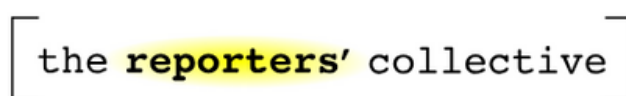
Navjyoti aims to develop the underprivileged segments of the society affected by crimes by gradually transcending them to an environment that is encouraging. They work towards facilitating each child and citizen with access to quality education, facilitate equal rights and dignity of all segments with an endeavour to make them employable. NIF fosters scientific programs and policies as platforms for enabling better health and nutrition to communities and aid communities to adopt better standards and envision a better life for the future generations.



**Youth for Social Development (YSD)** is a development organisation working with the duty bearers and rights holders to enhance the quality of life for both urban and rural underprivileged populations in the state of Odisha, India. YSD India prioritizes the well-being of resource-poor and marginalised communities, with a special emphasis on Dalit and Adivasi populations, as well as children, youth, and women, who form the cornerstone of our initiatives. Working together to avail basic services, empowering the communities on the margin and nudging the local governments and elected representatives – through research, advocacy and training – constitute the core of their approach.



**Ideosync Media** works towards integrating icommunication methodologies into development and social change programs, and to equip communities and NGOs with techniques and technology to support communities with access to information and communication skills & tools. They also work on developing communication strategies, training development workers and informing media policy to support multi-sectoral developmental initiatives by government agencies, NGOs, bilateral aid agencies and UN agencies.



**The Reporters' Collective** collaboratively produces investigative journalism in many languages and mediums. RC aims to report truthfully and bring out facts that the powerful prefer to keep hidden from citizens. Primarily their objective is to report on stories that put the spotlight on those in power and to shed light on how India's political economy and governance functions. The Reporters' Collective work closely with other news organisations to produce their work in different mediums and in multiple languages.

# International Advisors

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**Jacqueline Lo**

Director, Indo-Pacific Research  
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Honorary Professor, Australian  
National University



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HOD and Professor, Department  
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# National Advisors



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**Swati Chawla**

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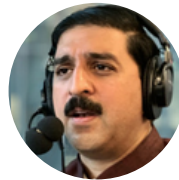
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INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE DEEMED TO BE  
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