

Know India Workshop

at Seneca College, Toronto (Online)

Monday November 09, 2020

The workshop started with the introduction by Know-India Workshop technical host Mr. Pulkeet Mehra with the welcome remarks by President of India International Centre of Canada, Dr. Nvedita Das Kundu. The workshop started with the special lecture and presentation by Honourable Ms Apoorva Srivastava, Consul General of India in Toronto.



Discover India: Overview of India's History, Geography, Culture & Heritage

Consul General of India in Toronto Ms Apoorva Srivastava gave the presentation on the overview of India which is a 7th largest country by land with 3.3 million sq.km of area and having 1.3 billion population. There are 22 official languages and more than 19500 spoken languages. Apart from major religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism Buddhism and Jainism, the Jews and Christians marked their presence since 200 B.C and 52 A.D respectively. In Ms Srivastava's presentations, she explained how India is incredible as it is home to Himalayas, Great Indian Desert-Thar, unique backwaters of Kerala, lush tropical Konkan to lavish Ladakh including abundant natural resources. India being located at a peculiar geographical location enjoys all the four weathers. Discussing ancient India and comparing it to the new digital India a lot of issues were touched upon in her presentation, starting from pioneers from India in the field of Mathematics, Medical Advancements, Ayurveda, Astronomy and Yoga which is a gift to the world. Consul General Ms. Srivastava briefed that, India's ranking on Global Indexes 2019 has improved being 9th in climate change performance index; 34th in Travel and Tourism competitive Index; 44th in Digital Competitive Index; 48th Global Innovation Index and 63rd in Ease of Doing Business in India. She further explained how India is working towards, \$5 trillion economy considering financial inclusion a right step in that direction, focussing more on education, decimating gender differences and making a Self- Reliant India.



India's Space Program & Innovation

Dr Ajay Lele, senior space science expert, presented the achievements of India in the space sector, science innovations and technological transformation. Dr. Lele also explained that the ancient method of agriculture has been replaced by many new inventions such as drones. He reflected how India's former prime minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru was of the view to develop scientific temperament and worked for the formation of TIFR. Stressing on the need to invest in outer space by India, Dr. Lele suggested that India has a unique topography and terrain, climatic conditions, skewed distribution of villages and townships for overall development of the states. Outer space is a subset of the policy initiative, which was articulated by one of the prominent scientists of India Dr Vikram Sarabhi as well. Furthermore, Dr. Lele touched upon various launch vehicle programmes and the importance of remote sensing, communication, navigation, meteorology and deep space missions. He mentioned that in spite of being denied technology for many years, space education is gaining its importance and the space programme of the future is extremely promising in India.



India's Advancement in Information and Communication Technology

Mr. Gaurav Sharma a technocrat gave an insight on India's advancement in Information and Communication Technology, as time to change/adapt/transform is reducing because of digital transformation and disruptions. Evolution of media from television, radio and Internet and their development over the period of time since 1960 was very well depicted by Mr Sharma. He mentioned that India is among the top two countries globally on many key dimensions, also he said that every 6th person with whom today we interact would be Indian in coming days, because of large demographic dividend. Promising an evolution is already underway by 2023, the number of

active citizen developers in India will surpass the US in numbers of software developers. He summarized that there are huge opportunities in the IT domain and students should explore numerous scholarships that are available to study IT related subjects and topics. He also mentioned that students should also read about successful IT sectors petronels achievements, to learn about their journey and take inspiration from them.



India's Economic Snapshot: The Reform Journey & the Current Snapshot

Dr. Vandana Kumar, a senior government official with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry explained about India's economic reform journey and gave cultural snapshots as well. She explained how India is on the world stage in terms of growth rate % shining at number 5 with 7.4% the reason for the same lies in 3D's, demographic dividends, demand and democracy. Subsequently, explaining the economic activity ranging from being a milk producer, largest rail network, largest automobile industry and domestic aviation market. Dr. Kumar mentioned that India is an importer of petroleum oils, unworked diamond, machinery and natural gas, on the contrary, India exports petroleum products, diamond, art jewellery, medicaments and rice. At the end Dr. Vandana suggested that India's transformation lies in collaboration, decision making, social inclusion and cooperative and competitive federalism.



Pathways for Canada India Collaborations: Contribution of Indian Diaspora

Dr. Nivedita Das Kundu, expert on international relations and India-Canada studies, described the Pathways for Canada-India Collaborations: Contributions of Indian Diaspora. Dr. Nivedita mentioned both the countries have shared traditions of pluralism, strong interpersonal connections and longstanding people to people ties. She mentioned that there are many ongoing areas of collaborations. Dr. Kundu mentioned that the education sector contributes a lot in this bilateral cooperation. She mentioned in her presentation, as far as India-Canada trade and economic cooperation is concerned, Canadian pulp and potash finds its way to India. Canada is a big market of Indian carpets, leathers and jewellery. India also offers a host of opportunities for Canadian matured pension funds and investment companies. India has a huge demand for hydrocarbons and steel grade coal and Canada has an abundance of both. She also highlighted that India's herbal medicines are getting significance in Canada. Dr. Nivedita further added that Indian community in Canada is the fastest growing community and acts as a second largest ethnic group. She also mentioned that many India origin people are serving in provincial and federal governments in Canada. In the conclusion Dr. Kundu suggested that, India-Canada partnership holds mutual benefits for politico-economic cooperation addressing many shared global challenges, however, the potential is immense and there is lot of scope for improvement.



India's Education System: Recent Changes

Mr. Prashant Srivastava, presented the Education system in India. Initiating with the gurukul in ancient times, in Vedic period there were stronger ties between student and teacher and learning was close to nature, contrary to the modern system, where learning is confined to subjects and teaching confined to classrooms. With more than 1.5 million schools and about 260 millions of students in 2015-16, India has the world's second largest school system after China. There are three national boards and many state boards to conduct the exams for students. There are international schools as well in India. Higher Education in India is being represented by UGC, (University grant commission) which specifies that only universities that were established by federal, state and provincial legislations have been granted the status of deemed university. Mr. Prashant while stressing on vocational and skill based education mentioned that the government has made changes in new education policy 2020 and launched various schemes to promote education among all, mid-day meal is being provided for nutrition to poor students, giving incentives for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among students.



Tourism in India

Mr. Senthur Kumaran from Ministry of Tourism in India, explained how India is a favourite destination for Tourism. Mr. Senthur mentioned that in India one can eat a variety of foods, pray different religions, love nature and can enrich all senses of discover India and one self. Mr. Kumaran mentioned India is also a land of 35 UNESCO world heritage sites, he stressed that also it is not just the world's old civilizations, it is also the world's largest democracy and has made stupendous progress among developing nations. Mr. Sethur mentioned that as a tourist destination, India has a bustling cosmopolitan cities to the quiet countryside, hill stations, beaches, resorts etc. It has destinations which offers a backdrop of unmatched beauty for a business meet. It has literally everything that a visitor wants to experience and offers people a complete holiday, both physically and mentally. India's tourism remains one major economic driver of the world. Adding to it, medical tourism, places for marriage ceremonies, for adventure, for golfing, for conferences and summits. He concluded saying that festivals of different culture makes India indeed an Incredible place.

Dr. Archana an executive body member of IICC thanked the Seneca college, all the participants, organisers, and also volunteers of Know-India Workshop.

Prepared by Team *Know India* Workshop
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