

## Shastri News - August 2009

### Updates from the Shastri Institute

1. Application details have now been posted for our Canadian Studies Fellowships. Submission deadlines will be October 1, 2009

- Faculty Research Fellowship
- Faculty Enrichment Fellowship
- Doctoral Student Research Fellowships

2. The Shastri Institute 2008-2009 Annual Report is now available to be downloaded both in [English](#) and in [French](#).

3. Thanks to the keen research of our summer intern, Priyanka Karuvelil, we have been able to document many funding opportunities currently being offered in Canada for both Canadian and Indian students. The list is now available on our website and can be accessed [here](#).

4. Priyanka has also collected a list of useful links for Canadians travelling to India. You can view them [here](#).

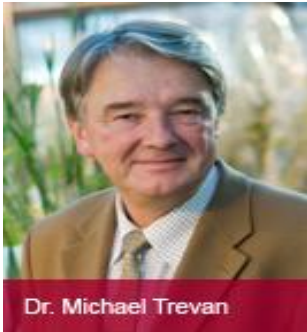
### Great potential for collaboration in agriculture

Among those who follow the relationship between Canada and India, 2009 may be remembered as the year of the farmer. Agricultural linkages between Canada and India are growing strong with formal relationships being established by both government bodies and private businesses. Trade in this sector continues to increase and both Canada and India are investing in research to improve agricultural practices. There is immense potential for further collaboration between academics in this field of study, especially as the [Canadian Faculties of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine](#) (CFAVM) decide collectively to turn their attention to India for the next two years.

CFAVM is an organization comprised of researchers, educators and scientists from 12 of the most distinguished universities across Canada. They currently represent over half of public sector research and development in Canada and almost all of Canada's undergraduate and graduate education pertaining to agriculture. Many of their members, like the University of Saskatchewan, College of Agriculture and Bioresources, are already actively interacting with institutions in India, and it is CFAVM's hope that such interactions will increase in 2009.



Farming in Canada can appear quite different from farming in India. "In Canada, a thousand acres supports one farm, but in India it supports 220 farms," explains Prof. Michael Trevan, Dean of the



Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Manitoba. Still, he believes that Canadian academics have a lot to learn from India and a lot to contribute, “particularly in the areas of the environmental impact of agriculture and value added agriculture.”

Early in 2009, the governments of India and Canada set the stage for collaboration by signing a formal agreement between Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC) and the Ministry of Agriculture in India. This agreement creates a framework to expand agricultural trade including Canadian pulse crop exports to India. India is the world’s largest importer of pulses and, as of 2007, Canada was the fourth largest exporter of agricultural goods to India (according to a [report](#) released by AAFC at the time of the agreement).

India also has a strong agricultural sector, accounting for 14 per cent of its total exports in 2007. India produces enough food to feed itself, but a large portion (between 25-50 per cent) is lost to disease and natural elements before it reaches consumers. Indian researchers are working to develop improved genetic engineering and preservation technologies, and could benefit from the experience of similar research done in Canada.

### **Manitoba mission to India focuses on food**

Earlier this month, the province of Manitoba sent a business delegation to India to meet with federal and provincial governments, chambers of commerce and Indian businesspeople. Much of their discussions revolved around agriculture. Manitoba, a prairie province, has a lot of expertise in the food processing industry yet its current interactions with India have been relatively low. The delegation’s goal was to identify possibilities for joint ventures between Canadian and Indian businesses. Such business ventures will likely coincide with increased academic engagements. Joining the Canadian delegates was Dr. Digvir Jayas, Vice-President (Research) at the University of

Manitoba, and an alumnus of the G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in Pantnagar, India.



Dr. Jayas, who has been actively involved in provincial initiatives with India, recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology (IICPT) on behalf of the University of Manitoba. The two institutions plan to collaborate on research and course development as well as exchange faculty, staff and students for research and training purposes. IICPT is a pioneer research and development institute under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

India’s Minister of Food Processing spoke at the delegation emphasizing the need for strong relations between India and Manitoba regarding food technology – an area where academics will continue to play a significant role. The delegation leader, Bidhu Jha, told Ajit Jain of India Abroad ‘our technology from the field to the shelf will be a new revolution for the Indian farmers...’

Manitoba boasts several world class agricultural institutions including the University of Manitoba's Richardson Centre for Functional Food and Nutraceuticals.

The Manitoba business delegation resulted in several MoU discussions with representatives from Indian provinces including the Punjab Agro Industries Corporation and the Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chamber of Commerce.

### **Dual degree programme brings Indian horticultural students to Canada**

A recent Memorandum of Understanding between the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) has laid the foundation for a new dual degree programme that will allow Indian students the chance to study environmental horticulture in Canada. According to Brian Crouse, manager of student recruitment and awards at NSAC, students will have to complete five semesters at TNAU and then three semesters at NSAC in order to obtain certificates from both universities.

"Sometimes it's hard, as an institution with a specialized focus, to find eager international partners," says Crouse, "but in India, we found that students aspire to study agriculture." The partners originally planned to launch the programme in the Fall of 2010, however, immediate interest from students has led them to consider beginning early. "It will depend on how fast the student's visas can be approved," Crouse explains. If all goes well, three Indian students could be arriving in September. Twenty-three more TNAU students are planning to attend NSAC in 2010 or 2011.

TNAU is currently the top ranked agricultural university in India and is actively seeking to create student exchange programmes with universities in the West. The largest obstacle to developing such programmes is the significant cost that students must incur. These programmes equip Indian students to be global citizens and also provide them with valuable North American work experience, but many students cannot afford to participate. Currently, there are few opportunities in Canada for Indian students to receive financial support for post-secondary studies.

### **A new way of thinking about English in India**

One of the greatest assets to India-Canada academic collaboration is the general ability to communicate in a common language – English. However, the place of the English language in India is still a heavily debated topic due to its roots in British colonization. Was English imposed on India by the British? If so, why is it so widely accepted nearly 60 years after independence? Dr. Alok Mukherjee tackles these questions and many more in his new book, [This Gift of English: English Education and the Formation of Alternative Hegemonies in India.](#)

This Gift of English, which draws on the theories of Gramsci and Bourdieu, makes the case that, contrary to popular view, English education in India resulted from a conjuncture of the colonial agenda of the British rulers and



the revivalist agenda of wealthy 'high' caste Hindus. He further argues that India's current English curriculum is still dictated by these two historical hegemonic agendas. Mukherjee suggests that India needs to reject the way English has historically been taught and move to a curriculum that is relevant today in order to empower all levels of society.

According to Mukherjee, change has to start with the 'gatekeepers,' who dictate the content of exams for entry into public service and teaching sectors. "Most students take English in order to gain employment," he explains, "so universities have little motivation to change what they teach if it



University of Delhi Book Launch Panel (left to right):  
Dr. Anjana Sharma, Prof. R. W. Desai, Dr. Alok Mukherjee,  
Dr. Kavita A. Sharma and Dr. V. K. Vasal

means moving away from the content of such exams." Mukherjee hopes that this book will not only educate on the history of English in India, but also spur discussion about educational policy changes.

Dr. Alok Mukherjee, who resides in Toronto, taught at York University and is currently Chair of the Toronto Police Services Board. In July, he travelled to India to promote his book at various events including a stimulating panel discussion at the University of Delhi co-organized by the English Literary Society and the Centre for Canadian Studies. The launch, which was held on

July 14, 2009, struck a cord with panelists and other participants.

"This book is one of the most comprehensive and probing accounts of the issues involved in the discussion relating to English and India." ~ M.S. Nagarajan, [The Hindu](#)

Dr. Mukherjee received a Student Research Fellowship from the Shastri Institute in 1998 to work on "The Evolution and Teaching of Post-Colonial Literature in Canadian and Indian Universities," a precursor to his current book.

### **Shastri scholar selected to evaluate project proposals for \$2.5 million programme commemorating Komagata Maru incident**

Citizenship and Immigration Canada has announced the appointment of three prominent members of the Indo-Canadian community to serve on an advisory committee for the Community Historical Recognition Programme (CHRP). This programme, initiated in 2008, allocates funds to community-based commemorative and educational projects that recognize the impact of historical immigration restrictions and wartime measures on various minority groups in Canada. Through CHRP, the Indo-Canadian community will receive \$2.5 million to support projects related to the [Komagata Maru incident](#) of 1914. Committee members Jack Uppal (Chair), Ratna Ghosh (Vice-Chair), and Iqbal Gill will be evaluating eligible projects and providing advice to the Minister on their merit.

“These three individuals have demonstrated great leadership and made major contributions on issues important to their community,” said Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney in a [news release](#) on August 1, 2009.



Citizenship, Immigration & Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney (centre) with Advisory Committee Chair Jack Uppal (left) and Vice-Chair Ratna Ghosh (right)

“The advice they are providing on the merit of eligible Indo-Canadian Community Historical Recognition Programme projects is extremely valuable.”

Ratna Ghosh, Professor of Education at McGill University in the fields of multicultural education, race relations, human rights and women and development, is a former president, alumni, current grant holder and friend of the Shastri Institute. Her

desire, through this appointment, is to see important events like the Komagata Maru incident represented in Canada’s history books and become generally known to all Canadians throughout the country.

“It is my great wish to make history more meaningful to people so that they can connect to what really happened in Canada, not only dates, but to the social history of Canada,” she said during a news conference in Vancouver. “I find it a real privilege to be part of this group.”

Background information on all three committee members is available on the [Citizen and Immigration Canada website](#).

The last CHRP call for proposals closed on May 22, 2009. However, another call for proposals could be posted in 2009-2010 (subject to budget availability). Interested parties should track the [CHRP website](#) for updates.

### **Many events taking place in September**

The month of September is busy with cultural and academic events for Indians and Canadians to partake in. Here is a glimpse of what our calendar holds:

September 5

- [Carnatic vocal concert by Shastri Fellow Aparna Bhat](#) (Montreal)

September 9-10

- [Guest Lecturer at U of A: Dr. Robert Philip Goldman, Professor of Sanskrit and India Studies at the University of California, Berkeley](#)(Edmonton)

September 17

- [Synergy '09 Education Conference](#) (Toronto)

September 20-22

- [International Multidisciplinary Conference on: Changing Economic Environment and Performance of the Nations: Canada and India](#)(Vadodara)

October 2

- [Interdisciplinary Conference on Gandhi's "Hind Swaraj"](#) (Toronto)

### **Canadian High Commissioner visits IIT Bombay**

On July 30, 2009, the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay hosted Canadian High Commissioner Joseph Caron. The purpose of the High Commissioner's visit was to discuss IIT Bombay's current and future collaborations with Canadian universities. Since 2006, IIT Bombay has been building momentum in its efforts to engage Canada and is looking to increase the scope of its international collaborations.

During his visit, the High Commissioner met with Director, Professor Devang Khakhar; Deputy Director for Finance and External Affairs, Professor R. K. Shevgaonkar; and the Dean of International Relations, Professor Subhasis Chaudhuri.

### **New Publications**

#### [A critical edition of Sangitanarayana by Purusottama Misra \(2 Vols.\)](#)

by Mandakranta Bose / Purusottama Misra

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) © 2009  
New Delhi

Sangitanarayana is a Sanskrit text on music and dance written in the 17th century by Purusottama Misra, a minister at the court of King Gajapati Narayanadeva of Parlakimidi in Orissa and his instructor in musicology, with the assistance of the king. While the precise date of the Sangitanarayana is not known, its relationship to Purusottama Misra and Gajapati Narayanadeva prompts us to place it in the first half of the 17th century.

Mandakranta Bose is Professor Emerita at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. She is also Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and the Royal Society of Canada. Dr. Bose is a Sanskritist with active research interests in the classical performing arts and religions of India, the Ramayana, and gender studies.



#### [Urban Transport Policy as if People and the Environment Mattered: Pedestrian Accessibility the First Step](#)

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Editorial on pedestrian accessibility in Indian cities

by Madhav Badami, Professor, School of Urban Planning, McGill University