

CONTENTS

About this Report.....	2
About the Author.....	2
Preface.....	3
1. India-Japan Bilateral Relations.....	4
Part 1. Ancient Times to World War II.....	5
Part 2. Post- World War II to Late 1990s.....	5
Part 3. Year 2000 Onwards.....	6
2. About the Course of 'Culture, Environment and Technology of India'	8
3. The Students.....	10
4. How India is Viewed.....	12
5. Outcome of the Class.....	13
6. India to Be Explored.....	15
7. Areas to Be Focused.....	16
8. Towards Mutual Cooperation and Understanding.....	18
9. Abundant Possibilities: Future India-Japan Relationship.....	20
10. Topics of Interest.....	22
Conclusion.....	23
Key References.....	24

About this Report

This report is developed as a part of Keio University India Japan Laboratory's research activities, mainly reflecting the student voices and aspirations of strengthening India Japan bilateral relations. As the year 2022 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and India, this report firstly provides a glimpse of the historical chronology of India-Japan bilateral relations, while emphasizing on its growing future relevance. Thereafter, the report mainly synthesizes the student perception of Keio University, Japan (mainly the 2021 batch of course 'Culture, Environment and Technology of India') about how India is currently being viewed in Japan and what could be the potential areas of cooperation and understanding for future India-Japan relationship. Herein, the student perception is synthesized based on the student perspectives about the present and future of India-Japan relationship, a two-page summary of which was submitted by around sixty students as part of coursework at Keio University. It is hoped that the key messages derived through this report can guide the future pathways of India-Japan Bilateral Relations.

About the Author

Tomo Kawane, Senior Researcher, India Japan Laboratory, Keio University, Japan

Born in Tokyo in 1970. Her first foreign trip was to Gujarat State in India in 1989, mainly to visit Sabarmati Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi and his birthplace in Porbandar. With recommendation from late Dr. Matsuo Ara at Tsuda College, she joined M.A. at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, as an I.C.C.R scholar of International Relations (Politics) from 1992 to 1994. Thereafter, she shifted to Gujarat for her M.Phil research on voluntary sector and development in India at Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (Political Science) from 1994 to 1997. By then she walked more than 1000 kilometers in India, mainly in Gujarat, including the route of the Salt March of 1930 by Mahatma Gandhi. Post Gujarat Earthquake of 2001, she was requested to be part of the local co-ordination team for the Japan Disaster Relief team, the first governmental official emergency medical relief sent to India by Government of Japan. After the completion of the mission, she stayed back in Kutch for three years for relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction actions, while also organizing open learning centers for 700 quake-affected children in Kutch District. Conversant in several Indian languages as well as some European languages, she has served as an expert in the People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI), the first all-India survey of the languages spoken in India. Her forte is the field work with direct interaction with local people in their vernacular languages. She has offered advisory services for Japanese government agencies, corporate offices, experts in various fields, especially architecture, history, and the media. For health and educational needs of women, vulnerable communities and differently-abled individuals in Gujarat, she has facilitated local co-ordination to offer direct relief to the needy for last 25 years. She has three home-schooled daughters with Premkumar, her Indian partner, who walked around the world for peace and disarmament for 17,000 kms in 1980s from Ahmedabad to Hiroshima.

November 2021



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Disclaimer:

This report is developed based on the experiences derived through the University coursework and the review of available literature. The complete list of referred sources is provided at the end of the report.

Preface

The history of India-Japan bilateral relations can be traced to long back, and their shared ideals and cultural diversity have been the key to their strong ties. In recent years, the bilateral relations have further grown more on the economic front, yet the cultural aspects should not be overlooked. Keeping in mind the diversity of the bilateral relationship, Keio University established India Japan Laboratory (IJL: www.indiajapanlab.org) in the year 2019. Since 2020, IJL has initiated a first of its kind course in Keio University titled “Culture, Environment Technology of India”. The course comprises 14 weeks of lectures from faculty of Keio University as well as invited guests and professionals in the field of technology, innovation, development, environment, yoga, music, movies, astrology etc. During the 2021 class, the enrolled students were asked to write their perspectives on the present and future of India-Japan relationship. This report mainly analyzes those student’s views and perspectives and draws some key messages.

Apart from the India class, IJL also focuses on enhancing knowledge partnership with several Indian universities on different aspects, including, disaster risk reduction, environmental management and sustainable development. One of the key targets is to develop an incubation center, where students from both India and Japan can come together to co-create innovative solutions to address societal challenges, through an entrepreneurship mindset with mentorship from private sector, practitioners, and other development sectors. Social innovation is an important aspect, where IJL hopes to develop partnerships between the two countries.

Recently, IJL has also established India-Japan collaborative platform for students and youth with specific focus on cultural exchange. The platform is named “InJaN Puliya.” InJaN comes from India Japan Network, and the word Injan means engine. Puliya, in general, means a bridge which usually connects small villages. Thus, the platform aims to connect unexplored talents in these two countries for cultural exchange. For the inception of this platform, focus is being put on two topics: anime and yoga for collaboration between youth of India and Japan. More information on this can be accessed in: <https://www.injan-puliya.com>. Through collective activities of youths from India and Japan, this platform aims to serve as future bridge between the two countries.

Although IJL’s efforts are very small, as compared to the vast potentials and scopes of bilateral cooperation, but our sincere hope is that the small efforts will eventually be linked to larger changes in the society in future. In the junction of 70th anniversary of India-Japan bilateral collaboration, this report is a small contribution from the students and youth of Japan for the future of India-Japan collaboration. I am very much thankful to all the students and professors and lecturers who contributed to the India class. My sincere thanks to Ms. Tomo Kawane to give it a shape from her own experiences in India and analyzing student’s voices. I hope this document will be useful to the youth in both the countries.

Rajib Shaw
Director and Professor
India Japan Laboratory, Keio University

1. India-Japan Bilateral Relations

The relationship between India and Japan has always been considered as friendly and cordial. They have never fought a war against each other, and also, there have not been any historical conflicts between them. On 28th April 1952, India and Japan signed the Treaty of Peace and established formal diplomatic relations. Remarkably, India was one of the first countries to sign peace treaty after World War II. Subsequently, India exported iron ore to Japan to recover from the losses in World War II. In exchange, Japan provided the first yen loans to India in 1958.

Since 2019, India has become one of the top five economies in the world, overtaking the United Kingdom and France. Today, India is widely known for its advanced information technology and the well-developed film industry.

The 21st Century witnessed close deliberations between Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Modi. Herein, the geo-political situations have appreciated the closeness of India and Japan. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, known as QUAD, consisting of the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, has further mainstreamed the growing influence of India in international relations. Today, India is being regarded as one of the most influential and fastest-growing emerging economies in the world, which is backed by its rapid development of science and technology.

With high proportion of population under the age of 25, the potentials of India to impact the world has progressively been on the rise. While India is expected to surpass China in terms of overall population by 2023, it is today being considered as a nation full of potential. Markedly, India has also attracted huge business interests from Japan, and these trends are likely to continue.

The peace treaties between India and Japan have evolved into the agreement, namely, “Japan and India Vision 2025 Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World”. The agreement was signed as a long-term economic and political agreement for continuing prosperous future bilateral collaboration between India and Japan. In the meantime, Japan has increased direct investments towards India, and has today become the 4th largest investor in India.

While India’s economy is constantly growing alongside its increasing population, there are also lots of great programmers and entrepreneurs, due to which India is being regarded as a huge IT country with huge pool of manpower. In contrary to that, the country of Japan faces an issue of ageing and declining population, and a considerable proportion of its population accounts for elderly population. Due to these reasons, Japan is often faced with workforce shortages.

In 2022, while we are to going to celebrate the 70th year of bilateral diplomatic ties, India is still regarded as a country less known in Japan and there is now a genuine need and scope for bridging this understanding gap. India is so often regarded as mysterious exotic country. The Japanese people do not know much about India and are not quite familiar with its economy and education. It is also one of the key reasons why people in Japan often wonder how India have excelled in having many highly skilled professionals in information technology and engineering.

HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY OF INDIA-JAPAN BILATERAL RELATIONS

Part 1: Ancient Times to World War II

India's earliest documented direct contact with Japan was with the Todaiji ("Great Eastern Temple") in Nara, where the consecration or eye-opening of the towering statue of Lord Buddha was performed by an Indian monk, Bodhisena, in 752 AD. Buddhism made its way from India along the Silk Route through Central Asia, China, Korea and then arrived in Japan in the 6th century. Buddhism quickly became associated with the Imperial court. During the Nara Era (710-794 AD) under the reign of Emperor Shomu (724-749 AD) and his consort, Empress Komyo, Buddhism was promoted as the protector of the state. In 741 AD, the national system of monasteries, known as the Kokubun-ji was established throughout 66 provinces.

The new imperial Todai-ji, the chief temple of the Kokubunji-system as well as the center of the national ritual, built in the capital of Nara was of an unprecedented scale, the construction of which engaged the best craftsmanship of Japan along with the latest building technology. It was the largest building project ever on Japanese soil, being the center of power, spirituality, uniting various Japanese clans of the time.

The colossal bronze Buddha, built with all the available copper in Japan and workers of the time, using an estimated 163,000 cubic feet of charcoal to produce the metal alloy and form the bronze figure, is housed in the heart of Todai-ji. The massive hall called the *Daibutsuden* (Great Buddha Hall) was completed in 752 AD, measured 50 meters by 86 meters with the support of 84 massive cypress pillars. It is the world's largest wooden temple.

Thus, the construction of Todai-ji and the consecration of the Buddha statue was one of the magnificent projects of national importance. Upon its completion, the entire Japanese court, government officials and Buddhist dignitaries from China and India attended the Buddha's "eye-opening" ceremony. Bodhisena, an Indian monk, was sought to participate in the ceremony. He painted in the Buddha's eyes, symbolically imbuing it with life. The presence of Bodhisena was the first official record of the bilateral relationship between India and Japan, marking a significant opening of India-Japan bilateral history.

In contemporary times, the prominent Indians associated with Japan include Swami Vivekananda, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, JRD Tata, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Judge Radha Binod Pal. In 1903, the Japan-India Association was also set up, which is recognized as the oldest international friendship body in Japan today.

Part 2: Post- World War II to Late 1990s

In the Post-WWII era, India's iron ore help to Japan was seen as a great deal in Japan's journey of recovery from the devastation.

Due to the World War II, the Japanese Army had ordered that the animals at the Ueno Zoo, such as elephants, lions, leopards and pythons, should be killed, fearing that they would attack humans if the zoo is destroyed by the attacks of the enemies. In 1949, the Children's Diet of Taito Ward of Tokyo where the Ueno Zoo is located resolved to get an elephant back to the Ueno Zoo. For some years, the children's diets functioned as a part of democratizing education in Japan. After failed attempt to bring one of the only two elephants alive in Japan from Nagoya, the elephants refused to be separated. Therefore, instead of separating them, the Japanese

authorities arranged 'Elephant Trains' to bring the children from different parts of Japan to Nagoya to have a glance of elephants. The Children's Diet of Taito Ward submitted their petition to the Chairman of the Upper House of the National Diet to request them to negotiate with the Allied General Headquarters to find an international passage to get one elephant for the Ueno Zoo. The presence of 18 children at the following discussion at the House of Councilors inspired other children in the entire Tokyo to join them. Thus, demanding an elephant for the Ueno Zoo became a public movement.

Around 1500 pieces of letters and drawings of the children requesting India to send one elephant to Japan were carried by a well-wisher to India, who handed them over to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Subsequently, Indira the Elephant was gifted to Japan. Upon its arrival on Japanese soil, Indira the Elephant walked a good 9 kilometers on foot from the Shibaura Port to the Ueno Zoo and was welcomed by more than 10,000 people waiting at the gate of Ueno Zoo in the middle of night. A grand welcome of the visitors of 50,000 people was there for the elephant. A local daily reported that Indira was offered a banana by Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida who was in full smile. In the next three months, the Ueno Zoo recorded unprecedented number of one million visitors, thanks to the gift from India. This entire episode is still remembered as an anecdote of peace and friendship for bilateral relationship between India and Japan, giving hope to post-war Japan.

The year 1957 saw Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi's visit to India and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Tokyo. In 1958, President Rajendra Prasad's visit to Japan happened and since then, Japan started providing yen loans to India. Remarkably, it was the first yen loan aid extended by Government of Japan.

In 1991, Japan bailed India out of the balance of payment crisis. This was considered as a crucial moment for India to witness Japan as India's reliable friend.

Part 3: Year 2000 Onwards

The momentum in bilateral relationship between India and Japan gained pace in August 2000, with Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's visit to India. Mr. Mori and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee then decided to establish "Global Partnership between Japan and India". In April 2005, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to India further led to Japan-India annual summit meetings that have been held in respective capitals of India and Japan. It is important to note the timeline of the diplomatic transitions, the emphasis of which has been summarized in Figure 1. Further, Table 1 also highlights a list of bilateral treaties and agreements between India and Japan, which help to clearly understand the history of India-Japan diplomatic ties.

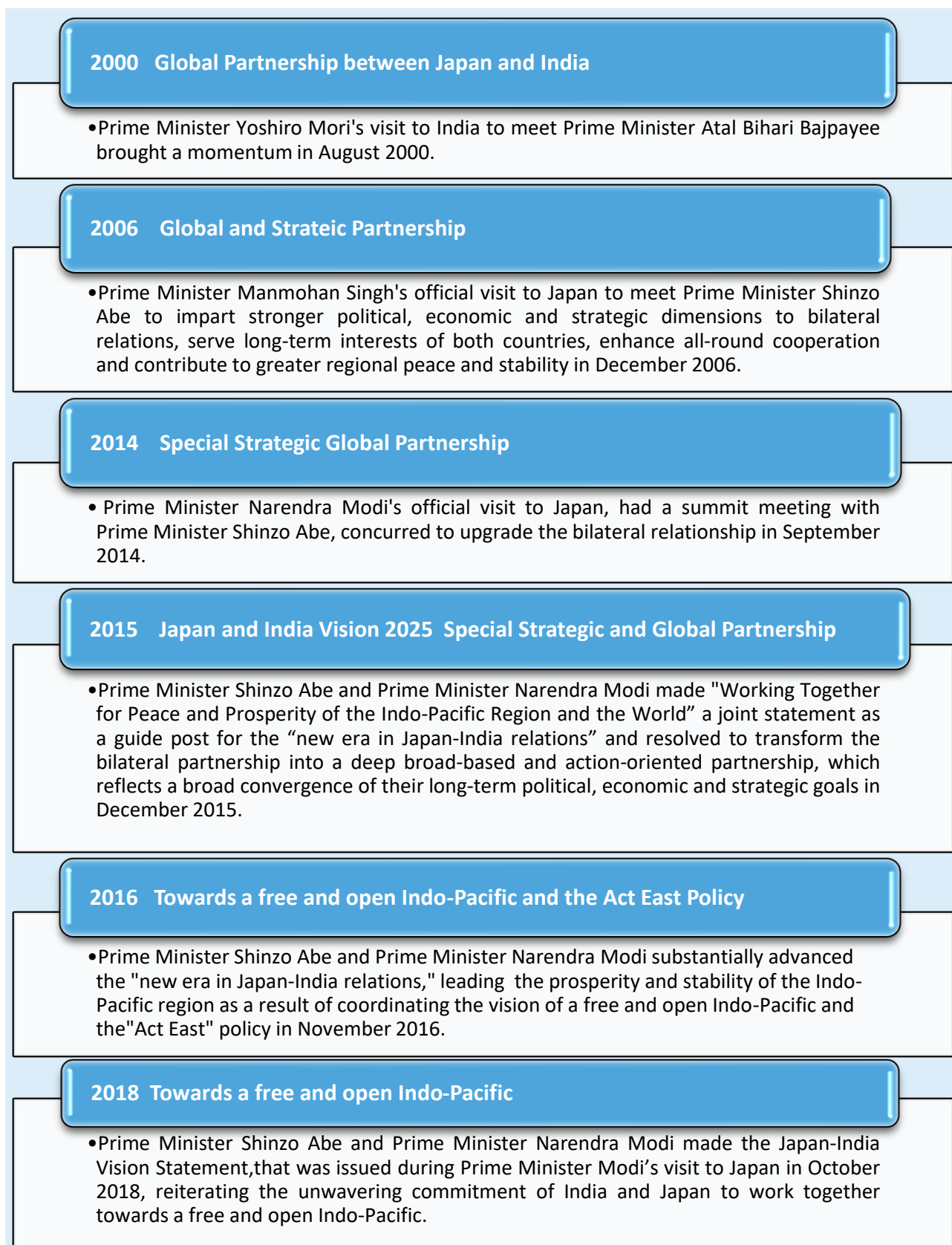


Figure 1. Transition of Bilateral Diplomatic Emphasis for India and Japan

Table 1. Bilateral Treaties and Agreements between India and Japan

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Japan-India Relations (Basic Data)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html>

Year	Bilateral Treaties and Agreements Between India and Japan
1952	Treaty of Peace
1956	Agreement for Air Service
1957	Cultural Agreement
1958	Agreement of Commerce
1960	Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation
1985	Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology
2011	Japan-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
2015	Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India Concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology
2015	Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India Concerning Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Military Information
2016	Agreement between Japan and the Republic of India on Social Security
2017	Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India for Cooperation in the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy

2. About the Course of ‘Culture, Environment and Technology of India’

Since the year 2020 (Spring Semester), Keio University Shonan Fujisawa Campus has introduced the ‘Culture, Environment and Technology of India’ course (mainly coordinated by the India Japan Laboratory) for the undergraduate students, with an aim to enhance the understanding on depth and diversity of India and the potential areas of India-Japan bilateral collaboration. It is a first of its type of cross-disciplinary course, which provides a comprehensive overview of the studies related to India, covering mainly three aspects:

- 1) Culture, history, art, religion, and language studies
- 2) Development, environment, and economic growth strategies,
- 3) Science, technology, and innovation studies.

Through a combination of in-house faculty and guest lectures from eminent personalities, who are knowledgeable on different aspects and disciplines related to India, this course provides the students with a comprehensive understanding of India’s characteristics. The course also provides the students an opportunity to interact and engage with the eminent guest faculties from premier educational institutes of India and learn from their practical knowledge and experiences. In the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, for the past two years, the class has predominantly been conducted online, with several presentations from India and elsewhere.

In the class of 2021, a total of 13 lectures were conducted through online mode, the contents of which are briefly described below. Notably, a visit to Embassy of India in Tokyo was also organized as part of the course to provide an opportunity for the students to interact with the Embassy officials and gain more exposure about India.

- 1) **Orientation:** Introduction to the course objectives, credit requirements, assignments etc.
- 2) India-Japan evolving relations, **start-up ecosystem, internet, and new technologies**.
- 3) **Japan India Overseas Development Assistance**, historical and current perspectives.
- 4) **Historical and evolving bilateral relation** of India and Japan from a global perspective
- 5) Theory and experiences of **meditation and its importance to human health and well-being**.
- 6) **Yoga demonstration** and its importance in the current world, with specific context of SDGs.
- 7) **India-Japan relativity in 'sound culture'** through collaboration in performing & literary arts.
- 8) Historical overview of diversity of **art, music, culture** in the context of India.
- 9) **Tagore Songs** and their implication in lives and lifestyles of Bengali community in India.
- 10) **Science of astrology / astronomy** and its importance in current India-Japan relationship.
- 11) Trip to Indian Embassy in Tokyo
- 12) **Economic growth strategy** in India and implication to bilateral & multilateral cooperation.
- 13) Core development issues of India and **major changes in the policies of "New India"**.

The post-course assignments and short reports of the students of the class has revealed several missing links in the friendly and co-operative relationship between India and Japan, a few of which are discussed as follows:

A. Starting Point: Lack of Interactions between India and Japan

This can be interpreted mainly in terms of far fewer exchanges between both countries, as compared with those between China and Japan. Thus, there are less opportunities for Japanese students to learn about India.

B. Learning Opportunities on India

While there are limited opportunities for learning about India, this class on "Culture, Environment and Technology of India" has offered a unique chance for the students to explore interesting aspects of the current state of Indian affairs, through a series of lectures, music performances, as well as Yoga sessions.

C. Suggestions for Future Bilateral Relations Between India and Japan

Credits to the sincere involvement and curiosity of students, they have actively taken part in all the different approaches of exploring India. Based on the derived learning, at the end of the class, the students could offer several achievable and realistic suggestions to strengthen the bilateral relations between India and Japan.

3. The Students

The student community at SFC creates a mini world that is represented by various nationalities. The life history of each student is quite unique, and most of them are international. Their writing reflects their upbringing and cultural trails reflecting the environment they have been brought up. While being able to relate to the purpose of this course to their prevailing surrounding cultures and preliminary experience and information about India, this course has brought out such inherent character and values of each student and made each one of them reflect upon the bilateral relationship. This has allowed them adequate experiences and knowledge depth to offer practical suggestions for strengthening the bilateral relations between India and Japan.

Direct experiences with India, like in terms of interactions with Indian people through family members or close friends, dealing with Indian goods, listening to Indian music, appreciating Indian architecture, practicing Buddhism as well as Hinduism, keeping Mahatma Gandhi's quote to heart, following Ayurveda, reading on astrology, playing music instruments, and practicing Yoga, a mix of everything that happened during the class has had a tremendous impact upon the students.

The course on India has proven that real experiences related to India could give maximum learning opportunities to the students. In some cases, it could be a casual touch of Indian fabric, dining Indian food, reading human stories in Indian fabrics, seeing philosophy of life in Bollywood movies, sensing aromas and tasting Indian dishes, experiencing relaxation and self-realization through yoga, Mahatma Gandhi's quote as a principle of life...all such things form vital reasons which make it possible for the students to relate to India.



Background of the Students

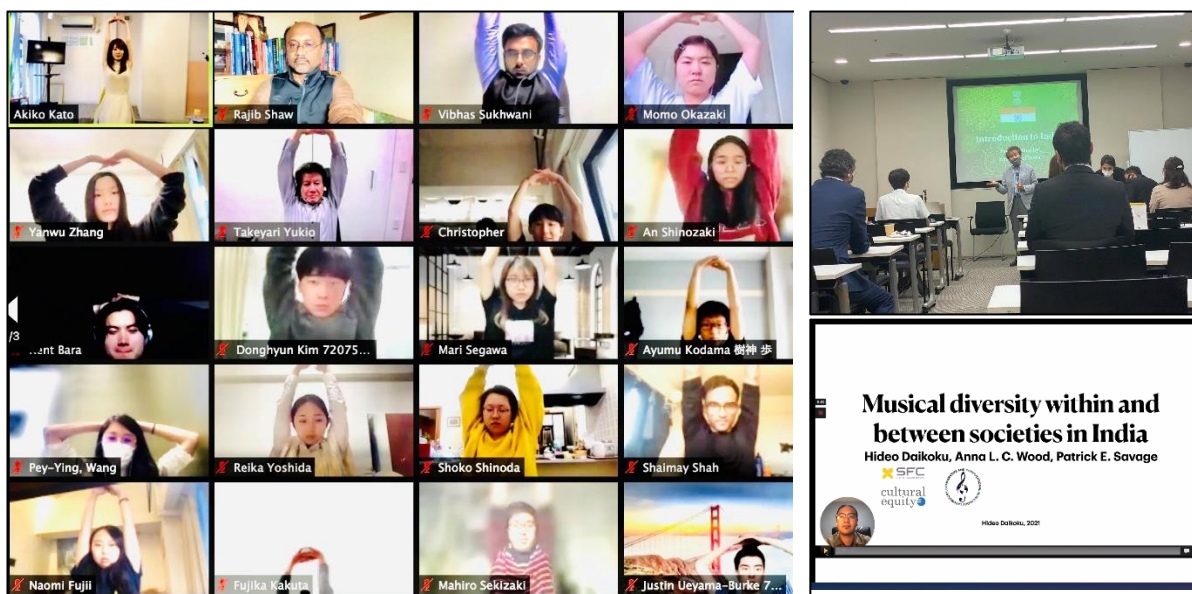
The background of the students at SFC varies a lot, reflecting its characteristics of embracing multiple cultures of various ethnic origins including Indian and Japanese. The degree of interactions with Indian people as well as knowledge about India differs according to each student. But overall, the students of the course reflected a genuine interest to learn more about India.

A number of students state that the class has deepened their understanding about India, in addition to their prior knowledge about Hinduism, Yoga, Ayurveda as well as Bollywood movies.

Those who practice and incorporate yoga in their daily life appreciate its impact on mental peace and mindfulness. While several students have had no prior interactions with Indian people, but even they got quite curious to know why India has been excelling in information technology. Highly skilled Indian professionals in Information Technology and engineering have been considered as India's advantage for many.

Many of them have tried various aspects of Indian food especially curry, and more fortunate ones have tasted Indian homemade food, as one of the easiest and friendliest way to learn about other cultures. Apart from one student, who is born and brought up in India, some students have lived in India, some others have family members and friends who have been deeply involved in Indian culture and economic activities with India. Moreover, the students have tried something Indian, be it food, fabric, yoga, music, movies, and so on. Those who were brought up in close contact with Indians, in most cases in multicultural societies in the third countries, have found the Indians quite intelligent and good at technology.

On the other hand, there are many more who do not have much prior knowledge of India, yet they joined this class to widen their horizons other than technology and programming fields.



4. How India is Viewed

Growing Indian Economy and Skilled Manpower

In Japan, India is viewed not only as a fast-growing economy, but also as a key democratic country in Asia and the World. Japan, as India's trustworthy ally, has become the first country with which India initiated a formal 2+2 defense and ministerial meetings in 2016. Since Indian engineers are becoming the backbone of Japan's IT industry, it is important and necessary for the Japanese industry to work together with India. It should be noted that some students do consider that India will surpass Japan in future. One anticipation among the students also suggests that India and Japan will require equal ties in the future.

India as an Emerging Power

Most of the students have acknowledged India as the most promising ally to Japan. India is considered as an economic force. India's potentials lie in its diversity, be it racial, linguistic, climatic, geographic, religious, and so on. India being a democratic country retaining its unity, will play a major role as a superpower in Asia in coming decades. Also, QUAD represents increasing international influence of India.

India as Growing IT Nation and Talents

The presence of India is being felt worldwide with its advanced technology as well as its huge pool of talented youthful manpower. Many of Indian professionals opt for Japan, too. It should be noted that some of the students consider that a day would come when India overtakes Japan in economic scale, and it would be Japan that would need India more. International presence of Indian professionals has been already there since long.

Economic Compatibility: Needed Skilled Indian Workforce

Many students underline that the field of technology has a promising scope to strengthen the bilateral relationship further. India has skilled professionals in information technology field. Many students have pointed out this gap in Japanese workforce as one apparent opportunity for India to supply vital key personnel to Japanese corporates and institutions while further accelerating furthering research and development.

Indian Mediums to Learn About India

Direct person-to-person communication is quite vital, as testified by the experiences of some of the students. One student had come to know about Indian fabric through the friendship of her mother with the person who is engaged in the fabric business and Yoga. Through such contacts, you will start imagining of the people and society behind the product you touch. The flavor, texture, fragrance, movements, sounds, visuals... all these factors have formed unforgettable experiences of India among the students. Also, there are instances how actually the students have incorporated such Indian mediums into their daily life.



Figure 2: How India is viewed by the students at SFC

5. Outcome of the Class

Sharing the Learnings from the Class

The approach of the class has been quite innovative, engaging the experts of varied fields to show varied possibilities of inter-cultural as well as inter-disciplinary collaborations. This class has engaged the students so well that there is enthusiasm among the students to share what they have learnt during the class in their close circles of family and friend in their day-to-day life.

Incorporating Learnings in their Life

Taking inspiration through the classwork sessions, some of the students have continued or have incorporated Yoga to connect mind and body as a part of their daily routine. The issues of both India and Japan have also been taken into consideration to envisage the possible cooperation between the two countries. There are interesting suggestions as concrete steps to ameliorate environmental issues, to overcome technological innovations, to conduct sustainable research towards securing sustainable source of energy, and so on.

Revisiting the Bilateral Relations between India and Japan

The students have been able to better understand the bilateral relations between India and Japan, from the perspective of geo-political realities as well as the strategic bilateral cooperation between the two leading nations in Asia that consider freedom and democracy as fundamental principles.

Media as a Source of Information on India

In our day-to-day life, media serves as one of the key sources of information on India. The idea of India is accordingly being created while being internalized, as it blends with the person's experiences, influences and interests of the person. Thus, in that manner, their knowledge and understanding of India is quite influenced by the media. And if one does not have any direct contact with the people from India, it further limits the possibility to feel close to India.

NOTE: Curious Features of Digital Activism

Preferred Personal Space Allows to Initiate Digital Action

Today, the personal space, interests, and daily interactions of an individual can become a good source of information to influence the world. And these things can now have a great impact upon the youth. Their efficiency in handling numerous sources of information of their liking, along their quick and spontaneous access to media of their choice allows them to act digitally to spread what they have learnt and adopted in their life, so fast and effectively, including learnings from this class.

Their readiness to spread their interests and learnings in relation to this class tells us about their 'digital activism' if I could name so. It is an easy and affordable way of interaction with the world beyond them with their own initiative. This is an instant mode of social action that will connect people. And I believe the students have considerable trust in this way of communication. Direct interaction with the like-minded people would happen through some virtual interactions via the statements and comments on them, most of the time with good attractive visuals for the information to be shared.

Real Interactions Matter

While digital interactions and dissemination of information are recognized ways of expressing one's ideas and learning to the world beyond an individual, it is quite notable that it is such visuals, sounds, movements, fragrances, tastes, and touches that are actually valued as the real experiences to understand India. Even though it may have been a quite limited experience during the classes, those real experiences impacted the students most. It is real interactions that leave lasting impressions about India. They consider that real interactions will be able to form formidable basis to strengthen the bilateral relationship between India and Japan.

6. India to be Explored

Today's students will contribute to form the future vision of the bilateral relationship between India and Japan. With this understanding, there are some points to be considered as follows:

Dichotomy of Indian Excellence and Indian Disparity

This has been most explicitly shown in Bollywood movies in India. Thanks to the digitalization of movies at affordable cost, the access to Indian entertainment allows anyone to experience this popular Indian culture which depicts dichotomy of Indian excellence and Indian disparity in some acute and prominent manner with lasting impressions.

Puzzling Social Factors of India

In comparison to India's huge success in information technology, some fundamental issues of economic disparity and practices based on caste system in Indian society have been noted by the students. To make India a more attractive tourist destination, security and sanitation aspects are considered to be crucial for enhancing the potential of human interaction between India and Japan.

Understanding Buddhism in India and Japan

Its Idea and Meaning in the Context of Society

Even though the students interpret Buddhism in a variety of forms, Buddhism tends to be regarded as a common thread between India and Japan. In 736 AD, the Monk Bodisena went to practice and spread its teachings. Since Buddhism links two cultures together, it is always emphasized that Buddhism as a religion as well as an idea connects India and Japan. Buddhism has been considered a shared value and bonding philosophy in the bilateral relationship. Because of its historical role in the bilateral relationship, there is always a danger of simplified equation to see Buddhism as a shared value. Buddhism actually represents the focal point of Bilateral relationship between India and Japan by urging us to pay due attention to how Buddhist idea/belief system has been perceived by people and practiced in each country. Buddhism needs to be reflected upon through its journey of evolution in society in India and in Japan.

More than a belief system, Buddhism, or any other religions, could be interpreted in historical context. Since Buddhism has been considered as a way of emancipation for certain class of Indian society in modern history, the social impact of practicing Buddhism in India could be included in the course in future. Buddhism being regarded as our shared value, it is never devoid of influences from history and other religions, and even politics. That part can be explained well with more interactions among those who practice Buddhism in both the countries.

7. Areas to be Focused

What We Need:

There are several practical ways to enhance cultural exchanges so that people can get to know about various aspects of India and Japan's culture.

1) People's Exchange

It is quite heartwarming to find that many students are motivated to make their own initiatives to share what they have learnt throughout this course to the people around them. The first step for enhancing further understanding about people and culture that are foreign to you is to be with them. Person-to-person interactions are considered to have given a lasting impact to some students who had opportunities to be in touch with Indian people and culture through their families and friends. This has turned out to be most simple yet shortest way to make a significant contribution for mutual understanding. It also leads towards further strengthening of the relationship between India and Japan. The exchange of people between India and Japan is the key to enhance long-lasting relationship.

2) Pandemic Relief

Knowledge sharing and reposting useful information, like that on COVID-19 pandemic, donating money and spreading awareness, can serve to enhance mutual engagements.

3) Real Experience Matters

It has been realized that the real touch, taste and aromas beat any number of explanations and descriptions about the culture of any country. The following points indicate main factors that have impacted the students most and enhanced their understanding and curiosity towards India:

- **Curry Culture**

Since, curry is another common and popular thread between India and Japan, representing each food culture, it would be intriguing to learn about how curry is prepared and dined in both countries. Different curries can be introduced, while other Indian food items such as lassi, chai, tandoori chicken, etc. could be popularized, too.

- **Real Experience through People's Exchange**

Just being in company with the people of any country gives us an enormous amount of information and lessons of life. Therefore, staying and studying in each other's country as exchange students for a short term and, if possible, for a long duration would help deepen the understanding about each other's culture.

- **Cultural Exchange & Festivals Introducing Culture**

The students are curious and eager to know more about popular Indian culture, Yoga, Ayurveda, Bollywood movies, dances, various kinds of curries, clothing, organic way of life, as well as spirituality. Indian culture could be explored through real practitioners of such cultural activities.

4) Disaster Management

In the era of climate change, no area or region or country remains unaffected. Both India and Japan are prone to natural disasters of varied degrees. Local challenges and experiences are not well documented, yet useful for further mitigation practices in the future. Exchanges of ideas and practices while understanding disaster related legal frameworks will help to establish more co-operation between India and Japan. It is also good to share the information and knowledge acquired through natural disasters in Japan to see whether Japanese way of disaster management could work for other countries. This will also lead to build international trust. Governmental policies and welfare systems in relation to disaster management can also be reviewed through India-Japan partnership. The compensation method can also be reviewed.

5) Yoga

Incorporating yoga in daily fitness routine can help one to take care of spiritual and mindful reflections as well as breathing. It leads to the inclusion of another country's culture, sports, and moreover, it will broaden the perspective of cultures outside of Japan in Japanese society. This is why learning yoga can be recommended as a part of curriculum in Japanese schools.

6) Cultural Fusions and Collaborations

Music and films have been quite appreciated by the students, appreciating the presence and performance of the professionally trained artistes/academics. There were few suggestions as below regarding possible cultural fusions and collaborations between India and Japan to cultivate curiosity about each other's culture and deepen mutual understanding.

- Music (Japanese and Indian music, music instruments)
- Indian Films and Japanese Actors
- **Celebration for 70th anniversary** of the diplomatic relationship between India and Japan for awareness among people about the bilateral relationship.
- Friendship town
- Communicating more with Indians in Japan

7) Involving Indian Workers

Attempts and planning should be made to execute projects to be run entirely in English for communication as well as documentation, so that Indian workers can participate in important part of the business. IT students in India who find it difficult to find jobs in India can be hired in Japan where it is difficult to hire good engineers. Though it is known for its technology and accuracy, Japanese IT industry mainly uses Japanese language with their limited global scale experience and not enough human resources, which often hinders the production capacities Japan. By enhancing Indian support for Japanese IT industry, it will be possible to create working environments that will change such situation.



Figure 3. India and Japan: Areas to be focused

8. Towards Mutual Cooperation and Understanding

Interactions over the past century and continued close ties as shown in numerous bilateral agreements and through the visits of the leaders of both Japan and India have strengthened the bilateral relationship between India and Japan. The bilateral supportive relations between India and Japan will also enhance both economies. At the same time, what is missing is the real interaction between the people of India and the people of Japan.

Here are some examples where India and Japan can work together:

India-Focused Research Collaborations

Since a great part of India's IT industry is focused on R&D, India-focused research with developmental perspective could be considered in Japan. Some examples are as follows:

- Improving effective communication system for disaster management
- Research of smart cities being built with Japanese assistance

Infrastructure Development Projects in India

Japan's cooperation with India in the field of infrastructure development reflects as a public work to help people in India, as it enhances infrastructure as well as employment opportunities. After being trained for such projects, Indian workers can be invited to work in Japan, too.

- Supporting economic development of India through loans

- Japan's investment in public projects like the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor and the Delhi Metro rail operation system and technological aspects and staff training.
- On the other hand, India provides local expertise to maintain quality and standard of materials.

Establishing Common Business Practices

Having a common language for communication and documentation in business can help Japan prepare Indian workforce to work in the setup of Japanese companies.

- Projects in English
- Preparing Indian supports
 - Allowing Indian workers to engage in vital business activities in Japanese companies
 - Internationalizing work documents and conversation on text charts and e-mails

Supporting People-to-People Relations through Cultural and Educational Exchange

It is possible to grow together through cultural exchange with the reality that Indian presence will be felt much more in Japanese society.

- There will be an increase in interracial children in Japan.
- And there will also be growing Indian presence in Japan.
- More Indian Japanese families will enter Japan.
- Education of Indian culture at schools will help people understand Indian culture better.
- Japanese universities accepting more professors and lecturers educated on specified Indian concepts, such as Indian history, philosophy, and art.

Internship, Study abroad, Educational Exchange

The students consider that mutual beneficial relationship can be seen in terms of India being attractive markets as well as offering many jobs for Japanese. At the same time, the need is felt to consider and promote India as a destination for further studies. The following activities are suggested as some of such desirable opportunities by the students to promote more exchanges:

- Studying in India under I.C.C.R. scholarship by Government of India
- Inter-university exchange projects between India and Japan
- The Japan India Exchange Platform Program: Inter-university exchange projects
- Rakuten internship
- Staying and working in India as a JICA volunteer
- Supporting Indian students with scholarships
- Training children and students of India together with Japanese students.

More the students from both countries would opt to stay and work in India and in Japan, a greater number of possibilities of collaborations would emerge. Such educational and professional exchanges will further strengthen the bilateral relationship, involving educational institutions, industries, government agencies and private enterprises.

Cultural Exchange Program/Theme-specific Festivals

Few actions as below could also be considered to enhance interactions between India and Japan:

- Cultural exchange program/theme-specific festivals to promote each other's culture
- Ease of issuing visas for such purposes
- Promotion of Sakura Science Program

Ameliorating Youth Unemployment in India

One of the most serious issues in India is the lack of jobs for young people. The remedy in relation to the bilateral tie-up could be to invite Indian youth to work in Japanese companies. Thus, Indian youth will be able to acquire the applicable skills while studying in Japan which would help India improve in the field and expertise where Japan excels. To materialize this channel of interactions, it is required to

- 1) provide work opportunities for Indian youth in Japan
- 2) establish more programs for exchange
- 3) ease visa requirements for Indians to come to Japan
- 4) establish link with already existing Indian community in Japan

Japan's Technology and Management & India's Youthful Human Resources

Being an aging society, Japan is likely to face a major labor crisis. Japan is one of the most developed countries with more than enough technological resources but lacks human labor power. Japan is the aging society and needs abundant supply of manpower while India has a large population of highly educated engineers. Therefore, Japan can offer knowledge of technology and management to India and India can offer highly educated elite labor force to Japan.

9. Abundant Possibilities: Future India-Japan Relationship

The core to strengthening India-Japan relations is to increase the familiarity and attention among people. The foundation of Japan-India friendship lies in the people and the future lies in the youth.

Bilateral Tie-up with Economic Compatibility

Both India and Japan would benefit from each other. Japan can provide India with the technology and resources to build the base infrastructure for internet connection that will allow to have LAN wires and internet towers. India can provide Japan with their highly educated elite labor force. Challenges for Japan is declining labor force population and the maturing market. Therefore, the bilateral collaboration will be extremely important for both the countries. There are multiple societal issues such as low birth rate and aging population in Japanese society. India's advantage is having massive workforce and surplus of engineers. Being a democratic country, it is good to tie up with India. If Japan can create good working environment for highly skilled Indians, Japan will be able to have many more skilled Indian workers living and working in Japan.

Investing in Indian Startups

Not only public sector, but also private sector needs to be considered for serious investment. In this endeavor, the Japan-India Startup Hub can contribute a lot by creating a platform for Indian startups to pitch their innovations to Japanese companies. There are opportunities such as enhancing infrastructure development, boosting up its economic development, supporting its technology startups in attractive Indian market with increasing population.

Introducing Yoga at School, at Work, and at Home

Yoga has enlightened the students as they could experience how Yoga impacts their body, and subsequently their mind. Doing Yoga has been an eye-opening soothing experience for many. Thus, introduction to Yoga is perceived as the way to learn how one can co-exist with one's own self. Yoga is suggested to be adopted in school curriculum in Japan by some students. It is because there is such tendency in current school system in Japan to treat the impact of physical movements separately from that of mental exercises. Practicing Yoga before class can help the students to study efficiently with focused approach to each class. Adopting Yoga to workplace is also good for achieving better mental health with therapeutic effects. Lastly, adopting yoga at home will heal people in natural ways, saving them from suffering due to sleep disorders, depression, headaches, and other physical ailments. A few students have suggested that holding regular yoga classes and studies at SFC for physical and mental peace could be considered, too.

Offering Opportunities for Language Education

This is the most neglected aspect in the bilateral relationship between India and Japan. *It is a fact that the majority of the population in both countries speak vernacular languages.* Therefore, it is good to increase the opportunities to study more about Japanese language as well as Indian languages. In the age when we are technologically driven and value our own personal space, yet not knowing the mass who have limited or no access to the sources and tools of information which the students have, it is the task of the educational institutions like SFC to offer ample opportunities for language education for the students so that they will have capacity and concern to listen to the people who would be not heard well otherwise.

Introducing the Students to Rural India

While Indian economy is growing at a rapid rate as one of the leading countries in the IT and engineering industries, its society still faces with social issues. To understand the real life of the country where the majority of people live, it will be a good experience to introduce the students to the life of rural India as a part of their study. The majority of population in India is from rural India. If any constructive change or reform would happen that would change the course of the growth of the country, it is inevitable to include rural India for securing the quality of life for all.

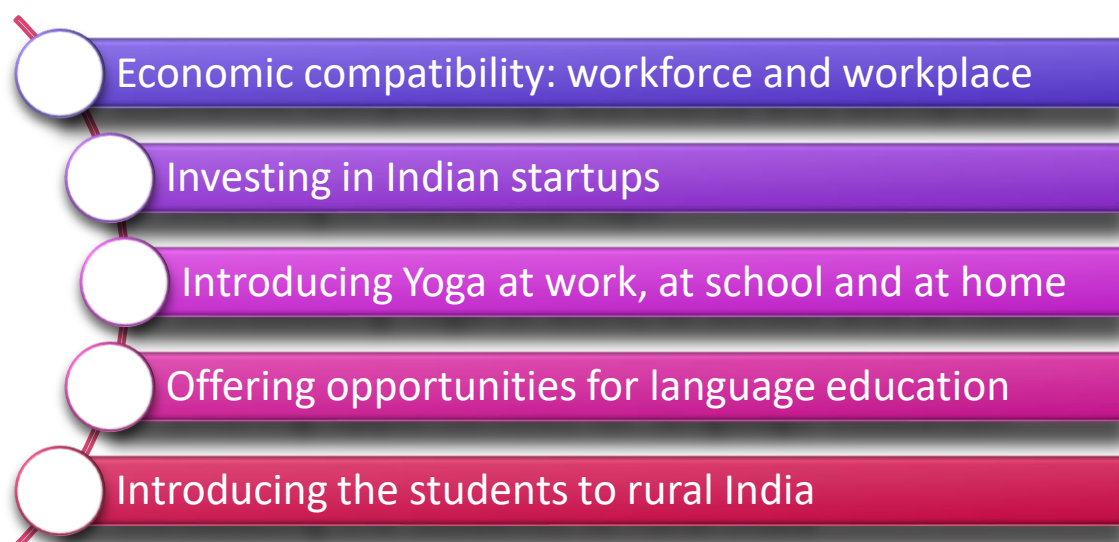


Figure 3. Some Suggestions for Future India-Japan Relationship

10. Topics of Interest

Impact of Information Technology upon Rural India

It is important to note that how phenomenal development of information technology in India is achieved despite considerable limitations in terms of internet penetration in the country. It will be a curious study to introduce such cases how information technology has impacted rural India. The aspiration of the youth in India is not restricted to urban India. Some case studies on how the emancipation from the state of economic disparity could happen in rural India with the help of information technology could be of great interest for the students at SFC.

Students Exchange towards Mutual Understanding

International exchange activities will be able to enhance international friendship and mutual understandings. Such activities can happen at SFC in collaboration with Indian educational institutions and organizations in India and Japan.

Study on Indian Community in Japan

The community of Indian population living in Japan would also be able to throw more light upon the future course of development of the bilateral collaboration between India and Japan.

Study on Entrepreneurial India

To understand India, it is required to understand entrepreneurial India. The Start-up ecosystem in India has a huge potential to grow. Since there are some students who are keen to start their own business, it would be interesting to explore the trend of entrepreneurship and start-up companies in India.

Let Us Solve the Mystery of “Close Yet Distant India”

Few reasons why we are not able to grasp India well could be explained as below:

- 1) Commonalities between India and Japan makes one feel that one already knows a lot about India.
- 2) Familiarities as well as ideas unique to its culture combined, it is not easy to explain the relationship between India and Japan fully.
- 3) Social systems and structures in Indian society seem to be quite complex and required to be observed closely.
- 4) Lack of vernacular languages to communicate well with people in general should be overcome by increasing practical ways and opportunities of learning Indian and Japanese languages.
- 5) Assessing the impact of issues like corruption, underdeveloped institutions, income gaps and governance could also be studied to understand how things work in India.

A Perspective: Japanese Society for Life and Co-Existence

It is possible to imagine that 10 years from now, 20 years from now, and 30 years from now, your children or grandchildren may be chatting over samosas and kachoris, talking about Kabaddi tournaments and Cricket played in Japanese neighborhood. Something that seemed a dream in the past has become a reality today. Such zeal and excitement for life and co-existence we can foster together by letting Indian and Japanese students meet, of course with other international students, discuss, eat, learn and share their thoughts amongst themselves. Both Indian and Japanese society would need to foster such positive energies to reflect upon the wellbeing of every individual.

Conclusion

Looking back, there are shared issues arising from cross-cultural communications in our homeland, whether it would be in India or in Japan or in any other country. One would feel “foreign” in India as well as in Japan, whether being a native or a foreigner. We will be facing such issues more and more in coming years as people will cross borders, having multiple bases apart from the place of birth. With this realization, we will have to channel our energies towards people’s exchange as the students have also suggested. Such endeavor, once coupled with the hope that it would complement, enhance, and culminate already existing initiatives organically with the spirit of innovation, could become an enormous trigger for a change. That is where the platform for cultural innovation and exchanges would be desired most among the youth of India and Japan, and beyond. And this attempt is worth making.

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