

# How Informal Networks of International Indian Students Affect the Learning Culture of Canadian Institutions

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## Network

The network could mean a group or system that interconnects people or things. It could be a connection for mutual benefits, sharing resources, opportunities or specializing together for a similar purpose or benefits (Korsching, Besser, Miller, Hofstedt, Welch and Orr, n.d.). This information is passed by word of mouth in a peer to peer relationships. Importantly, all formal networks include informal networks but not the vice versa. Here, in this paper, the only an informal network will be explored. Firstly, information from the informal network is passed quickly such as an informal conversation between peers standing in line to buy a bag of chips. Secondly, the information is spread by speeding up the process, so all the actors can find advantage in this information group. Thirdly, informal networks are based on a social structure where the eventual goal is to get everyone (involved in the informal network) rewarded for the information that is being spread.

## The Choice of British Columbia

British Columbia (BC) is Canada's most western, third largest province. Because of its climate and natural resources, it is well-known internationally for tourism and labor force. More than 25000 students were enrolled in BC where Asians, Europeans and Americans international students were dominated (Statistics Canada, 2016). China, India, Korea, Saudi Arabia from Asia, the United Kingdom and France from Europe and Nigeria and Egypt from Africa are the main countries to send students to BC for Education.

**Table 1.0:** Distribution of International Students in British Columbia as Compared to Canada

<b>Regions</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>British Columbia</b>
<b>Asia</b>	79,209	17,349
<b>Europe</b>	16,947	2,160
<b>USA</b>	7,989	2,247
<b>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</b>	8,556	1,143
<b>Africa</b>	13,269	903
<b>Oceania</b>	744	153

India has public, private and home schools, international and local, open and distance, religions and technical schools with 10+2+3:10 years in school for junior school, a junior college for high school and college/university for a bachelor degree respectively.

## A Comparison to Canadian and Indian Education System

The Canadian education system is almost uniform all over the country as compared to the Indian education system. It offers more choices in junior and senior high school. It encourages creativity and makes you think out of the box. It is based on more practical work as compared to theory in India. The choices of career are limited in India such as engineering, medical, law and business fields. For example, if more students are going into mechanical engineering this year, you will be going to mechanical engineering as this is a trend described by Jariwala (2014). In Canada, students are encouraged to join their choice of field for their careers. Canadian education system includes anything from arts to sports to music to law. As compared to this, the Indian education system emphasizes theory and classroom studies. Indian students are supposed to go to tuition center for extra study hours in the evening after school and colleges.

Moreover, attainment of education is encouraged for all age groups, visible minorities, women and disabled people in Canada. If someone has special needs, h/she will be provided necessary and reasonable resources with extra support to overcome his/her difficulty for learning. H/she will be provided help in notes taking and will be given extra time during exams. At times, H/she may have a learning specialist who will discuss course syllabus and accommodation (Ghumanl, 2013). To achieve their goals, parents, students, teachers, staff and other community members will continuously help the student to address his/her needs (including providing technology, special desk and chair with elevator designed for disability students) (Ghumanl, 2013).

In Canada, education is free until university. In India, education is treated as a business nowadays. Jariwala (2014) explained that private schools, tuition, and coaching centers had turned education into a business. Canada uses a higher level of technology in classes that includes tools to check to cheat, and plagiarism for assignments as compared to in India. Curriculum changes from time to time to add new concepts with a newer edition of textbooks. Grades are given not as much importance as compared to India. A lot of stress is given to GPA and entry test scores in India. Canadian system believes that skills, knowledge, abilities, training, talent, and character create job opportunities after graduation. Memorization is not encouraged in the Canadian education system. In the Canadian education system, students are encouraged to change their education field anytime they want. For example, they can go from engineering to music degree without any hurdle. All in all, not much freedom is given in Indian education system for creativity, innovation, critical thinking, fun and choices of interesting careers.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This essay discussed how informal networks of International Indian students affect the learning culture of Canadian institutions. Two main indicators of Indian students and a comparison of Canadian and Indian education system were explored in detail. The secondary data showed that Canadian education encourages innovation, creativity, critical thinking, and provide more career options as compared to memorization, stress on high grades and fewer career choices in the Indian education system. My research has shown that being new to Canada, homesickness, weather, family and societal pressure, high expectations, work, culture, low motivation, becoming an independent first time in life and tight financial budget were the main reasons for informal networks of international Indian students. The analysis showed that circumstances influence behavior. It is crucial to understand that every situation is unique; therefore, these indicators present a general overall view of Indian students. More research is needed on a micro level to consider this hypothesis in more depths and finds it relevant solutions. In the end, high societal pressure from India and better future expectations in Canada stood out to be the most important factors in shaping the current situation of informal networks of international Indian students at Canadian institutions. Indian students should know their potential, be open-minded and should not stay in their comfort zone are the recommendations provided. Continual hard work, the right mindset, easy culture transition and development programs should be used for international Indian students for their superior education attainment and better quality of life in Canada.