

Facing the Future Together: Exploring New Pathways for Canada-India Collaborations

A summary of the First Canada-India Symposium at York University

Hosted by the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies jointly with Consulate of India in Toronto, Center for Refugee Studies, York Center for Asian research, and Dahdaleh Global Health Research Institute



Facing the future together: exploring new pathways for Canada-India Collaborations October 13, 2017

This year Canada is marking the 150th anniversary of Confederation. Canada and India have long-standing bilateral relationships built upon shared traditions of democracy, pluralism, strong interpersonal connections and longstanding people-to-people ties. The two countries have embarked on a process aimed at improving and expanding their bilateral ties. The aim of this conference was to highlight existing research and collaboration between Canada and India and to articulate the factors underpinning success, as well as, to identify bottlenecks and challenges. The Symposium identified future possibilities and emerging opportunities between Canada and India.

The Symposium on “Facing the future together: Exploring New Pathways for Canada-India Collaboration”, was held at the Harry Crowe Room, 109 Atkinson College, 96 The Pond Road, North York, York University, Toronto. The evening ‘Key Note’, speech and reception were held at the ‘Chancellors Room’, at York University.

The aim of this symposium was to bring together experts from academia, diplomats, policy makers, technocrats and the business community to identify collaboration opportunities between the two nations aimed at developing policies appropriate and relevant to changing circumstances.

Discussions attempted to explore how Canadians can build better long-term relationships with their Indian counterparts. Issues of collaboration around research, resource building and knowledge sharing, in the innovation processes, were covered. Joint research and connectivity establishment were also highlighted.

Participants and panelists were encouraged to generate “out of the box” ideas, blue-skies thinking and discuss ways of overcoming challenges effectively, seize opportunities and develop them informed by best-practices in collaborative methods.

The idea began with a plan to hold a conference to focus on Canada and India in bilateral terms. But the scope of the agenda broadened to include topics ranging from Social Science Frontiers and Public Policy to Migration, Diaspora, STEM and Economic Activities.



Poster of first of its kind Canada-India Symposium in the GTA, at York University Keele Campus, Toronto, Ontario

The Symposium started with Greetings and the inaugural address by **Prof. Ananya Mukherjee-Reed**, Dean, Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, York University. Prof. Ananya remarked that this will not be the only event, as we are planning to make it an annual meeting with similar projects to improve the bilateral activities between academics and universities. We want to make sure the younger generations involved at universities in both the nations should get together. Prof. Mukherjee-Reed felt that younger people in universities could be the driving force to move such trans-disciplinary issues beyond the borders of this type of partnership.

The Consul General of India in Toronto, **Mr. Dinesh Bhatia**, in his welcoming remarks reminded us that both India and Canada respect the principles of democracy and share their multicultural, multilinguistic societies. Both nations believe in the merits of free trade, a very proactive policy of sustainable development, in both multilateral and bilateral forums. With almost half of the Indo-Canadian community (estimated at about 1.3 million), living in the GTA (Greater Toronto area), Mr. Bhatia pointed out that Canada is a preferred destination for Indian students, due both to its safe law- and-order situation and also its education system - less costly compared to other countries, particularly the US. He also mentioned that Canada has several provincial (21) and federal(4) leaders from the Indo-Canadian community.

Mr. Bhatia went on to say that, in spite of India being a developing nation, India has invested heavily in Canada over the last 20 years or so and had generated more than 40,000 jobs in Canada. Of course, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is still much lower than Canada's, but in overall terms India has a very large economy today and by 2030, expects to

rank among the top three economies in the world. The two-way trade between our two countries has increased by 22 percent, but this is much below what can be achieved.

The Consul General also remarked that the above facts show that India and Canada do not compete against each other, rather they complement each other. Canada has good agricultural potential, also rich in mines and minerals. Canada moreover, is a good market for many Indian products such as carpets, leather goods etc.

Mr. Bhatia also brought up some lesser known facts that Canadians may not be familiar with: specifically about ID Cards that have been issued to more than 1.18 billion citizens. Another example cited is about the 2014 elections in India when, 814 million men and women were registered of which 21 million were in the 18/21 age bracket. Over half a billion-people voted, using electronic ballots. This is the only country in the world to tabulate numbers of this magnitude. Even though India's GDP per capita is small, the nation is undertaking massive changes such as the "make in India" campaign, demonetization of high-end currency notes, the idea of a cashless society (more digital transactions), GST was implemented on 1st July in India (one country one tax). India is a secular democracy and largest growing economy. Mr. Bhatia said both India and Canada follow free trade and sustainable development. He added that Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, has visited Canada as have some other ministers in his cabinet.

The first session of the Symposium was on:

SOCIAL SCIENCE FRONTIERS & PUBLIC POLICY

Chaired by Mr. Raj Narula, CEO InCa Synergies of Ottawa.



Picture of Raj Narula

He mentioned that his company's help a lot of government incentives. He said the numbers of students coming from India are growing because of India's economic growth, but the challenge is that students arrive in Canada with no orientation to help them in the difficult process of adjusting to a new environment and culture.

Prof. Sheila Embleton, Professor, York University, spoke on "Canada-India Academic Relations". The period of Indo-Canadian academic collaboration was quite short. India shares with Canada, a British colonial history though there were some crucial differences! Similarities between the two countries however, were in their legal systems and the government accredited terminology, structure of schools and universities, various cultures, legacies. English - widely spoken by the educated classes in India, is one of several other commonalities that can be found in both countries.



Picture of Prof. Maria João Dodman (left) and Prof. Sheila Embleton (right)

Sheila mentioned that the problem was the mutual academic interests of varied Canadian and Indian academic history and culture were seldom shared, which minimized the prospects for direct interaction or longer term relationships. Before the early 2000s, there was the Colombo plan, Canadian Studies Programs, CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) and the Commonwealth Scholarships Program. In 1968, The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute Fellowships were introduced. At the time, Canada had a very negative view of India - as a poor, underdeveloped country and regular communications between the two countries was perfunctory, except for some projects linked to the Shastri Institute in 1968. The relationship had not developed fully as most of the research was done on an individual level and there was next to nothing at the institutional level. Since 2004, interest in India has grown. Expanded international trade required a deeper understanding of the country's economy and of its people. Governments in both Ottawa and New Delhi saw possibilities for revenue generation, directly through fees and indirectly through economic impacts. Recruitment though, did not necessarily lead to institutional or research relationships. One of the many noteworthy relationships between the two countries was the York Schulich School of Business, the very first school, which gave students a global perspective from the late 1980s, followed by its link up with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Ahmedabad and Bangalore and ISB in Hyderabad. This culminated in the opening of a campus in Mumbai in January 2010, which has now moved to Hyderabad. Prof. Sheila added that York's overall collaboration with India began with her work; by 2006 there was an established relationship with Jadavpur University in Kolkata, Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi

and St. Xavier's College in Mumbai and a few law schools. Carlton University in Ottawa, University of Toronto's Rotman School and Simon Fraser in British Columbia, were among some institutions that strove to maintain good relations with the Indo-Canadian community and also to do fund raising. What some noticed was the comparative absence of Quebec in the national picture; Atlantic Canada too was not involved.

Although India was a destination of choice for Canadian international academic collaboration, attempts to match India's three-year graduate degree program with university degrees in Canada was a problem. Another hurdle was the lack of coordination between (Canadian) provinces and the federal government as a whole.

Sheila concluded by declaring that the need of the hour is to re-inject more energy and commitment into the relationship and that maintaining some focus on India is vital, even as we pursue new markets and new relationships around the world. Throwing light on the plight of international students who come to Canada, Sheila said that only some students are provided work permits, while others are expected to support themselves, a formidable challenge for most. Individual universities are also not providing monetary support or any form of service support as well.

Commenting on Sheila's speech, **Dr. Nivedita Das Kundu**, Research Faculty, York University and the co-organizer Canada-India Symposium said - in her presentation on "Possibilities for Collaboration between the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada" - that she had been working with ICSSR and during her tenure as research director there, she was asked to visit Canada and start collaboration activities in the

social sciences research sector, especially with SSHRC. Despite all efforts from ICSSR's side, which falls under the Ministry of Human Resource Development in India, this project could not be started due to lack of funding and interest. Apart from similarities with ICSSR and SSHRC both sides only conducted few cultural activities, but the research and scholar exchange programs could not be established.

Having its own libraries, resource centers, guest houses for students and faculty, ICSSR is doing valuable work in the academic community in India. Additionally, they provide technical support to the under-privileged and indigenous people in remote areas. ICSSR also has special programs for under privileged and indigenous populations for bringing them into the mainstream. They are giving lots of support for research and also organizing the training programs and research methodology course to small town universities and universities in remote places. ICSSR is also having good collaborations with number of Social Science councils in other countries like France, Russia, China, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Iran and Netherlands and also with the United Kingdom. The ICSSR's program includes the faculty exchange programs as well as joint research, joint projects, joint conferences, etc. Dr. Nivedita recommended that SSHRC is the federal research funding agency that promotes and supports research and research training in the humanities and social sciences, focusing on developing talent, generating insights and forging connections across campuses and research communities all over the world. ICSSR, through its international collaboration program, invests significant time and energy in developing collaborative links with social scientists, social science organizations and academic institutions within India and overseas. Hence, both councils are very similar and should start collaborating with each other in promoting bilateral linkages

with scholars and experts and foster connectivity and people-to-people contact.

The third speaker of the Session was **Prof. Martin Bunch** representing Dahdaleh Global Health Research Institute. In his paper on a low income community in Chennai, India, Prof. Bunch emphasized the importance of managing well-being in a turbulent environment. He narrated his experiences from 2004 to 2009 when an interdisciplinary team of Canadian and Indian researchers and Indian NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) and one non-profit, voluntary citizens' local group collaborated with his project with the Anju Kudasai community to explore the application of an Ecosystem Approach to health and wellbeing which links community health and well-being with the environment and sustainable development.

In his recommendations, Prof. Martin pointed out that economically underdeveloped and poor segments of the population should be properly represented by community level collaboration. More echo system approaches should be adopted. The Shastri Institute funded some part of his study, connecting with people there. Building relationships with them was a prerequisite for his project.

Dr. Maria João Dodman, Associate Professor at York University in her presentation on "Visions of India in Portuguese Literature of the Renaissance- study conducted at York University", said that the establishment of the sea route and the subsequent conquests in India propel Portugal into a coveted position as Europe's most powerful empire at the beginning of the 16th century. Portugal's sudden fame, wealth and achievements are well documented. But, while official accounts praise Portuguese ingenuity and heroism, playwrights offer others insights into a country's greed and social disorder. Her presentation tried to expose such insights and their intersection with other

important discourses of Portuguese colonialism and the search for profits in the sea voyage. Prof. Maria also mentioned that Portugal profited a lot from successful trips to India. Navigators brought back stories of India that created interest in India around the world. The stories told back then, connect India with greed and lust. She concluded by saying the Indian impact on Portuguese culture is still significant.

Ms. Wazida Rahman, a Shastri Indo-Canadian short term visiting graduate scholar from Assam, said in the video presentation about her study on "Comparative Analyses of Status of Women and Children in Live-In-Relationship in India and Canada ", She said that India - a country where traditions are fairly conservative - is slowly absorbing western ideas and lifestyles: such as common-law relationships. She highlighted the Canadian Family Law Act, R.S.O. 1990, which states that when two persons have been leading a conjugal relationship for at least one year, the relationship acquires sanctity and is recognised as a 'common law marriage'. Wazida's study does a comparative analysis of live-in-relationships on marriage and family institutions in India and Canada highlighting differences as well as common practices between the two societies.

Ms. Chandni Bhambani, another Shastri Indo-Canadian short term visiting graduate scholar at York University spoke about her research on "A comparative study between India and Canada exploring the contexts that shape decisions to be childless in two diverse societies". She presented the concept of contextualizing childlessness by choice, in India and Canada noting that reproduction is the key impetus to continue the legacy of the human species. Families and society in India generally frown on childlessness. Canada by contrast, is a developed economy and seriously under-populated. These differences provide a pervasive account of the social, economic and political conditions that

foster or hinder the nonconformist option of choosing not to have children.

Prof. Jose Curto of York University along with his graduate students, Abubacar Fofana León and Golaleh Pashmforoosh, presented a paper entitled "Canada-India-Canada via Mozambique: a study of the trade and cultural connections that developed in that region over several centuries. In his presentation about the Portuguese arriving in Goa he stated that Goa is administering the center in a sea environment. The Portuguese came to Goa, produced and systematically documented much of what they sought to do. This makes their records one of the most valuable archival materials in India. This is an archival material because of its administrative context. However, these archives are poorly indexed and keep deteriorating. York University can help by sending graduate students to recommend better ways to compile and protect these important documents. His graduate students' study observed that trade was driven by Gujarati merchants, despite attempts by the Portuguese to dominate the business. Graduate student Abubacar mentioned that by early 19th century, Mozambique had a huge Indian population; consequently Northern Mozambique's trade with India grew to significant proportions.

Second Session was on:

MIGRATION AND DIASPORA. This session was chaired by Susan McGrath, Centre for Refugee Studies, York University

The first Speaker was **Dr. Ranu Basu** Associate Professor at York University. She spoke on "PIO Geographies in Toronto and the '(Par) Desi' Politics of Place". The study focuses on settlement patterns of those communities of Indian origin, who for the most part, live in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and explores the

socio-spatial patterns and corresponding practices and politics of place. Dr. Basu's paper gave a reflection on the broader philosophical question as to what constitutes a City of Refuge. She concluded her presentation by stating that a particular sub/urban/alien cosmopolitan landscape with a different imaginary of the city is presented as defined and practiced by the migrants themselves.

Prof. Daniel Drache, Professor emeritus, York University, presented his paper on "The Trump Ant-Immigrant Backlash, the Kid Trudeau and the Challenge of Global Cultural Flows". He believes Indian immigration to Canada over the last 60 years was a significant factor contributing to the transformative goal of Canadian multiculturalism; because immigration was seen through a positive lens, by supporting diversity as a foundational part of modern Canada. Many experts believed that the Indian Diaspora was unique because of the skills, education levels and strong work ethic brought by Punjabi and Gujarati immigrants. It could be said that these characteristics enabled them to integrate into Canadian society quickly. As well as being self-organized, they were often able to assist each other with support in the long and often difficult settlement process. He said it is quite remarkable that the extent to which the Indian community has played a critical role in the political life of all political parties in Canada, including the recent election of the new NDP leader Jagmeet Singh.

The post-Brexit and post-Trump world, in Prof. Drache's view, is a very different and threatening place for immigrants, as we know from reporters covering events in Syria, the Middle East, Myanmar and elsewhere, such as the brutal attacks on Rohingyas in Myanmar. Fear of the stranger has, in many countries replaced the welcome once offered refugees. Flag-waving nationalist populism is a toxic force both at election time in the EU, and as we have

seen, in daily life. Intolerance and xenophobia have moved from the margins to the mainstream in many countries. Prof. Drache drew attention to the growing polarization in North America between anti-immigrant policies of the Trump administration and the growing tensions with Canada and the Trudeau government over NAFTA and other issues. In his concluding remarks he ponders on the question: “is the anti-immigrant backlash coming to Canada?” and “Should the Indian Diaspora be alarmed?”



Picture of Ms. Sabrina Saqeb presenting on Afghan refugee issues

Ms. Sabrina Saqeb, the Parliamentarian from Afghanistan, spoke on problems encountered by Refugees from Afghanistan and destined for India and Canada: “A Journey of Hope from Violence to Healing”. Afghans constitute the second largest refugee population (after Syrians) and make up approximately 70% of the refugee population in Asia and the Pacific. There were 2.7 million registered Afghan refugees scattered over 70 countries around the world by the end of 2016. More than 50% of these were children. The largest groups of unaccompanied or children separated from their families who lodged asylum claims in 2015-16 were refugees from Afghanistan. There are around 11,200 Afghan refugees in India today. Sabrina explained how difficult and time consuming it has been to obtain visas for India. As a consequence many applicants chose to move to neighboring Pakistan or Tajikistan instead, despite the

security concerns and threats of violence they face in those countries. Some refugees, desperate to flee or tire of waiting for their visas, just cross borders without documents.

Ms. Saqeb said, though the Indian government helps with infrastructure, education as well as, in military sectors in Afghanistan, refugees do not have the legal right to work in India. In Canada, the immigration process often takes years to complete. This is a huge challenge for the displaced. Despite being host to large numbers of Afghan refugees, surprisingly, India is neither a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Protocol. The convention signed by 144 of 190 countries around the globe, works for protecting the rights of the displaced and ‘defining legal obligations of the states to protect them.’ In her recommendations, Ms Saqeb suggested that distinct legal, economic, social, and cultural dimensions need to be looked into, for integrating refugee families, enabling them to pursue sustainable livelihoods, contribute to the economic life of the host country and live among the host population without discrimination or exploitation.

Dr. Sutama Ghosh, Associate Professor at Ryerson University, spoke on the “Transnational housing investments of Toronto’s (Indian) Bengalis in Bolpur, West Bengal”. In her presentation she said it is now well known that flourishing housing projects built for Non-Resident Indians has caused unprecedented changes in the built form and associated urbanisms of India’s megacities. Although the geographical location of NRI housing investment has expanded, its impact on medium and small sized cities remains under-researched. Also, the details of transnational housing investments of Indo-Canadians are not well researched. By focusing on the housing investment of Toronto’s Bengalis in Santiniketan (West Bengal), her presentation

attempted to explain specific reasons and impacts of these cultural investments.



Picture of Mr. Rajesh Gupta, CEO of SBI Canada

Mr. Rajesh Gupta, President & CEO, SBI, Canada Bank, Canada expressed his perspectives on the Indian Economy and the Banking System. Mr. Gupta has already devoted 30 years of service in the banking sector; as such his observations were of great interest. He has witnessed the transformation of the Indian economy from a centrally controlled one into a free-market economy. With regard to India's economic growth, Mr. Gupta believes Prime Minister Modi's structural reforms will put India in the top league internationally. During the first thirty years after independence, India's growth rate averaged 3.5% per annum. The first major economic reform was implemented in 1991, when license fees and tariffs were lowered and the growth rate improved. The boom in start-up companies since 2014 was followed by a 7.6% growth rate in GDP – the new normal! – Which places India seventh in world ranking. Mr. Gupta also referred to the depreciation of the Indian Rupee and other economic problems that need to be tackled.

Mr. Gupta went on to outline five major sectors of India's current economic priorities i.e. (i) Financial inclusion – access to credit that allows business to grow. Because of this initiative, every citizen is expected to have at least one

bank account (ii) Demonetization of high-denomination bills - aimed at “unearthing” vast sums of “black” money. (iii) Digitization in the Banking Sector (iv) introduction of GST - a very important element in Tax reform. It will certainly be a challenge to get 1.3 million people to implement rates uniformly (v) the Agriculture sector [that is connected to the market] is responsible to protect farmers' interests and ensure that they are properly compensated for their labour and the products they deliver.

The banking sector has of course a key role in the nation's economic growth and the government recognises this. Positive elements of today's Indian economy include: (a) low inflation (b) a stable currency. The Rupee has appreciated against the Canadian dollar: this has encouraged several Canadian companies, have begun to invest in Indian businesses. During a question and answer session, Mr. Gupta stated that in the last quarter, SBI has seen a steep rise in the volume of electronic banking. Almost a billion “hard cards” have already been issued and are linked to the cardholders' bank accounts. Hard cards are for Indian residents only; NRI and PIOs are not entitled to this document.

At the start of the third Session, **Prof. Abidin Kusno**, Director, York Centre for Asian Research claimed that India and Canada are very much connected; however, there are notions of identity issues. This Symposium is about new opportunities and new pathways and range of fields regarding knowledge sharing. He said community issues need to be discussed regularly in such a forum.

Session on:

STEM AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

**Chaired by Prof. Arun Chockalingam,
from Dahdaleh Global Health Research
Institute, York University.**

This session dealt with the untapped resources the diaspora can offer in science, engineering, technology and mathematics.

Prof. Metta Spencer was a special guest of the symposium representing Science for Peace, University of Toronto. Her topic centered on the Role of Science for bringing Peace. Metta has been a peace activist for most of her life. She reminded us of the most serious catastrophes the world faces today: pandemics, global meltdowns, famine, cyber-attacks, terrorism and nuclear war. There is a need for citizens to come together to tackle these matters, How much impact you have depends on the number of people you have actively involved in your movement. Prof. Spencer is currently working on collaborating groups to brainstorm and devise the most pragmatic ways to “Save the World in a Hurry”.

Dr. Fahim Quadir, Interim Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, York University, talked about "York University's engagement in India". York is interested in making ties and build relationships. Last year only four students from York went to India. More students should come from India to York to study; likewise more students from York need to study in India. York is endeavoring to improve the exchange system. But a more comprehensive approach to seek research opportunities and to create a positive space for Indian researchers is needed. He would like to see Indian colleagues promote research here at York.

Prof. Dawn R. Bazely of York University & Coordinator Canada-India Symposium, along with her research partner from Vishwa Bharati, Prof. Shibani Choudhury presented research on her study on the frugal innovation, an engineering approach to solve problems using a cost-effective approach to energy accessibility and availability. Her presentation addressed the energy needs that applied plant ecology issues

and provides renewable energy to communities that are not on a main power grid.

Prof. Dawn explained that this collaborative venture was informed by Prof. Shibani's recently completed project showing that “decentralized hybrid power plants with different renewable technologies can become the most efficient, low-cost and sustainable options for rural electrification”. Dawn, in her recommendations said that there are two significant challenges, i.e. the need for strategies to manage invasive plant species and the need for rapid, inexpensive and accurate protocols for assessing the toxicity of plants, including the microbes that live inside them, known as endophytes.



Picture of STEM and Economic Activities Panel

Ms. Nimisha Singh from Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH) provided a video presentation from Noida, (India). She spoke of the strategic thrust areas of BIMTECH and the institute's short term “study abroad” programs. She mentions in her presentation that BIMTECH received a grant from the Indian government for establishing an incubation centre. BIMTECH is engaged with academic vs practice engagement and mentioned its international connections with various universities. She suggested the possibility of BIMTECH's collaboration with York and about organizing joint conferences and study projects. She also mentioned the Birla Global University

which is part of BIMTECH and can also link up with York University.

Dr. Ajey Lele, Senior Fellow, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi spoke through a video connection from India about collaborations as an important concept of Political leadership and policy makers. Economists perceive such collaborations in science and technology as an engine of progress and growth. Dr. Ajey said, India and Canada have a long history of scientific and technological (S&T) collaboration that includes working on specific areas of research including global issues such as climate change, infectious disease control etc. The India-Canada Collaborative Industrial Research & Development program was established in 2017. Space and nuclear technologies constitute a significant collaboration between these two nations- While reviewing the historical and current status of these projects, Dr. Lele predicted the likelihood of future partnerships in nanotechnology, biotechnology, space research etc. Other areas of common interest would include technologies for social development – for example, green technology, water technology and agricultural technology. Dr. Lele is optimistic that Indian and Canadian agencies will continue to work together and reap benefits at many levels.

Ms. Parveen Fatima, Shastri Indo-Canadian short term visiting graduate scholar at York University, has been involved in Optometric. She spoke of her research on the process for analyzing and diagnosing AMD or macular degeneration - a major cause of partial-blindness in ageing adults. Currently, there are an estimated 11 million people in the US and Canada affected by AMD, and the numbers are expected to increase, unless there is a breakthrough in research. Parveen’s study also investigates lens aberration or glaucoma and

attempts to figure out where AMD occurs, morph pictures on screen with the macula. In India, as in many other countries, the major causes of cataracts and AMD, as well as, possible demographic factors are still being sought.

Ms. Nagma Sahi Ansari, Shastri Indo-Canadian short term visiting graduate scholar at York University, spoke of the changing aesthetics of self through everyday photography. She points out that India has a great visual history, but that is changing. Now people are narrating culture in time and space; she referred to social sharing – taking photos and sharing them via the internet or media. Cameras have become “an extension of the body” “Selfies” are a narcissistic phenomenon. Her study focuses on social media campaigns, and their impact on relationships and gender disparities. The cell phone and internet have made it easier for people to instantly show who they are and who they want to be. Nagma’s concluding observation reminds us that wherever a camera is present, someone is sure to be performing!



Picture of Policy Panel

Policy Recommendations Panel included Gilberto Fernandes Dawn Bazely, Jose Curto, and Maria João Dodman

Recommendation of Mr. Dinesh Bhatia, Consular General of India in Toronto

❖ India and Canada need to focus on six crucial areas for their future relationship which could be mutually beneficial:

- Energy and infrastructure;
- Manufacturing and High Technology: Canada has been a G7 country for the last 40 years and India has much to gain from Canada;
- Agriculture and agricultural goods industry, where Canada has expertise, but India lags: this presents huge scope for collaboration;
- Skill development in which both Universities and Colleges have an important role to play
- Entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Research & Education;

Recommendations of Presenters and Chairs:

- Increase support from both the government side.
- Explore ways of developing Canada-India heritage project.
- Policy changes needed for changing times.
- There is a need to know more about each other's' universities
- Increase funding opportunities by universities and other Institutions.
- More people-to-people exchange.
- Funding for travel to facilitate ease of academic exchange is vital (learning through web research is no substitute for being there in person)
- Need to lower/subsidise air-fares
- More information campaigns to curb prevalent misinformation/ negative attitudes
- Need exchanges of personnel: signed agreements to maintain institutional commitments are not enough.
- The most valuable benefits are derived from a better understanding

of cultural differences and commonalities.

- There is a need to engage more scientists.
- Canada can make significant investments and collaborate with Indian scientists/engineers on experiments relating to zero gravity, nanotechnology or other new areas
- Both countries can discuss the possibility of building satellites or investing in remote sensing applications.
- There are more areas of investing possibilities, i.e. movement of debris in outer space, Areas of space meteorology – requirement to have dedicated centre to take meteor.
- There is a need to think in the long term of unexplored areas of research and incredible learning opportunities of mutual benefit to both countries.



James Orbinski Director of Dahdaleh Global Health Research Institute

The Symposium's closing event was the Keynote speech delivered by Prof. James Orbinski, the newly appointed Director of the Dahdaleh Global Health Research Institute, York University.

“The world order is changing” was his opening remark...”as it is no longer a unified world. (We now live in) a multi-polar world with multiple centres of economic trade blocks emerging.” This statement was soon followed by his stark

warning on Climate Change: “we are well beyond the point of no return” - spoken by a widely-travelled physician, scholar and activist who were President of MSF’s (Doctors without Borders) International Council when the organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.

Dr. Orbinsky emphasised the importance of establishing stronger relations between York University and Indian Universities and cited some of the recent collaborations which have worked well and continue to attract talented professionals. He spoke of research on drugs and neglected diseases (such as Kalazar) the initiatives in which he was involved, in collaboration with the Indian Medical Research Institute, and with Cipla Pharmaceutical that developed antiretroviral that are in use all over the world in treating HIV/Aids.

He said, in general people think about health in terms of drugs and health care technologies, but global health is more than just a disease. It involves a range of aspirations, visions as to how one can become a healthy individual. Dr. Orbinski stated that we are currently in a period of geological, environmental and biological transformation of the planet. We are altering nature by being who we are. We have crossed planetary boundaries, which are the thresholds for global sustainability. Because climate change can no longer be reversed, we face some serious challenges: citing bio-geo-chemical nitrogen and phosphorus cycle, biological diversity loss rate, global fresh water use, ocean acidification and land system problems. Millions of people live in slums; this raises issues from both health and economic perspectives. There is a convergence of management, food, stability and many more issues. It is difficult to bridge gaps and this is also a governance challenge.

The top five global risks of today are (1) Water crises, (2) Failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation, (3) Extreme weather events, (4) Food crises and (5) Profound social instability. James Orbinski mentioned in his presentation that climate change and social instability is leading to war and displacement. Also, due to climate change, fragile states are facing food insecurity. Today, the conflict is borderless, porous and has global impact. For shaping the world’s global health, a person’s rights should be respected the same way everywhere.

During the presentation he spoke about his project in Mali. The founding faculties – Health, FES, Engineering, Law, Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and Education have a trans-disciplinary approach. Values that need to be respected are effectiveness, excellence and equity.

Prof. Orbinski’s also touched on Planetary Health i.e. the new formation of old ideas when we think about the pursuit of research for global health. This focuses on the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health, wellbeing and equity worldwide. As per his research, humanitarianism is grossly declining; only 49.9% of pledged humanitarian assistance actually materialises! There are people who do not get humanitarian assistance and protection. They are not given any integrative health and wellness approach that is about disease and disease prevention.

What does it mean to be in a healthy relationship between the biosphere and home? Dr. Orbinski remarked on the wealth of knowledge that Ayurvedic medicine and western medicine offer. In his words, “The Ayurvedic approach and philosophy is effective and relevant, not all of it but some.” His closing recommendation was that we have to design the future that we want. That

involves looking to the future and doing some reverse engineering.



Canada-India Symposium Organizers and Sponsors



Canada-India Symposium group photo.

Glossary

Students were given certificates of participation for their volunteering work at the symposium. Certificates were duly signed by Ronda Linton, President, Vice Chancellor, York University and by Mr. Dinesh Bhatia, Consul General of India in Toronto. Mr. Bhatia also presented certificates to students at the end of the third session of the symposium.



Laiba Khan, student organizer and presenter from York University at Canada-India Symposium.



Mr. Dinesh Bhatia giving a certificate to Harjot Singh Deol, student coordinator, Canada-India Project- York University.



Mr. Dinesh Bhatia giving a certificate to Pegah Nazir, student coordinator, Canada-India Project- York University.

The Event was covered by four international Television channels and telecast was done in North America and in India. The telecast was made before the Symposium as well as, after the symposium. Below are YouTube links to the media interviews, also found at

www.canadaindiaproject.ca:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9powG
ilKcc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9powG
ilKcc)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6RS5IF
5FoY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6RS5IF
5FoY)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xcw8D
91sUrM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xcw8D
91sUrM)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcZ2Zb
MZDwk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcZ2Zb
MZDwk)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL719H
CIG0c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL719H
CIG0c)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBR_wt
hsj5I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBR_wt
hsj5I)

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Coordinator and Organiser of Canada-India
symposium*

Organizing Committee

The organizing committee consisted of Saifullah Khan from Consulate of India in Toronto, Maria Joao Dodman, Laura Taman, Michelle Millard, Faida Abu-Ghazaleh and Namig Aghayev from York University

The two conference coordinators were:
Dawn R. Bazely & Nivedita Das Kundu from York University.

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