

Increasing local and transnational discourses in the present globalized era has set an inevitable need to know and study the diverse cultures in their entirety. To achieve this end, Rinchen Shah Center for West Himalayan Cultures (RSCWHC) has been established as a research center to help the State's citizens better understand their immediate surroundings from ethnographic, linguistic, anthropological and cultural perspective. The center defines "West Himalaya" as the regions known today as Kullu-Manali, Lahul-Spiti, Ladakh-Baltistan, Gilgi, Kashmir, Jammu and the hill tracks. RSCWHC will research, document and catalogue the human communities in this region and study how they are bound together by geography and language with overlapping ethnic and linguistic affiliations that create a continuum of frontiers cultures. The Centre is named after Rinchen Shah, a historical figure who was the first king of Kashmir, and originally from Ladakh.

The Center has published a book and several research articles on the area. It is working on several research projects titled: "Ladakh's trade relations with neighboring areas", "Violence, Trauma and Quality of Life: An Anthropological Study in the Context of Kashmir" and in the aftermath of flash flood disaster in Ladakh region, a rapid appraisal of disaster impact assessment was also conducted. The Center is planning to offer a short course on Research Methodology in Humanities and Social Sciences for Master's students.

The Center and Kargil Social and Cultural Organization have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, whereby, the Rinchen Shah Centre shall provide expertise to the Kargil Social and Cultural Organization. This expertise shall include academic, conceptual, logistical, and infrastructural assistance for the Munshi Aziz Bhat Museum Project, undertaken by the Kargil Social and Cultural Organization with the aim of establishing the first ever - museum of its kind in Ladakh, focused on Central Asian Trade and Kargil arts and artifacts. In sync with NEP 2020, the Centre aims to facilitate cross cultural learning and exchange through the study of these cultures by offering the academic courses for the desired learners.

The objective of the Centre is to invite and encourage learners to study the West Himalayan Culture by engaging them in various academic and research activities relevant to the area.