

Shastri News - March 2008

Contents

- [Workshop Held on Transport, Health, Environment and Equity in Indian Cities](#)
- [Award Announcements](#)
- [Member News](#)
- [Alumni News](#)
- [Office News](#)
- [Shastri Institute Welcomes New Member](#)
- [The Shastri Institute is grateful for donations to its 40th Anniversary Campaign from the following individuals:](#)

Workshop Held on Transport, Health, Environment and Equity in Indian Cities

Motor vehicle growth is occurring most rapidly in the low income countries in Asia. While motor vehicles provide mobility to millions in India, they are causing serious environmental, health and welfare impacts. The urban transport challenge is made more difficult by financial, technological, and institutional resource constraints.

A three-day workshop was held December 17-19, 2007, on Transport, Health, Environment and Equity in Indian Cities, at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi. The event, funded by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, was jointly organized by Professor Madhav G. Badami of McGill University and Professor Geetam Tiwari of the Transportation Research and Injury Prevention Programme (TRIPP) at IITDelhi, the first international Centre of Excellence funded by the Volvo Research and Educational Foundation of Sweden.

The workshop brought together around 60 participants. They included academic researchers in a wide range of disciplines (atmospheric sciences, biomedical, civil and mechanical engineering, economics, environmental policy, epidemiology, management, urban policy, and urban transport planning), senior government decision makers, medical professionals, and private sector, industry, NGO, and pedestrian, cyclist, and cycle rickshaw puller group representatives, from India, Canada, and other countries. The discussions focused on the critical research needs for better understanding, and more effectively addressing, the urban transport situation in India, and useful approaches for meeting those needs. Workshop sessions were devoted to the following topics: Transport Air Pollution, and Health; Road Safety; Access for Non-motorized Modes and the Urban Poor; and The Research-Policy Interface.

Apart from contributing to the development of research approaches for addressing the urban transport challenge in India, the workshop highlighted India-Canada collaboration, provided opportunities for exploring long-term academic and research partnerships, and served as a platform from which to launch on-going debate on this important policy issue. Finally, it contributed to

training future researchers, by actively involving several graduate students and research associates from India, Canada and the UK.

Award Announcements

Student Excellence Award

François Thibeault reports that his doctoral research at the Université du Québec à Montréal focuses on the phenomenon of Buddhist pilgrimage in India. Through the observation of the pilgrims' practices in India's main sanctified Buddhist places (Bodh Gaya, Sarnath , etc.), he wants to show the interplay between localized Buddhist pilgrimage practices and beliefs and contemporary globalized Buddhist ideals. He will pay a particular attention to the many kinds of Buddhists (Western, Tibetan, Asian) that travel to, around and from the city of Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, and to the ways in which these Buddhists make pilgrimages to the most famous Buddhist sites of India. Mr. Thibeault will be traveling in India in April/May 2008 in order to do preliminary fieldwork. A long-term fieldwork will be conducted in 2009-2010.



Visiting Faculty Travel Grants

Rosaline Canessa, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, to attend an International Conference in Delhi on Citizenship and Governance: Re-visioning Social Transformation in the 21st Century.

Rama Singh, Department of Biology, McMaster University, to lecture at IIT -Mumbai, Banaras Hindu University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Gandhi Centre, Mumbai, Jammu University and attend Mahila Shanti Sena Meeting in Patna, Bihar.

Brian Given, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, to speak in a special session of the National Seminar on Marginalized Groups: Problems and Prospects in Contemporary India on March 5-6 2008 at Vidyasagar University.

M. L. Khan, Department of Forestry, North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology to visit Concordia University in March for a collaborative research and training programme.

Michael Shepherd, Faculty of Computer Science, Dalhousie University, to participate in a Workshop on Ontology, hosted by the Indian Statistical Institute, Documentation Research & Training Centre, Bangalore from March 19 to 21st. He will also participate in a workshop on Machine Learning at the International School of Information Management, University of Mysore.

Muthukumaran Packirisamy, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Concordia University, to present a paper "BioMems Based Target Detection of Heat Shock Protein 90 Interactions at the Medchem India 2008 Conference in Bangalore on March 18 to 19, 2008.

Member News

University of Victoria Signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Society for Participatory Research in Asia

President David Turpin of the University of Victoria and President Rajesh Tandon of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia signed an MOU formalizing an extensive series of activities and collaboration for the future. The University of Victoria, one of Canada's leading research universities will be working with PRIA, the leading Indian NGO working in the area on capacity-building, governance and community-based research. PRIA is at the centre of a network of over 2000 grassroots organizations in every state in India. The MOU covers areas such as: institution building of PRIA's continuing education operations; joint co-operation in community planning and mapping; research into the informal learning of women involved in electoral politics in both India and Canada; global networking in community-based participatory research; and the building of relationships between the Tribal Peoples of India and Aboriginal Peoples in British Columbia and Canada.

The University of Victoria sent a team of 11 community-based research scholars to New Delhi, Orissa, Kerala and Rajasthan during the last week of February, 2008. The team was lead by Dr. Budd L. Hall, University of Victoria's representative on the Shastri Members' Council.

University of Guelph

The Shastri Institute would like to congratulate Professor O.P. Dwivedi a long time member of the Shastri Institute's previous Board of Directors. He will be awarded an honorary Doctorate in Environmental Studies (honoris causa) by the University of Waterloo at its Spring Convocation on June 11, 2008. This will be his second honoris causa doctorate. The first was awarded by the University of Lethbridge, in the eighties.

Alumni News

Nalini Mohabir, recipient of an India Studies Student Research grant in 2006-2007, recently attended the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts Diaspora Cultural Festival which featured a poster display of her work.



Office News

We are pleased to welcome Reshma (Rana) Verma as In-Charge Canadian Studies Library at the India Office.

We also extend our congratulations to Sanghamitra Jana and her husband on the birth of their baby girl.

Shastri Institute Welcomes New Member

We are pleased to welcome the University of Agricultural Science, Dharwad, and Karnataka as a new member of the Shastri Institute.

The Shastri Institute is grateful for donations to its 40th Anniversary Campaign from the following individuals:

Mahinder Chaudhry, Kingston; Kantilal Davé, Calgary; Sheila Embleton, Toronto; William Fyfe, London; H. Patrick Glenn, Montréal; Peter Harnetty, Vancouver; David Hopper, Washington; Milton Israel, North York; George Kurian, Calgary; Flora MacDonald, Ottawa; Kanta Marwah, Ottawa; Stephen McDowell, Tallahassee; N. Deo Mishra, Calgary; Edward Moulton, Winnipeg; Arun Mukherjee, Toronto; Vasavan Nair, Verdun; William Noble, Cameron; Geoffrey Pearson, Ottawa; K.D. Srivastava, Vancouver; Srikanta Swamy, St. Lambert; Suresh Thadhani, Westmount; Gary vanLoon, Kingston; Daya Varma, Montréal; Douglas Verney, Philadelphia; Jagannath Wani, Calgary; Cicely Watson, Toronto and other anonymous donors.

We thank all those who contributed to this edition of the newsletter.

Please forward this newsletter to a friend and email us at sici@ucalgary.ca with your comments and suggestions for future issues. Please click [here](#) if you wish to unsubscribe to this newsletter.

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