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Original Research

India-Specific Research by Non-Indians: A Bibliometric Analysis of Social Science Literature

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Abstract

This study aims to uncover and characterize research related to India conducted by international scholars, utilizing the Scopus database. It focuses on annual trends, leading authors, institutions, and countries, as well as preferred journals and highly cited articles. The analysis was performed using MS-Excel and the Bibliometrix R Package, incorporating science mapping alongside publication analysis. The findings indicate that the earliest studies on India date back to 1836, with two-thirds of the studies published between 2005 and 2023. The University of California has produced the highest number of research articles, while the United States remains the leader in global scientific output. The top two funding agencies for research on India are the National Science Foundation of the United States and the Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom. Although authors from the United States dominate the field, a Brazilian author ranks at the top. Seventeen journals account for 16% of the total articles, with most of the leading journals originating from the United Kingdom. The top three journals include South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies, World Development, and Modern Asian Studies. Researchers from other countries have focused on contemporary issues in their studies of India, including gender, development, South Asia, migration, education, and caste. This research may assist scholars in identifying relevant topics and trends in the social science literature concerning India and enable comparisons of research patterns in culturally similar nations.

Keywords: Publications, Scientific Output, Social Science Literature, Non-Indians, India Specific Research, Bibliometrics Analysis, India.

Introduction

India's substantial contribution to the global advancement of scientific knowledge is widely recognized, owing to robust government backing and a thriving private biopharmaceutical sector. This contribution has already led to the development of effective strategies for the prevention and management of COVID-19, as highlighted in an interview with Anthony Fauci,

the chief medical adviser to the President of the United States of America.[1]

According to a survey conducted in 2008, individuals of Indian descent accounted for a significant proportion, specifically 36%, of the scientific community employed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Furthermore, Stanford University's survey in 2022 identified a total of 4,635 scientists affiliated with Indian institutions who ranked among the top 2% globally. This represents a notable increase of around 25% compared to the previous year, 2021, when the number of such scientists was determined. In terms of research output across all disciplines, India holds the third position globally in 2022, according to Scimago[2]. Moreover, India is ranked seventh worldwide in the field of social science. On the other hand, India ranks seventh in terms of research and development expenditures, with a total expenditure of 65.2 billion US dollars in 2022. However, India's performance in terms of the proportion of research and development expenditure to gross domestic product (GDP) is one of the poorest in the world in 2021[3].

Research specific to a country involves a thorough exploration of its population, history, governance, economic systems, and other relevant aspects. This process is crucial as it

helps us understand current issues and challenges by taking into account the unique social, economic, political, and cultural contexts of that nation. This approach leads to the creation of more effective and context-sensitive solutions, rather than relying on broad strategies that might not work well in different national environments. Ultimately, it provides insights that are relevant to the local context, which can result in more impactful interventions and policy development. Notably, the Center for Research on International Economics at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, conducts country-specific studies. Typically, most research studies on a particular country are carried out by authors affiliated with that nation. For example, a search conducted on January 31, 2025, for India and the United States in Scopus showed that Indian authors accounted for 69% of publications on India, while authors from the United States were responsible for 71% of publications on the United States. A considerable portion of the remaining publications originated from other countries, and to date, no study has been conducted to explore this further.

Numerous studies have examined India's contribution to the world's research output in various domains. For instance, Elango & Ho (2017) analyzed India's highly cited papers, Chinnaiyan, Palanisamy, and Sambasivam (2022) analyzed tribal research in India, Nayak, Behera, Shetty, Shetty, Kumar, and Shenoy (2023) analysed the scientific output. On health care insurance in India, Sudesh, Goneta, and Dikkatwar (2022) looked at the research on corporate social responsibility in India, Vaishya, Gupta, Kapp,i and Vaish (2022) examined India's orthopaedic research output, Kikon (2022) evaluated the Indian research output on e-learning, Wodeyar and Mulla (2022) investigated the considerable data research in India, Elango,

Matilda, Martina Jose, Mary, and Arul Pugazhendhi (2023) examined the Indian publications in cybersecurity research, and a few studies looked at Indian retracted articles

[1] . (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/indias-contribution-to-global-scientific knowledge-helping-in-covid-19-prevention-fauci/articleshow/83224826.cms).

[2] . (https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php).

[3]. (https://www.statista.com/statistics/1350227/india-gross-expenditure-on-randd-as-a-share-of gdp/#:~:text=The%20gross%20expenditure%20on%20R%26D, the%20total%20GDP%20in %202022).

(Elango, Kozak, and Rajendran, 2019; Elango, 2021). Further, only a few studies focused on mapping the social

science research in India (Goel & Garg, 1994; Sangam & Mogali, 2014; Tripathi, Kumar & Babbar, 2018; Gupta, Kumbar & Gupta, 2013). A team of authors from De Montfort University in the United Kingdom has examined significant advancements in the professionalization of accountancy in British India from 1913 to 1932 (Verma & Sian, 2025). In a similar vein, American researchers (Yan & Chen, 2025) investigated the relationship between mothers' empowerment and the gender beliefs of adolescent children in India. These studies have laid the groundwork for this research.

The examination of existing literature demonstrates that several investigations have been carried out across diverse subject disciplines, including research in the domain of social sciences that explicitly explores the contributions of India. However, there is a lack of available data on research studies conducted in India by researchers from other countries. The present study aims to address this gap in the existing knowledge base. Despite facing criticism, Scopus and Web of Science are generally regarded as the leading international databases for research evaluation (Oh & Elango, 2024). Scopus is particularly effective for assessing research outcomes and performing daily tasks for several reasons (Pranckutė, 2021). A study by Singh, Singh, Karmakar, Leta and Mayr (2021) revealed that 99.11% of journals indexed in Web of Science are also included in Scopus, which is why Scopus has been selected for this study.

Over one-third of publications related to India are in the field of Social Sciences, which is why this area has been selected for the study. Social science research is vital for understanding the complexities of human behaviour and societal dynamics. It not only helps in grasping human behaviour but also plays a key role in addressing real-world issues, guiding policy decisions, promoting social change, and enriching public discourse. In this light, this study aims to explore India-specific research conducted by authors from other countries, with the findings expected to shed light on the dynamics of social science research concerning India.

Based on the purpose and breadth of source titles and their content, Scopus divides the sources into 27 subject disciplines using the All-Science Journal Classification (ASJC) scheme under the four major categories of physical sciences, health sciences, social sciences, and life sciences (Elango, 2023a). The social sciences category comprises six disciplines: (1) arts & humanities, (2) business, management & accounting, (3) decision sciences, (4) economics, econometrics and finance, (5) psychology, and (6) social sciences. Among these, the discipline of social sciences, which has the following sub-disciplines, has been chosen for this study.

Anthropology, Archaeology, Communication, Cultural Studies, Demography, Development, Education, E-learning, Gender Studies, Geography, Planning & Development, Health (Social Science), Human Factors & Ergonomics, Law, Library and Information Sciences, Life-span and Life-course Studies, Linguistics and Language, Political Science and International Relations, Public Administration, Safety Research, Social Sciences (Miscellaneous), Social Work, Sociology & Political Science, Transportation, Urban Studies

Objectives

The primary goal of this study is to conduct a quantitative assessment of India-specific research performed by other nationalists in the social sciences discipline, with an emphasis on changing topics and themes. Specific objectives are:

- To explore the annual trend in articles published

- To identify the most impactful articles
- To find the most preferred journals
- To identify the prominent authors, institutions, and countries
- To find the most frequent funding agencies
- To uncover the major themes and topics
- To delineate directions for future research

Materials and Methods

Scopus was used over Web of Science for this study because it has more journals and articles, and more than 99% of Web of Science journals are also indexed in Scopus (Falagas, Pitsouni, Malietzis & Pappas, 2008; Singh et al. 2021). To identify the India-specific research output, the following keywords were searched in the Article-title field: India OR Indian AND NOT Indiana. Additionally, the following limitations were applied: articles published in the English language, journals, and the social science subject discipline. The articles contributed by the authors affiliated with Indian affiliations were excluded from the study. Finally, 23,946 articles specifically about India contributed by authors/researchers of various countries were exported for further analysis. The database was accessed on May 04, 2023. In the screening stage, 4,595 articles without affiliation information were discarded from the dataset. MS-Excel and Bibliometrix R Package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) were used to analyze the final dataset, which contained 19,351 articles. Figure 1 depicts the comprehensive research process.

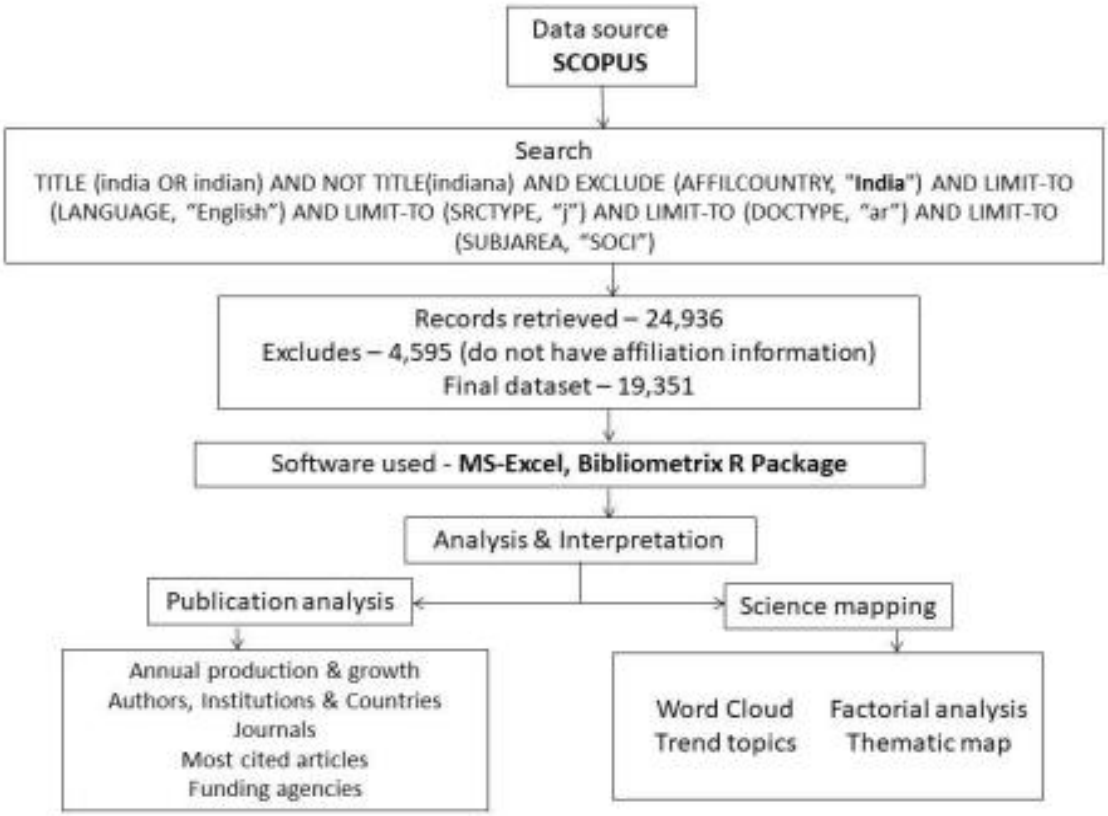

Figure 1: Study process

Results

Publication analysis

The authors from nations other than India contributed a total of 19,351 articles in the social sciences discipline that had an emphasis on India(n). There were 3,300 journals, and 13.49 citations for each article. Out of the total articles, 12,365 (64%) had just one author. 17.67% (n = 3,420) of articles received no citation. On average, 40 references have been appended by the authors (Table 1). The values about the Collaboration Index (Elango & Rajendran, 2012) and the Modified Collaboration Index (Elango, 2023b) suggest that the research team for this particular topic comprises one to three authors.

Table 1
Overview of the dataset

Description	Numbers
Articles	19351
Timespan	1836:2023
Journals	3300
Average citations per document	13.49
References	719713
Author's Keywords (DE)	25270
Author appearances	33192
Single-authored documents	12365
Documents per Author	0.891
Collaboration Index	1.93
Modified Collaboration Index	2.98

The annual growth of articles focused on India published between 1836 and 2023 is seen in Figure 2. There was a big void in the publication year during this time frame. For instance, from 1837 until 1842, no articles were published. Similarly, no publications were made between 1844 and 1857. Most articles were published in recent years, with over 1,000 in 2021 and 2022. The year 2023 is excluded from this calculation since it is unfinished.

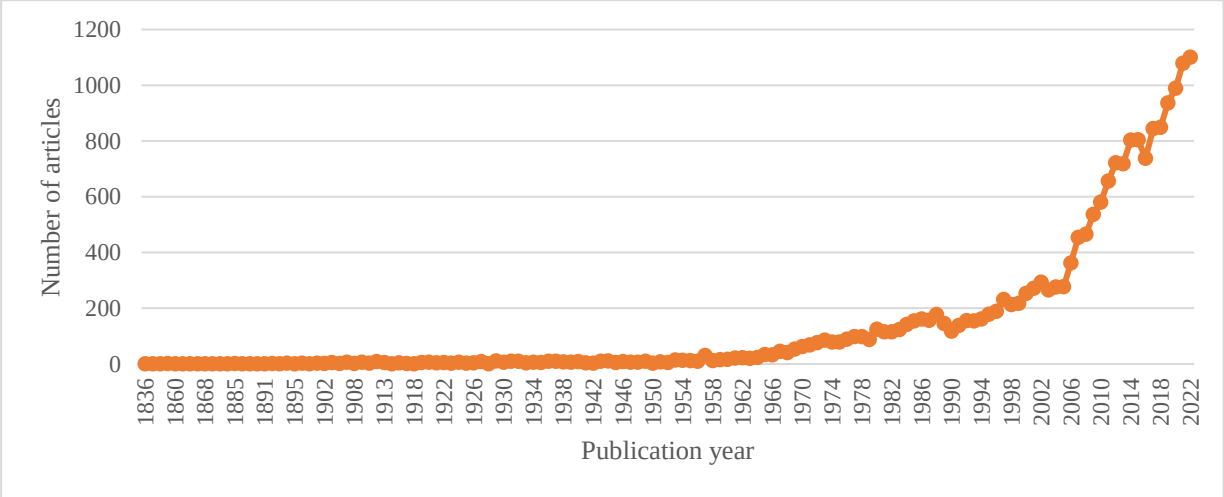

Figure 2: Yearly trend of articles

Based on Bradford's law of scattering, the entire publication years have been divided into three phases (Table 2). Consequently, one-third of all articles were published during two centuries, commencing from 1836 and concluding in 2004. Another third of articles were published within an eleven-year timeframe, commencing in 2005 and concluding in 2015. The remaining third of articles were published within seven years, commencing in 2016 and concluding in 2022 (except 2023, as it is incomplete). This observation implies that the researchers of non-Indian origin have consistently focused their attention on conducting India-specific studies. In particular, nearly 900 studies per year have been undertaken within the most recent seven-year duration (2016-2023), which is almost double the amount conducted in the preceding period.

Table 2
Publication period by Bradford's law

Publication period	Number of articles	Share	Number of articles per year
1836 - 2004	6087	31.45	49
2005 - 2015	6381	32.97	580
2016 - 2023	6883	35.57	860
Total	19351	100	136

The output of studies on India published between 1836 and 2023 involved 21,724 unique authors who were not of Indian descent, indicating that the research has not been broadly disseminated. Lokta's law about how many articles an author writes does not apply to this set of data because most of the authors (77%) wrote one article, and the others wrote between 2 and 59 articles. Several authors share the same name. For instance, the label "singhs" has three separate authors: SINGH, SUKHWINDER, SINGH, SATBIR and SINGH, SUPRIYA. As a result, SCOPUS Author ID was used for the manual verification. The top 10 authors (Table 3) each had at least 21 articles. Six of them were from the United States, two were from the United Kingdom, and one each was from Australia and Brazil.

Table 3
Top authors

Author	Number of articles	Rank	Affiliation & Country
Salzano FM	31	1	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
Manson SM	30	2	University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, United States
Urpelainen J	28	3	Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, United States
Pant HV	24	4	King's College London, United Kingdom
Beals J	24	4	University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, United States
Gone JP	23	5	Harvard University, United States
Mitchell CM	23	5	University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, United States
Ganguly S	23	5	Indiana University, United States
Arnold D	21	6	University of Warwick, United Kingdom
Jeffrey C	21	6	University of Melbourne, Australia

The 4,280 institutions represented by the authors contributed to the research output on India, and of those, more than 50% had only one article, with the remaining institutions having multiple articles. The top twenty institutions have a publishing record of at least 100 articles (Table 4). Institutions with campuses spread across several cities are combined into a single body. Ten campuses of the University of California, for instance, are dispersed across various American cities. A strong indication that US-based institutions are more interested in research studies on India is the fact that 13 of the top 20 institutions are headquartered in the United States. Following the United States, the United Kingdom had five institutions and one each from Australia and Singapore.

Table 4
Top affiliations

Affiliations	Country	Number of articles	Rank
University of California	United States	524	1
University of London	United Kingdom	304	2
National University of Singapore	Singapore	241	3
University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	230	4
University of Oxford	United Kingdom	223	5

Affiliations	Country	Number of articles	Rank
University of Washington	United States	193	6
University of Michigan	United States	179	7
University of Sussex	United Kingdom	174	8
Harvard University	United States	166	9
University of Pennsylvania	United States	165	10
Columbia University	United States	138	11
Arizona State University	United States	135	12
York University	United States	126	13
Monash University	United States	122	14
University of Toronto	United States	115	15
Stanford University	United States	112	16
Cornell University	United States	107	17
University of Melbourne	Australia	106	18
London School of Economics and Political Science	United Kingdom	102	19
Yale University	United States	101	20

Table 5 lists the top 12 productive countries performing research on India(n). It shouldn't be surprising that the authors from the United States wrote almost half of the articles on India, with the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and so on following closely after. Mexico is surprisingly included in the list of top countries. Except for Italy, six of the G7 countries are among the top 12 countries. Except for South Africa, China, and In Mexico, nine of the top 12 countries are classified as high-income. There is ample evidence to suggest that industrialized countries are becoming more interested in studies on India.

Table 5
Top countries

Country	Number of articles	Rank	Classification by income
United States	9055	1	High income
United Kingdom	3439	2	High Income
Australia	1324	3	High Income
Canada	1095	4	High Income
Germany	694	5	High Income
Netherlands	426	6	High Income

Country	Number of articles	Rank	Classification by income
Singapore	395	7	High Income
South Africa	301	8	Upper Middle Income
France	286	9	High Income
China	281	10	Upper Middle Income
Japan	248	11	High Income
Mexico	204	12	Upper Middle Income

A total of 3,303 distinct journals published a total of 19,351 articles, with the top 17 journals publishing approximately 16% of the total articles. Between 109 and 347 articles were published in these prestigious journals (Table 6). Two of the 17 journals are from India, and the majority of the journals are from the United Kingdom (n = 10). Along with a few other subject categories, the seventeen journals are all grouped under the heading "social sciences", "*South Asia"*, and "*Modern Asian Studies",* for instance, are included under 'arts & humanities. Additionally, included under the heading "Medicine" are the "*American Journal of Physical Anthropology"* and "*Social Science & Medicine"*. In 2022, the American *Journal of Physical Anthropology* was renamed to the *American Journal of Biological Anthropology*.

Table 6
Top journals

Journals	Country	Subject category	Number of articles	Rank
South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies	United Kingdom	AAH SOS	347	1
World Development	United Kingdom	EEF SOS	293	2
Modern Asian Studies	United Kingdom	AAH SOS	292	3
Asian Survey	United States	SOS	258	4
American Journal of Physical Anthropology	United States	MED SOS	222	5
American Anthropologist	United States	AAH SOS	193	6
Social Science and Medicine	United Kingdom	AAH MED SOS	172	7
Economic and Political Weekly	India	EEF SOS	165	8

Journals	Country	Subject category	Number of articles	Rank
Journal of Development Economics	Netherlands	EEF SOS	157	9
Contemporary South Asia	United Kingdom	SOS	145	10
Journal of Asian and African Studies	United Kingdom	SOS	127	11
American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research	United States	AAH MED PSY SOS	125	12
India Review	United Kingdom	SOS	125	12
Indian Economic and Social History Review	United Kingdom	AAH EEF SOS	120	13
Contributions to Indian Sociology	India	SOS	117	14
Journal of Development Studies	United Kingdom	SOS	113	15
Strategic Analysis	United Kingdom	SOS	109	16
AAH = Arts & Humanities; EEF = Economics, Econometrics & Finance; MED = Medicine; PSY = Psychology; SOS = Social Science				

Table 7 lists the top 22 funding agencies that helped researchers from outside India conduct studies on India. These top funding agencies include articles ranging from 52 to 259. The National Science Foundation of the United States has supported the most research studies out of all the publications that were chosen and assessed, with 259, closely followed by the Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom with 238. Others that followed closely are the National Institutes of Health of the United States and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The National Institutes of Health is divided into many divisions, some of which include the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, among others. Eleven (50%) of these top funding agencies are American, with three coming from the United Kingdom, two from the European Union, and one each from Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Japan, and Singapore. In this regard, Prime Minister Boris Johnson declared in June 2020 that the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign Office would merge to form the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Table 7
Top 22 funding agencies

Funding Agency	Country	Number of articles	Rank
National Science Foundation	United States	259	1
Economic and Social Research Council	United Kingdom	238	2
National Institutes of Health	United States	164	3
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada	Canada	112	4
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development	United States	98	5
American Institute of Indian Studies	United States	93	6
Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft	Germany	89	7
National Institute on Drug Abuse	United States	89	7
National Institute of Mental Health	United States	81	8
Australian Research Council	Australia	79	9
National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities	United States	76	10
Department for International Development	United Kingdom	74	11
Social Science Research Council	United States	70	12
Japan Society for the Promotion of Science	Japan	69	13
European Research Council	European Union	65	14
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism	United States	58	15
World Bank Group	United States	58	15
European Commission	European Union	55	16
Wenner-Gren Foundation	United States	55	16
Arts and Humanities Research Council	United Kingdom	52	17
National Natural Science Foundation of China	China	52	17
National University of Singapore	Singapore	52	17

Of the total articles analyzed, 15,931-representing approximately 82%-have received at

least one citation. The mean number of citations per article is 13.49. The top eight articles earned citations from 504 to 3,803 between the date of publication and the date of access on May 4, 2023 (Table 8). These eight articles have an average of 1,142 citations each, making them the eight most frequently mentioned articles about India. Three articles were collaborated with international co-authors, three articles were published with single authors, and the remaining two were published with national co-authors. Different funding agencies supported three out of eight articles.

Table 8
Top cited articles

Article	Year	Journal	TC
Estimating Wealth Effects Without Expenditure Data - Or Tears: An Application to Educational Enrolments in States of India	2001	Demography	3803
Frontier Production Functions, Technical Efficiency and Panel Data: With Application to Paddy Farmers in India	1992	Journal of Productivity Analysis	1568
Why India Cannot Plan Its Cities: Informality, Insurgency and the Idiom of Urbanization	2009	Planning Theory	842
Holocene Itcz and Indian Monsoon Dynamics Recorded in Stalagmites from Oman and Yemen (Socotra)	2007	Quaternary Science Reviews	737
From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation: Transnational Communities and Regional Upgrading in India and China	2005	Studies in Comparative International Development	604
Extreme Heat Effects on Wheat Senescence in India	2012	Nature Climate Change	562
How To Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India	1988	Comparative Studies in Society and History	519
Why Is Son Preference So Persistent in East and South Asia? A Cross-Country Study of China, India, and The Republic of Korea	2003	Journal of Development Studies	504

Topics and themes

In particular, author keyword analysis paves the way for analysing research trends (Dhawan, Gupta & Elango 2021). It can direct researchers towards the topic trend and focus of a study domain (Su & Lee, 2010). The author keywords that were used the most frequently in the research studies on India(n) are shown in Table 9.

Table 9
Top author keywords

Author Keywords	1836-2023	Rank
India	4179	1
Gender	404	2
China	332	3
American Indian	233	4
American Indians	197	5
South Asia	196	6
development	168	7
Education	161	8
Caste	153	9
Indian Ocean	150	10

To understand the changing themes and topics for the two most recent periods, 2005-2015 and 2016-2023, various word clouds, trending topics, thematic maps, and factorial analyses have been created. The word cloud (Figures 3a, 3b) makes it simple to understand the most critical issues when investigating the prominent research themes in the India-specific research studies. The visual representation of a word is directly proportional to its frequency in the articles. The two most recent times have little in common with one another. In both periods, China and gender predominate over the keyword 'India'.

Figure 3a: Word cloud of author keywords (2005-2015)
(Note: Field – Author's keywords; Min. No. of Words – 50; Occurrence measure – Square root; Shape – Circle; Font type – Impact; Text colors – Random Dark)

Between 2016 and 2023, researchers have increasingly focused on topics such as the Indian Ocean, the Global South, migration, caste, social media, and foreign policy, as shown in Figure 3b. This marks a shift from the previous period of 2005 to 2015, illustrated in Figure 3a.

Figure 3b: Word cloud of author keywords (2016-2023)
(Note: Field – Author's keywords; Min. No. of Words – 50; Occurrence measure – Square root; Shape – Circle; Font type – Impact; Text colors – Random Dark)

With the use of trend-topic analysis, it is possible to identify evolving topics/themes throughout time based on the most popular author keywords (Figure 4a). In 2005-2015 (refer figure 4a), the themes have been changed from gender discrimination (2006) to cultural values (2007) to institutions, and media (2010) to American India, and development (2012) to foreign policy, and corporate social responsibility (2014) to Narendra Modi, and BJP (2015). For example, Hall (2015) assessed the evidence that suggests a new "Modi doctrine" is forming in Indian foreign policy as a result of Narendra Modi's election as prime minister of India in May 2014. The Narendra Modi selfies, according to Baishya (2015), were significant in the lead-up to and results of the Indian general elections of 2014. Torri (2015) argued that Modi's victory

was primarily due to the process that began in 2009 with the support of the Indian corporate sector to portray Modi as a fearless and unblemished hero who had raised his home state, Gujarat, to an extraordinary level of economic development and was now ready to do the same for India. Andersen & Verma (2015) predicted that India would switch from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific when Narendra Modi was elected as prime minister. These studies show that the globe closely monitors the leader of India, the largest democracy.

Figure 4a: Trending topics of author keywords (2005-2015)

(Note: Field – Author's keywords, Minimum Frequency – 5, Number of words per year – 5) In the same way, from 2016 to 2023 (Figure 4b), the emphasis shifted from land acquisition (2016) to COVID-19 and health (2021) to the Indian Child Welfare Act (2023). For example, a systematic review of studies that looked at the application and/or efficacy of the Indian Child Welfare Act, a United States federal law, was carried out by Francis Hall, Ansong, Lanier, Albritton, and McMillan in 2023.

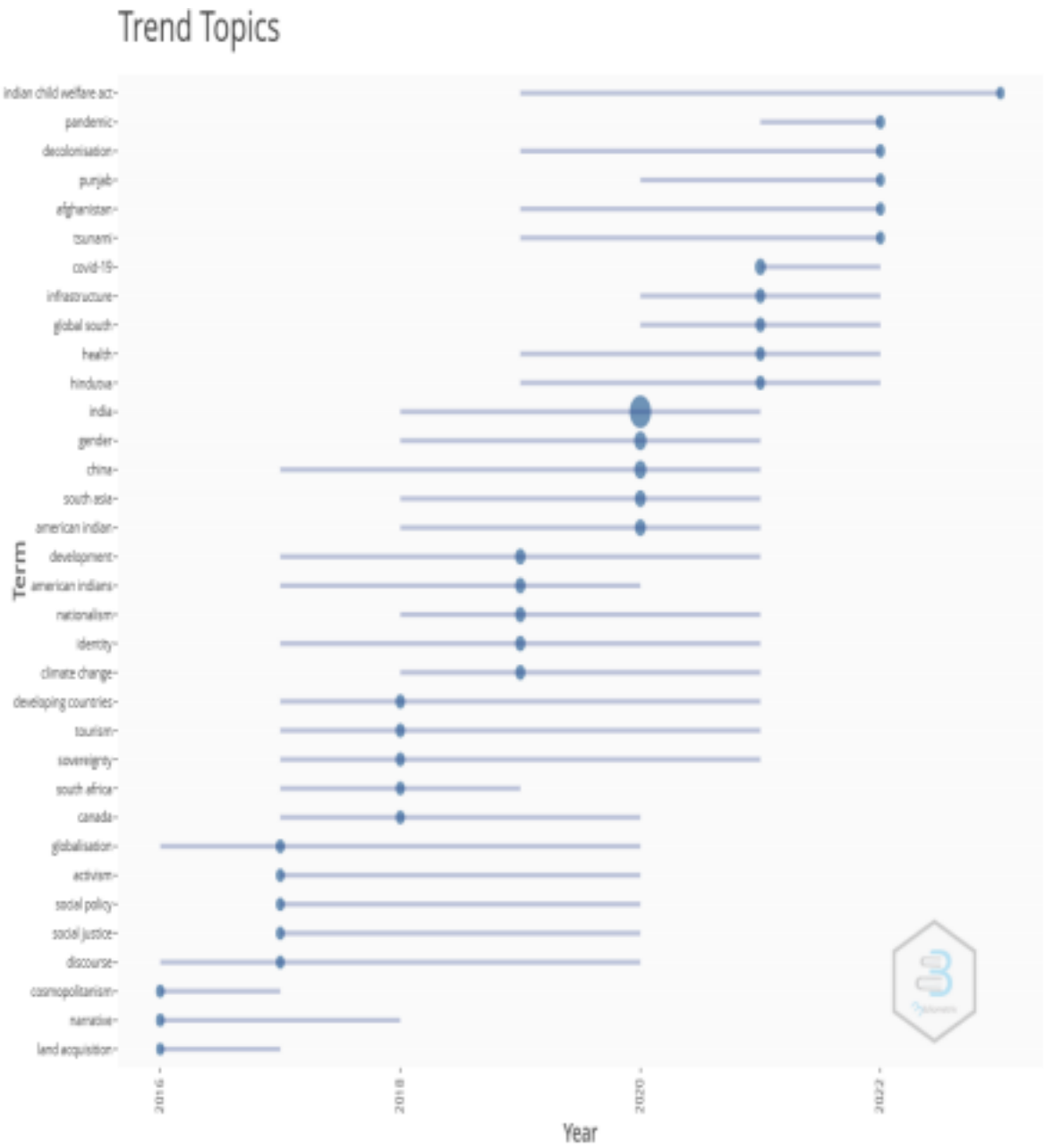

Figure 4b: Trending topics of author keywords (2016-2023)
(Note: Field – Author's keywords, Minimum Frequency – 5, Number of words per year – 5)

Clustering and co-word network analysis are the foundation of thematic mapping. With the use of this methodology, themes can be examined in their geographic locations (Cobo, López-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma & Herrera, 2011). The thematic map, according to Aria and Cuccurullo (2017), provides insights into patterns, trends, seasonality, and outliers Within the research areas. Because they are divided into four quadrants based on centrality (X axis) and density (Y-axis), the resulting maps are simple to understand. Four sorts of themes can be identified using the quadrants (Figure 5a): niche themes (upper left), motor themes (upper right), basic themes (lower right), and emerging or declining themes (lower left). The primary area of research is on motor themes, which are well-developed topics. Topics of a respectable level in terms of density, but that are not extremely central and are regarded as peripheral, are well-developed and isolated themes. A developing or minor concern is emerging or declining.

Basic and transversal topics are also significant problems due to an inadequate density (Mishra et al. 2023).

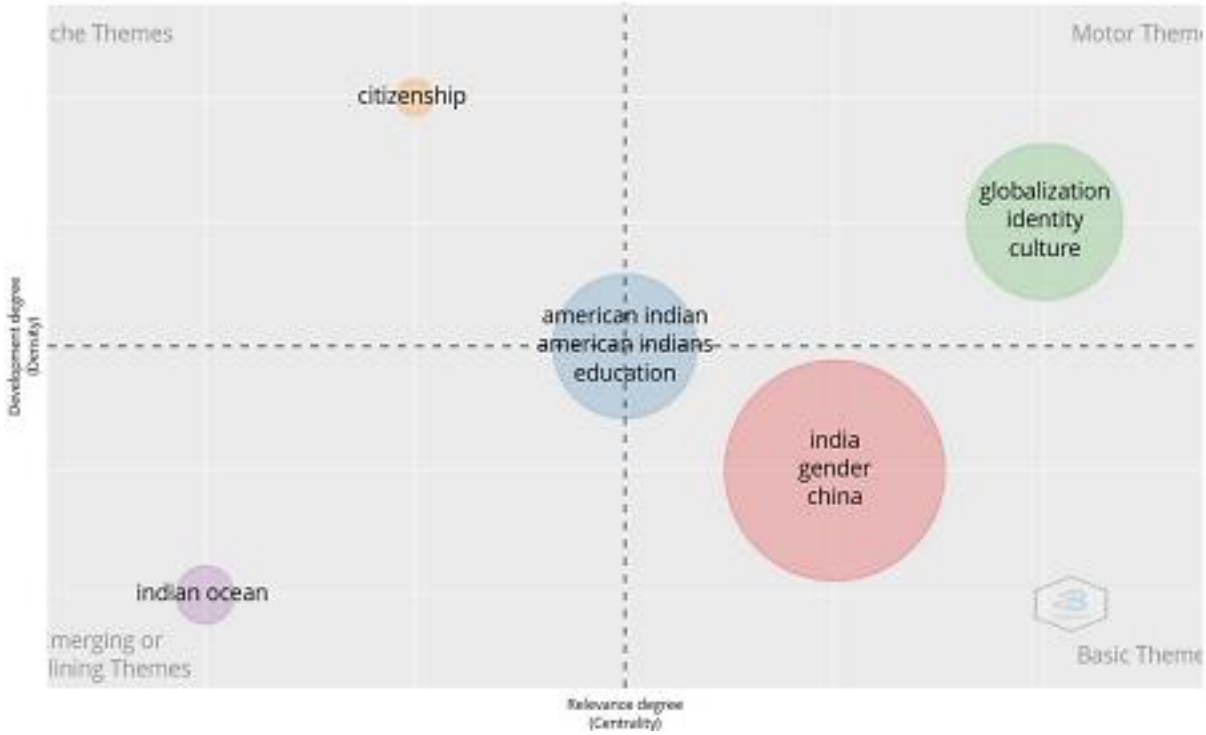

Figure 5a: Thematic map of author keywords (2005-2015)
(Note: Field – Author's keywords, Number of words – 250, Min. cluster frequency – 5, No. Of labels/cluster – 3, Label size – 0.3)

Figure 5a maps the thematic mapping of author keywords that appeared in the research articles about India between 2005 and 2015 (Figure 5a) and between 2016 and 2023 (Figure 5b), each containing five clusters. Globalization, identity, and culture were the driving forces between 2005 and 2015, according to the map. Similar to this, the driving forces from 2016 and 2023 were development, governance, and climate change. Gender, India, and China were the primary themes between 2005 and 2015. Between 2016 and 2023, India and China were mapped across basic and motor themes, alongside COVID-19. It is pretty interesting to note that the themes of American Indian(s) and culture are positioned in the core of the map, indicating that these topics were prevalent among the studies specifically about India from 2005 to 2015. However, American Indian(s) shifted to niche themes between 2016 and 2023.

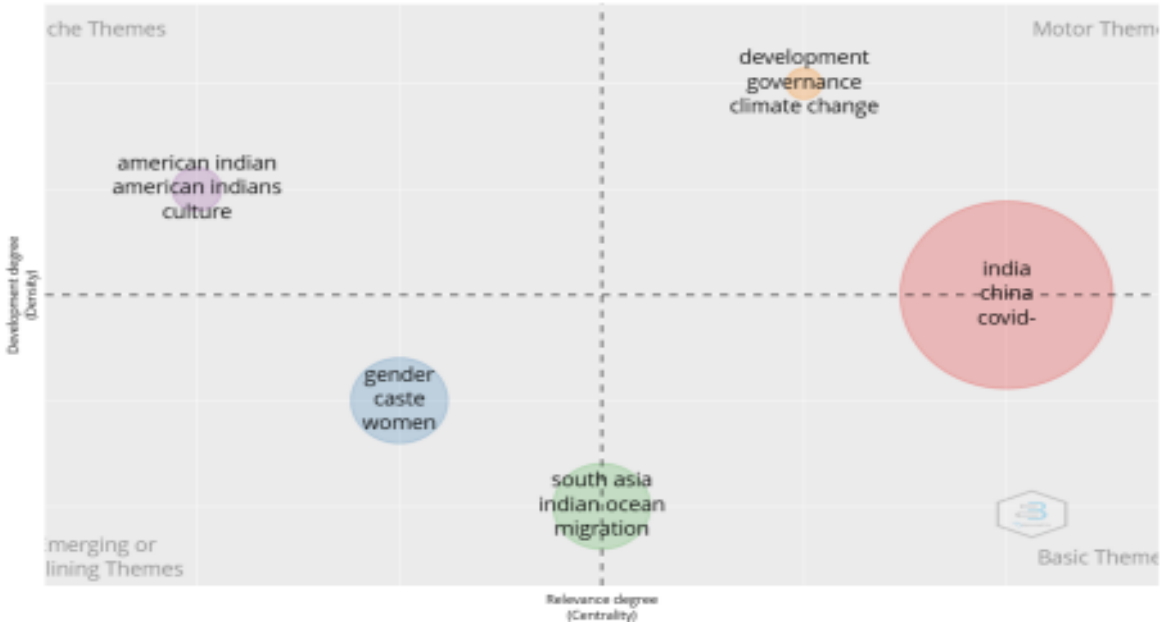

Figure 5b: Thematic map of author keywords (2016-2023)
(Note: Field – Author's keywords, Number of words – 250, Min. cluster frequency – 5, No. Of labels/cluster – 3, Label size – 0.3)

Concepts are typically contained in a network of associations, and the meaning of a concept or idea can be traced in part to the other concepts to which it is associated. As a result, we investigated the conceptual structure in India-specific studies by conducting a factorial analysis of author keywords using the Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) method (Figure 6a). A multiple correspondence analysis can be used to summarize large amounts of data with various variables in a low-dimensional map in which the words near the centre of the graph have received significant attention in recent years, while those near the edges have received less attention in research or have been integrated into other topics (Xie, Zhang, Wu & Lv, 2020).

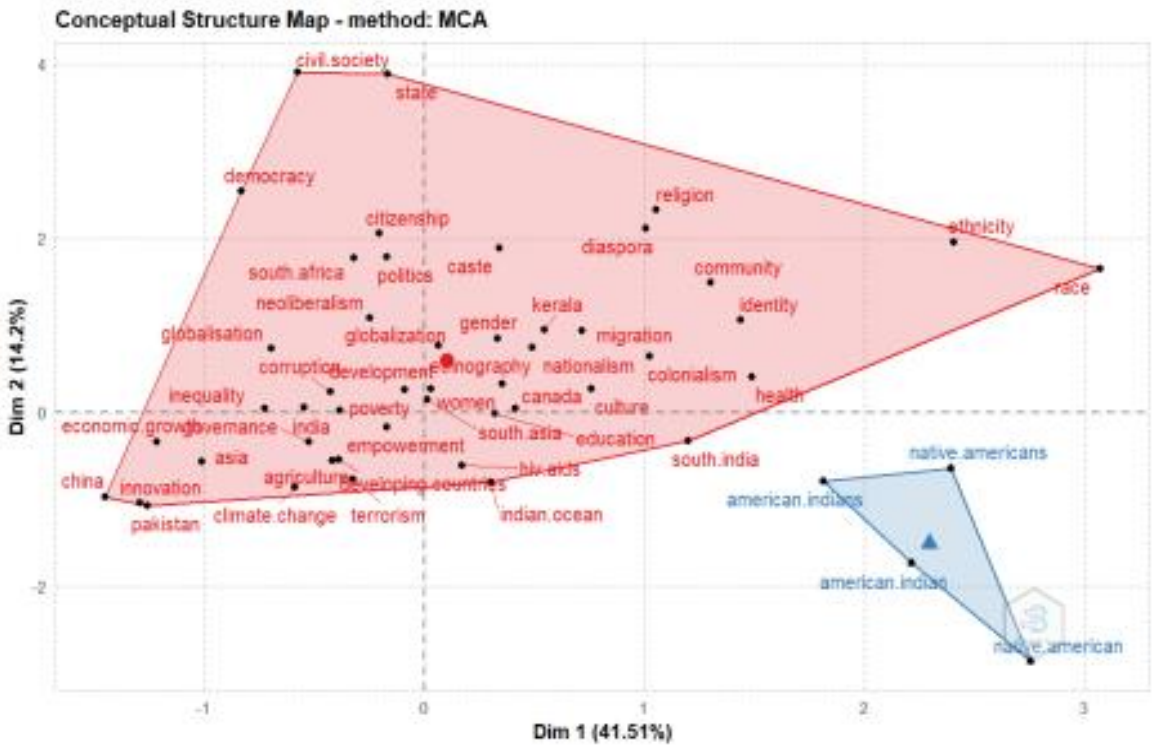

Figure 6a: Factorial analysis of author keywords (2005-2015)
(Note: Method – Multiple Correspondence Analysis, Field – Author's keywords, Number of items – 50, Number of clusters – Auto)

The largest red cluster creates a network of topics that have been focused on by researchers other than India, linked with India-specific studies. The small blue cluster consists of keywords that may be group of people relocated to the United States from India: American India(s) and Native American(s) (both are same) were formed in this small group during 2005-2015 (Figure 6a) whereas only singular forms of these topics were formed during 2016-2023 along with indigenous, plural forms were moved to the red cluster (Figure 6b). Some of the issues were common among the red cluster in both periods, such as demography, citizenship, religion, gender, ethnography, Indian Ocean, identity, race, Asia, culture, climate change, politics, and caste. Similarly, some new topics have emerged in the recent period (2016-2023), such as COVID-19, foreign policy, the global south, domestic violence, intersectionality, health, Bangladesh, Brazil, and the United States. It is noted that some of the topics were given less attention, such as inequality, globalization, food security, HIV-AIDS, education, terrorism, women, empowerment, Kerala, South India, Canada, and South Africa, in the recent period.

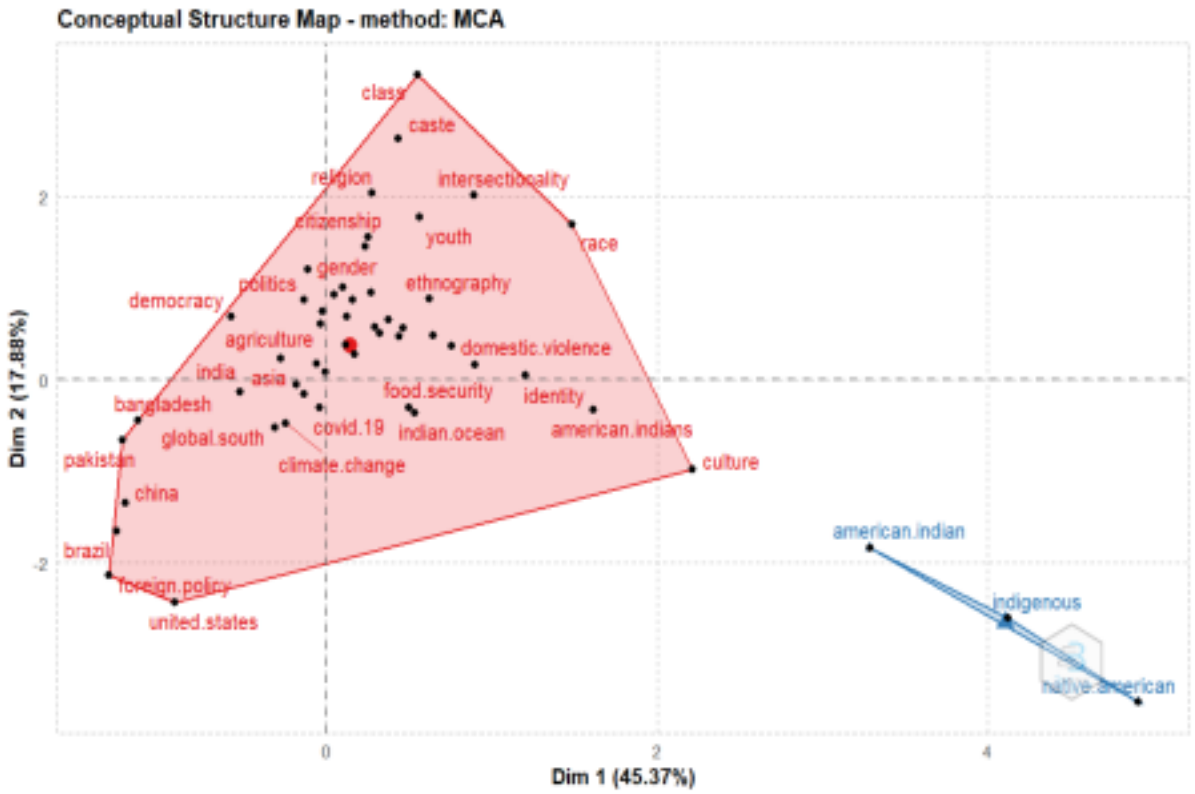

Figure 6b: Factorial analysis of author keywords (2016-2023)
(Note: Method – Multiple Correspondence Analysis, Field – Author's keywords, Number of items – 50, Number of clusters – Auto)

Discussion

India-specific studies conducted by researchers of non-Indian origin have gained significant momentum in recent years. An illustrative example of this trend is the publication of over 1,000 articles in the years 2021 and 2022. In contrast, there has been a decline in the number of social science publications authored by Indian-affiliated researchers in 2021, compared to the previous year (Elango, 2023a). Notably, one-third of the articles were published between the years 2016 and 2022, signifying a concentrated period of scholarly output. Conversely, a staggering 70% of Indian publications in the field of cybersecurity were published within a mere three-year span, specifically from 2018 to 2020 (Elango et al. 2023). A significant proportion, approximately two-thirds, of the articles were authored by single authors, representing a noteworthy contrast to the contributions made by Indian researchers. For example, a mere 4% of publications were single-authored in the realm of Lean Six Sigma (Citybabu & Yamini, 2023). Similarly, cybersecurity research witnessed approximately 7% of publications being authored by single authors (Elango et al. 2023). Furthermore, single authors accounted for 16% of open access social science literature (Kirtania, 2018), 34% of in Indian Library and Information Science (LIS) publications (Shukla, Sharma, Kumar, Mahala & Tripathi, 2020), 41% of highly cited articles from India (Elango & Ho 2017), and 45.5% of publications in the field of social science and humanities (Tripathi et al., 2018).

The United States emerged as the primary contributor to research articles focused on India, authoring almost half of them, followed distantly by the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. This pattern is similarly observed in India's highly cited articles and library and

information science research, where the United States and the United Kingdom hold the top two positions as collaborating countries (Elango & Ho, 2017; Shukla et al., 2020). Additionally, the United States and the United Kingdom are the leading contributors in the fields of educational research (Ivanović & Ho, 2019) and social network analysis (Su, Lin, Chen & Lai, 2020), contributed by Indian-affiliated authors.

Among the top 22 funding agencies, 50% originated from the United States, with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) serving as the foremost funding agency. Similarly, NIH retains its position as the leading funding agency in the domain of health research (Viergever & Hendriks, 2016).

Conclusion

The pioneering study, which was based on Scopus data, looked at social science research studies carried out by other nationals specifically on India, with emphasis on temporal evolution, top authors, institutions, and countries, most preferred journals, top funding agencies, most significant articles, and changing topics and themes. Indicating that India-specific research studies were strongly emphasized in the twenty-first century, notably the last two years (2021 and 2022), with more than 1000 articles each, two-thirds of the total articles were published after 2005. Six of the top 10 authors were from the United States, which accounts for over 47% of all articles published. The top affiliations were all from the United States and the United Kingdom, indicating that these countries are more interested in research studies that focus specifically on India. 16% of all articles focused on topics specific to India were published in the top seventeen journals, all of which are categorized as social sciences. Most of the funding agencies originate from the United States and the United Kingdom. From the time of publication until the time the database was accessed, the top eight articles had more than 500 citations, three of them had funding from various agencies. Some insights are provided by topic analysis. As an illustration, this study begins with the most popular author keywords, then presents a word cloud, trending topics, thematic maps, and concludes with a factorial analysis. These maps help explain how the issues and themes have changed over time. For instance, researchers were focused on the current problems issues like Narendra Modi and the BJP in the recent period of 2005-2015 and the Indian Child Welfare in the most recent period of 2016-2023.

This study has several limitations. (1) The findings of this study are based on the SCOPUS database; they might be different if we used other databases, like Web of Science. A more thorough investigation could be conducted in the future. (2) Rather than the author's nationality, the country of origin was established using affiliations mentioned in the articles.

(3) Network diagrams are built on a set of threshold values, and different threshold values may provide different outcomes. (4) The literature containing the words "India" or "Indian" in the title is taken into account in this study; group names like BRICS, Asian countries, etc., are not taken into account. The results of this study may help future researchers (stakeholders) better understand research topics as well as India-specific patterns and trends in the social sciences. It might also serve as a benchmark for comparing research trends in nations with comparable cultures.

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None

Conflict of interest

The results are exclusively based on the information gathered from the Scopus database.

Use of AI text

To improve the phrasing and readability, writing tools such as QuillBot and Typeset.io were used.

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