

Shastri News - October 2009

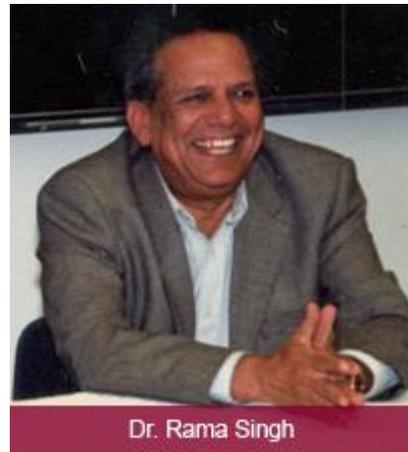
Should academics also be activists?



Should academics strictly study, teach and observe or are they also obligated to derive opinions, react to their findings, and influence others to do the same? Dr. Rama Singh, professor in the Department of Biology at McMaster University, surely knows where he stands. Although lately he has been doing a lot less standing and a lot more running around. When you mix academics and activism what you don't end up with is a lot of free time.

"Science is made up of both facts and value," explains Dr. Singh. "Objectivity is required while obtaining facts, but expressing the value of those facts is not completely objective, it's context dependent...how to make society a better place – that's what science is all about."

Dr. Singh started out as a Biologist and Geneticist who taught a few courses with philosophical overtones like "human diversity & human nature." Gradually, however, he found his academic life blending more and more with his passion for humanity. In 1993, he decided to become a member of the Coordinating Council of McMaster's Centre for Peace Studies and initiated fundraising for instituting an Annual Mahatma Gandhi Lectures on Non-violence.



On his own time, through the Centre for Peace Studies, and with funding from some Shastri Institute Grants, Dr. Singh began traveling to India to work with individuals who shared in his passion. Together they took up a movement known as the Mahila Shanti Sena; the 'Women's Peace Brigade.' The group conducts training with women in the area of peace, non-violence and participatory democracy, and often receives funding from McMaster University and the Canadian International Development Agency to send interns from Canada, or to hold conferences and workshops in India.

In Canada, Dr. Singh is also working hard to build awareness and promote peace initiatives. For the last 17 years, Dr. Singh has been the chair of Hamilton's annual Gandhi Peace Festival, which is sponsored by the Centre for Peace Studies, the India-Canada Society and the City of Hamilton. The festival centres around Gandhi's Birthday on October 2nd. This year, nearly 350 people gathered at McMaster University's downtown campus, to participate in music, children's dances, multi-faith prayers and a peace walk around the downtown core. They were joined by Dr. Rajmohan Gandhi, historian, biographer and grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, who spoke at the peace festival and delivered the 12th Annual Mahatma Gandhi Lecture at McMaster University.

Coordination of the festival requires an enormous amount of Dr. Singh's time and energy, but he is thankful for the opportunity to keep it going year after year. Not every university chooses to allocate resources to promote community activism and development work. Still, Dr. Singh believes that things are changing and that Centres like McMaster's Centre for Peace Studies are becoming more common in Canada and around the world. For him, it is a step in the right direction. He would like Gandhi Peace Festivals to become part of the Canadian cultural scene in all major metropolises and communities.

To learn more about the Centre for Peace Studies, the Women's Peace Brigade or the Gandhi Peace Festival, please click here: <http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/gandhi>.

Shastri fellow and language pioneer to receive France's highest honour

When Dr. Asha Pande first moved to Rajasthan in 1977, not a single academic institution was teaching French. "Initially," she told the Times of India, "the scene here was very depressing as people were not very enthusiastic about the language." Today, however, over 25 schools and eight colleges are teaching French in Rajasthan thanks to Dr. Pande's pioneering efforts.

On October 14, 2009, Dr. Pande received a letter indicating that the President of the Republic of France had recently signed a decree nominating her to be knighted in the National Order of the Legion of Honour, the highest decoration in France. Soon she will join the ranks of a select few foreign nationals to receive this distinction; a group including presidents, war heroes, artists and philanthropists.



Dr. Asha Pande (right) and her husband, Ashok, at Niagara Falls in Canada.



Established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, the National Order of the Legion of Honour is the highest decoration in France.

"I was thrilled, absolutely on cloud nine," Dr. Pande explained in another interview with the Times. French embassy officials in India had called to collect her biographic information around eleven months ago, but the letter in her mailbox during that Diwali week was beyond any of her wildest dreams.

Dr. Asha Pande was in the first graduating class to complete a Master's in French Language, Literature and Civilization at Jawaharlal Nehru University back in 1976.

The following year she moved to Jaipur where her husband had been posted. She initially taught at a public school and later joined the faculty at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur (UoR) where she now heads the dramatics department as well as the centre for French and Francophone studies. Her Legion decoration recognizes both her contribution to academic and cultural fields, the expansion of French in Rajasthan and her overarching contribution to the relationship between India and France.

More recently, in 2007, Dr. Pande travelled to Canada through a Shastri Institute Faculty Enrichment Fellowship, to make connections and gather resources on French-Canadian literature.

“My experience in Canada was very enriching. I regularly visited McGill, UQAM and CRILCQ and my interactions with academicians from all these Institutes, professional as well as personal, gave me an insight into the Canadian Educational system and the warm, informal and very hospitable culture of the country. It was a pleasure discovering Canada’s great authors like Anne Hebert and Gabrielle Roy and poets like Emile Nelligan.” ~ Dr. Asha Pande

Since her return to UoR, Dr. Pande has been inviting many Canadian scholars and authors to visit Rajasthan. The latest in the list of authors/poets was Monique Juteau who conducted a creative writing workshop at the University of Rajasthan.

Alumni database project initiated

We are very pleased to announce that the Shastri Institute has begun the process of archiving all our grant and award alumni on our website.

[View the alumni section](#)

So far we have covered from 2005 to 2009 and we will be working our way backwards during the next few months. Do not be alarmed if your name is not yet listed if the grant or award you received was either very recent or prior to 2005. We will be providing monthly updates on our progress.

This project is still in its preliminary phase and we appreciate your feedback as we build it. If you discover any errors in the information we have posted please let us know. We welcome and encourage photos from our alumni to add to their personal profiles.

Please feel free to contact Sarah Hawkins, Communications Officer at the Canada Office.





Dr. Sandeep Agrawal

What dictates successful economic integration for Indian immigrants in Canada?

Why do some Indian immigrants experience upward mobility in Canada while others never manage to fully integrate economically? Dr. Sandeep Agrawal, founding director of the graduate program in Urban Development at Ryerson University has recently completed a research project studying some of these trends.

While a typical successful Indian immigrant is young, well educated and well versed in English, some immigrants will all of these traits still fail to achieve upward mobility. Dr. Agrawal notes that other factors like the economic environment at the time of immigration, the demand for a specific skill set, and the recognition of foreign credentials all impact an individual's immigration experience.

Dr. Agrawal's study makes some interesting comparisons between the integration strategies of Indians and Chinese immigrants in Canada. He has found that many Chinese immigrants have achieved upward mobility in Canadian society by interacting primarily within their own ethnic economic sphere. Conversely, most Indian immigrants attempt to engage Canada's mainstream economy. As a result, some Chinese achieve economic success in Canada without developing superior English language skills. For Indian immigrants, fluency in English is crucial.

Those interested in learning more about Dr. Agrawal's findings will have to read his report entitled "Indian Immigrants in Canada: The Shades of Integration," which is forthcoming as an Ontario Metropolis Centre Working paper. A subsection of the report entitled "High-Income Indian Immigrants in Canada" is also under-review at South Asian Diaspora journal for publication. For a sneak peak, please contact Dr. Agrawal directly: sagrawal@ryerson.ca

Dr. Sandeep Agrawal has been a faculty member in the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Ryerson University for almost 10 years. He has a variety of planning experiences in federal, county, and municipal governments in the United States, where he earned his PhD. He has also practiced urban planning in Canada and India. Several of his publications are in the most prestigious journals in the planning, geography and ethnicity areas, including Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design, the Canadian Journal of Urban Research and the Journal of International Migration and Integration.

Le village dans le ciel

[Read this article in English.](#)

Dédiée à l'art et à la découverte de différentes cultures, Rachel Bussi eres,  tudiante en anthropologie   l'Universit  Laval, a d velopp  une v ritable passion pour la photographie. Contemplative et patiente dans sa d marche, elle parcourt un long processus d'essais : derri re chaque photographie s'en trouvent beaucoup d'autres. Depuis



Rachel Bussi eres

son voyage initiatique en Inde où elle a travaillé comme photographe au sein de deux différentes associations, the Tibetan Women's Association à Dharamalsa et the International Society for Ecology and Culture au Ladakh, sa relation à ce médium est devenue très intime.

Son projet d'exposition Le village dans le ciel est un portrait du village de Skindiyang, un village dans le ciel du Ladakh. C'est grâce à son association avec the International Society for Ecology and Culture qu'elle a pu s'y rendre et y vivre pendant quelques jours. L'exposition découle de la volonté de Rachel à représenter la nature humaine dans son quotidien. En cherchant à comprendre ses sujets et à en dresser le portrait, elle a pris le temps de discuter avec eux sous la forme d'une entrevue intime avant de capter des images. Lors de sa cohabitation avec les habitants de Skindiyang, elle s'est familiarisée avec la langue, la nourriture et les habitudes de vie et elle a appris à se confondre au paysage afin d'immortaliser des scènes de vie.

Le village dans le ciel relate l'histoire des habitants d'un village au Ladakh, mais également, celle d'une Occidentale allant à leur rencontre et vivant seule dans une famille pendant plusieurs jours; c'est la confrontation entre la tradition et la modernité, c'est le choc culturel, l'adaptation au milieu pour s'en rapprocher et saisir l'émotion qui y règne. Par l'image, Le village dans le ciel communique l'expérience humaine des Ladakhis tout en dévoilant la nature de sa relation avec eux.



Ces images, fixées sur du papier de riz naturel provenant du Népal et entièrement fait à la main, ont été imprimées en Inde avec de l'encre à pigments. Afin de rendre hommage à chacune d'entre elles, celles-ci ont été soigneusement imprimées une par une: elles comportent tout l'univers dans lequel elles ont été créées.

Le village dans le ciel a été présenté le 15 octobre dernier au pavillon central de l'Université Laval et sera exposé à la galerie Tzara, située sur la rue Saint-Paul, au printemps prochain.



Will Canadian copyright reforms spell bad news for distance education between India and Canada?

Athabasca University President, Frits Pannekoek, released an [open letter](#) to students late August encouraging them to speak out against potential reforms to Canada's copyright legislation. Last year, Bill C-61 was introduced into Parliament to reform copyright legislation, but was rejected after tens of thousands of Canadian citizens wrote to their Members of Parliament complaining. In response,

the government has launched an “Ask Canada” project welcoming feedback from the Canadian people on how we ought to modernize copyright legislation. Pannekoek wants students to speak out to ensure that new reforms do not inhibit Canada’s ability to engage in distance education.

“This legislation could well end our ability to contribute to building Canadian and overseas learning communities. Countries with wiser copyright regimes that promote educational use will catapult ahead of Canada. No longer will we be internationally competitive because of the restrictions contained in the legislation. We need to seek balance between the protection of rights, the rights of learners, and our international competitiveness in distance and e-learning.” ~Frits Pannekoek

Evelyn Ellerman , a professor at Athabasca University, has been partnering with Dr. V. Bharathi Harishankar of the University of Madras for many years on joint course materials for distance education courses. She admits that the possible reintroduction of Bill C-61 is “a real concern.” Ellerman and Harishankar are trying to be exceptionally cautious with their current projects and are hoping that all their work will not be in vain.

When asked her thoughts on the potential changes to legislation, however, Dr. Ellerman states that her primary concerns are for the students whom she feels will be hurt the most:

Imagine a student beginning a four year degree, in which older course materials are continually disappearing as the student moves through the degree. What would the student have to refer to? Imagine our future doctors, lawyers, biologists, nurses, chemists, and historians being unable to refer back to the information in their previous courses! Bill C61 would not only make teaching and learning by distance unsustainable, it would make research impossible. If libraries are meant to limit access to electronic resources to five days, the whole move to digital libraries becomes meaningless. ~Dr. Ellerman

The Department of Canadian Heritage, responsible for copyright legislation, ended its open consultations with the Canadian public on September 13, 2009. In response to the concerns raised by Frits Pannekoek, spokesperson Charles Drouin states, “We want to ensure that Canada’s copyright laws are forward-looking and flexible, and that they foster creativity, innovation, and economic growth. We are reviewing the over 8000 submissions we received, including the one from Mr. Pannekoek. We are also aware of the concerns expressed by many students of the Athabasca University and Canadians interested in e-learning and distance education.”

Government representatives will not be making a statement about new legislation until they have had a chance to review all of the feedback from the “Ask Canada” consultations.

Chadha now a key India resource for the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

His business may be 'nuts,' but don't be fooled, Baljit S. Chadha is one of Canada's tycoons when it comes to engaging India's markets. In his years with Balcorp, Mr. Chadha has not only built a name for himself as a successful businessperson, but also as a community leader and a public policy difference maker. Now he turns his attention to an advisory role with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF) to help the policy think tank expand its resources in relation to India.



Mr. Chadha's appointment as a Distinguished Fellow of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada is part of a strategic initiative. While focusing on Asia as a whole, the Asia Pacific Foundation hasn't always had the resources to "give India the attention they would have liked," admits Canadian President and CEO Yuen Pau Woo. However, the Foundation has been working for the last three years to grow its India-related resources to become a stronger Canada-India knowledge broker.

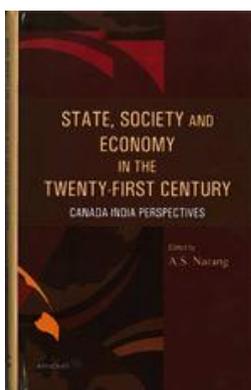
Mr. Chadha has worked with the Canadian Government on policy related issues in the past. He has been a key player in a number of international trade missions and treaty development processes. He made valued contributions to the international Trade Missions led by the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Quebec. He was also involved in the opening of the Canadian Consulate General in Chandigarh and was named a member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada in 2003.

Mr. Chadha looks forward to contributing his knowledge, expertise and insight to the Asia Pacific Foundation, which he holds in high regard. He sees momentum building in the India-Canada relationship, with various initiatives and projects happening; "what we need," he explains, "is to connect all of them under one unified goal." This will be his focus as he begins working with AFP.

Mr. Chadha obtained his undergraduate science degree (B.Sc.) at the University of Bombay before immigrating to Canada. He has a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Concordia University in Montreal and a Diploma in Business Administration (DBA) from the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario (UWO).

In 1976, he founded Balcorp Limited, an international trading enterprise and marketer of various products and services with gross annual sales of up to \$100 million

New Publication



State, Society and Economy in the Twenty-First Century: Canada-India Perspectives

Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute 40th Anniversary Commemorative Volume

Edited by: A.S. Narang

New Delhi: Manohar Publisher and Distributors © 2009

(From the insert)

Both India and Canada are regional powers with a global leadership role. Canada, the second largest country in the world, and India, the second most

populous, share a number of common values including a firm belief in democracy, the rule of law and respect for pluralism. The two are among the rare examples of successful federal polities with a parliamentary system of government.

While during the first ten years of India's Independence, the two countries had developed cordial and close relations to the extent of being called 'Indo-Canadian entente,' the later decades of the twentieth century witnessed almost a freezing of those. The twenty-first century has begun with a renewed interest in the two countries. There is great scope in areas of economic and trade cooperation as well as security-military and non-military issues including environment.

The essays in this volume bring out new trends in strengthening Indo-Canadian relations and hope for a positive growth. At the same time they highlight the challenges in the way. This Volume is part of the various efforts initiated to enhance political and cultural understanding between two different nations belonging to two different civilizations, but capable of contributing significantly in world affairs in a positive manner.