



RESEARCH PAPER

Four Stages of Pakistan Studies in China: An Analysis

Yang He

Ph. D., Department of History and Pakistan studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab,
Pakistan

***Corresponding Author:** 15268748@qq.com

ABSTRACT

The current study is aimed to summarize and chronically describes the process of Pakistan studies in China, point out the deficiencies and challenges of research on Pakistan in China, and puts forward suggestions on how to improve and enhance it. With the rise of China and the proposal of the Belt and Road, Pakistani academic community have paid more and more attention to China and China-Pakistan relations, However, the Pakistan studies in China rarely introduces. Therefore, this article mainly introduces Pakistan studies in China. Mainly using statistical analysis and chronological methods, analyzes China's Pakistan studies based on data from authoritative knowledge platforms in China. The quantity, scope, and quality of China's Pakistan studies have steadily increased in 70 years. However, there are some deficiency in translations, content, and communication in the studies, and should be taken to improve and enhance by promoting communication and cooperation between China and Pakistan in academic fields. Humanities studies is the foundation for improving Pakistan studies in China, and the key to enhancing communication and cooperation between the two countries.

KEYWORDS China-Pakistan Relations, Chinese Academic Community, CPEC, Pakistan Studies

Introduction

China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic partners, with close cooperation in many fields and 70 years of friendly and stable international relations. Now, with the construction of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, more and more countries around the world are paying attention to the study of China Pakistan relations. Some scholars have explored China studies in Pakistan, such as Chih yu Shih, Prapin Manomaivibool, Mariko Tanigaki, and Swaran Singh (2020), studies on China and China Pakistan relations also significantly increased in Pakistan. There are many scholars and academic achievements of Pakistan studies in China, but the overview of them is rare. The author only got two articles from authoritative Chinese databases, Tian Guangqiang and Han Zhaoyin (2013), Tu Huazhong, Nie Jiao, Zha Wenxian. (2017), with the development of practice, these two literature obviously cannot explain the new situation of research in China and Pakistan at present.

When reviewing an academic issue, the Chinese academic community tends to divide it into several stages. The study of Pakistan in China has a history of more than 70 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. The author believes that dividing it into different stages can help better grasp its development context and discover the affecting factors. Based on the research of Chinese scholars, the author divides Pakistan studies in China into four stages: the initial stage (1951-1977), the preliminary development stage (1978-2000), the rapid development stage (2001-2012), and the comprehensive development stage (2013 to present).

The Initial Stage (1951-1977)

In 1951, when the start of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, China began to study the history and the society of Pakistan. China's initial understanding of Pakistan mainly came from the works of Soviet scholars, due to the fact that New China had just been established and had learned from the Soviet Union in all aspects, it was easier to get the Russian books about Pakistan .

In the 1950s, China translated Soviet work "India and Pakistan", "Pakistan", and "Pakistan's Economy and Foreign Trade" and Badr's (India) "Agricultural workers in India and Pakistan".

The first work by a Chinese author about Pakistan was "Today Pakistan" compiled by Mai lang in 1957, which supplemented the shortcomings of the aforementioned works and was the first systematic introduction to Pakistan in China.

Due to limited information at that time, only 40 articles related to Pakistan were published in various Chinese journals and newspapers.

In the late 1950s to early 1960s, the Chinese government organized the translation Team to translate works by Pakistani authors. The most important achievement of this stage is the translation works of four volume version of "A Brief History of Pakistan" , which was translated by Sichuan University.

At this stage, Pakistan studies in China mainly focuses on a rough introduction to the overview, history, economy, and culture of Pakistan. There are no institutions or academic journals dedicated to studying Pakistan, and there is no real research on Pakistan. This situation was related to the domestic and international environment in which China was situated at that time.

The Preliminary Development Stage (1978-2000)

1978 was a extraordinary year for both China and Pakistan. For China, the policy of reform and opening up was launched in this year, China urgently needs to engage in exchanges and cooperation with countries around the world to Catch up with the pace of modernization. For Pakistan, In this year, the Karakoram Highway was officially opened, laying the foundation for expanding the connectivity between China and Pakistan. The Pakistani government sent a high-level cultural delegation led by the then Minister of Culture, Mr. Mohammad Shahzad Abbas, to visit China to explore the possibility of expanding cultural relations between the two countries. In this year, Center For South Asian Studies was established, specializing in research on countries in the South Asian region, Pakistan studies is an important part of South Asian studies. With the further development of China Pakistan relations, the Chinese academic community has begun to attach importance to the Pakistan studies.

At this stage, there are a total of 8 books by Chinese authors about Pakistan, more than 300 Pakistan themed articles have been published in various journals and newspapers, including 108 important academic research papers, mainly focusing on political and economic research.

At this stage, China translated and published 4 works by Pakistani authors, all of which were literary works.

Compared to the previous stage, there had been a relative increase in studies on Pakistan in the Chinese academic community, however, the depth and breadth of the studies were relatively limited, and the translations were also disadvantages of simplex variety.

The Rapid Development Stage (2001-2012)

2001 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, while at the same time, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have made Pakistan the front line of the world anti-terrorism war. With the consolidation and development of China Pakistan relations and Pakistan's important position in the anti-terrorism war, Pakistani research has received great attention in the Chinese academic community. At this stage, with the support of the Pakistan government, China established four Pakistan research centers, providing an important platform for China's Pakistan studies and effectively promoting the development of related researches.

During this stage, China published approximately 20 works related to Pakistan, providing detailed information for the Chinese people and scholars to know Pakistan. Chinese scholars have published two collections of articles on Pakistan studies.

In this stage, the Chinese academic community translated 4 works by Pakistani authors.

In 2010, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of cultural centers for each other, establishing cultural centers in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, and Beijing, the capital of China, to carry out friendly cooperation with partners and provide high-quality cultural and educational activities and related resources to the public. 2011 is the "China Pakistan Friendship Year", both countries held a series of exchange activities. China decided to provide 500 government scholarships to Pakistan within the next three years. In 2011, the doctoral thesis database in China began to include dissertations from Pakistani students.

Comprehensive Development Stage (2013 To Present)

In 2013, China and Pakistan signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Long term Planning and Cooperation of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is regarded as the flagship project of the "the Belt and Road". In May 2013, Premier Li Keqiang visited Pakistan and signed a joint statement with the Pakistani government on deepening comprehensive strategic cooperation between the two countries. In the statement, both sides believe that expanding cultural exchanges and cooperation has laid a solid public opinion foundation for China Pakistan friendship. China supports Pakistan's efforts to promote Chinese language teaching and will train 1000 Chinese language teachers for Pakistan within 5 years. The Pakistan supports the establishment of Confucius Institutes at Karachi University and gradually expands the construction of Confucius Institutes in Pakistan. All of these promoted the rapid progress of Chinese scholars in their research on Pakistan.

From 2013 to 2023, nearly 50 monographs on the theme of Pakistan published, including one English work "YOU and US: The Story of China and Pakistan". Approximately 6000 articles on Pakistan were published in various journals and newspapers. Translated and published 4 works by Pakistani authors and one Pakistani themed work by British authors.

During this period, China made significant progress in the breadth and depth of its researches on Pakistan. Compared to the previous stages, there has been a significant increase on the quantity of Pakistan studies. Benefiting from the influence of the Belt and Road policy, studies on education and law has increased significantly in the field of Pakistan studies. The study of Pakistani laws undoubtedly can enhance the research and understanding of Pakistani society for the China people and intellectual.

The Communities

The communities engage in Pakistan studies in China mainly consist of various levels of South Asian and Pakistan studies institutions, most of which are established by various universities. In addition to institutions, this article will also briefly introduce the main publishing institutions that publish research on Pakistan for reference.

South Asian Studies Communities

The initial Pakistan studies in China were attributed from South Asian studies communities. The first two South Asian studies institutions that made significant contributions to Pakistan studies, one was the Center for South Asian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, established in 1978; the other was the Institute of South Asia studies at Sichuan University, established in 1985. At present, China has nearly 50 communities on South Asian themes. Besides the two communities above, Yunnan University and Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences are important communities on Pakistan studies in China. Before the establishment of the specialized Pakistan research center in China, China's South Asian institutions had always been the main force in China's South Asian research. Nowadays, many South Asian research institutions also consider Pakistan studies as an important direction.

Specialized Research Institution on Pakistan

At present, there are 8 specialized Pakistan studies institutions in China. Among them, the Pakistan Cultural Communication studies Center of Tsinghua University, the Pakistan studies Center of Peking University, the Pakistan studies Center of Fudan University, and the Pakistan studies Center of Sichuan University are relatively important and have received funding from the Pakistani government.

Publishing Institutions

The two important South Asian studies communities mentioned earlier in this article have hosted two journals related to South Asian studies, "South Asian Studies" hosted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and "South Asian Studies Quarterly" hosted by Sichuan University were the most important journals on Pakistan studies in China that publish the most important academic achievements of South Asian research in China. South and Southeast Asian Studies journal, hosted by the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, is also very valuable. So far, there is no publishing institution in China named after "Pakistan studies". Although many journals do not clearly define the direction of "South Asia studies", such as "Oriental Language and Culture studies", "Indian Ocean Economies", they have actually made important contributions to South Asian studies. In addition, electronic journals that hosted by the important Pakistan studies communities mentioned above have also become new forces in South Asian studies in the new era, Chinese people can get the latest information about South Asia and Pakistan. On January 11, 2022, the South Asia study and Publishing Center jointly established by the South Asia studies Center of Peking University, the Institute of

International and Regional Studies of Tsinghua University, and the China Encyclopedia Publishing House was officially unveiled in Beijing. This is the first institution in China named after South Asian studies and Publishing.

Difficulties and challenges

Language Obstacles

Language has always been a barrier to Chinese academic interaction between China and Pakistan. Although China establish Urdu language major in universities as early as 1946, the number of admissions and applicants was very few. According to surveys, only one-third of Urdu language graduates were engaged in teaching, broadcasting, foreign trade, translation, and other work, with two-thirds of graduates giving up their majors. That is to say, only very few Urdu language graduates are engaged in Urdu language translation and Pakistan studies, and the vast majority of them only focus on literature. This explains why China's Pakistan studies cannot be delved deeper for a long time ,also explains why translation books of Pakistani authors' in China are very few and most of them are literary works.

On the other hand, although china's international students education for Pakistani student start from 1960es, and with the development of the Belt and Road, more and more Pakistani students accept their higher education in China, however, the history of the establishment of Confucius Institutes in China is relatively short, and there is a lack of systematic and high-quality Chinese culture resources for international students, Therefore, it is currently impossible to cultivate outstanding talents proficient in cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan. At present, although there are a large number of Pakistani international students, their research still mainly covers the fields of economy, agriculture, and industry.

Deficiency of the Studies

Although the field of Pakistan studies in China has relatively expanded greatly, there are still some deficiencies. One is the lack of in-depth and high-quality humanistic studies. for monographs, more than half of the monographs on Pakistan are overview, and original research is generally focused on science and engineering, agriculture, and pharmacy. As said in the China-Pakistan joint statement on deepening comprehensive strategic cooperation (2013) :“expanding cultural exchanges and cooperation has laid a solid public opinion foundation for China Pakistan friendship”, while the humanistic studies is the foundation of the culture communication .Therefore both counties' academic should pay more attention on humanistic studies. Secondly, there is insufficient studies on China Pakistan relations. On the one hand, compared to studies on China and Europe, China and United States, China and Japan, the quantity of China-Pakistan studies is small; On the other hand, within the Pakistan studies in China, the proportion of studies on China-Pakistan relations is also relatively small. With the development of the Belt and Road, this situation has improved, but it still needs to be strengthened. The areas of academic exchange between China and Pakistan are geology, agriculture, water conservancy, machinery, technology, and medicine.

Academic Communication and Cooperation Limited

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan 70 years ago, official, economic, and civilian exchanges between China and Pakistan have become increasingly frequent, and cooperation and exchanges in higher education have

also been expanding. However, in the academic field, especially in humanities studies, there are very few. The reason for this is that on the one hand, China's humanities academic system is relatively closed, and the works of Chinese humanities are mostly in Chinese. Therefore, in the field of humanities, except for Sinology, which has certain exchanges with other countries around the world, there is basically little exchange among other disciplines. On the other hand, although China has trained many Urdu language graduate and Pakistan has seen an increasing number of people attending Confucius Institutes or studying in China, it is also very difficult for these people to engage in humanities research and be able to communicate with each other.

Conclusion

The process of Pakistan studies in China can be divided into four stages that has witnessed the steadily advanced friendship between two brother countries. The quantity, scope, and quality of China's Pakistan studies have steadily increased in 70 years. However, there are some deficiencies in translations, content, and communication in the studies, and should be taken to improve and enhance by promoting communication and cooperation between China and Pakistan in academic fields.

Recommendations

Mao Zedong said that he had no knowledge of literature and history, and did not understand righteousness. Understanding the history and culture of a country is the foundation of all other research. It is also the foundation of cultural exchange. If one does not understand China's modern and contemporary history, and does not understand Marxism with Chinese characteristics, they will not understand the development path of China's politics, economy, culture, and teaching today. Similarly, if one does not understand the arduous process of the partition of India and Pakistan, and does not know the political ideals of Zhenna, they will not understand the people of Pakistan. So, this article more focuses on how to enhance the studies in the field of humanities. This is not only for the Chinese academic community, but also an initiative for Pakistan to enhance cultural exchange between the two countries.

Strengthen the mutual translation of books

China should strengthen the translation of works by Pakistani authors, especially in the field of humanities, in order to better enhance understanding of Pakistani society and culture and promote the understandings and friendly exchanges between the two peoples. At the same time, China should also translate its excellent humanistic works to readers interested in China from around the world. The Chinese government now is doing this and hopes that Pakistani international students who are familiar with Chinese culture can contribute their efforts in this.

Strengthen academic exchanges

The academic circles of China and Pakistan should conduct more academic exchange activities on issues related to humanities and China-Pakistan relationships, enhance mutual understanding in the academic fields of both sides, and better promote the development of academia towards higher quality. In fact, it is very feasible for both academic circles to strengthen academic cooperation through English as a mediator, which is also conducive to promoting the improvement of academic research between both sides and transmitting the voices of Chinese and Pakistan studies to the world.

Strengthen the cultivation of interdisciplinary talents in the field of humanities

Both China and Pakistan should attach great importance to the cultivation of cultural professionals in China and Pakistan. The language and cultural studies earlier has laid a good foundation for future talent cultivation. On this basis, China and Pakistan should focus on cultivating experts who are familiar with both cultures and cultivating ambassadors for cultural exchange between China and Pakistan. Make contributions to better cooperation between both parties.

Develop cultural and tourism studies cooperation

The development momentum of China's tourism industry is fierce. However, compared to Southeast Asian countries, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Pakistan is not large. This is partly due to safety issues, and on the other hand, Chinese tourists have insufficient understanding of Pakistan's cultural tourism background and projects. In fact, Pakistan's Himalayan culture, Muslim culture, cuisine, and Gandhara art are highly attractive to Chinese tourists and have great potential for tourism market. Pakistan and China should enhance cooperation in studies on these cultural and tourism projects, which can not only promote the development of Pakistan's tourism economy but also promote China's Pakistani studies.

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