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Hindi-Chinese bhai-bhai for business

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AHMEDABAD: The Chinese mean business in India and are learning Hindi to prove it. To tap the large Indian market, Chinese students from Yunnan University of Nationalities have come to Gujarat to learn Business Hindi, or the applied language that is essential to do business in India. With increasing per capita incomes of India and China, the language hurdle, once crossed, will only mean good news for both economies.

Dr Sunil Shukla, chief faculty, EDI and chairperson, PGP, said, "We have an office in Kunming in collaboration with Yunnan University of Nationalities. This university teaches six foreign languages, one of which is Hindi. These students want a firsthand experience to pursue business in India. So, we have designed the course accordingly; we will teach Business Hindi and Indian culture."

Jagat Shah, chairman, India China Economic & Cultural Council (ICEC)-Gujarat chapter, said, "The biggest problem between India and China is language. As more Chinese learn Hindi and Indians learn Chinese, the business in both countries will undergo a multiplier effect and boost the economies."

These Chinese students, who have been given 'Hindi names' while they are here, will be made to read Panchtantra, Rabindranath Tagore's and Yashwant Mehta's short stories in Hindi. "Literature, grammar, Indian culture, history and some anecdotes will be part of the curriculum," said Dr Avadhesh Jha, associate faculty, EDI. "Language cannot be taught in isolation to culture," said Shah.

China has already started teaching Hindi in many of their universities like Beijing University. "But now, they are aiming at proficiency. These students are looking at a variety of jobs after learning Hindi; from translators to entrepreneurs," explained Shukla.

The Chinese students will also be taught by visiting faculty from Gujarat Vidyapith, where Chinese and Mandarin are being taught to 14 Indian students. Interestingly, more than 40 Indian students are learning Chinese as a part of EDI's business entrepreneurship course. In IIM-A, 70 students learnt Chinese this year.