

Policy Brief

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Prepared by

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Canada and India Should Give Closer Look in Collaborative Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Executive Summary

India and Canada are two large plural democracies with a lot of common attributes. The economic potential between the two countries have remained below potential, but new avenues should be explored in the post-COVID-19 economic order. Collaborative innovation and entrepreneurship is one such area in which India and Canada should deepen their ties to deliver new solutions to citizens in sectors like health and medicine, education, science and technology, information and communication technologies, artificial intelligence, food security, water management and sustainable development. Indian and Canadian economies are complementary, and they should support each other to jointly attain the sustainable development goals despite expected disruptions from COVID-19.

Need for an Collaborative Approach

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and aims to achieve \$5 trillion status in coming years. India ranks 48th in Global Innovation Index 2020 and 44th in Digital Competitive Index 2020. India is fast emerging as one of the leading digital democracies and has implemented large biometric linking system of its citizens through Aadhar. The Government of India has used the digital identity to allocate various social and economic benefits to its citizens and bridge social divide. Despite immense challenges at home, India has risen to the occasion and supplied medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to other countries to tackle the pandemic without any geostrategic considerations. India believes in the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, a Sanskrit phrase which means the whole world is a family. This is similar to the spirit of multilateralism promoted by Canada through its foreign policy. A stable and interconnected world is in the best interest of both India and Canada and they should jointly tackle new emerging threats.

Require Encouragement for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Due to the digital revolution, the world today is highly connected through technology. In the digital world, Charles Darwin's concept of 'survival of the fittest' has

transformed to 'survival of the most adaptable'. Life has become a constant learning process where to survive, one has to learn, unlearn and relearn. Human adaptability needs to be in pace with technology advancement, as has been noticed in case of artificial intelligence and machine learning. As the world changes rapidly, innovation allows nations to respond to these changes and find solutions to new problems. The time required to make changes, adopt and transform is rapidly reducing in the digital age and the answer lies in collaborative innovation. India has been one of the centres of innovation since ancient times. In terms of conceptual understanding, microwave transmission and fibre optics originated in India. Today, India has 3rd largest start-up ecosystem in the world, while there is strong government support for innovation. India has a burgeoning culture of innovation and the government has prioritized support for entrepreneurship. A KPMG report in 2018 had ranked India third, behind the US and China in the list of global tech innovation leaders.

Indian and Canadian economies are complementary. Canada plays a part in ensuring India's food security while India provides well trained English speaking human resources to Canada. Canada has been constantly showing interest to forge strong trade and investment ties with the nations that are beyond its traditional markets in the US and Europe. At the same time, India is expected to make a swift economic recovery after the Corona pandemic and the two sides have a reason to deepen their economic links.

Promote Relevance of Cooperation

In political terms, India adopted a very progressive Constitution in 1950, with a universal adult franchise. India and Canada are multi-cultural democracies with strong people to people contacts. Indian Constitution has adopted various features from a number of countries and the idea of federalism in India is similar to Canada. As two responsible countries, India and Canada should forge a partnership based on human security concerns. Democracies like India and Canada need to come together to address the new reality after the COVID-19 pandemic. This would require problem-solving approach and cooperation between various stakeholders between the two sides like in the universities, think tanks, business houses, start-ups and entrepreneurs.

Reference: Policy Brief prepared based on the on 29th January 2020 workshop, on "Complementarities Driving India-Canada Relations," to celebrate 72nd Republic Day of India. The topic of discussion was on "Collaborative Innovation and Entrepreneurship". The workshop was jointly organized by the Bharat Centre of Canada, University Canada West, in association with the Consulate General of India in Toronto. Contact Email : research@bharatcentre.ca