



Ireland-India Council

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PRESS RELEASE:

LAUNCH OF PROJECT 'INTEGRATING INDIANS IN IRELAND'

The Ireland-India Council is an organisation based in Dublin but covering the whole of Ireland, created to provide a forum for person to person contact, business to business interaction and cultural exchanges between individuals and organisations in Ireland and India. It aims to provide a platform for exchanges of ideas for academics, the media, and public and private organisations in the field of Indian studies, as well as for the development of professional and institutional links and the promotion of public and private events that may foster public awareness about Irish-Indian relations and the integration of Indians living in Ireland. The Council has a wide and flexible remit which extends from political, commercial and business links to the fields of performing and visual arts and beyond.

The objective of the Council's Indian studies programme is to promote in Ireland an informed interpretation of Indian society, culture and politics. While recognising that studies of Irish literature and culture often provide the focus for Irish studies in India, the Council has broadened the focus of Indian studies for Irish scholars in Ireland to cover history, politics, economics, society and other areas.

The Council's institutional and professional links program is aimed at fostering bilateral contacts that strengthen links between key institutions in the two countries, such as universities, libraries, museums, technical colleges, research institutes, professional organisations and appropriate non-governmental organisations, with a view to promoting long-term bilateral economic and commercial relationships.

Similarly the Council's public awareness programme is to increase awareness and understanding between the people and institutions of Ireland and India.

Recently the Ireland-India Council decided to launch its innovative project 'Integrating Indians' on 30 January, 2007 in Dublin. The project '**Integrating Indians**' is designed to bring the Irish-Indian community together, through comprehensive and sustainable efforts. The second objective of the project is to assist in the integration of the Indian community in Ireland, both with indigenous Irish and the other multicultural communities in the State. The third objective of the project is to actively link this community with its greater diaspora, benefiting not only the Indian diaspora in Ireland, but also society in general through its entrepreneurship, investment and professional skills. This is aimed at developing the capacities of Indian professionals to equally engage in and draw upon their networks and structures in the workplace and in local communities.

At the launch of the Project on 30th January, representatives of partner institutions will be making presentations on a various topics related to Integration in Ireland. They include: Mr. Aki Stavrou, Director, Integrating Ireland, Mr Philip Watt Director,

NCCRI, Ms. Martina Glennon of Integration Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Services, Mr. John Kearns Chief Executive of Partas, Mr. Diarmuid Hegarty Chairman of GCD, and Barrister Patrick Dillon Malone, etc.. Almost 100 different nationalities along with indigenous Irish and Indian community attending this historical event.

Ms Liz O'Donnell T.D. Deputy Leader of Progressive Democrats will be the Chief Guest of the event, she will light the ceremonial lamp to inaugurate the project. The special guest of the event will be: Ms Sheila Power Head Irish Council of Overseas Students, Ms. Sarah Mongey - Department of Justice Immigration Department, Ms. Margaret White - Department of Justice Immigration Department, Ms. Caroline Wardlaw - Griffith College Dublin student Counsellor, Garda Intercultural Liaison Officer.

Indian Migration to Ireland

During the first 50 years of the last century only a small number of Indian students came to Ireland, mainly to study in different universities, and for the overwhelming majority most returned to India after completing their studies. By 1970 not more than one dozen people of Indian origin had migrated to Ireland, most of who were entrepreneurs. A number of Indian students courted Irish girls and later married and settled in this country and in India as well. Between 1970 and 1990, approximately 100 medical doctors came to Ireland to work in Irish hospitals, however, because of limited career opportunities and a lack of provision for family reunification most either went back to India or migrated to the United States, the United Kingdom or Canada. Growth rates between 1990 and 2005 were much greater and mirrored the 'opening' of Ireland to foreign workers and students. By August 2005, the Ministry of External Affairs of India estimated that 2,000 Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin were living in Ireland. Since then there has been a rapid escalation in the growth of the Indian community, and the Ireland-India Council estimates the size of the Indian community in Ireland to now between 7,000 and 9,000 persons. Furthermore, unlike the earlier immigrants, the new Indian community in Ireland is spatially distributed throughout the country.

This immigrant community is extremely varied in terms of religion: belonging to a number of different faiths, namely: Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhists, Jain, and Parsi, and they speak more than 25 different languages. Hindi and English however are the main common languages, with Hindi being widely spoken and understood by almost all Indians.

Apart from the cultural, linguistic, culinary and lifestyle contributions they are making to Irish society, this group of immigrants has also contributed in terms of providing their skills in the labour market and also investing in it. For example, numerous Indian professionals work in the sectors of information technology, medical and health care, management, engineering, architecture and education. It is against this particular backdrop that the Ireland-India Council hopes to contribute to an exciting and important new dynamic in Ireland-India relations.

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