

Indian Merchant Chamber Seminar - Mumbai, 27 February, 2004.

Background

The seminar was a joint effort of the Indian Merchant Chamber, Indo Canada Business Chamber and Travel Corporation of India. From Canada Action Committee for Enterprise and Employment was represented by Jay Chauhan and Tazeen Kavarana. There was an admission fee for attendance at the seminar of Rs.250.00 and about 50 businessmen attended. The representatives of the Canadian Government were invited but did not attend. Mr. Dilip Dalal who is a veteran member of the Indian Merchant Chamber chaired the meeting. He pointed out that the Indian Merchant Chamber was 107 years old and one of the most prestigious Chamber of Commerce in Bombay which is a business and commercial centre of India. Travel Corporation of India which is also a 100 year old company in India having 27 offices in India 17 around the world and employing about 4,000 persons in India was represented by Mr. Adi Katgara participated at the seminar. Jay Chauhan, was the guest speaker and he represented Action Committee for Enterprise and Employment of Canada with Jay Chauhan . Interview after the speech was broadcast in a local Mumbai TV channel.

Summary of speech of Jay Chauhan

Overview

About 230,000 people immigrate to Canada per year and one quarter of these immigrants are of Indian origin. Chinese and Indians now comprise about half of all the immigration to Canada. Half of all the immigrants settle in Toronto or surrounding metropolitan communities.

History of Indian Migration

Indians started migration to outside of India in the last 100 years to countries like East Africa, Fiji, South Africa, Guyana, West Indies etc..The history started with supporting the British in these places. In the next generation many became professionals and businessmen. In the last about 35 years the doors to migration have opened up in US, Canada, Australia and England and Indian community has expressed their talents in an atmosphere of relative equality.

Development of Indian Community in Canada

Enormous progress has been made by the Indian community in Canada and the United States and the United Kingdom. In Canada there have been cabinet ministers and British Columbia we had a premier of Indian origin. I am one of the first judges appointed on the bench in Ontario, Canada. In the business community we have many who have succeeded in many types of businesses. We now have many Doctors and professionals in every field in Canada.

Impediments

In the development and settlement of the Indian diaspora has not been easy, in terms of finding employment or starting businesses. There are problems of adjustment to North American culture and they include ability to write effective resumes and developing job interview skills. The qualifications of the individuals obtained in home country are frequently not recognized.

In business life there are particular problems of adjustment. The market place in North America is more sophisticated and technical and the expectations of delivery and quality of goods is higher. The Indian businessmen underestimate the need for professional advice of lawyers, accountants and marketing business consultants to achieve success.

There is a cultural adjustment required for the businessmen. Indian products and services are not currently rated at par with world standards although the Indians are making significant inroads in obtaining computer software contracts and providing call service centre services in India. To improve the image of Indian goods there will have to be a greater effort in delivery standards, packaging and quality of products. To be equal in the international market place one will have to be better than equal to establish the reputation.

Achievements

Once the adjustment has been done by individuals, the statistics of achievement of Indians is much higher than average population in North America. In the US where statistics are available the number of doctors, engineers and professionals in many major institutions such as Microsoft, Xerox, IBM, INTEL, NASA is very high. In many of these institutions the proportion of Indians is above 30% when in fact the population of Indians in North America is only about 1 or 2 %.

India's Future

India is industrializing at a dramatic pace and the exports are rising. With this trend it is necessary and inevitable that the Indian economy will integrate with the economies of the west and other countries. Presently, the biggest giant and powerhouse of the world economy is the United States. Indian businessmen need to export their goods and services to US and other developed countries such as Canada and expand their trade with other countries as well around the world. The future integration will happen and the Indian businessman should take up challenge of settling business in a country like Canada and other countries.

Strategy

Improvement of the Indian economy and advancement of individual businesses is linked with working and establishing in North America. Canada offers not only a cheaper labour compared with United States, but establishing business in Canada also a door to the American market through North American Free Trade Agreement. A typical Indian enterprise, even when it is large is usually a family owned business. It is not a easy decision for a businessman in India to turn his attention to foreign markets when India's rising middle class economy provides almost an unlimited market for the goods and services that Indian enterprise can develop. Hong Kong, Chinese and Singapore businesses have reached the foreign markets aggressively and have succeeded. Indian businessmen need to follow those role models. As a part of the strategy for establishing in the foreign markets the Indian businesses will have to match the international standards of performance in providing goods or services.

Solutions

Action Committee for Enterprise and Employment was founded to assist Indians settling in Canada to find employment and establish a business. It is a non-profit organization founded by Madhu Verma, Tarun Chandola and myself. We want to assist newcomers in employment and in setting up businesses.

When you are in Canada we now have professionals of Indian origin who can help such as the lawyers, doctors and engineers etc. We have a large Indian community of about 750,000 and have many Indian restaurants and newspapers to make one feel at home in Canada.

The Point System

The current immigration to Canada is done under a point system in which the individual is required to get 67 points out of 100 for Education, Age, Experience, and the education of the spouse and having some connection with Canada such as having an uncle or brother. If the person qualifies under the point system he or she can bring with the spouse and children under 21 for settlement in Canada.

There are 3 types of categories for the business class persons, namely, Self Employed, Entrepreneur and the Investor. The self employed person is one who has proven artistic or athletic ability which enables him to become self employed in Canada. The second is an Entrepreneur who needs to show that he has business experience. There are set criteria for establishing this. Once an entrepreneur is approved by the Delhi office of Canadian Immigration he is required to start business within 2 years of coming to Canada and maintain it for at least one year. The third is an investor who must show a minimum of CAD\$.800,000 of capital of which and must invest CAD\$.400,000 in a Government approved project for 5 years. Certain banks in Canada are willing to lend about CAD\$. 360,000 out of the total required of CAD\$. 400,000 investment. So for a net investment of CAD\$.120,000 you can have landing in Canada without conditions.

Speaker

Jay Chauhan

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