

**SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES IN CHINA:
AN ASSESSMENT**

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Executive Summary

1. China's SAS (South Asian Studies) was revived in 1978 when the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Peking University jointly sponsored and inaugurated the Institute of South Asian Studies, kicking off comprehensive South Asian studies in China.
2. Currently, there are three kinds of SAS institutions in China. The first kind is the SAS association which is an independent and national academic research group on SAS.
3. The second kind is the institutions affiliated with universities. These institutions usually maintain a graduate programme and have been tasked with the training of new generations of scholars as well as undergraduates.
4. The third kind is the institutions affiliated with central or local Academy of Social Sciences. Unlike institutions affiliated with universities, these institutions are more or less full-fledged think tanks and have less responsibility for training new generations of scholars.
5. Currently, there are three journals in China which have similar "South Asian Studies" in their titles. They are *South Asian Studies Quarterly*, *South Asian Studies and Southeast* and *South Asian Studies*. These three journals have different focuses and characteristics.
6. What has driven the development of SAS in China is the increasing demand from central and local governments for formulating external policies. There is a growing need for understanding South Asian countries in all aspects at different levels.

7. The first is to understand the dynamic social and economic changes in South Asian countries and their impacts on China-South Asia relations, such as China-India free trade agreement and China-Pakistan strategic relations.
8. The second is to compare China's and India's development models. The Centre of India and China at Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences was established mainly for this purpose and has launched a number of comparative projects since its inception.
9. The third is to better understand New Delhi's "Look East" policy. Southeast Asia is of special importance to China and the shift in New Delhi's stance has generated a sense of rivalry between the two and impacted Southeast Asia.
10. Security-oriented research institutions like South Asian Studies Centre at Shanghai Institutes for International Studies and South Asian Studies Centre at Fudan University have also conducted a lot of related research.
11. SAS in China has shifted from simple research areas like country presentations, literature and religious studies in the early period, to current multi-disciplinary and comprehensive studies.