

Shastri News - March 2009

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Shastri Institute Photo Competition Results

The Shastri Institute would like to thank all those who submitted photos to our photo competition this year. The submissions depict some of the quality work being done by scholars and students in India and Canada. We invite you to visit our [Photo Gallery](#) on the Shastri Institute website for the competition results. Congratulations to Prabjit Barn, Shastri Institute Youth Intern, who was our competition winner.



Award Announcements

This month the Shastri Institute distributed its bi-national research-based awards. The response to these grant competitions was overwhelming this year and we would like to congratulate the successful award recipients for standing out among so many exceptional applications.

Partnership Development Seed Grants

This grant serves as a catalyst for new partnerships between Canadian and Indian academics by sponsoring activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences and planning meetings that bring the two partners together. The goal of this grant is to build awareness of collaborative opportunities, to promote sharing of knowledge and expertise and to showcase Canada-India research. Five grants were distributed this year to the following projects:

Dr. Karanjot Kaur Brar and **Dr. Smita Bhutani**, Panjab University, and **Dr. Elizabeth Finnis**, University of Guelph

Women and Sustainable Agriculture: Experiences from the Field.

Dr. Phil Dearden, University of Victoria, and **Dr. Rajesh Tandon** and **K.B. Kaustuv**, Participatory Research in Asia

Creating an India-Canada Community-based Research Partnership Program for Environmental and Social Sustainability

Dr. Purnima George, Ryerson University, and **Dr. Mary Alphonse**, University of Mumbai
Partnership Development between the University of Mumbai College of Social Work and Ryerson University School of Social Work.

Dr. M. Parameswaran, Simon Fraser University, and **Dr. V. Lakshminaryan**, Raman Research Institute

Collaborative Research and Development of Micro-Fluidic Unit for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Infantile Diarrheal Epidemic in Indian Rural Areas

Dr. Robin Wright, University of Windsor, and **Dr. Santiago Joseph**, Bharathidasan University
Tamil Nadu Child and Family Health Study: Socioeconomic Factors Interrelatedness to Health Status and Quality of Life of Children and Mothers in Triuchirappalli and Four Adjacent Districts

Millennium Development Goals Research Grant

This grant provides funds to a bi-national research team to undertake a two year public policy relevant research project towards one or more of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals. This year the following project was funded:

Dr. Ratna Ghosh, McGill University, and **Dr. Paromita Chakravarti**, Jadavpur University
Women's Empowerment and Education: Panchayats and Women's Self Help Groups in India

The Millennium Development Goals Research Grant and the Partnership Development Seed Grants are funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

On the Map...

Have you ever wondered where the Shastri Institute is represented within India and Canada? We have over 80 well-reputed member institutions of higher learning spread across both countries. Learn more about them through our [new interactive map](#) available on our website.



A Life-Changing Opportunity for Two Budding Academics

A year ago, Katie Shaw and Cornelia Dragne were graduate students at the University of Victoria and India was a place far removed from their minds. Their studies, however, led them both to join a research team with a bi-national, India-Canada scope. The impact of this project changed both their lives.



Cornelia Dragne (centre right) and Katie Shaw (centre left) with a group of women from their study

The project, a comparative study of the formal and informal political learning of women, required the students to conduct interviews with female elected officials both in India and in Canada. Katie learned of the opportunity through the key investigators, Drs. Darlene Clover and Catherine McGregor, who were also her MA supervisors. Cornelia was attracted to the project because of her focus on women and education. Neither student had ever conducted research abroad before December of last year when they boarded a plane to India for the first time.

Besides the initial culture shock, both women acknowledge that the most challenging aspect of conducting interviews in rural India was not speaking the local languages. They were interviewing anywhere from two to thirty women at a time with the help of a translator. Cornelia describes a common situation where, “the women were so eager to share their thoughts that they would all talk at once for several minutes and afterward the translator would try to summarize the conversation ...It was hard not to feel like you were missing a lot.” These challenges were easier to overcome thanks to the team’s partnership with the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA). Having partners who were embedded in the culture and were able to prepare details prior to the team’s arrival was an incredible asset for which Cornelia and Katie were most grateful.

For Katie, the experience has built an awareness of the challenges that women face balancing politics with childcare, education and personal health. She was intrigued by how pivotal family approval was for the successful political activism of women in both countries. Since her personal studies focus on youth engagement, she also took note of the inter-generational impact of their research. The project has made her consider pursuing career paths in international fields.

As a PhD Student working hard on her thesis, Cornelia was surprised at how much the women of India boosted her moral.

As an academic, I sometimes wonder how much difference my work can really make. At first impression, the obstacles facing the women I met seemed almost insurmountable, but the women were not discouraged, they showed an incredible amount of agency and optimism... It was a transformative learning experience. ~ Cornelia Dragne

This project has been funded in part by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute.

India Welcomes Two Canadian Visiting Lecturer

Two distinguished scholars from Canada toured India in February as the Shastri Institute's visiting lecturers. Dr. Daniel Drache, Professor of Political Science at York University and Associate Director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, arrived in Delhi February 8. He traveled from Delhi to Bangalore lecturing on international markets, globalization and public movements at 11 universities and Canadian Studies centres along the way. Professor Drache drew from his new book, *Defiant Publics*, to offer timely insight on American politics from a Canadian perspective. His lectures captured the attention of faculty, research students, social activists,



Dr. Daniel Drache lecturing at IIM Indore

artists and postgraduate students.

Ms. Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm is a distinguished Canadian Anishinaabe writer and an authority on aboriginal literature and art. Her stories and poetry pay homage to the story-telling traditions of the First Nations people. During her February visit to India Akiwenzie-Damm spoke on contemporary First Nations art, drama and literature at ten different universities and Canadian Studies centres. She delivered the Keynote Address at a two-day International Seminar on 'The Reality of the Indigenous Woman: Canada and India' at Jadavpur University in Kolkata.

Both academics had the opportunity to lecture at the reputed Reaney Canadian Centre at Gujarat University around the time of the James Reaney Memorial Seminar. The Seminar was held to pay tribute to James Reaney, a decorated literary and theatrical Canadian figure who supported the Centre through a donation of his personal library. Reaney passed away in June 2008 at the age of 81. Gujarat University held a Memorial Seminar on February 17, 2009. The dignitaries on the dias were Ms. Kateri Akwenzie, Dr. O. P. Juneja, a well known Canadianist, and Dr. S. D. Desai, a well-known drama critic. Dr. Daniel Drache lectured at the Reaney Canadian Centre three days earlier.

Addressing Obstacles in Canada - India Academic Relationships

In November 2007, the Canadian Bureau of International Education organized, along with the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, a Forum on Canada-India Higher Education Linkages. At that Forum, it became evident that Canadian post-secondary institutions conducting academic business with and in India are facing a number of problems, both operational and policy-related. Just around that time, the Asia Pacific Foundation commissioned a number of papers dealing with these issues, a selection of which can be found [here](#).

February 2009, a group of 25 people involved with Canadian post-secondary institutions doing academic business in and with India met in Banff to address the major obstacles that prevent Canadian post-secondaries from being as successful as our competitors in our Indian ventures. (Many thanks to HRSDC for funding this workshop and to Kathleen Scherf, President and Vice-Chancellor, Thompson River University, for organizing the event). Most commentators agree that the scattershot, unorganized approach that Canadian post-secondaries have taken in order to advance their individual projects is not a hallmark of the more successful nations doing academic business in India, such as Australia, France, and the UK. Accordingly, this results-based workshop focused on what Canadian post-secondaries could do collaboratively to improve the field for all. The participants chose to focus on developing strategies to address a small number of very serious obstacles, concentrating their efforts where they will provide the greatest leverage. Participants were heartened by the convergence of various interests in improving the performance of Canada's Indian international education portfolio, from changes in CIC student visa policy and procedure, to the preponderance of federal and provincial delegations visiting India, to Minister Kenney's recent announcement that Canada will seek to increase its numbers of Indian students studying in Canada.

The Banff Roadmap, February 2009 presents the participants' assessment of the most serious obstacles, and their proposed strategies for addressing them. For the full text document please [click here](#).

The Ontario Maharashtra Goa (OMG) Student Exchange Program

[Lalu Mansinha](#)

Academic Director

A substantial increase in student interest in the Ontario Maharashtra Goa (OMG) Student Exchange Program fortuitously coincides with the opening of the OMG India Office, located in the newly opened International Center of Pune University. For 2009-10 we are seeing a breadth of student applications in architecture, law, mining and mechanical engineering, visual arts, political science, human rights, women's rights, and development issues.

Each selected student on the OMGprogram is awarded a bursary of \$2000 (for one term) or \$2500 (for two terms). Member institutions do not charge tuition fees toOMG exchange students, both in India and in Canada. For the OMGstudents from Maharashtra/ Goa, the tuition scholarship is substantial, amounting to about \$12,000/ year at Ontario universities. For more information please visit <http://www.omgprogram.org>



A student writes after spending a term in Ontario on the OMG Exchange Program:

“I have returned to India after my fall semester but I am so much amazed by my experience that I want to go back for the winter semester.... I would like to thank on behalf of all the OMG participants for giving us such a LIFE time opportunity to study in one of the finest universities of Canada.”

A mother in Canada contacted me in November 2008, worried about her son at Pune University. I met John Quillevere (not his real name) at Pune in the campus apartment which he was sharing with a group of French students. Here are excerpts from my letter to John’s mother;

I saw a handsome happy smiling young man, completely at ease in India. He loves the country and the people. He eats off the street vendors; he walks around and explores the slums. And everywhere people warm up to him. In his explorations of the slums, so many times he has been invited into their homes, offered instant hospitality, food and drinks, by complete strangers. John noted that in Canada people do not talk to strangers. ‘In Pune’, he says, ‘they strike up conversations with me anywhere’. So he has lots of friends, in class and out. John expressed appreciation of the OMG program for allowing him this opportunity to study in India.

With the recent appointment of Ms. Vaishali Potnis as the OMG India Program Coordinator, based in Pune, we expect a significant increase in interest in theOMG Exchange Program in Maharashtra and Goa. We are also helped by the Canada Education Center (CEC), with Maria Mathai in the Delhi office. Suchita Tirkey, of the CEC Bangalore office is a part time OMG Program Consultant. In Ontario Agnes Poleszczuk, assisted by Dagmar Todd administer the program from offices provided by York University. The original concept and the initial structure of OMG were initiated by Dr. Sheila Embleton and Dr. Roopa Trilokekar of York University. John Manning of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Government, of Ontario, has been unfailing in his support of international student mobility programs at Ontario universities.

Senior Curator of the Canadian Museum of Civilization visits India

Dr. Stephen Inglis, Senior Curator of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, has recently returned from a trip to India to give the keynote address at a conference titled: "The Representation of Region and Nation in Literary and Cultural Studies." The conference was held at Madras University and was organized by Canadian Studies stalwart Professor S. Armstrong of the English Department. Dr. Inglis took the opportunity to visit faculty involved in Canadian Studies at Madurai-Kamaraj University in Madurai. While passing through Delhi, he met with Joint Secretary, Ms. Gaitri Kumar (Foreign Affairs) and Joint Secretary Mr. V. Madan (Culture) to discuss the possibility of a "Festival of India" in Canada in 2010-11.



I made good progress through meetings with archivists, scholars, collectors and artists on my research on popular art in 20th century South India, particularly toward a biography of K. Madhavan, cinema banner, calendar and magazine cover artist (1907-1979). ~ Dr. Stephen Inglis

New Publication

A new article based on research funded by the Shastri Institute SHARP programme has recently been published:

Agriculture in Uttarakhand, India – Biodiversity, Nutrition and Livelihoods, by Mohammad Rais, Bohumir Pazderka and Gary vanLoon in the Journal of Sustainable Agriculture 33, 1-17 (2009).

Full text available [here](#).

This paper emphasizes the need to develop policies that will continue to support the rich agrobiodiversity of the hill regions of North India while providing for nutritional and economic needs of the population. It appears in the March edition of the Journal of Sustainable Agriculture.

Call for Papers: International Conference on "Policy, People and Peace"

In May 12-14, 2009 the University of Jammu will be holding an international conference on "Policy, People and Peace : Democratization of Foreign Policy and Participatory Democracy in Canada and India." This DFAIT-supported interdisciplinary conference will be held in collaboration with McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada, under the auspices of the Centre for New Literatures, Culture and Communication, University of Jammu. It will address important key issues such as: Peace-keeping Policies and Practices; Peace-building through Participatory Democracy and Development; International Peace-keeping operation and peace-enforcements in troubled areas;

the Role of NGOs and local bodies, associations and organizations in generating peace-keeping consciousness especially in women and the youth, both in Canada and India.

Abstracts (300 words) are invited and these may be sent by April 15, 2009 to:

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Also welcome to contact [Professor Rama Singh](#), Centre for Peace Studies, McMaster University,

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