

Shastri News - November/December 2009

\$80,000 Millennium Development Goals Research Grant recipient announced

The Shastri Institute is pleased to announce the winners of our 2010-2012 Millennium Development Goals Research Grant. Dr. Steven Newmaster and Dr. Nirmala C. Balasubramaniam will be the principal investigators in a collaborative research project between the University of Guelph (Ontario) and the Centre for Biocultural Diversity (Chennai). They will be working with three aboriginal communities in South India to assemble biodiversity knowledge toward an en-gendered cultural approach to environmental sustainability.

Application excerpt...

We chose to explore the traditional knowledge of several aboriginal cultures within India because this knowledge is richly built on thousands of years of history and is still an integral part of these cultures today. It was apparent from our first field experience that the ecosystems are very diverse and the respective traditional knowledge (TK) had great depth. Our early work discovered that this knowledge is very reliable within a culture as evidenced by high consensus. As researchers we were captivated and humbled by the wealth of TK, but most of all we were amazed at the discoveries during the assemblage of knowledge among science and TK.



Dr. Newmaster (front left) and Dr. Ragupathy (front right) with graduate students (back).

While working with these cultures we recognized that pressures from population, water shortage and rapid urbanization have added stress to the need to maintain high productivity while protecting the integrity of the ecosystems. Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) provide an important supplement to livelihoods of many local families of which women appear to play a prominent role in NTFP harvesting and conservation. Promotion of equitable and sustainable access to these resources is essential and for this infrastructure improvement is required. However this should be provided in a way that sustains biodiversity in agriculture and forestry.

This has inspired us to develop this research project entitled “The Assemblage of Biodiversity Knowledge Toward an Engendered Cultural Approach to Environmental Sustainability”, which will explore the role of gender in the knowledge of biodiversity and conservation of natural resources. Our proposed project will generate a repository of traditional knowledge and an education model for the respective ‘Madhuvaras’, ‘Malasar’ and ‘Irulas’ communities.



Dr. Nirmala C. Balasubramaniam

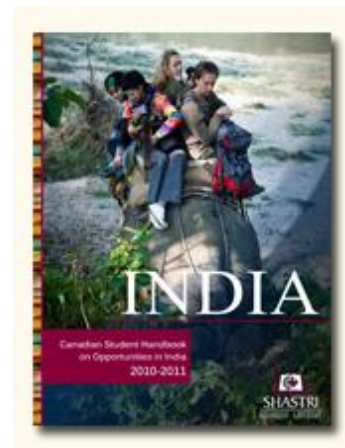
The Shastri Institute received a high volume of quality applications for the MDG Research Grant this year. We would like to thank all the teams who applied and commend them for their efforts.

New Canadian Student Handbook on Opportunities in India

Do you know what programming is currently available for Canadian Students who want to study in India? This new [handbook](#) is a comprehensive guide to the Master's and Undergraduate programming available at our 36 Canadian member universities in 2010-2011.

There are breadths of opportunities waiting to be discovered and students should act now to get involved because most application deadlines are in December – February.

Please help us build awareness about the benefits of studying in India and pass this handbook along to a student you know who may be interested.



A storyteller's story

Rashi Khilnani makes a living telling people's stories and she loves her job. First, because she believes that everyone has a story worth listening to, but also because she gets to focus on a group of people close to her heart: Indo-Canadians. Rashi runs the Indo-Canadian Report, a thrice weekly segment on CBC's international broadcast, Radio Canada International. This month, she celebrates her first anniversary on the job, so we have decided to reverse the microphones and tell her story.

Like many Indo-Canadians her age, Rashi was born in India but moved abroad when she was only a toddler. She spent her formative years in Nigeria, where she attended an international school and became a true citizen of the world. When she moved to Canada at age 15, the idea of being an Indo-Canadian was just as foreign as the idea of living on Indian soil.

Rashi's journey of self discovery prompted her to return to India as an adult. An internship through the Shasti Indo-Canadian Institute provided the perfect vehicle to get there. So Rashi took the internship and spent nine months living in India and working with the National Council of Applied Economic Research in New Delhi. The experience of living independently in India proved to be radically different from the short visits to family that she had made as a child.

"I got to make friends with regular Indians and see how they lived their lives," she explains. "It was a chance to see [India] for what it was, with all its rich complexities, beyond the confines of my family homes."



Returning to Canada was a difficult adjustment and left Rashi torn about what to do next. She had already completed her degree in Political Science and International Development Studies from McGill University and contemplated taking a Master's degree in Public Health. She enjoyed the health-related research she had done in India, but she was also surprised at how much she enjoyed conducting key informant interviews as part of that job. As a self-professed "news junkie," Rashi started to see potential for a new career path and chose rather to study International Journalism at City University in London, England.

After spending two years working as a journalist in England with stints at the Associated Press, Time magazine and the Financial Times Group, Rashi returned to Canada. A job surfaced to head-up the Indo-Canadian Report as part of Radio Canada International's English program called 'The Link.' The job required competency in Hindi, and experience in India among other things, so she decided to give it a shot. Now, a year later, Rashi gets to look back on what has been a truly amazing experience.

When asked about the most memorable segment she has ever done, Rashi replied: "Tough question, because they were all memorable. But I do remember really enjoying talking to a gentleman who had lost his family in the Air India Bombings. He started a school in South India in an attempt to regain a reason to live... it's incredible to see just how much people are doing with their lives."

Rashi feels that Indians are generally a curious people, well-respected, hard working and increasingly influential in Canada. A substantial portion of the people who tune into 'The Link' everyday are Indians living in India, so Rashi has a unique opportunity to show that audience how the Indo-Canadian community has evolved and thrived.

Some day she hopes to be able to report from India on India-Canada relations and bring new perspectives to the Indo-Canadian Report. The segment is still in its infancy, but it has been growing. Recently, Rashi has been given airtime on Radio One, so that Canadians also have the opportunity to hear her live broadcasts.

The Indo-Canadian Report is broadcast on shortwave radio in India (at 6:30 AM IST on 6040 kHz and 6165 kHz and at 8:30 PM IST on 9635 kHz and 11975 kHz) and on Radio One in Canada at 2:00am. Segments can also be downloaded from the [Radio Canada International website](#).

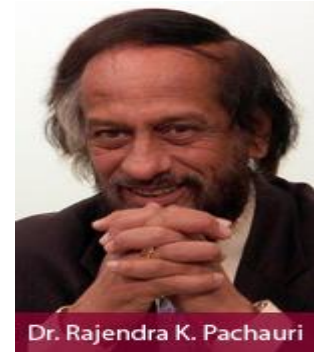
Rashi welcomes feedback and she would love to hear from you if you know of a story that needs to be told. Write to her at: india@rcinet.ca

2010 Visiting Lecturers and Lecture Series announced

Lester Pearson Memorial Lecture

Seeking Global Climate Solutions: Why India and Canada Matter
This Year's Lester Pearson Memorial Lecture will be hosted by the University of Victoria and presented by an Indian national, Dr. Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chair, UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Dr. Pachauri is Chairman of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) an international scientific body, established by the World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme in 1988. He was elected to the position of Chairman, IPCC in April 2002; under his leadership, the IPCC was awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.



This lecture on global climate solutions is both timely and critically important as the world's leaders struggle to find an international consensus, inclusive of both developed and developing nations, that will be effective in mitigating the effects of climate change as well as being fair and economically viable. It is also very fitting to have a recent Nobel Peace Prize recipient deliver the lecture in memory of Canada's only Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

Kanta Marwah Lecture Series

This year, as part of the Kanta Marwah Lecture Series, we have granted Mount Allison University the opportunity to welcome Dr. Ramaswami Balasubramaniam as a guest speaker during Mount Allison's official Year of International Engagement.

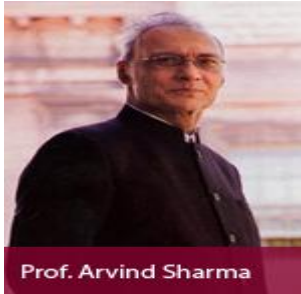
Dr. Balasubramaniam is the founder and president of the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM), an Indian organization whose mandate it is to provide the rural poor with medical services, health-related education, and access to clean water and sanitation facilities. "Balu," as Dr. Balasubramaniam is affectionately known, is also a strong advocate for the rights of tribal groups within Karnataka who have suffered a loss of land or property as a result of development in the region. After a 23-year campaign, he won a landmark case against the Indian government – the only one of its kind to date – to have the affected tribal groups appropriately compensated (e.g. land, housing, livestock, etc.). Balu is a trained medical doctor who has been working in the field since 1984. He is presently participating in a year-long professional program at Harvard University the training from which he hopes will serve to add to the quality of life of those marginal members of Indian society that he works with.

The Year of International Engagement Committee hopes that Balu will help to educate Mount Allison students about life in India and encourage them to take a more active interest in development and social justice projects around the world.

Canadian Visiting Lecturers

The Shastri Institute's Canadian Visiting Lecturers help to enhance the understanding of Canada in India by visiting and lecturing at numerous Institutions in India during the winter term.

Arvind Sharma



Professor, Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University

Professor Arvind Sharma is one among a few internationally renowned academics having vast experience in the field of education and administration. He got his Ph.D. in Indian Studies from Harvard University in 1978. From 1976 to 1987 Professor Sharma worked in several universities in Australia and later joined McGill University. He was instrumental in convening an International Conference on World Religions after September 11, which was hosted in Montreal, Canada from September 11 to 15, 2006. Professor Sharma organized another seminar on the same topic at Jamia Millia, New Delhi in 2008. During his visiting lectureship in India he will likely be speaking on a variety of topics including:

- September 11: What has Gandhi got to do with it?
- World religions After September 11: Philosophical Perspectives
- Asian Philosophies and Religious Freedom
- Religious Freedom as a Human Right

Dr. Margery Fee

Professor, Department of English, University of British Columbia



Dr. Margery Fee has a Ph.D. in English from the University of Toronto. She is the Editor of *Canadian Literature: A Quarterly of Criticism and Review*, and an Associate Editor of the *Dictionary of Canadian English on Historical Principles*. Her recent research pertains to Native-Newcomer Identities, Literatures, and Conversations, which examines how the dominant identities of mainstream Canadians and Aboriginal peoples have been co-produced, however unevenly.

During her visiting lectureship in India she will likely be speaking on a variety of topics including:

- What Does "Oral Culture" Mean? Aboriginal Language Loss and Revitalization in Canada
- Sociolinguistic Methodology and Cognates: The Example of Quebec English and Quebec French in the Study of Borrowed Words
- Aboriginal Ethnographers: Henry Wellington Tate, George Beynon, and George Hunt
- Genetics and Racialization
- Literary Journals and Open Access: The Example of Canadian Literature

The 2010 Indian Visiting Lecturer will be announced early in the New Year.

We will be advertising all of these lectures in the [Events](#) section of our website as soon as dates are confirmed. Stay informed by checking our events on a regular basis.

Indian professor honoured for her contribution to Francophone studies

The Canada-India academic relationship profits tremendously from the commonality of the English language. However, our relationship would be tragically incomplete if we never attempted to build understanding beyond what is capable in English. The French heritage and culture unique to Canada



is an invaluable contribution to Canadian society. There are also countless languages and cultures in India that define and shape its' people. When somebody translates literature they make a piece of culture accessible to others, opening a window into a world that was previously out of reach.

Dr. Kiran Chaudhry is a professor at the Centre for French and Francophone Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. In her years as an academic, she has developed French translations of Hindi literary texts written by notable authors like Mannu Bhandari, Krishna Sobti, and Bhishm Sahni. She has also guided dissertations at the post-graduate level on translation of French Canadian texts into Hindi. Her research interests include teaching language and culture in a multilingual context, and studying translation and culture. We are proud to have her as an alumna of one of our 2006 Faculty Enrichment Fellowships.

Recently, Dr. Chaudhry has been decorated as an 'Officer' in the Order of Academic Palms, a prestigious academic honour awarded by the Prime Minister of the French Republic. The distinction honours those who render important services to French National Education and contribute to the intellectual, scientific and artistic influence of France in the world. On behalf of the Shastri Institute, we offer our congratulations.

Question to consider:

France does a commendable job of acknowledging foreign nationals who make a contribution to the study of France beyond its own borders. This is critical in a world where education has truly surmounted political boundaries. Should Canada and India be following France's lead? Would it make a difference in strengthening our academic relationships?

Symposium in Sweden highlights Shastri Youth Intern's research in India

Robin Lau is one of the Shastri Institute's most recent Youth Interns. He has been working with a bi-national team of academics to study the future of life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in India. Thanks in large part to the research he conducted in Chennai from September 2008 to February 2009, his research supervisors, Dr. Shanthi Johnson from the University of Regina and Dr. T.J. Kamalanabhan from IIT Madras, were able to present the India Healthy Life Expectancy Projection Model (IHLEPM) at an International Symposium for Health Information Management in Kalmar, Sweden in October 2009.

The study that Robin worked on sheds light into the population health measures needed to improve understanding of the determinants of health, to inform policy in the planning of health and social services, and to ensure the efficient allocation of resources.



According to Dr. Johnson, Robin has proven to be an invaluable asset to the research team. He in turn has gained a life-changing experience abroad that has him keen to return to India someday soon.

“I never thought I would ever go to India before I came across this internship,” admits Robin. “It seemed so different and there seemed to be so many obstacles in the way.” The internship experience may not have proven Robin wrong, but it did show him how much he could grow once he overcame those obstacles which included monsoon rains, tropical heat and the fact that in India you don’t get a lot of personal space.

Once he got over the culture shock and the elements, Robin found that he thrived in the research environment in which he was placed, where he had the opportunity to guide much of his own work. Robin was also grateful to have had the opportunity to share his internship experience with another Canadian intern, Amenda Kumar, who was working simultaneously on a different research project.

“The skills the interns have been able to develop and the changes I see in their perspectives on work and life upon their return to Canada is truly amazing,” says Dr. Shanthi Johnson. “Canada is multicultural and it is wonderful and reassuring to know that these youth interns will take the cross-cultural understandings into their future education, careers, and lives.”

Today, Robin Lau is working on a Ph.D. in Health Service and Policy Research at the University of Alberta. His time in India has increased his interest in Health Economics and Policy and has given him a more international perspective in that field. After experiencing the benefits of his internship, Robin would recommend studying in India to any Canadian student.

The Shastri Institute is pleased to welcome a new Canadian university member



Celebrating its centenary in 2010, St. Thomas University is an undergraduate, liberal arts institution whose roots are in the faith and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. With an enrolment of 2,400, its students graduate with Bachelor of Arts, Applied Arts, Education and Social Work degrees. The faculty members are distinguished teachers, researchers and scholars, and the university holds three Canada Research Chairs.

St. Thomas University takes pride in and seeks to nurture its Catholic and humanistic heritage, its concern for social issues, its interaction with the community beyond the campus and its sensitivity to the needs of individual students. A strong sense of community unites its alumni, students, staff, faculty, and friends.

The Shastri Institute looks forward to working with the faculty and staff at St. Thomas University to strengthen their relationships with Indian Institutions and facilitate more India related studies on campus.

For more information on St. Thomas University, please visit their [website](#).

Das appointed as new Secretary for the Department of Higher Education in India

Mrs. Vibha Puri Das has recently taken charge as the Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) of the Government of India. She will be the new official representative of the Government of India serving on the Executive Council (Board) of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute.

Das is an Indian Administration Service officer of the 1976 batch, Uttaranchal Cadre. Prior to this posting, she was Addl. Secretary, Department of Personnel and Training. Das's earlier stints in the Central Government include that of Joint Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, and Executive Director, Central Social Welfare Board.

Her other earlier postings include serving as Principal Secretary and Commissioner, Forest and Rural Development, Uttaranchal and Principal Secretary, Home and Transport of Uttaranchal. She has also been Addl. Chief Executive officer of the Greater Noida Authority, Vice Chairperson, Ghaziabad Development Authority, and Special Secretary (Finance), Government of U.P.

Das is an M.A. in Political Science from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

The Shastri Institute looks forward to working with Mrs. Vibha Puri Das and wishes her well in the new position.

Professor Braj Sinha receives Ivany Internationalization Award

The Shastri Institute is pleased to congratulate one of its long-time friends and alumni for being awarded the J.W. George Ivany Internationalization Award at the University of Saskatchewan's Fall Convocation this year. Braj M. Sinha, Professor and Head of the Department of Religion and Culture at the U of S, is the current Shastri Member Representative on campus and has been promoting Saskatchewan's academic ties with India for over two decades.

"Professor Sinha has been engaged since his arrival at the University in support of internationalization, both through his own scholarly work as a teacher and researcher, but also as a mentor, leader and advocate for others engaged in internationalization," wrote the College of Arts and Sciences' International Liaison Officer, Bob Stock, in nominating Sinha for the award. "Now, the University is moving to take advantage of the rapidly expanding opportunities in



India, and is able to truly benefit from Professor Sinha's years of hard work and network-building between Canada and India."

Professor Sinha's many accomplishments in Internationalization at the U of S include co-founding the International Society for Indo-Judaic Studies and Co-editing the Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies. He played a key role in initiating and facilitating dialogue between the government of Saskatchewan and the Indian High Commission ultimately leading to a Saskatchewan trade and academic mission to India in February 2007.

Following the Saskatchewan trade and academic mission to India, the dialogue initiated by Dr. Sinha between the Government of India and the University of Saskatchewan resulted in the signing of a contract involving the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron. Professor Sinha has also created opportunities for interactions with scholars from India in the fields of philosophy, religion, biotechnology, journalism, policy research, diplomacy, art and art history, gender studies, Diaspora studies and drama.

In many ways, Professor Sinha's work with the Shastri Institute has complimented and contributed to his achievements at the University of Saskatchewan. He was the first Secretary-Treasurer of our bi-national board and served on the board for many years. He has also chaired various committees including the India Studies committee, the nominating committee and the organizing committee of our first bi-national conference on science and technology.



Prof. Sinha receiving Ivany award accompanied by U of S President, Dr. Peter MacKinnon (left) and Chancellor, Dr. Vera Pezer (right)

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Upcoming Grant Deadlines

Lal Bahadur Shastri Student Prize – Friday, January 15, 2010

For Canadian Undergraduate and Master's level students

Scholar Travel Subsidy Grant – Monday, February 15, 2010

For Indian and Canadian Faculty

New Publications

[e-Journalism: New media and News Media](#)

Edited by: Kiran Prasad

New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation © 2009

The purpose of this book is to examine the role of new media and how the nature of news media and news presentation has changed dramatically over the last decades with the emergence of new media technology and growing popularity of electronic news media. It also discusses how electronic media journalism is changing and challenging the identities of the occupations and organizations that make up the news industry. This book brings together senior researchers in media and communication studies who examine the challenging interplay between 'new media' and 'news media' through theoretical reflections, empirical studies and policy deliberations in the field of mass media and journalism.

The book includes a chapter on "Community Radio in India and Canada: Media Policy for Democratizing Communication"

About the Editor: Kiran Prasad is Professor in Communication and Journalism, Sri Padmavati Mahila University, Tirupati, India and currently with the Salalah College of Applied Sciences, Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman. She was a Commonwealth Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for International Communication Research, University of Leeds, UK and a Shastri Institute Canadian Studies Research Fellow at the School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Arti Nanavati, Canadian Studies Research Fellow, has published a working paper:

["Social Capital and Labour Market Outcomes for South Asia-Born Immigrants in Canada"](#)

