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Study on the Communication of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India in the New Century

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ABSTRACT

The English-language *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* occupies an important place in the People's Republic of China's state-sponsored translation programme and has circulated worldwide for more than half a century. This paper focuses on India—a major post-colonial, English-speaking neighbour whose revolutionary and academic circles have long engaged with Maoist ideas, offering a first systematic study of the work's twenty-first-century communication and reception there. Drawing on data from Indian e-commerce sites, union-catalogue records, university libraries, postgraduate syllabi, doctoral theses, and in-depth faculty interview, the research combines macro-mapping with micro-level discourse analysis. Findings show that: (1) distribution now relies chiefly on non-official “Maoist” reprints and freely shared digital files, while the original Foreign Languages Press edition remains the main scholarly source; (2) the text enters Indian knowledge systems through graduate and undergraduate courses in political science, history, and strategic studies, where guerrilla-warfare and anti-colonial chapters are privileged over other theoretical essays; (3) reception is filtered by ideological repositioning, geopolitical sensitivities, and dependence on western secondary literature interpretation, resulting in both admiration for China's revolutionary model and misconceptions about Mao

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Zedong Thought's contemporary relevance. To enhance the cultural universality of Chinese discourse, the article proposes three strategies: embedding Chinese scholarship in Indo-Chinese academic partnerships, delivering context-rich digital content on mainstream Indian platforms, and holding joint forums around shared anti-imperialist legacies. These recommendations aim to inform future national translation initiatives and China's effective global cultural communication.

Keywords: English Edition of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*; International Communication and Reception; Cultural Universality; Cultural Divides

1. Introduction

In his speech at the symposium on philosophical and social science work, Xi Jinping underscored: "We must address the significant challenges facing our nation's and the world's development by formulating concepts, propositions, and solutions that reflect China's stance, wisdom, and values. We should not only introduce the world to 'China on the culinary front' but also to 'China in academia,' 'China in theory,' and 'China in philosophical and social sciences.' Let the world recognize 'a developing China,' 'an open China,' and 'a China contributing to human civilization.'^[1]" Moreover, studies on Mao Zedong constitute the core component of overseas scholars' research on "China-related issues,"^[2] thereby forming an essential part of "China in philosophical and social sciences."

The Chinese version of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* epitomizes Mao Zedong thought and represents the collective intellect of the Communist Party of China. It was initially compiled and published in 1944, prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The widely disseminated version today is a four-volume set compiled between the 1950s and 1960s following the founding of the new China, which includes the principal works of Mao Zedong during the period of the new democratic revolution^[3]. The international communication of Mao's works began as early as 1927 when the Communist International's official publication, both in Russian and English editions of "Report on the Hunan Peasant Movement"^[4,5]. In July 1951, the Central Publicity Department held a central translation conference to discuss the translation of *The Collected Works of Stalin* and the Russian translation of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*^[6]. In November of the same year, the first national translation conference was convened, where Hu Qiaomu, Director

of the Central Translation Work Committee, delivered an important speech titled *Formulating Translation Plans and Enhancing Translation Quality*. He advocated that "translation work must meet the needs of the government and the people's work and life," "important Chinese works should be translated into foreign languages in the future," and "as the national stature in the world increases, mutual understanding is essential," among other points^[7]. These remarks reflected a top-level design prioritizing the translation and international communication of important national works, thereby inaugurating the translation of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* into foreign languages as the prelude to New China's national translation practice. The international communication of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* has had a profound impact on the world, effectively conveying the successful experiences of the Chinese revolution, enabling global understanding of China's revolutionary and development realities and laying a solid foundation for the global outreach of Chinese culture^[8]. As the pioneering work of New China's national translation endeavors, *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* has a lasting influence both domestically and internationally.

2. Challenges in National Translation Practices

National translation practices have provided a robust linguistic foundation for the international communication of state leaders' works. However, these practices encounter numerous practical obstacles and challenges, such as cultural barriers impeding the local reception of documents, ideological contradictions leading to misunderstandings in discourse interpretation, and the limited communication channels for translation works^[9]. Furthermore, the meaning of discourse may be diluted, fragmented, or even

reconstructed in face of cultural, political, and ideological factors ^[10]. Currently, research on this subject remains insufficient, particularly lacking studies on non-Western English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries and regions. This gap hinders an objective understanding of the expectations and actual reception of Chinese discourse across different nations and regions. Additionally, there is a significant deficiency in the longitudinal descriptions of China's foreign discourse translation and communication over the past 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China ^[11].

Although English-speaking regions such as Western Europe and North America are the primary target areas for the English edition of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, certain countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, notably India and Southeast Asia, are also important regions for its communication ^[12]. India's importance as a case study for understanding how *The Selected Works* are received arises from three notable socio-historical and textual features: First, Non-Official Translation Networks. India fosters local publication channels not seen in most English-speaking or postcolonial contexts. Locally printed editions point to grassroots ideological adaptation—Mao's writings were adjusted for Indian audiences without direct involvement from Chinese official institutions. This differs from state-driven communication methods elsewhere. Second, postcolonial affinity and geopolitical tension. India shares China's anti-imperialist heritage yet also faces rivalry in recent history such as the 1962 conflict. This combination creates a unique setting for reception: Mao's ideas tap into anti-colonial solidarity but also meet political pushback—an interplay less visible in neutral or Western societies. Third, English as a mediating language. Because India is one of the world's largest English-speaking nation, local readers can consult the English translation of *The Selected Works*. This allows for a clearer view of how local cultural frameworks shape such transmission. This study aims to offer insights and references for future international communication endeavors on related themes, aiding in the elimination of misinterpretations of Chinese discourse by overseas scholars and societies ^[13]. And its focus on India highlights the distinctive complexity of cross-cultural communication in such a unique context.

3. Longitudinal Examination of the Communication of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India

3.1. The Historical Context of the Communication of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India

From the perspective of revolutionary practice, India, which was once one of the Four Great Ancient Civilizations alongside China, has been deeply scarred by British colonial rule, making it difficult for the nation to recover its vitality. In 1946, the Telangana Peasant Uprising broke out in India, resonating deeply with the anti-colonial struggles of the Third World. It was within this context that Mao Zedong Thought was embraced by the Indian people, who shared the common struggles of post-colonial nations. During this uprising, Indian communist party first proposed using Mao Zedong's path of armed struggle as a theoretical weapon for India's own revolutionary movement ^[14]. This armed struggle continued until 1951, after India gained independence ^[15].

In the years following independence, the country faced deep social contradictions, exacerbated by the separation of peasants from land, the oppression of lower castes, and the entrenched power of the higher castes and feudal elites. Urban poverty led to widespread dislocation, and the social and cultural foundations of the masses were eroded. These contradictions culminated in the rise of Maoist movements beginning in 1967, two decades after India's independence ^[15].

From the academic perspective, Indian scholars' interest in Mao Zedong Thought has been motivated by a desire to resolve their own social problems. They often showed their Indian perspective on the study of Mao Zedong Thought. Unlike other South Asian countries that mainly interpreted Mao Zedong Thought in their revolutionary practices, India has notably been advanced in academic research on Mao Zedong's political ideology. While the overall academic understanding of Mao Zedong and his ideas remains objective, it is not without certain misreadings and misunderstandings in some areas ^[16,17].

3.2. Communication of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India

Phase One: Foundation of Communication (1950s to 1960s)

Prior to the official publication and distribution of the English edition of *The Selected Works*, the international communication of Mao Zedong Thought was primarily based on scholarly exchanges between India and China, as well as early communist movements within India^[18]. On April 1, 1950, diplomatic relations between China and India were established. Throughout the decade spanning the 1950s to the 1960s, the International Book Trading Company of the newly founded People's Republic of China distributed a substantial volume of Chinese publications to India^[19]. In October 1954, India's Prime Minister Nehru, the first foreign head of state visited the new China, forged robust political ties that significantly bolstered the distribution of Chinese publications in India. During this period, the primary distribution materials included the English-language *China Pictorial* magazine and several English books^[19]. These efforts fostered cultural understanding between the two countries, which formed some societal groundwork for the communication of *The Selected Works* in India.

Phase Two: Peak of Communication (1960s to 1970s)

The Chinese government's promotion of Mao Zedong's works, especially *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, culminated in widespread circulation among nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with India being a notable example. In 1962, the Central Foreign Affairs Group, in its report *On Improving the International Distribution of Foreign Language Publications*, emphasized the "the importance of Mao Zedong Thought." The report stated: "to make Mao Zedong Thought known worldwide through the distribution of books and periodicals. The main policy is, in line with the development of international revolutionary movements, systematically distribute our publications globally, particularly in the Asia-Africa-Latin America regions, primarily foreign language materials, focusing on Mao Zedong's works and other political literature."^[20]

This phase coincided with a cooling of Sino-Indian relations, with publication communication chiefly occurring in Indian non-official channels. Indian "Maoists" selectively embraced elements of Mao Zedong Thought from

a revolutionary standpoint, focusing on the principles of continuous revolution, class struggle, opposition to the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, reliance on violent revolution, mass line, guerrilla warfare tactics, and the strategy of encircling cities from the countryside to seize state power by force^[17]. The Indian "Maoists" regarded *The Selected Works* as their sacred scripture^[17], with the slogan "China's Chairman is our Chairman." While its successful revolutionary experiences was known to developing countries like India, China also frequently rectified deviations in understanding. For instance, on March 29, 1968, in a report concerning the evaluation of Mao Zedong Thought by Myanmar communists, Mao Zedong instructed: "Generally speaking, we should not interfere in the internal affairs of any foreign party (Marxist-Leninist). How they conduct publicity is their own business. We should focus on our own publicity, avoiding exaggeration or inappropriate statements that might give the impression of coercion"^[20]. Furthermore, in 1970, in dialogue with Indian Maoist leader Souren Bose, Premier Zhou Enlai explicitly stated that slogans taking Mao Zedong as their own Chairman may offend national sentiments and the working class could not identify with it, deeming such slogans inappropriate^[21].

In addition to the acceptance of Mao Zedong Thought by the proletarian revolution, research on Mao Zedong Thought also reached its peak in the 1960s and 1970s^[16,17]. The Department of Chinese Studies at the University of Delhi, which has a high influence in Indian academia, opened in the 1960s, focusing on the study of modern Chinese history and modern politics, and listing the Chinese language as a minor. The Centre for Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, which also enjoys a high reputation, published the *China Report* in 1964, introducing and reporting on China under the leadership of Mao Zedong and Mao Zedong Thought^[18]. These developments promoted the climax of the spread of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* and Mao Zedong Thought in India.

Phase Three: Steady Communication (1980s to Late 1990s)

Looking at the history of book exchanges between China and India, before 1978, the political relationship between the two countries was the primary driving force. After 1978, the political influence gradually diminished, and economic factors gradually increased^[19]. Although Si-

no-Indian relations experienced fractures, they gradually began to mend and develop during this period ^[22]. From the late 1970s onward, Chinese official publicity for India significantly diminished ^[21]. Nonetheless, as bilateral relations improved, many Indian booksellers developed an interest in Chinese publications ^[19].

In India, while the 1960s saw the Chinese official Foreign Language Publishing House translating and publishing the English edition of *The Selected Works* as the primary carrier for international communication, there was also collaboration with the British Lawrence Publishing House for the English edition. Additionally, indigenous translation efforts in India constituted a vital component of the communication of *The Selected Works*, resulting in the coexistence of multiple translated versions from diverse sources. The versions circulated online and within Indian libraries originated from spontaneous translations and productions by Indian “Maoists” during this period.

The “Indian Maoists,” adhering to their revolutionary principles, curated and self-published the English edition of *The Selected Works* of volume VI to IX, incorporating elements such as land reform and military strategy from Mao Zedong Thought. The “first edition” saw the publication of Volume VI in 1990 and Volume VII in 1991. Volumes VIII and IX were released on December 26, 1994, coinciding with the centenary celebrations of 100th birthday of Mao Zedong, encompassing articles written by Mao Zedong between 1963 and 1971, which largely overlapped with the Cultural Revolution. The “authorized party” was Kranti Publications (Revolutionary Publishing House), and the publisher was Sramikavarga Prachuranalu.

The Indian edition produced by the “Indian Maoists” mirrors the official Chinese version in appearance and sequence numbering. The widely circulated online English editions often amalgamate elements from both versions. Additionally, the mainstream Indian online space offers standalone volumes with selected themes. These factors complicate the differentiation between the Indian editions and the official Chinese versions in studies of the communication and reception of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India.

Beyond the spontaneous promotion by the revolutionaries, relevant scholarly research continued to emerge. Since China’s reform and opening up in 1978, the Indian

magazine *China Report* has published nearly 20 articles on Mao Zedong studies, examining the origins and development of Mao Zedong Thought, the affirmation of his Marxist identity, and the impact of the thought on India, thereby highly evaluating the historical and practical value of Mao Zedong Thought ^[23]. Overall, the communication of *The Selected Works* in India during this phase tended towards autonomous and steady communication.

Phase Four: Ongoing Communication in the New Century

Since the dawn of the new century, Mao Zedong Thought has been communicated amidst the continual fragmentation and integration of Indian Communist Party ^[18]. The revolutionary principles of *The Selected Works* often takes the form of excerpts and paraphrasing in communication. From an academic perspective, the solid foundation established in previous phases has allowed research on this topic in India to become more sophisticated. For instance, doctoral dissertations in India since the new century illustrates this progression. Shodhganga, a repository established in response to the Indian government’s 2009 mandate for electronic submission of doctoral theses, had by 2016 amassed over 90,000 dissertations from more than 260 Indian universities. Due to the platform’s establishment timeline, the volume of recent dissertations reliably reflects the state of research in this field in the new century, whereas earlier dissertations may be underrepresented.

A search for “Maoism” on Shodhganga yielded a total of 70 results, comprising 67 dissertations in English and 3 in other languages, with completion time as shown in **Table 1** (There is some difference between total retrieved number and the total number each year added up, which is the actual search results shown in the Shodhganga search page. Despite this difference, the number can show a general picture of doctoral dissertation of the topic. The same situation applies to **Tables 2** and **3**).

Table 1. “Maoism”—related doctoral dissertations in India.

Time	Number of Dissertation
2020–2022	1
2010–2019	21
2000–2009	9
1990–1999	10
1980–1989	4
1970–1979	2
1960–1969	1

A search for “*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*” on Shodhganga yielded a total of 23 results, comprising 22 dissertations in English and 1 in other language, with completion time as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. “*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*”—related doctoral dissertations in India.

Time	Number of Dissertation
2010–2019	9
2000–2009	7
1995–1999	1

Upon analyzing the titles of the dissertations, it was discerned that twelve pertained to subjects such as politics and linguistics, while an additional ten were related to medical topics, thereby falling outside the scope of this study.

A search for “Mao Zedong Thought” on Shodhganga yielded a total of 22 results, comprising 21 dissertations in English and 1 in other language, with completion time as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. “Mao Zedong Thought”—related doctoral dissertations in India.

Time	Number of Dissertation
2010–2019	8
2000–2009	7
1995–1999	1

Consequently, it is evident that since the dawn of the new century, approximately 58 doctoral dissertations in India have centered on the themes of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* or Mao Zedong Thought. This equates to an average of two to three dissertations annually. Although modest in quantity, a consistent trend of scholarly output in this area is nevertheless maintained.

3.3. The Influence of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India

The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung provides a lucid and comprehensive exposition of the core tenets of Mao Zedong Thought. It presented post-colonial India with a paradigm of success for addressing its own societal problems, thereby having a broad and profound influence on the country. An editorial in *The Times of India* posited that “aside from Gandhi and Lenin, no other individual in this century has left such an indelible mark on the lives of so

many. Not only did he successfully lead a revolution in the world’s most populous nation, transforming every facet of the lives of eight hundred million people, but he also propelled China into the ranks of the world’s most powerful states, charting a course distinct from that of Soviet Russia, thereby altering the global balance of power.” Furthermore, it was noted that “Mao Zedong possessed both originality and audacity. Prior to him, no Marxist leader had conceived of establishing a peasant army operating both within and beyond the rural areas; and as an architect of socialist revolution, no other ruling Communist leader had dared to initiate a self-critique of the party apparatus to rectify the transgressions of the bureaucratic elite.” The editorial concluded that “the strategies and tactics of Maoism have influenced revolutionaries in numerous nations, including Vietnam” ^[24].

4. Distinctive Characteristics of the New Century Communication of the English Edition of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India

This study examined how Indian universities utilize and receive the English-language edition of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. Drawing on data from Indian websites, university library collections, academic course structures, reading requirements for courses featuring *The Selected Works*, e-mail exchanges with researchers at Indian institutions, and transcripts of an in-depth interview, which offers a multifaceted analysis.

The rationale for focusing on universities lies in the capacity of library holdings, curriculum design, and related resources to yield macro-level insights into the communication and reception of *The Selected Works*. These perspectives were accessed chiefly through online searches and analysis.

At a more granular level, the experiences of Indian teachers and students illuminate micro-level dimensions of reception. As specialized and cross-culturally engaged audience, educators and learners not only fulfill academic tasks but also form cognitive and emotional judgments about the materials they study. Their viewpoints can uncover elements of international communication not readily discernible in macro-level data. For instance, one mi-

cro-level case involves a 1.5-hour Skype interview with a professor of an Indian university on October 27, 2021, supplemented by relevant e-mail communications.

According to the university website, the professor's course assign all four official volumes of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* published in China as required reading. Given that both the professor and students have engaged with these texts in the context of East Asian studies, his or her insights offer valuable reference points on their usage and reception.

The analysis reveals several distinctive characteristics of the English edition's communication in twenty-first-century India.

4.1. Mao Zedong's Personal Influence as a Catalyst for Communication

Since *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* represents a distinctive political text authored by a prominent leader, its international circulation remains closely intertwined with his image. His innovative approaches to land revolution and his context-specific military strategies are widely recognized. Even today, he is often cited in Indian media and referenced by Indian national leaders and senior officials. These references typically emphasize aspects of his legacy such as his role in liberating China and establishing an equitable society, laying the groundwork for contemporary national success, using force to counter India's involvement in Tibetan affairs, honoring Dr. Kotnis, being admired by modern Chinese youth, starting the Cultural Revolution, and being compared with Gandhi. In the Indian media and official discourse, thus appears as a figure of potent political mobilization, strategic foresight, and enduring influence.

Flipkart, the country's largest e-commerce retailer, presented versions and themes accessible in Indian society, which is illustrative. Among the top ten for "Zedong Mao books" are "Collected Writings of Chairman Mao—Politics and Tactics", "Selected Works of Mao Zedong", "On Guerrilla Warfare", "Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung (Illustrated)", "Sobre La Guerra Prolongada", "Selected Poems", "Quotations from Mao Tse Tung", "On Guerrilla Warfare", and "Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong During the Cultural Revolution". Notably absent is the officially published English edition from China and the

market is dominated by print-on-demand volumes. These available texts tend to highlight guerrilla warfare and Cultural Revolution-related content. Thus, in the public mind, Mao Zedong's image aligns closely with the dimensions of military struggle which resonates strongly with "Maoist" advocacy in India.

4.2. The Enduring Appeal of Mao Zedong Thought as the Basis of the Communication of *The Selected Works* in India

The impact of Mao Zedong's political thought and his political persona on Indian scholars is undeniable. His capacity for political mobilization remains what that scholars seek to understand in their pursuit of effective social governance strategies for India. Mao's unwavering commitment to integrating theory with practice and adhering to the principle of seeking truth from facts, coupled with his adaptation of Marxist-Leninist party-building theory to the Chinese revolutionary struggle, culminated in a comprehensive theory of party building for the Communist Party of China. This theory emphasized the fundamental is wholeheartedly serving the people, adhering to the work method of "from the people, to the people," upholding the principles of appointing talents from all corners of the country, having both ability and integrity and meritocracy, and maintaining a culture of critique and self-critique.

Mao Zedong decisively reversed dire circumstances, ingeniously salvaged the revolution, and ultimately achieved victory, leading to the establishment of a New China, and transformed the nation, once disparagingly labeled the "Sick Man of East Asia," into an independent and sovereign country standing tall in the East. Consequently, Mao Zedong's name became an iconic symbol of anti-colonialism globally.

In 1939, Mao Zedong articulated that "the emancipation of women is inextricably linked to the emancipation of society, and the women's liberation movement should exist as an integral component of the broader social liberation movement. Without the emancipation of society, the emancipation of women is unattainable. And conversely, without the women's emancipation, social liberation is impossible." Mao Zedong championed the cause of women's liberation, promoting gender equality in political, economic, and other spheres.

Mao Zedong placed great emphasis on realizing social equity and justice. His designs for socialist economic, political, and cultural systems embodied a pursuit of fairness, and he pioneered a developmental path distinct from those of the West, Europe, and the Soviet Union, propelling China's historical transformation.

These legacies, including his grounding in deep-rooted Chinese cultural traditions and his adaptation of Marxism to the Chinese context, serve as the very appeal of Mao Zedong Thought, thus explaining the fundamental reasons for the dissemination of *The Selected Works* in India.

4.3. China's Revolutionary Success as an Example

The triumph of the Chinese Revolution in a vast, developing nation such as China served as an exemplar for the Indian society. Indian intellectuals sought to explore the relevance of Mao Zedong Thought to the Indian context, particularly in relation to the principles of equality, development, socialist development, social equity, morale building, mass mobilization, and the establishment of national unity, in their quest to address the deeply entrenched social divisions caused by the caste system.

The initial publication and distribution of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* were largely driven by the audience's desire to comprehend the success of the Chinese Revolution. Beyond *The Selected Works*, national policy were communicated internationally through platforms such as radio, Xinhua News Agency, and *Beijing Review*. Notably, *Beijing Review* enjoyed widespread readership among Indian Maoists, serving as a crucial channel for the understanding of China's revolutionary experiences in India ^[21].

4.4. The Cultural Universality of *The Selected Works* in Indian Academic Systems

Studies of the international communication and reception of Chinese discourse must consider the socio-cultural contexts of the recipient societies ^[10]. In this regard, India's unique socio-cultural context has significantly shaped the communication and reception of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* within its borders. *The Selected Works* being able to be communicated across diverse cultural landscapes can be attributed to its content's cultural universality. And

this universality can be observed from two aspects from a macro perspective in Indian academic systems: (1) library resources and (2) university curricula.

Lefevere's theory of translation as rewriting posits that the cross-cultural transmission of texts entails rewriting shaped by target-context patronage systems and poetic norms ^[25]. India's academic system, as a key patron, reframed *The Selected Works* through library classification and curricular incorporation. The observed cultural universality reflects partial compatibility between Mao's discourse and India's knowledge structures, mediated by historical-political constraints.

(1) Library Holdings

Library holdings can, to some extent, reflect patterns of communication and reception ^[26]. While WorldCat primarily mirrors the collections of major European and American libraries, offering limited data on Indian collections, India has many library consortia. However, many such consortia lack comprehensive online retrieval systems. Among them, the Information and Library Network Centre stands out, as it catalogues holdings from India's principal universities. A search on August 20, 2021 for "Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung" in its Online Union Catalogue of Indian Universities returned 84 results. After expanding all results, screenshotting them, merging identical entries, and removing unrelated items, 36 university libraries were found to possess *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. Their classification categories are outlined in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Classification Categories for *The Selected Works* in Indian University Libraries.

Category	Frequency
China-History-20th Century/HISTORY; CHINA/CHINA-HISTORY; COMMUNISM- CHINA/China-Communism/History of China	12
MAO-TSE-TUNG-COLLECTED WORKS/ Mao Tse-tung-Selected Works - Collection/Tse-tung, Mao-Biography/Tse-tung, Mao-essays	5
Socialism & related systems/Communism	3
China & Korea/History Of Asia	2
political Science	2
President-essays-china	1
Economics	1

12 libraries classify *The Selected Works* as “Chinese history” instead of political theory. This distances the works from contemporary relevance, aligning with India’s postcolonial strategy to neutralize radical discourses. Only 3 libraries categorize it under “socialism/communism,” revealing the Cold War legacy that frames socialism as a historical artifact, not a living ideology. Classification disparities demonstrate how Mao’s revolutionary language is somewhat distant from its political nature to fit India’s academic poetics. “Universality” emerges when texts are depoliticized.

(2) Usage in University Curricula

A Google search on August 21, 2021 for references to *The Selected Works* within Indian university websites yielded 653 results. After examining downloaded syllabi and identifying instances where *The Selected Works* itself, rather than research on it, was assigned as required or recommended reading, 14 universities were found as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Universities Assigning *The Selected Works* as Reading Material.

Jawaharlal Nehru University
University of Mumbai
Dibrugarh University
Delhi University
Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) (The People’s University)
Kurukshetra University
Guru Nanak Dev University
Kurukshetra University
Himachal Pradesh University
Veer Kunwar Singh University
Bhagwant University
University of Calicut
University of Kerala
Durg University

Except for Durg University, which assigns *The Selected Works* at the undergraduate level, all other institutions integrate it into their master’s courses. This implies that *The Selected Works* is commonly studied within research-oriented graduate programs, suitable for in-depth

exploration.

From a curricular perspective, analysis of the subject fields, key articles, and teaching modules helps clarify *The Selected Works*’ interpretive angles as shown in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Disciplinary Distribution of *The Selected Works* Readings in Indian Universities.

Discipline	Frequency
Political Science/East Asian Studies	6
History	5
Defence & Strategic Studies	2
Sociology	1
Philosophy	1
Science	1

The Selected Works most frequently appears in political science and history courses, reflecting its political character and historical significance. Its inclusion in history and sociology suggests that Indian faculty regard it as an resource for understanding China’s history and society.

High frequency of On Guerrilla Warfare and On Protracted War in **Table 7** corresponds to military strategy for “Low-Intensity Conflict” studies shown in **Table 8**, while core political philosophy such as On People’s Democratic Dictatorship, which was cited only once, was marginalized. Epistemological texts such as On Practice was cited only once. “Universality” is mainly confined to tactically useful elements, excluding transformative ideology.

Table 7. Key Articles Assigned from *The Selected Works*.

Key Articles	Frequency
Guerrilla Warfare (论游击战)	5
On Contradiction (矛盾论)	4
On the Protracted War (论持久战)	3
On Practice (实践论)	1
Speech at the Assembly of Representative of the Sheni-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region (在陕甘宁边区参议会的演说)	1
On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship (论人民民主专政)	1

Table 8. Curricular Modules Employing *The Selected Works*.

What is Critical thought	Critical about?
Builders of Modern Asia in the 20th Century/History of China and Japan in Modern Times/History of East Asia in Modern Times: China	
Contemporary Political Thought/Western Political Thought	
Area Study: China /Chinese Revolution/The Chinese Revolution: New Democracy/Sociological theories and the study of China/Political process in post-revolutionary China/Role of Communist Party in China	
Evolution of Strategic Thought/Theory and Practice of War/DEFENCE - STUDIES: Western Military History/THEORY & PRACTICE OF WAR—Guerilla Warfare and Low Intensity Conflict: Concept, Origin, Scope and Objectives	

In these diverse modules, *The Selected Works* is incorporated into Asian studies, modern political thought, China-focused area studies, and strategic studies.

The publishers of *The Selected Works* editions held in university libraries or recommended in course readings offer insights into the influence of earlier promotional efforts. Their distribution appears in **Tables 9** and **10**.

Table 9. Publishers of *The Selected Works* Editions in University Libraries.

Publisher	Frequency
Peking, Foreign Languages Press	17
Bombay, Peoples Publishing House	9
London, Lawrence and Wishart Ltd	8
Oxford, Pergamon Press	8
Pyongyang, Foreign Languages Publishing House	1
London, Peoples Publishing House	1
Harper & Row	1
Calcutta, Nabajatak Prakashan	1
Moscow, Foreign Language Publishing House	1
Peking Peoples Publication House	1

Table 10. Publishers of *The Selected Works* Editions Recommended by Universities.

Publisher	Frequency
Peking: Foreign Language Press	6
Online Resources	6
New York: International Publishers	1

Dominance of Beijing's Foreign Languages Press as in **Tables 9** and **10** signifies China's enduring influence as the source-text patron. Six courses use online resources, as in **Table 10**, implying subversion of institutional control—digital access circumvents formal gatekeepers, creating a neutralized acceptance space.

4.5. Cultural Divides for *The Selected Works* in India

As with other efforts to international communication Chinese discourse, *The Selected Works*' reception in India encounters cultural barriers stemming from the two nations' differing historical and cultural contexts. These challenges include:

(1) Political Sensitivity in Indian Society and Universities

According to *India Today*, the “ban imposed on *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* since 1962 remains in force.” The article notes that chapters like “On New Democracy”, “On Protracted War”, and “On Contradiction” mirror conditions in Indian society, prompting the government's earlier ban. The deeply entrenched caste system and widening socio-economic disparities remain Indian concerns^[27,28]. Yet, upon verifying with a professor from an Indian university who was an expert on China studies, it appears that while *Quotations from Mao* is banned, *The Selected Works* is not and can be found in many libraries. Nevertheless, the Indian public often associates Mao Zedong with “Maoism,” which holds connotations of intense political struggle and is therefore politically sensitive in India's public discourse.

Beyond the broader Indian societal sensitivities, universities also sense political pressure. Some professors interested in teaching Mao Zedong Thought find it difficult to integrate the subject into their curricula, which focus more on Indian or Western political and sociological thought, leaving limited room for direct inclusion of Chinese materials.

(2) A Fractured Understanding of the Contemporary Relevance of Mao Zedong Thought

In the 1990s, as China embarked upon reform and

opening-up, Indian students believed that the success of China's revolution was closely tied to its economic growth. This perception ignited considerable enthusiasm for studying Mao Zedong Thought, prompting many scholars and students to immerse themselves in such research. However, in the new century, particularly in recent years, as that historical period has receded further and China's domestic and international circumstances have undergone profound transformations, Indian students have demonstrated increasing interest in China's market economy, technological advancements, and other issues with direct bearing on their professional prospects. Consequently, their interest in Mao Zedong Thought was not particularly high.

(3) Insufficient Contextual Knowledge

A deficiency in background information hinders comprehension. For instance, without knowing that "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" is a key text for analyzing China's class structure, students encounter understanding difficulties. Instructors often resort to Western scholarship to provide guidance and clarity. Another form of cultural divide arises from gaps in Indian students' own knowledge: lacking familiarity with their own local governance systems, dominant occupations, class formations, and political ideas, let alone Mao Zedong and his revolutionary experiences, which was like a kind of "utopia" to them. How to provide a realistic interpretation of China's history is a challenge.

(4) Misconceptions Stemming from Partial Understanding

Misunderstandings about Mao Zedong persist among the Indian public and students. Some associate the Chinese revolution primarily with violence, making them reluctant to discuss the topic. Others perceive Mao Zedong as driven by a lust for power. Moreover, while Mao Zedong's capacity for political mobilization is acknowledged as a significant political ability, it is also interpreted as a form of "discipline" imposed upon the people, indicating a skewed understanding of these concepts.

Such misconceptions may be linked to the sources from which students draw their information and interpretations. During the interview, the word "western" surfaced 17 times—12 of these in relation to Western scholars and Western publications on Mao Zedong. Western academia thus serves as a vital, and often predominant, inter-

pretive intermediary. However, the West's longstanding frameworks and value systems may harbor biases against late-developing nations, as well as misunderstandings and hostility rooted in the ideological divide between capitalism and socialism^[29]. Cross-cultural barriers may hinder foreign scholars from situating Mao Zedong Thought and practice within China's historical and material conditions of the time^[30].

The interviewee expressed a strong desire to learn how contemporary Chinese scholars interpret Mao Zedong Thought. This indicates that there is currently a lack of voices from Chinese scholars in Indian academic circles who can provide a relatively comprehensive and accurate interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought, despite demand for such research content. At present, there is an insufficient supply of content for international communication in this area. Although the English translations of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* are of high quality and help to some extent in overcoming language barriers in international communication, the overall capacity building for international communication that aligns with this remains a significant challenge.

From its introduction to India in the last century to the present, *The Selected Works* has enjoyed broad communication and prompted a steady stream of research. Yet certain cultural divides endure. In this new century, the transmission of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India is marked by a dynamic interplay of both challenges and opportunities.

5. Insights and Strategic Pathways for China's International Communication

In October 1954, during four conversations with Indian Prime Minister Nehru, Mao Zedong mentioned, "All of us Easterners have historically been bullied by Western imperialist countries."^[31] As eastern neighbors with similar historical experiences, China and India share a social foundation that can facilitate mutual cultural exchange, though both now face certain challenges. Mao Zedong, a prominent historical figure, is renowned for his innovative military strategies, such as guerrilla warfare, and his contributions to socialist construction, which inspired and em-

powered oppressed nations globally. His influence extended beyond China, making him one of the most significant and controversial leaders of the 20th century. *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* encapsulates the essence of Mao Zedong Thought, which includes his Marxist-Leninist theories, military strategies, and revolutionary ideas.

This work has gained international recognition and is available in various formats, including privately printed versions in India. It is also housed in the libraries of prominent institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University, reflecting its acceptance by mainstream academic and intellectual circles in India. The unique content of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* holds important value in the audience market.

As a product of national translation efforts, the communication of this work has achieved a considerable temporal and spatial reach. The high quality of its translations ensures its accessibility and reliability for international readers. However, due to the distinctiveness of its content, its global communication requires more than just the text itself. It necessitates a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional communication strategy.

The dissemination of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* in India reveals both the enduring resonance of anti-colonial solidarity and persistent barriers rooted in historical-political context. To transform these insights into effective “China story” strategies, four evidence-based pathways for Chinese communication is proposed based on the cultural divides identified.

First, recontextualizing Mao Zedong Thought within the contemporary Chinese discourse.

The absence of Chinese scholarly voices in Indian academia cedes Mao’s intellectual legacy to Western frameworks and China should work to co-created knowledge ecosystems. For instance, establish “Sino-Indian Critical Theory Studios” under academic institutional partnerships, training Indian sinologists in Chinese historiographical methods. These studios would produce annotated editions of *The Selected Works* with parallel commentaries—e.g., juxtaposing “On Practice” with Xi Jinping’s governance philosophy, demonstrating theoretical lineage while demystifying dialectical materialism for Indian audiences. It is also possible to launch “Digital Professorship” programs, connecting Chinese scholars in Indian universities for vir-

tual masterclasses. Courses like Mao’s Theory for an Equal Society could recalibrate perceptions of his relevance in today’s world.

Second, optimizing narrative penetration with platformed dissemination.

The predominance of online resources in curricula signals digital-first reception patterns. China should optimize delivery systems such as using TikTok micro-narratives translating philosophical maxims into developmental parables, such as short videos pairing “No investigation, no right to speak” with drone footage of Chinese researchers in wildlife ecosystems, or “Protracted War” montages of China’s semiconductor breakthroughs.

Third, leveraging diplomatic-cultural platforms.

China and India could institute “Eastern Brothers” Biennial Forum, with the two countries as rotating host of conferences on topics such as Shared Anti-Colonial Epistemologies: Mao’s “Three Worlds Theory” and Nehru’s Non-Aligned Movement and China’s Philosophy of “People-Centered Development” and India’s “Development for All.”

The Selected Works’ India reception underscores a core tension: universality resides in anti-colonial empathy, while divides stem from asymmetric knowledge production and past challenges. By treating Lefevre’s “rewriting” not as distortion but as necessary co-creation, China and India can reactivate shared emancipatory legacies while honestly addressing divides.

6. Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers insights into how *The Selected Works* is received in Indian, it inevitably has certain limitations that may shed light on future exploration. First, because the analysis centered on academic channels and involved a modest interview sample, its findings may not fully explain how these texts are used or perceived in broader social arenas such as activism and policymaking. Second, by emphasizing traditional methods, including catalogue reviews, the research did not harness emerging approaches like digital humanities or network analysis that could reveal modern patterns of textual exchange. Finally, focusing on India alone limited the opportunity to compare how Mao’s ideas spread across other parts of South Asia.

To address these gaps, future studies could integrate digital ethnography for tracking online discourse, run stratified interviews with wider groups of stakeholders such as activists, educators, and government advisers, and compare India's reception of Mao's works with that in neighboring countries or with other prominent Chinese texts.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author, Wang, H., upon reasonable request.

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Conflicts of Interest

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