

Rising Tide lifts all boats - Aditya Jha's Timmins Keynote Address

Keynote Speech addressed by Mr. Aditya Jha, at the 16th Annual NAN Business Awards- 2006
"Rising Tide lifts all boats"

Grand Chief Stan Beardy , Grand Chief Stan Louttit, Harvey Yesno, Chief Willis Mckay, Chairwomen Madaline Commanda, Chiefs, leaders of the First Nation , Award winners of tonight , Distinguished guests, and brothers and sisters of First Nation

I have mentioned to Grand Chief that it is a great feeling to be the only Indian amongst so many chiefs

Ladies and Gentlemen!!

I am honored to have this opportunity to share my thoughts with you all this evening. In the last three years that I have been connected with NAN leadership, a special bond has been created. What seemed a wishful thinking then about Nurturing Entrepreneurship amongst the First Nation people in the mainstream Canada• appears to be quite achievable now. It warms my heart to be here to celebrate the success of First Nation business .When we celebrate collectively the success of our own people that is the most positive signal that we can send to our community and to the world.

With this background, I thought I should title my talk, "Rising tide lifts all Boats"•. There is no denying that there are lots of problem areas in the First Nation, and all of them deserve to be addressed. However, what I would like you all to focus on is a niche area that is to create rising tides amongst First Nation- select a few First Nation individuals who have the potential to be the "tides"• in the community. These should be strong tides in mainstream Canada- Others will have to notice them - they themselves will feel empowered. They will have the resources at their command to lift others from their community. Noticing these tides would establish credibility for First Nation within mainstream Canada. It would have the viral effect within the community, and community members would like to emulate the success of their own, and feel more comfortable in venturing into what they see that has already worked, and feel confident about the fact that their own community members has come a long way. It happened within the last ten years in the Indian community in the Silicon Valley where, in the past, Indians used to be mostly highly successful professionals (Engineers, doctors, scientist), and they quickly transitioned into starting high-tech ventures. Once few individuals created billion dollar companies and net worth of 100 million or more, It caught on like a wild fire around different parts of North America, and within the same periods Indians in their homeland built global technology companies and put at least 4-5 of them on the list of richest people in the world. No one questions today the capacity of Indians in the high-tech world anywhere. Rather Venture fund companies now prefer that new start-up companies should have at least one founder that is Indian. These Indians in Silicon Valley were the strong tides in the mainstream North America. Let us think of creating similar tides of Native Canadians in corporate Canada- Think of establishing credibility in mainstream Canada. Think of the viral effect that such tides will create.

I have seen and experienced it personally when I was growing up in a small village in Nepal where people thought that those of us growing up in villages are no match for the people in big cities like New Delhi - in power- in money as though they were something very special. We felt that people in advantageous situations did not have a feeling of inadequacy. How do I feel today- when I meet Craig Eaton or Harry Rosen on the same platform and in the same committee at the Ryerson University. They are there in their right, as I am rightfully there.

Let me share a little secret with you all. It was not a long time ago; just a little over 200 years; poverty was all over the world. There was no Developed or Developing world- Every part was underdeveloped. Almost everyone in the world was poor. Distribution of rich and poor in North America or China or India was no different. Then what made only certain parts of the world massively prosperous within last two hundred years. If you track the history of prosperity of nations- what you find is those who allowed growth and pursuit of technology in their society allowed application of technology in Commerce those who put emphasis on education, I mean quality education; and valued their educated lot; those were the ones who prospered the most. Hence you have Europe or Canada or America as prosperous and powerful nations giving a different sense of dignity to their people. These are the countries that didn't close their society from outside indulgence and interference but welcomed it, and their leadership was confident and prepared. These were the ones who survived, prospered and achieved power and respect. Little over 200 years of that little secret and you have prosperity in Europe and North America. Does it need to take another 200 years for those who want to join the club? No! It took just 40 years for Japan to build itself as the 2nd most powerful economy after Second World War. It has taken only 20 years for China and 15 years for India to be suddenly recognized as an emerging economic power. By 2050 China's economy will be 2nd in the world, and India's tracking to be the fourth largest economy.

With that background, it need not and should not take 200 years for the First Nation to catch up with mainstream Canada.

I strongly believe that a handful of well intentioned First Nation leadership, with an open mind, great deal of determination, and in partnership with corporate Canada having great deal of eagerness and rightful impatience to shake up everything in order to make the First Nation community a prosperous community too.

Prosperity is also great means to preserve your great and proud tradition and culture. I have first-hand experienced that there is tremendous amount of goodwill and willingness to help and support First Nation amongst the leadership of mainstream Canada. Prosperity is a must to have- it is not only about riches- It is about dignity to people- Dignity that your people deserve most.

It really baffles and pains me to see how come we see new immigrants of different nationality, visible minorities from different faiths assimilating, integrating and prospering within a short time in Canada. Then why those who are the First people on this land, and those who have been here for the last seven thousand years or more are so much disenfranchised, and not integrated and assimilated into the mainstream Canada.

Two of the participants of Project Beyshick told me Aditya! I thought the CEO I was job shadowing would be someone very special but I found her like an average next door person. And I said- It is true- what is different is that this average next door person has a few different things with her- She has very specialized and valuable skills- Is very focused- Is willing to work as hard as it possible to get her where she wants- she is skilled, she is focused, she is hardworking and despite that she is an average person- SHE IS A WIINER.

Let us pause here.

Why can't any community have her amongst them â?? SHE IS THE ONE WHO IS THE TIDE. SHE LIFTS ALL BOATS.

"RISING TIDE LIFTS ALL BOATS"

MEEGWETCH- THANK YOU!!!

Photos from this event can be seen here »