

# Reflections on moving forward CANADA-INDIA Educational Initiatives

Event: Canada - India Research Roundtable at York University

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{moszoomthumb imgid=1168 itemid=211 style\_m=2}Chairperson Adrian Shubert, fellow panelists and distinguished participants. It is a great privilege to have the opportunity to share my thoughts on moving forward Canada- India Educational Initiatives.

For academic institutions like York University which have a strong interest in continuing to strengthen collaborations with other academic institutions around the world, there are a number of key issues which should be taken into consideration. Therefore, I have focused my comments today on highlighting some of those issues at a very high level.

## 1. Network Enabled Learning

There appears to be a general agreement that the conventional educational methods and the existing infrastructure are not going to meet the learning needs of an increasingly globalized world. What is needed is the institutionalization of network enabled learning which is:

- not institution centric but learner centric;
- based on a blended curriculum delivered over appropriate delivery mechanisms ( e.g. self-paced, synchronous, offline, collaborative, hands- on and classroom oriented);
- highly scalable and used when needed and where needed;
- Independent of geography and time schedules;
- able to blend rich human interaction and experience; and
- Outcome quality.

Over the last two hundred years in the history of prosperous nations, it has been proven time and again that whenever we have successfully integrated network enabled applications into our societies and economies, we have prospered and have further democratized our societies. Whether it was the rail-road, or electricity or roads and automobiles or recently the internet, we have seen the creation of unprecedented prosperity, shrinking of geographic limitations, democratization

and social mobility. Network- enabled learning is the next frontier in this evolutionary process. The more seriously we work towards institutionalizing network enabled learning, the more successful we will be in fulfilling our goal of advancing our educational initiatives between Canada and India.

## 2. Collaborative Research

With varying degrees of success, both countries have been engaged in international research collaboration and in promoting mobility of researchers. However, in this era of network connectedness, we should also consider some of the following with respect to collaborative research:

- We should take a cue from the IT world and introduce the concept of multi- shore research, and contract research in a cost effective and bandwidth elastic manner;
- Synchronous live research using online networks and by establishing inter-institutional databases and pan- institution databases. These databases can be customized around projects and/or research areas; and
- A new model of research funding which breaks the geographic barrier of institutional project only funding, and uses the private-public-institution funding model across Canada & India and between institutions.

## 3. Retooling India's Manpower

India estimates that it will have a shortfall of 500,000 trained professionals by 2010 within the technology sector alone. India also has major challenges with regard to labor quality, as almost sixty percent of the graduating population is considered unemployable by corporate India. Larger Indian companies are able to provide 3-6 months of training in-house, but not all the companies have the wherewithal to do that. Another major issue in India involves improving linkages between industry and academia. Increasingly, Indian corporations are making large acquisitions in the developed world or taking their business global, which necessitates the need for training of their top executives for western style leadership. This presents an enormous opportunity for Canadian institutions, particularly business schools, to provide retooling educational services to Indian companies and provinces. Educational institutions should allowing access to their education material.

## 4. eTutoring

Conversely, Canadian high schools need major support and hand- holding to significantly improve the quality of their high school graduates and underachieving groups such as First Nations students. India can be of major help through on-line tutoring that brings live and personalized after school- tutoring using network and offshore tutors.

Thank you all for being so patient. If time permits I will be more than glad to take your questions or you can reach me through email at (<mailto:Aditya@osellus.com>) and through my colleague, Smriti Gyawali who is here with me today.