

SHASTRI BILATERAL EDUCATION FORUM 2025

*Bridging Borders with Sustainable Academic
Collaborations*

Abstract

The Shastri Bilateral Education Forum (SBEF) 2025, held in New Delhi, brought together 80 delegates from 70 Canadian and Indian institutions to advance Indo-Canadian academic collaboration. Through focused dialogue on research, mobility, joint programming, and capacity building, the Forum moved beyond symbolic MoUs toward action-driven, inclusive, and policy-aligned partnerships. Key discussions addressed regulatory coherence, funding equity, and culturally responsive internationalization. The Forum concluded with a shared commitment to sustained institutional transformation and collaborative impact.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	2
• Strategic Support and Extended Engagement	
Forum Highlights	3–6
Day 1: March 27, 2025	
• Inaugural Session	
• Panel Discussion: Beyond the MoUs	
• Book Launch and Networking Dinner	
Day 2: March 28, 2025	
• Keynote Address by Dr. Pankaj Mittal	
• Overview of Thematic Sessions	
Thematic Focus I: Building Partnerships	6–10
• Research Collaboration	
• Articulation Agreements and Dual Degrees	
• Professional Capacity Building	
Thematic Focus II: Strategies for Success	11–15
• Navigating Institutional Priorities and Policies	
• Partnership Models and Frameworks	
• Student and Faculty Mobility	
Thematic Focus III: Challenges and Opportunities	16–21
• Regulatory Policy Landscape	
• Funding and Mobility Barriers	
• Cultural and Methodological Variations	
Looking Ahead	22–24
• Consolidated Feedback	
• Policy Recommendations	
• Recommendations and Next Steps	
Concluding Remarks	24
Annexes	
a) Forum Agenda	25-30
b) List of Participants	31-35
c) Forum Photo Highlights	36-40

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shastri Bilateral Education Forum (SBEF) 2025, convened in New Delhi from March 27–28 with the support of Global Affairs Canada, marked a pivotal moment in advancing Indo-Canadian academic collaboration. Bringing together 80 delegates from 70 premier institutions across both countries, the Forum was guided by the theme “*Bridging Borders with Sustainable Academic Collaborations*,” and served as a high-impact platform for translating dialogue into action.

Over one and a half days of strategic engagement, participants explored pressing issues and innovative solutions related to research collaboration, faculty and student mobility, articulation agreements, and professional capacity building. The Forum decisively moved beyond symbolic Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), emphasizing the importance of purpose-driven, faculty-led partnerships grounded in institutional alignment, shared values, and measurable outcomes. Discussions also addressed regulatory bottlenecks, funding disparities, cultural barriers, and the underrepresentation of key sectors such as agriculture and community-based research.

A key outcome of the Forum was the articulation of actionable pathways to sustain momentum, including the development of thematic joint initiatives, implementation of short-term, inclusive mobility models, integration of KPIs within collaborative frameworks, and the establishment of a digital follow-up and monitoring system. Participants also called for a more visible, strategic role for the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute as a facilitator, matchmaker, and policy advocate in supporting long-term academic cooperation.

Looking ahead to SBEF 2026, this report consolidates feedback, policy recommendations, and priority areas for investment—offering a forward-looking roadmap for deepening bilateral academic engagement that is equitable, resilient, and aligned with the evolving priorities of global higher education.

INTRODUCTION

The Shastri Bilateral Education Forum (SBEF) 2025, held in New Delhi from March 27–28 with the support of Global Affairs Canada, was a flagship initiative of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI) aimed at advancing Indo-Canadian academic cooperation.

Anchored in the theme “*Bridging Borders with Sustainable Academic Collaborations*,” the Forum served as a strategic platform to foster long-term, responsive partnerships aligned with the evolving priorities of global higher education.

SBEF 2025 reflected SICI’s broader mission to promote meaningful binational engagement in research, teaching, and academic mobility. Through a series of focused dialogues and thematic workshops, the Forum enabled faculty members, researchers, and institutional leaders to co-develop ideas for joint programming, articulate shared goals, and address challenges related to mobility, regulatory frameworks, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

With 80 participants—30 from Canada and 50 from India—representing 70 leading institutions, the Forum convened a dynamic and diverse cohort of senior academic leaders,

internationalization specialists, and early-career scholars. Selected through a competitive process under the SBEF Participation Subsidy Grant program, participants brought rich disciplinary diversity and a shared commitment to strengthening Indo-Canadian higher education linkages. To ensure equitable representation across the SICI network, funding was limited to one delegate per institution.

SBEF 2025 was not only a forum for exchange—it was a catalyst for action, embodying SICI’s commitment to turning dialogue into sustained, policy-aligned, and measurable institutional collaboration.

The Forum concluded with a *Dinner Reception hosted at Canada House*, deepening diplomatic engagement and celebrating the spirit of academic exchange.

STRATEGIC SUPPORT & EXTENDED ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The success of the Forum was supported by a well-structured grant mechanism and strategic pre-event engagement. Through the SBEF Participation Subsidy Grant, SICI ensured financial accessibility and promoted equitable institutional representation, enabling broad and diverse participation from across its Canadian and Indian member networks. The grant was instrumental in lowering barriers to participation and reinforcing SICI’s commitment to inclusive academic exchange.

To extend the impact of the Forum beyond its core days, SICI also facilitated optional institutional visits across India from March 29 to April 4, 2025. These campus engagements provided Canadian faculty with valuable opportunities to build on Forum connections, explore potential collaborations on the ground, and strengthen bilateral ties through direct engagement with Indian counterparts.

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

SBEF 2025 unfolded 1.5 core days of programming:

March 27 (Day 1):

The event opened at the **National Museum, New Delhi** with formal greetings from the Indian and Canadian governments, a keynote panel titled *"Beyond the MoUs,"* and the launch of a SICI-supported publication. The evening concluded with a networking reception and high tea, providing participants with space to connect informally.

March 28 (Day 2):

A full-day agenda at the **Indian Institute of Heritage** featured three thematic workshop sessions:

- **Building Partnerships** (e.g., joint research, articulation agreements, professional capacity building)
- **Strategies for Success** (e.g., policy navigation, funding frameworks, mobility models)
- **Challenges and Opportunities** (e.g., regulatory landscapes, cultural differences, logistical barriers)

DAY 1: MARCH 27, 2025- SUMMARY OF OPENING CEREMONY

- Inaugural session highlights
- Panel discussion overview ("Beyond the MoUs")
- Book launch and key takeaways
- Networking dinner insights

Day 1 of the Forum commenced with a strong sense of shared purpose and collaborative vision. The **Opening Session** was expertly facilitated by **Prof. Meenal Srivastava**, *Secretary-Treasurer of SICI and Associate Dean, Student & Awards at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Athabasca University*, whose leadership framed the event with clarity and energy.

The session featured **welcome remarks** by **Prof. Srikrishna Deva Rao**, *President of SICI and Vice Chancellor of NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad*, followed by a compelling **overview of the Forum's concept and genesis** by **Prof. Ajay Agarwal**, *Vice President of SICI and faculty member at Queen's University*. Together, these opening reflections set the stage for a forum grounded in meaningful dialogue, mutual respect, and long-term academic partnership between Canada and India.

Diplomatic greetings from both governments added significant momentum—*Mr. Chinmoy Naik*, Acting High Commissioner of India to Canada, and *Mr. Ryan Ward*, Acting Minister (Commercial) at the High Commission of Canada to India, reaffirmed bilateral support for deepening academic cooperation.

The panel discussion on **"Beyond the MoUs"** underscored the need to move past symbolic agreements and toward action-oriented, measurable collaborations. While MoUs can serve as a starting point, participants stressed that their true value lies in sustained follow-through. Key strategies identified included:

Building sustainable engagement models through joint research, faculty exchange, and student mobility.

Ensuring institutional and financial backing, with emphasis on funding mechanisms and administrative support.

Aligning partnerships with institutional priorities to foster relevance, mutual benefit, and long-term value.

Setting measurable milestones via outcome-based reviews, defined timelines, and regular evaluations.

Activating faculty and student participation, with initiatives like co-teaching, conferences, and dual-degree programs proving most effective.

The Forum also featured the launch of the edited volume **"Women in Contemporary Indian Films and Media: Representations and Responses"** by *Dr. Aysha Viswamohan*, Professor of Film Studies at IIT Madras. Supported by the Shastri Conference and Lecture Series Grant, the publication explores the evolving portrayals of women in Indian cinema and media, offering

critical insights into gender, culture, and popular narratives. The launch underscored SICI's commitment to advancing scholarly work that bridges academic inquiry and cultural discourse.

The day concluded with a *Networking Reception and High Tea*, offering participants a relaxed and engaging setting to connect with peers, speakers, and distinguished guests. This informal gathering provided a valuable opportunity to foster professional relationships, exchange ideas, and lay the groundwork for the next day's sessions in a more personal and collegial atmosphere.

DAY 2: MARCH 28, 2025- SUMMARY OF THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

Day 2 of the Forum commenced with an energizing opening session at the Auditorium, setting the stage for a day of in-depth thematic discussions. *Dr. Ajay Agarwal*, Vice President and President-Elect of SICI, welcomed participants and introduced the keynote speaker, emphasizing the continued momentum from Day 1.

Keynote Address – Dr. Pankaj Mittal

Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), delivered a powerful keynote outlining India's rapidly evolving higher education landscape under NEP 2020. She emphasized the country's growing commitment to internationalization, regulatory reforms, and innovative models of collaboration, including dual/joint degrees, foreign campus setups, and credit mobility frameworks. Her address called for moving beyond symbolic MoUs toward impact-driven, mutually beneficial partnerships between Indian and Canadian institutions.

Key Points:

- **Scale and Reform in Indian Higher Education**
 - India hosts over 43 million students, with 1.5 million teachers across ~15,000 colleges and universities.
 - NEP 2020 promotes student-centric, flexible, and multidisciplinary education.
 - The Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) enables students to build customized degrees from multiple institutions.
- **Internationalization and Campus Expansion**
 - Foreign universities can now establish campuses in India via:
 - **GIFT City** (e.g., Deakin, Wollongong, Queen's Belfast)
 - **UGC-regulated model** (e.g., University of Southampton in NCR Delhi)
 - Indian institutions (e.g., IITs) are also setting up campuses abroad.
- **Joint and Dual Degrees**
 - Eligibility: NAAC A grade, top 100 NIRF, or top 1000 global ranking.
 - Joint Degree: One diploma with joint transcript.
 - Dual Degree: Two diplomas with recognized credits.
 - Requirements: 30% credits must be completed physically; up to 40% may be online.
- **Implementation Infrastructure**
 - International Student Offices are mandatory to manage global programs.
 - UGC regulations and ABC platform support credit transfer and collaboration.

- **Barriers to Inbound Mobility**
 - Visa delays, accommodation, food, hygiene, and scholarships remain key issues
 - Study in India Portal and ICC scholarships are initial steps to address these.
- **Role of AIU in Internationalization**
 - AIU represents 1,000+ Indian universities.
 - Leads cultural, academic, and sports exchanges.
 - Conducts India Immersion Programs and global summits.
- **Matching Institutions for Collaboration**
 - AIU assists foreign universities in identifying credible Indian partners.
 - Collaborates with Universities Canada, Australia, UK, FICCI, and others.

Key Takeaways

- India is actively inviting meaningful partnerships grounded in outcomes, not formality.
- NEP and UGC reforms offer a flexible foundation for collaboration.
- Institutions must move from “pocket MOUs” to strategic, action-driven partnerships.
- Faculty and student mobility, joint centers, and immersion programs are key vehicles.
- Equity in partnerships with Indian institutions beyond IITs is essential.

Dr. Meenal Srivastava, Secretary-Treasurer of SICI, concluded the session by outlining the day’s agenda and presenting a clear roadmap for the interactive workshops and breakout sessions, organized under three thematic pillars: *Building Partnerships, Strategies for Success, and Challenges and Opportunities*.

This section presents the core insights, strategic recommendations, and actionable outcomes from the three thematic sessions, outlining a clear path forward for sustained collaboration.

Thematic Focus 1: “Building Partnerships”

Dr. Shanthi Johnson, Vice President of Research and Innovation at the University of Windsor, Chaired the thematic session on “*Building Partnerships*” by reflecting on the deeper meaning of partnership—as not just symbolic collaboration, but a relationship rooted in trust, co-ownership, and shared vision. She urged participants to approach the day’s discussions with purpose, reminding them that the forum themes emerged from collective input and are designed to address real institutional priorities. She introduced the three breakout themes:

- i. **Research Collaboration** – focusing on joint publications, strategic areas, and formal/informal networks.
- ii. **Articulation Agreements** – covering joint/dual degrees, academic alignment, and accreditation frameworks.
- iii. **Professional Capacity Building** – emphasizing curriculum co-development, faculty training, and policy engagement.

Dr. Johnson concluded by encouraging attendees to think boldly, reflect critically, and move from dialogue to action, building not only partnerships, but friendships that sustain future collaboration.

Breakout Session i

Research Collaboration- *Facilitated by Dr. Shanthi Johnson*

This session explored opportunities and challenges in fostering Canada–India research collaboration, bringing together academics and institutional leaders from diverse disciplines. Discussions emphasized the need for reciprocal partnerships, joint research models, and policy support to scale cross-border collaboration.

Key Points Discussed

- Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Strong interest in joint, thematic research clusters aligned with global challenges (e.g., AI, health, climate).
- Reciprocity in Mobility: While Indian students increasingly go to Canada, Canadian mobility to India remains limited; short-term faculty exchanges and co-supervised PhD models were proposed.
- Barriers: Bureaucracy, visa delays, grant eligibility mismatches, and lack of seed funding hamper progress.
- Models of Success: Indo-Australian joint PhD programs were cited as scalable templates; University of Toronto India Foundation showcased as a model for seed-funded collaboration.
- Inclusive Access: Emphasis on involving rural students and non-elite institutions in collaborative frameworks.
- Funding Innovation: Advocacy needed for flexible, multi-lateral seed funds and better articulation of collaborative outcomes.

Key Takeaways

- Develop a Canada–India Researcher Portal to connect institutions and streamline collaboration.
- Expand joint PhD programs, short-term teaching residencies, and immersion programs.
- Focus on priority thematic areas (e.g., climate, healthcare, finance) with measurable, mutual benefits.
- Promote celebration and visibility of outcomes, joint publications, exchanges, and projects.

Action Items

- Identify emerging collaborative research areas.
- Lead joint publication and interdisciplinary initiatives.
- Propose framework for Indo-Canadian joint research centers.
- Begin work on a research synergy platform.

Key Questions for Further Exploration

- How can institutions reduce regulatory and funding bottlenecks in international research?
- What strategies can support equitable involvement from underfunded or rural institutions?
- How can Canada and India align funding policies for smoother bilateral collaboration?

Breakout Session ii

Articulation Agreements and Dual Degrees- *Facilitated by Dr. Manzoor A. Shah*

The breakout discussions focused on strengthening institutional partnerships between Canada and India through improved articulation agreements, more effective use of MOUs, and strategies to overcome funding and mobility barriers. Participants examined structural, regulatory, and operational challenges while sharing innovative strategies to make partnerships more inclusive, reciprocal, and sustainable.

Key Points Discussed

- **Articulation Agreement and Dual Degrees**
 - Misaligned academic calendars, unclear credit equivalencies, and Senate approval delays were major barriers.
 - Institutions highlighted the need to align programs with accreditation standards and institutional priorities.
 - Calls were made for clearer definitions, credit pathways, and inclusive access to avoid limiting exchanges to elite institutions.
- **MOUs and Partnership Effectiveness**
 - Many MOUs were deemed inactive or symbolic.
 - Agreements of Cooperation (AOCs) focused on specific faculty collaborations were viewed as more impactful.
 - Institutions stressed the need for preconditions, clear deliverables, and faculty engagement to move beyond ceremonial agreements.
- **Funding and Mobility Barriers**
 - Disparities in funding between STEM and social sciences, and among elite vs. second-tier institutions, were noted.
 - Visa delays, lack of short-term mobility grants, and inflexible structures limited access for students and faculty.
 - Successful models from University of Saskatchewan and Indo-Australian PhD programs were cited as replicable templates.
- **Institutional Leadership and Sustainability**
 - Partnerships must be supported by both top-down vision and grassroots engagement.
 - Leadership turnover and poor succession planning were identified as threats to continuity.
 - Institutions advocated for embedding internationalization into strategic plans and performance metrics.

Key Takeaways

- Shorter, modular exchange formats can broaden student participation.
- Review and refine MOUs to ensure they are functional, with mutual accountability.
- Foster capacity building for early-career faculty to support long-term collaboration pipelines.
- Develop a portal or platform for matching institutional interests and promoting thematic research clusters.

- Recognize and track success stories to encourage internal buy-in and external visibility.

Action Items

- Review inactive MOUs and establish criteria for renewal or sunset.
- Develop joint degree models tailored to institutional flexibility and regional goals.
- Initiate mentoring programs to support faculty navigating funding applications and regulatory landscapes.
- Launch calls for exchange proposals focused on equity, underrepresented fields, and second-tier institutions.
- Build synergy platforms for joint proposals and cross-border research engagement.

Key Questions for Further Exploration

- How can academic partnerships be sustained across leadership and policy shifts?
- What models best align institutional flexibility with regulatory frameworks?
- How can funding access be expanded for non-elite institutions and underfunded disciplines?
- What best practices exist for managing IP in international joint research projects?

Breakout Session iii

Professional Capacity Building- *Facilitated by Dr. Simon Sigue*

This session explored strategies to strengthen professional development and faculty mobility between Indian and Canadian institutions. Discussions centered on addressing current imbalances in exchange programs, aligning training with evolving skill demands, and overcoming policy and funding constraints that limit sustainable collaboration. The session featured contributions from academic leaders and NGO representatives across both countries.

Key Points Discussed

- **Skills Development in Priority Sectors**
 - Strong emphasis on tailored training in health sciences, AI, data analytics, and community education.
 - Need for alignment with local labor market needs in both countries.
- **Reciprocity in Exchanges**
 - Current programs favor Indian students/faculty going to Canada; calls for more Canadian faculty presence in India.
 - Proposed bilateral programs with government and institutional support.
- **Faculty Mobility as a Tool for Capacity Building**
 - Faculty exchanges are vital for curriculum development, research mentorship, and student engagement.
 - Community-based academic initiatives were highlighted as high-impact models.
- **Barriers to MOU Implementation**
 - Many MOUs remain inactive due to lack of follow-up, funding, or clear deliverables.
 - Institutions must clarify expectations and build institutional infrastructure for execution.

- **Recognition and Incentives**
 - Indian faculty face challenges in securing sabbaticals and PD funding.
 - Calls for frameworks to provide value-added credentials and career advancement incentives.
- **Government & Policy Engagement**
 - Advocacy needed to support short-term summer courses, faculty grants, and streamlined mobility pathways.
- **Role of Faculty Champions**
 - Faculty leaders are critical in sustaining partnerships, aligning needs with institutional priorities, and championing collaboration internally.

Takeaways

- Professional development must be equitable, need-based, and outcome-oriented.
- Canadian institutions should expand support for incoming Indian faculty and co-develop structured programs.
- Funding mechanisms need to prioritize faculty exchanges, especially for under-resourced institutions.
- MOUs must shift from symbolic agreements to action-oriented frameworks.
- Short, modular training programs were suggested as effective and scalable.

Action Items

- Identify skill areas for student employability with Canadian partners.
- Draft a joint student training proposal.
- Explore new institutional partnerships for professional development in India.
- Share government-sponsored exchange opportunities.
- Research funding options for two-way faculty mobility.

Key Questions for Further Exploration

- How can faculty development programs ensure reciprocity and long-term impact?
- What infrastructure or policy changes are needed for MOU execution?
- How can early-career faculty be better supported to lead international collaborations?
- What are the priority sectors (e.g., education leadership, public health, technology) for future partnership development?

Thematic Focus 2: “Strategies for Success”

Dr. Balakrishnan Prithiviraj, Asst. Dean International, Dalhousie University chaired the thematic area “*Strategies for Success*,” which focused on enhancing the impact and sustainability of international academic partnerships. To enhance the impact of international partnerships, he emphasized the importance of establishing shared definitions of success, engaging in proactive, cross-functional planning, and empowering faculty-led leadership. Also, institutions should treat MOUs as strategic frameworks with clear deliverables, establish cross-functional teams early, and implement KPIs with feedback loops for continuous improvement. Emphasizing inclusive, multilateral collaboration and celebrating small wins can further strengthen institutional engagement and long-term success, he added.

This theme was further explored through three focused breakout discussions:

- i. **Navigating Institutional Priorities and Policies:** Regulatory approvals; Funding mechanisms, Institutional infrastructure
- ii. **Partnership Models and Frameworks:** Joint proposals; Knowledge exchange programs; MoUs
- iii. **Student and Faculty Mobility:** Curriculum internationalization; Strategic areas of mutual interest; Internships, Joint field studies

Breakout Session i

Navigating Institutional Priorities and Policies- *Facilitated by Drs. Michael Bradley and Pratap Kumar Pati*

The breakout session on *Institutional Priorities and Policies*, examined the internal enablers and barriers to sustaining international academic partnerships. Discussions emphasized the tension between top-down mandates and bottom-up innovation, the need for structured institutional support, and the importance of embedding internationalization into core strategic frameworks.

Key Points Discussed

- **Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up Models**
 - Participants acknowledged the benefits of both administrative leadership and faculty-driven initiatives. However, the absence of a coordinated approach often leads to fragmented efforts. A hybrid model was proposed to combine strategic direction from leadership with grassroots innovation from faculty.
- **Over-Reliance on Faculty Champions**
 - Many partnerships hinge on the enthusiasm and networks of a single faculty member. While effective initially, such reliance makes initiatives vulnerable to attrition when that individual departs or disengages.
- **Institutional Gaps in Sustaining Collaborations**
 - Several institutions lack dedicated offices, formalized procedures, or long-term strategies to support global engagement. This gap limits the scalability and continuity of partnerships, particularly across leadership transitions.

Key Takeaways

- Institutional success in internationalization depends on building internal infrastructure; not just signing MOUs.
- Faculty champions remain essential, but must be supported by institutional frameworks, such as international offices, recognition mechanisms, and succession planning.
- Strategic alignment and implementation roadmaps should be embedded in partnership agreements to ensure long-term viability.

Action Points

- Develop a cross-departmental community of practice to coordinate and share best practices in internationalization.
- Institutionalize core partnerships through governance structures (e.g., Senate-endorsed agreements, recurring reviews).
- Ensure MOUs include actionable implementation plans, backed by resource allocation and leadership commitment.
- Conduct internal reviews of existing policies and administrative capacity to support international collaboration.

Questions for Further Exploration

- How can institutions build resilience into international partnerships to withstand leadership turnover or restructuring?
- What governance models best support a balance between institutional oversight and academic freedom in global collaborations?
- How can success be measured and rewarded across both faculty-led and institution-driven international initiatives?

Breakout Session ii

Partnership Models and Frameworks- *Facilitated by Dr. Suchorita Chattopadhyaya*

This session offered strategic insights into optimizing international partnership models in higher education, drawing on experiences from institutions such as the University of Calgary and Athabasca University. Emphasis was placed on transforming Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) from symbolic gestures into purposeful, results-oriented tools. The discussion highlighted the importance of faculty-driven, equitable collaborations and the need for institutional frameworks that can sustain long-term, globally engaged partnerships.

Key Points Discussed

- **Purposeful Use of MOUs**
 - MOUs are critical in contexts involving intellectual property, funding, or formal joint programs, but are not prerequisites for faculty-initiated collaboration. Their value lies in being tied to deliverables, timelines, and review protocols.

- **Faculty-Driven Partnerships**
 - Most successful collaborations originate from faculty-level engagement. Institutions should support these initiatives with appropriate administrative backing, incentives, and strategic alignment.
- **Inactive Agreements and Rationalization**
 - A large proportion of MOUs remain inactive. Institutions like the University of Calgary are conducting reviews to reduce inactive agreements by 20–30%.
- **Digital Platforms and Competency Mapping**
 - Centralized portals to showcase faculty expertise, sabbatical availability, and research interests were proposed to facilitate better partner matching and proposal development.
- **Inclusive and Flexible Models**
 - To improve access, institutions are encouraged to pursue virtual, hybrid, and low-cost mobility options. Curriculum mobility and virtual exchanges help overcome financial and regulatory barriers.
- **Implementation and Legal Considerations**
 - Clear guidelines, designated oversight departments, and early legal agreements are key to effective partnership management.

Key Takeaways

- MOUs should be used strategically, not symbolically.
- Faculty initiative is the most reliable foundation for enduring partnerships.
- Equity, accessibility, and virtual engagement must be integral to partnership design.
- Digital infrastructure can enhance transparency and partner discovery.
- Internal processes and incentives are essential for sustaining collaboration.

Action Points

- Conduct regular MOU reviews to retire or revamp inactive agreements.
- Build structured incentives and capacity-building programs for faculty.
- Develop institutional or inter-institutional portals for partner matching.
- Include clear deliverables, contact points, and timelines in all new MOUs.
- Promote hybrid and virtual mobility as accessible alternatives to physical exchange.

Questions for Further Exploration

- How can institutions balance strategic oversight with faculty autonomy?
- What mechanisms ensure continuity of partnerships despite leadership or funding changes?
- How can virtual models maintain academic rigor and cultural engagement?
- What tools are needed to evaluate the long-term impact of MOUs?

Breakout Session iii

Student and Faculty Mobility- *Facilitated by Dr. B. Hariharan*

This session explored persistent and emerging challenges in advancing international mobility programs in higher education, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Facilitators led a focused discussion on aligning institutional calendars, enhancing the flexibility of exchange models, redefining mobility in modern contexts, and leveraging digital tools to connect faculty across borders. The conversation highlighted the need for responsive and inclusive frameworks that reflect current global realities and institutional capacities.

Key Points Discussed

- **Term Mismatches Across Academic Calendars**
 - The lack of synchronization between academic calendars across institutions and countries continues to hinder smooth coordination for student and faculty exchanges.
- **Call for Flexible Mobility Models**
 - There was consensus on the need for more adaptable mobility formats—including virtual, hybrid, and short-term exchanges—to accommodate diverse academic schedules, funding constraints, and student needs.
- **Faculty Matchmaking Platforms**
 - Participants emphasized the importance of creating or adopting centralized platforms (akin to the Association of Commonwealth Universities) that map faculty expertise and collaboration interests, streamlining partner identification and joint project development.
- **Variations in Defining Mobility**
 - Institutions interpret mobility differently—some prioritizing physical relocation, others embracing virtual or hybrid engagements. This lack of consensus complicates program design, reporting, and strategic alignment.
- **Barriers to Mobility**
 - Key barriers include funding limitations, visa restrictions, lack of institutional support structures, inequities in access, and academic calendar misalignment.
- **Post-COVID Challenges**
 - The pandemic has reshaped mobility dynamics, increasing the relevance of virtual formats while also revealing deep structural inequities. Institutions must now design hybrid-ready, scalable models that are resilient to future disruptions.

Key Takeaways

- **Flexibility is Fundamental:** Institutions must move away from rigid, traditional mobility formats toward inclusive and adaptive models.
- **Technology as a Connector:** Digital platforms can unlock new collaboration opportunities if they are accessible, well-integrated, and institutionally supported.

- **Shared Definitions are Critical:** A unified understanding of mobility types is essential to avoid confusion and ensure comparability across institutions.

Action Points

- **Calendar Mapping and Modular Design:** Develop overlapping academic calendars or modular course structures to accommodate cross-institutional participation.
- **Pilot Diverse Mobility Models:** Launch and assess short-term, virtual, and hybrid exchange programs tailored to different disciplines and institutional contexts.
- **Invest in Faculty Match Platforms:** Create or partner with consortia to build searchable faculty collaboration portals.
- **Standardize Mobility Language:** Create a shared glossary or typology for mobility formats to streamline communication across partnerships.
- **Promote Equity-Focused Solutions:** Design mobility options that are accessible to underfunded institutions and students, using virtual participation as a lever for inclusion.

Questions for Further Exploration

- What are the most effective ways to align academic calendars across diverse global institutions?
- How can institutions build sustainable hybrid models that balance flexibility with academic rigor?
- What governance structures best support equitable and scalable mobility programs?
- How can technology be leveraged to not only connect faculty, but also build trust and long-term collaboration?
- What are the key indicators for measuring success in post-COVID mobility initiatives?

Thematic Focus 3: “Challenges and Opportunities”

Dr. Srikrishna Deva Rao, Vice Chancellor, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad chaired this thematic session. Dr. Rao set the stage by framing the session’s central theme, exploring both persistent challenges and emerging opportunities in international higher education collaboration. His deliberation emphasized India’s expanding academic landscape under NEP 2020 and highlighted strategic avenues for Canadian institutions to engage, from dual degrees and global classrooms to research chairs and campus partnerships. Government-supported programs such as GIAN and SPARC were noted for enabling cross-border faculty exchange and research collaboration, while initiatives like digital universities and innovation hubs (e.g., T-Hub Hyderabad) signaled new models of engagement. He also underscored the importance of moving beyond bilateral partnerships toward inclusive, multilateral, and interdisciplinary collaboration frameworks that can respond to global challenges such as climate change and sustainability.

He introduced the breakout structure, which invited participants to engage with the following three thematic areas:

- i. **Regulatory Policy Landscape**
- ii. **Funding and Mobility Barriers**
- iii. **Cultural and Methodological Variations**

Breakout Session i

Regulatory Policy Landscape- *Facilitated by Dr. Parag Waknis and Dr. Srikrishna Deva Rao*

This breakout session examined how national and institutional regulatory frameworks impact the internationalization of higher education, with a specific focus on India and Canada. Drawing on experiences from faculty, policymakers, and administrators, the session explored the uneven application of policies, barriers to student mobility, institutional readiness, accreditation reforms, and the potential for digital innovation through AI and ISO certification. Participants emphasized the urgent need for streamlined, culturally sensitive, and future-ready frameworks to enable equitable and effective cross-border partnerships.

Key Discussion Points

- **Regulatory Complexity and Misalignment**
 - India’s NEP 2020 encourages international engagement but is interpreted inconsistently across institutions.
 - In Canada, federal-provincial fragmentation causes conflicting internationalization strategies.
- **Mobility and Visa Barriers**
 - Stringent visa processes and shrinking residency-through-education pathways deter inbound mobility, particularly toward Canada.
 - India’s *Study in India* portal, while centralizing admissions, may increase bureaucratic hurdles.

- **Accreditation and Institutional Bottlenecks**
 - India's shift from UK to US-style accreditation systems has caused confusion, particularly in legal education.
 - Binary activation models categorize universities, risking marginalization of smaller or rural institutions.
- **Institutional Infrastructure Gaps**
 - A call to mandate fully functional international student offices in all universities.
 - Streamlined internal processes, including ISO adoption, can improve efficiency and transparency.
- **AI Integration in Academia**
 - Faculty remain hesitant to adopt AI, while students often use it without proper understanding.
 - AI is useful for administrative and pedagogical functions but requires training and ethical guidance.
- **Cultural Sensitivity and Global Partnerships**
 - Partnerships must respect national values and cultural contexts.
 - Caution against international agreements that overlook local priorities or ethics.

Key Takeaways

- Centralized Policy Coordination is essential in both countries to streamline compliance and decision-making.
- Equity in Internationalization should be prioritized by ensuring access for non-elite institutions and rural universities.
- Operational Efficiency can be achieved through ISO-based quality frameworks and streamlined MOU processes.
- Faculty Empowerment in AI must be supported through structured training and curriculum integration.
- Institutional Readiness depends on establishing international offices, modernizing admin systems, and cultural alignment in global agreements.

Action Points

- Develop a white paper on regulatory reform (*Led by Dr. Rao and Wankar*)
- Operationalize international offices across all Indian universities under NEP 2020.
- Pilot ISO certification in select institutions to test administrative reform.
- Launch AI literacy programs for faculty and students.
- Introduce a streamlined MOU approval process through joint stakeholder decision-making.

Questions for Further Exploration

- What regulatory elements in India and Canada currently support or hinder international collaboration?
- How can Indian institutions streamline compliance without compromising autonomy or flexibility?

- What models can improve federal-provincial coordination in Canada's international education strategy?
- How can institutions balance efficiency and innovation with cultural integrity in global partnerships?
- What incentives or frameworks can increase equitable participation of underfunded institutions in internationalization efforts?

Breakout Session ii

Funding and Mobility Barriers- *Facilitated by Dr. Ajay Dalai*

This session brought together Indian and Canadian academic leaders, policy advisors, and institutional representatives to discuss persistent challenges and emerging opportunities in faculty and student mobility, international funding, and collaborative research. It emphasized the need for more equitable funding structures, seed support at the institutional level, strategic use of mentorship, and institutional mechanisms to enhance mobility, particularly for underrepresented disciplines and institutions. The session was grounded in the broader goal of strengthening Indo-Canadian higher education partnerships through sustainable, inclusive models.

Key Points Discussed

- **Funding Inequities and Institutional Gaps**
 - Disproportionate funding favoring STEM and elite institutions (e.g., IITs), leaving social sciences and regional institutions under-supported.
 - Indian institutions lack dedicated faculty mobility budgets; most rely on research grants for travel.
- **Barriers to Student and Faculty Mobility**
 - Visa delays, reimbursement-based models, and logistical complexities hinder mobility—especially for social sciences and short-term visits.
 - Underutilization of existing exchange agreements due to lack of awareness, funding, and structured pathways.
- **Seed Funding and Mentorship Models**
 - Strong recommendation to allocate 3 lakh per year per institution for seed mobility funding.
 - Structured mentorship programs needed to guide early-career faculty, particularly in second-tier institutions.
- **Success Stories and Funding Models**
 - University of Saskatchewan's model shows strong ROI: travel/project grants generate significant research funding.
 - Programs like IC-IMPACTS and Mitacs (Mitacs India) were cited as effective, though the latter is now inactive.
- **Structural and Policy Recommendations**
 - SICI should play a stronger intermediary role in managing joint funding calls and mitigating regulatory barriers (e.g., FCRA).

- Emphasis on short-term, cost-effective programs over long classroom-based exchanges.
- **Portals and Matchmaking**
 - Need for centralized digital platforms to map funding calls, faculty expertise, and potential collaborators.
 - Current lack of systematic partner identification impedes collaboration.

Key Takeaways

- Institutions must fund and support bottom-up initiatives, not just elite-led, top-down partnerships.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration must be balanced with recognition of domain-specific strengths.
- Small-scale wins—such as pilot exchanges and travel grants—can build momentum and confidence.
- Dedicated internationalization structures and transparent funding frameworks are critical for sustainability.

Action Points

- Establish institutional seed funds for mobility and joint project development.
- Launch annual calls for internationalization proposals, with built-in mentorship components.
- Revive bilateral programs like Mitacs India with co-funding from both governments.
- Create centralized platforms for funding opportunities, faculty matchmaking, and grant tracking.
- Promote flexible, short-term visa schemes for collaborative teaching and research engagements.
- Develop eligibility guidelines for partner institutions to ensure broader participation beyond elite campuses.

Questions for Further Exploration

- How can we ensure equitable funding access for underrepresented disciplines and non-elite institutions?
- What institutional mechanisms can maintain accountability and reciprocity in international MOUs?
- How do we align calendars and systems across countries to support joint degrees and exchanges?
- How can we incentivize sustained faculty engagement and leadership in long-term partnerships?
- What models best support decentralized, faculty-led initiatives while maintaining strategic oversight?

Breakout Session iii

Cultural and Methodological Variations- *Facilitated by Dr. Lakshmi Narsimhan (Mohan)*

This session, moderated by Lakshmi Narasimhan, examined the cultural dimensions of Indo-Canadian academic collaboration. Through shared experiences and reflective dialogue,

participants explored challenges in student engagement, teaching methods, assessment practices, and institutional structures. The session underscored how differing cultural norms, communication styles, and educational philosophies shape academic exchanges, and highlighted the need for deeper cultural understanding to foster more meaningful and inclusive partnerships.

Key Points Discussed

- **Communication and Engagement Styles**
 - Differences in indirect vs. direct communication and how it affects classroom interaction.
 - Diverging views on using attendance and participation as metrics for assessment.
- **Experiential Learning and Assessment Practices**
 - Indian institutions face challenges adapting to experiential learning models common in Canada.
 - Variations in instructor autonomy and flexibility in setting assessments across both systems.
- **Cultural Adaptation and Sensitization**
 - Importance of cultural immersion through host families, buddy systems, and orientation activities.
 - Examples of misunderstandings due to unfamiliarity with local customs and norms.
- **Institutional Funding Models**
 - Contrasts between public and private funding structures in India and Canada.
 - Implications for access to mobility programs and the role of government subsidies.
- **Power Distance and Addressing Authority**
 - Cultural discomfort among Indian students addressing professors informally (e.g., using first names).
 - Canadian flexibility in this area can cause confusion for incoming students.
- **Modalities of Exchange and Internships**
 - Interest in short-term, thematically focused exchange programs over full-semester models.
 - Successful research internships depend on faculty mentorship and alignment with student interests.
- **Local Contexts and Permissions in Field Research**
 - Projects involving tribal communities in India must navigate stringent government regulations and permissions, especially when linked to conservation efforts.

Key Takeaways

- Cultural context matters: success in academic collaboration depends on mutual understanding of educational, social, and institutional differences.
- Faculty exchanges can build empathy and cross-cultural teaching competencies.
- Structured student support (orientation, buddy systems, cultural activities) is critical to adaptation.

- Short-term programs and flexible assessment frameworks can increase participation and relevance.
- Awareness of funding disparities and regulatory constraints is vital in program design.

Action Points

- Compile a shared resource outlining cultural challenges and collaboration opportunities (*Led by Lakshmi Narasimhan*).
- Investigate the feasibility of faculty exchange programs to improve pedagogical alignment (*Led by Venkatesh Mehta*).
- Develop and pilot host family programs to support international student integration (*Led by Graham Barber*).
- Explore creation of short-term cultural immersion programs as a bridge to longer exchanges (*Led by Jennifer Copeland*).

Questions for Further Exploration

- What specific cultural barriers do Indian students face when integrating into Canadian academic environments?
- How can Indian and Canadian universities design culturally sensitive mobility and exchange programs?
- What role can faculty mentorship play in bridging cross-cultural academic expectations?
- How can cultural orientation be made a core part of international student programs?
- What systems can support sustainable field research within indigenous or protected communities?

LOOKING AHEAD:

Strengthening the Future of Indo-Canadian Academic Collaboration

As SBEF 2025 concluded with renewed energy and optimism, participants offered a wealth of constructive feedback and strategic ideas to sustain the momentum and deepen bilateral academic engagement.

This section captures key suggestions from both Canadian and Indian stakeholders, highlighting areas for improvement, policy innovation, and long-term planning. From expanding the Forum's scope and enhancing networking tools to addressing funding challenges and promoting inclusivity, these insights lay the foundation for building more resilient, equitable, and action-oriented partnerships leading into SBEF 2026 and beyond.

Consolidated Feedback from Canadian and Indian Participants

- **Enhancing Networking and Collaboration Opportunities**
 - Participants across both countries emphasized the importance of structured networking formats, such as speed-networking, one-on-one meetings, and discipline-specific breakout groups.
 - They recommended advance circulation of participant profiles and institutional details to support targeted engagement.
 - Suggestions also included co-locating delegates to encourage informal exchanges and proposing cluster-based institutional coordinators to support regional collaboration beyond the Forum.
- **Extending the Forum for Deeper Engagement**
 - Many advocated for expanding the Forum to at least three full days to enable more meaningful discussions, unstructured peer interaction, and thematic deep dives.
 - Extended time was seen as essential for trust-building and developing actionable outcomes.
- **Creating Tools for Research Matchmaking**
 - Participants proposed the creation of a centralized digital portal to map faculty expertise, research interests, and available funding opportunities.
 - Such a tool, ideally hosted by SICI, would streamline collaboration, reduce duplication, and support long-term partnership alignment.
- **Addressing Funding and Mobility Gaps**
 - The lack of mobility funding—especially for Indian students due to the discontinuation of Mitacs support—was a recurring concern.
 - Participants advocated for bilateral or matched funding schemes and the development of short-term, low-cost mobility models as alternatives to traditional semester-long exchanges.

- **Strengthening Understanding of Academic Ecosystems**
 - Orientation sessions were suggested to enhance mutual understanding of Indian and Canadian academic systems, including governance, credit transfer, and regulatory frameworks.
- **Focusing on Sustainable, Faculty-Led Partnerships**
 - Many emphasized that lasting collaborations must be faculty-driven but strategically aligned with institutional priorities.
 - Embedding internationalization in long-term institutional planning, supported by administrative infrastructure, was seen as key to sustaining momentum.
- **Embedding Measurable Outcomes and Accountability**
 - Participants urged the inclusion of KPIs, timelines, and progress-tracking mechanisms in all collaborative agreements.
 - A structured post-Forum follow-up system—potentially through a digital platform with biannual check-ins—was recommended to ensure ongoing alignment and impact measurement.
- **Enhancing SICI's Strategic Role**
 - Participants encouraged SICI to take on a stronger facilitative role, not just as a funding agency, but as a long-term enabler of Indo-Canadian academic collaboration.
 - Suggestions included increasing the visibility of existing programs, articulating a clearer strategic vision, and supporting interdisciplinary engagement across sectors.
- **Promoting Inclusivity and Disciplinary Balance**
 - There was a strong call to broaden participation from underrepresented disciplines, particularly agriculture, rural development, and community-based research.
 - Participants stressed that disciplinary diversity is essential for partnerships that address shared social and developmental priorities.

Policy Recommendations

- Advocate for bilateral and multilateral seed funding programs to support faculty and student mobility.
- Promote policy frameworks that enable short-term mobility, co-supervised research initiatives, and virtual exchange models.
- Recommend the introduction of specialized visa categories to facilitate collaborative research and training visits.
- Encourage both governments to harmonize accreditation and regulatory frameworks to support joint and dual degree programs.

Next Steps

- Engage Forum participants to take leadership or actively contribute to advancing the identified action items.

- Establish structured follow-up mechanisms (e.g., digital portal, biannual check-ins) to track progress and maintain engagement.
- Identify and develop thematic priorities for continuity in SBEF 2026.
- Formulate policy recommendations to enhance international mobility for students and faculty, and to support joint programming and funding models.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

SBEF 2025 reaffirmed the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute's role as a catalyst for deepening bilateral academic relations through pragmatic, inclusive, and forward-looking engagement. The Forum not only highlighted the transformative potential of joint research, faculty mobility, and student exchanges, but also brought to light structural and cultural challenges that must be addressed to sustain meaningful partnerships.

Participants echoed a collective call to shift from symbolic agreements to measurable outcomes, to invest in institutional capacity and grassroots faculty leadership, and to embrace innovation in mobility, curriculum design, and collaboration models. As institutions in both countries navigate evolving education policies, funding landscapes, and geopolitical shifts, the SBEF 2025 outcomes offer a timely roadmap for collaborative action, policy alignment, and mutual growth.

The Forum has laid a strong foundation for continuous engagement, which will be further advanced through ongoing initiatives and the next iteration of the Forum in 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Mahmuda

Mahmuda Aldeen
Program and Member Relations Officer
SICI Canada Office
Email: maldeen@ucalgary.ca

Annex – A: Program Agenda (Day1)



SHASTRI BILATERAL EDUCATION FORUM (SBEF) 2025

***Bridging Borders with Sustainable Academic
Collaborations***

Inaugural and Networking Session

The National Museum, Janpath, New Delhi

March 27, 2025 (4:30 – 7:00 pm)

Opening Session (4:30 – 5:00 pm)

Welcome Remarks (4:30 - 4:35 pm)

*Prof. Srikrishna Deva Rao, President, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI), Vice
Chancellor of NALSAR Hyderabad, India*

Overview of the Forum: Concept and Origin (4:35 - 4:40 pm)

Prof. Ajay Agarwal, Vice President, SICI, Queen's University, Canada

Greetings from the Government of India: (4:40– 4:50 pm)

Mr. Chinmoy Naik, Acting High Commissioner of India to Canada

Greetings from the Government of Canada: (4:50-5:00 pm)

Mr. Ryan Ward, Acting Minister (Commercial), High Commission of Canada to India

Panel Discussion (5:00-6:00 PM)

Beyond the MoUs: *Strategies for Impactful Academic and Research Partnerships*

Moderator:

- Mr. Ajay Bisaria (Moderator), Corporate Strategic Advisor, Distinguished Fellow at ORF and Ex Ambassador/High Commissioner to Canada, Pakistan, Poland, and Lithuania

Panelists:

- Prof. Bidyadhar Subudhi, Director, National Institute of Technology Warangal, India
- Prof. Sandra den Otter, Vice-Provost, Global Engagement, Queens University, Canada
- Prof. Parag Wanknis, Dean, International ~~MM~~ Ambedkar University, India
- Prof. Allen Britten, Professor, Cape Breton University, Canada

Vote of Thanks & Next Day's Overview (6:00 – 6:10 pm)

Prof. Meenal Srivastava, Secretary-Treasurer, SICI, Associate Dean and Professor, Athabasca University, Canada

Book Launching (6:10-6:30 pm)

- Edited Volume, **“Women in Contemporary Indian Films and Media: Representations and Responses”** by Dr. Aysha Viswamohan, Professor (Film Studies, Drama & Popular Culture), Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.\

The publication is the outcome of Shastri Conference and Lecture Series Grant.

Networking Reception and High Tea (6:30 – 7:00 pm)

- A unique opportunity to network, build professional relationships, and engage informally with fellow participants, esteemed speakers, and distinguished guests.

Annex – A: Program Agenda (Day2)



SHASTRI BILATERAL EDUCATION FORUM (SBEF) 2025
Bridging Borders with Sustainable Academic Collaborations
March 28, 2025
The National Museum & Indian Institute of Heritage,
Janpath, New Delhi

A. Opening Session (9:00 – 9:25 am)

Venue: Auditorium

Welcome & Introduction to the Keynote Speaker- Dr. Ajay Agarwal, Vice President/President Elect, SICI (9:00-9:05 am)

Keynote Address- Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities (9:15-9:20 am)

Agenda Briefing- Dr. Meenal Srivastava, Secretary-Treasurer, SICI (9:20-9:25)

B. Thematic Breakout Sessions for Discussions

i. Thematic Focus: Building Partnerships 9:25 – 10:55 am

Session Chair- Dr. Shanthi Johnson), Vice President-Research and Innovation, University of Windsor: Introduces the thematic focus, outlines breakout session themes, and introduces facilitators (15 mins) 9:25-9:40 am

Venue: Auditorium

Breakout Session (75 mins) 9:40 – 10:55 am

a. Group 1: Research Collaborations

Facilitator- Dr. Shanthi Johnson

(Formal institutional agreements; Informal networks; Strategic research areas; Joint publications, Bilateral research projects)

Venue: Room No-1

b. Group 2: Articulation Agreements: Joint/Dual Degrees

Facilitator- Dr. Manzoor A. Shah

(Academic calendar alignment; Degree structures; Accreditation; Credit transfers, Policy Alignment, National Education Policy 2020)

Venue: Room No-2

c. Group 3: Professional Capacity-building

Facilitator: Dr. Simon P Sigue

(Professional development courses; Curriculum co-development; Influencing policy) **Venue: Room No-3**

Health Break - 10.55 - 11.30 am (35 mins)

ii. Thematic Focus: Strategies for Success (11.30 – 1:00 pm)

Session Chair- Dr. Balakrishnan Prithiviraj, Asst. Dean International, Dalhousie University: Introduces the thematic focus, outlines breakout session themes, and introduces facilitators: (15 mins) **11:30 – 11:45 am**

Venue: Auditorium

Breakout Session (75 mins) 11:45 am – 1:00 pm

a. Group 1: Navigating Institutional Priorities and Policies,

Facilitator-Dr. Balakrishnan Prithiviraj

(Regulatory approvals; Funding mechanisms; Institutional infrastructure)

Venue: Room No-1

b. Group 2: Partnership Models and Frameworks,

Facilitator-Dr. Suchorita Chattopadhyay

(Joint proposals; Knowledge exchange programs; MoUs)

Venue: Room No-2

c. Group 3: Student and Faculty Mobility

Facilitator: Dr. B. Hariharan

(Curriculum internationalization; Strategic areas of mutual interest; Internships, Joint field studies)

Venue: Room No-3

Lunch Break – 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Venue: TBA

iii. Thematic Focus: Challenges and Opportunities (2:00 - 3:30 pm)

Session Chair- Dr. Srikrishna Deva Rao, Vice Chancellor, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad:

Introduces the thematic focus, outlines breakout session themes, and introduces facilitators, (15 Mins) 2:00 – 2:15pm

Venue: Auditorium

Breakout Session (75 mins) 2:15 – 3:30 pm

a. Group 1: Regulatory Policy Landscape

Facilitator: Dr. Parag Waknis

Venue: Room No-1

b. Group 2: Funding and Mobility Barriers

Facilitator: Dr. Ajay Dalai

Venue: Room No-2

c. Group 3: Cultural and Methodological Variations

Facilitator: Dr. Lakshmi Narsimhan (tbc)

Venue: Room No-3

Health Break (3.30 – 4:00 pm)

iv. Thematic Focus: The Way Forward (4:00 – 5:25 pm)

Session Chair – Dr. Meenal Srivastava: Associate Dean, Student & Awards at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Athabasca University: Moderates the final presentations by the group facilitators

Venue: Auditorium

- **Presentation of Key Action Items:** 45 Mins (5 mins x 9 Facilitators) ·
- Q&A, Open Discussion, and Synthesis:** 35 Mins (4:50-5:25pm)

C. Closing Remarks: Dr. Ajay Agarwal (5:25-5:30 pm)

Venue: Auditorium

Dinner Reception - 7:00 – 9:00 pm

You are invited to attend a **Dinner Reception** in honour of SEBF guests at Canada House on the evening of March 28, 2025. It will be an evening of networking and conversation.

Venue: Canada House, 4 APJ Abdul Kalam Marg, New Delhi - 110011 (*The Official Residence of the Canadian High Commissioner in India*)

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

SICI looks forward to welcoming you to this special event.

Annex – B: List of SBEF 2025 Participants

List of Participants – SBEF 2025

Name	Title	Country	Institution/University	Email Address
Darren Finlay	Director, Transnational Education Partnerships	Canada	Toronto Metropolitan University	d.finlay@torontomu.ca
Ajay Agarwal	Associate Professor, Geography and Planning	Canada	Queens University	agarwala@queensu.ca
Ajay Dalai	Professor, Chemical and Biological Engineering	Canada	University of Saskatchewan	ajay.dalai@usask.ca
Allen Britten	Professor, Chemistry	Canada	Cape Breton University	allen_britten@cbu.ca
Balakrishnnan Prithiviraj	Asst. Dean International, Assoc. Professor, Agriculture	Canada	Dalhousie University	bprithviraj@dal.ca
Chandrima Chakraborty	Assoc. Dean, Faculty of Humanities, English and Cultural Studies	Canada	McMaster University	chandri@mcmaster.ca
David McGuire	Assoc. Vice- President, International	Canada	University of the Fraser Valley	david.mcguire@ufv.ca
Faisal Beg	Country Director, India Liason Office, UBC	Canada	University of British Columbia	faisal.beg@ubc.ca
Graham Barber	Director, Global Engagement	Canada	McGill University	graham.barber@mcgill.ca
Jennifer Copeland	Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science, Prof. Kinesiology and Physical Education	Canada	University of Lethbridge	jennifer.copeland@uleth.ca
Jitendra Paliwal	Professor, Vice- President, Research and Innovation	Canada	University of Winnipeg	j.paliwal@uwinnipeg.ca
Miriam Gordon	Asst. Dean International, Prof. Animal Science and Aqua Culture	Canada	Dalhousie University	miriam.gordon@dal.ca
Mathieu Boisvert	Professor, Religious Studies	Canada	Université du Québec à Montréal	boisvert.mathieu@uqam.ca

Meenal Shrivastava	Professor, Political Economy and Global Studies & Assoc. Dean, Student and Awards. Faculty of Graduate Studies	Canada	Athabasca University	meenals@athabascau.ca
Parvinder Arora	Dean, Faculty of Management	Canada	Laurentian University	parora2@laurentian.ca
Sandra den Otter	Vice-Provost, Global Engagement	Canada	Queens University	denotter@queensu.ca
Buffy St-Amand	Senior Director International	Canada	University of Calgary	buffy.stamand@ucalgary.ca
Simon Pierre Sique	Professor, Marketing, Vice-Dean Operations, Faculty of Graduate Studies	Canada	Athabasca University	simons@athabascau.ca
Chris Busch	Associate Vice-President, Enrollment Management	Canada	University of Windsor	cbusch@uwindsor.ca
Shanthi Johnson	Professor, Kinesiology, Vice-President, Research and Innovation	Canada	University of Windsor	shanthi.johnson@uwindsor.ca
Varghese Manaloor	Professor, Social Science, John P. Tandberg, Chair in Economics	Canada	University of Alberta	manaloor@ualberta.ca
Venkatesh Meda	Professor, Chemical and Biological Engineering	Canada	University of Saskatchewan	venkatesh.meda@usask.ca
Zoë MacLeod	Associate Faculty, Associate Vice-President, Professional and Continuing Studies	Canada	Royal Roads University	zoe.macleod@royalroads.ca
Michael Bradley	Professor, Physics and Engineering, Dean of Engineering	Canada	University of Saskatchewan	michael.bradley@usask.ca
Gauravi Lobo	Country Head, University of Toronto, India	Canada	University of Toronto	gauravi.lobo@uoftindiafoundation.com
Deepak S. Gupta	Associate Vice-President - Research	Canada	Kwantlen Polytechnic University	deepak.gupta@kpu.ca
Asokan Mulayath Variyath	Professor	Canada	Memorial University of Newfoundland	variayath@mun.ca
Merli Tamtik	Associate Dean Research	Canada	University of Manitoba	Merli.tamtik@umanitoba.ca

Manoj Aggarwal	Professor in Charge, Institute Incubation and Innovation Council	India	IIT, Jammu, Kashmir	manoj.aggarwal@iitjammu.a c.in
N.Venkatachalapathy	Professor in the Department of Food Engineering	India	NIFTEM, Tamil Nadu	venkat@iifpt.edu.in
Manvi Seth	Pro-Vice Chancellor	India	Indian Institute of Heritage, New Delhi	registrar.nmi@gov.in
Mehul R.Naik	Associate Professor	India	Nirma University, Ahmedabad	mehul.naik@nirmauni.ac.in
Rosewine Joy	Associate Professor, School of Business and Management	India	Christ University, Banagalore	rosewine.joy@christuniversit y.in
Dipak Pinjari	Associate Professor, Department of Polymer & Surface Engineering	India	Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai	dv.pinjari@ictmumbai.edu.in .
P.U.Krishnaraj	Professor and University Head in the Department of Agricultural Microbiology	India	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dhanwad	krishnarajpu@uasd.in
Arvind Susarla	Associate Professor at the Centre for Regional Studies, School of Social Sciences,	India	University of Hyderabad	arvss@uohyd.ac.in
Samrat Sabat	Professor, Centre for Advanced Studies in Electronics Science and Technology (CASEST), School of Physics	India	University of Hyderabad	slssp@uohyd.ac.in
V.Ponnusami	Professor and Associate Dean, School of Chemical & Biotechnology	India	SASTRA Deemed University, Tamil Nadu	vponnu@chem.sastra.edu
Tejpal Dhewa	Associate Professor, Department of Nutrition Biology	India	Central University of Haryana, Haryana	tejpaldhewa@cuh.ac.in
Rajani Mullerpatan	Professor and Director, MGM School of Physiotherapy and the MGM Centre of Human Movement Science	India	MGM Institute of Health Sciences, Mumbai	rmullerpatan@mgmsopnm.ed u.in

Namita Nimbalkar	Professor, Department of Philosophy	India	University of Mumbai, Maharashtra	namita.nimbalkar@philosophy.mu.ac.in
Srinivas Hebbar	Assistant Professor- Selection Grade, Department of Pharmaceutics	India	Mahipal University of Higher Education (MAHE)	hebbar.srinivas@manipal.edu
Arpita Amarnani	Associate Professor, Finance & Accounting	India	Goa Institute of Management, Goa	arpita@gim.ac.in
Kanupriya Katyal	Professor, Marketing area	India	Goa Institute of Management, Goa	kanupriya@gim.ac.in
Shantanu Wahal	Consultant specializing in International Cooperation	India	IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand	shantanu.wahal.ir@srict.iitr.ac.in
Sneha Bhagat	Assistant Professor, Centre for Canadian, US & Latin American Studies	India	Jawaharlal Nehru University	sneha@mail.jnu.ac.in
Jagdish S. Joshi	Professor Director of the UGC- Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre	India	University of Gujrat	jsjoshi@gujaratuniversity.ac.in
Ritesh Vyas	Assistant Professor, Department of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	India	Pandit Deendayal Energy University	ritesh.vyas@sot.pdpu.ac.in
Rajni Singh	Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences	India	Indian Institute of Technology, Dhanbad, Jharkhand	rajnisingh18@iitism.ac.in
P. Suresh	Professor, Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering and Dean of International Relations	India		drpsuresh@veltech.edu.in
Ravinder Singh	Professor and Head of the Department of English	India	University of Jammu, Jammu	ravinder.singh@jammuuniversity.ac.in
Ananya Ghoshal	Assistant Professor, English, School of Humanities and Social Sciences	India	IIT Indore, Madhya Pradesh	aghoshal@iiti.ac.in

Lakshmi Narsimhan (Mohan)	Director of International Relations	India	SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai	lakshmi.narsimhan@srmist.edu.in
Juhi Sadiya	Assistant Professor, Department of Museology	India	Indian Institute of Heritage, Delhi	juhi.sadiya.nmi@gov.in
Bidyadhar Subudhi	Director	India	National Institute of Technology Warangal	director@nitw.ac.in
Neha Sardana	Associate Professor, Department of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering	India	IIT Roper, Punjab	nsardana@iitrpr.ac.in
Aysha Viswamohan	Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences	India	IIT Madras, Chennai	draysha@iitm.ac.in
N. Sree Rajani	Head I/C	India	SPMVV	rajju12000@yahoo.com
Parag Waknis	Associate Professor, Economics and the Dean, International Affairs Division	India	Ambedkar University, Delhi	parag@aud.ac.in
Ajit Pratap Singh	Senior Professor, Department of Civil Engineering	India	BITS Pilani, Rajasthan	aps@pilani.bits-pilani.ac.in
Anup Naha	Professor, Department of Pharmaceutics	India	Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE)	anup.naha@manipal.edu
Sudeshna Saha	Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Sciences	India	SRM University, AP	sudeshna.s@srmmap.edu.in
Ranjeet Thapa	Professor, Department of Physics	India	SRM University, AP	ranjit.t@srmmap.edu.in
B.Hariharan	Senior Professor, Institute of English	India	University of Kerala	harirang@gmail.com
SriKrishna Deva Rao	Vice-Chancellor	India	NALSAR Hyderabad	vc@nalsar.ac.in
Manzoor Shah	Professor, Department of Botany	India	University of Kashmir	mashah@uok.edu.in
Vijaylakshmi Iyengar	Senior Professor, Strategic Management, Policy, and Business Analytics	India	Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management (LBSIM), Delhi	iyengarvijayalakshmi@lbsim.ac.in
K. M. Sellamuthu	Professor, Department of Soil Science and	India	Tamil Nadu Agricultural University	kmsellamuthu@tnau.ac.in

	Agricultural Chemistry			
Suchorita Chattopadhyay	Professor, Department of Comparative Literature	India	University of Jadavpur	suchorita.chattopadhyay@jadavpuruniversity.in
Vijita Singh Aggarwal	Senior Professor, School of Management Studies	India	Guru Govind Singh I.P. University	director.international@ipu.ac.in
Anita Singh	Assistant Professor of Law	India	Hidayatullah National law University, Raipur	anita.singh@hnlu.ac.in
Pratap K. Pati	Professor and Head, Department of Biotechnology	India	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar	pkpati@yahoo.com
Vandana Gambhir	Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology	India	University of Delhi	demo@lb.du.ac.in
Manish Kumar	Associate Professor, Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management (OB & HR)	India	Indian Institute of Management, Ranchi	manish@iimranchi.ac.in
Tanwee Hargave	Manager, International Relations Office (IRO)	India	Indian Institute of Management, Ranchi	
Pampa Sinha	Associate Professor, School of Electrical Engineering	India	KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha	pampa.sinhafel@kiit.ac.in
Aarti Katoch	Manager	India	AcSIR	aarti@acsir.res.in

Annex C: Photo Highlights



SBEF 2025 Group Photos



SBEF Forum 2025



Opening remarks by Dr. Srikrishna Deva Rao



Overview by Dr. Ajay Agarwal



Greetings from Canadian High Commission



Panel Discussion



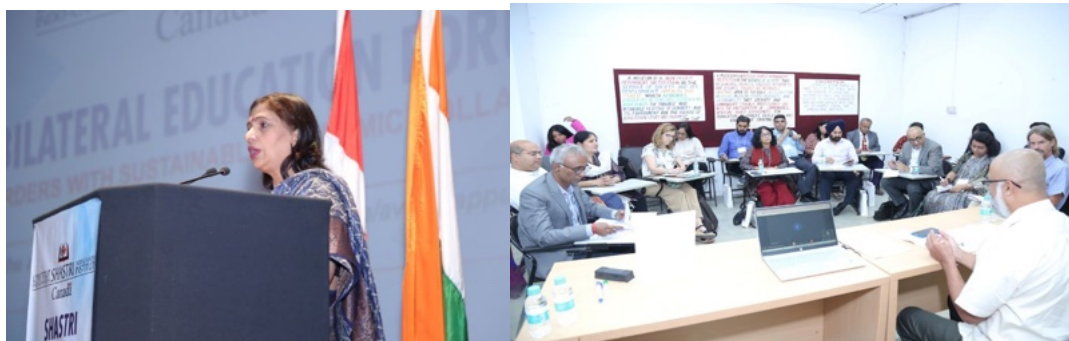
Dr. Meenal Srivastava-Facilitation



Book Launching



Audience Engagement



Keynote address- Dr. Pankaj Mittal

Breakout Sessions



SBEF Engagements

