



US-India bilateral collaboration to enhance transportation—A decade of experience



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ABSTRACT

Established in 2004 as a non-profit organization, the Association of Transportation Professionals of Indian Origin (ATPIO) is focused on its strategic objective of facilitating bilateral collaborative activities and partnerships between diverse groups of transportation professionals in US and India. These activities include research, as well as knowledge and technology transfer. Over the past decade ATPIO has organized free webinars, technical presentations at its Annual Meetings, co-sponsored conferences and workshops; as well as collaborated with academics, research organizations and governmental agencies both in US and in India.

This paper summarizes these activities and discusses collaborative research between academics from US and India. The paper also discusses ATPIO's current and proposed future initiatives aimed at bringing public and private sector counterparts from US and India together to facilitate current research based knowledge and technology transfer for betterment of transportation in the 21st Century. The paper concludes with a brief summary of ATPIO's accomplishments and identifies challenges it has encountered in the pursuit of its strategic objective.

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1. Introduction

The Association of Transportation Professionals of Indian Origin (ATPIO) was established at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board in Washington, DC. Dr. Kumares Sinha, Distinguished Professor at Purdue University and Arun Shirole', Executive Director Emeritus of the National Steel Bridge Alliance, then a semi-autonomous division of American Institute of Steel Construction, served as ATPIO's founding President and Vice President, respectively. In subsequent years, Professors Dr. Lalita Sen, Dr. Chandra Bhat, Dr. Ram Pendyala, Dr. Shashi Nambisan, Dr. Vijaya Gopu, Dr. Anuj Sharma, as well as Arun Shirole', Hardik Shah and Salil Gokhale have served as ATPIO President or Vice President. Under their leadership, ATPIO's strategic objective has consistently been focused on facilitating bilateral collaborative activities and partnerships between diverse groups of transportation professionals in US and India. In pursuit of this objective ATPIO has organized its annual meetings that include invited technical presentations, free webinars, workshops and conferences in collaboration with academics, research organizations and governmental agencies both in US and in India. As the ATPIO activities

have increased, so has its membership. Current ATPIO members include well-known academics, senior level public and private sector transportation professionals of Indian origin, as well as students pursuing graduate degrees in transportation related fields in both countries. This paper documents decade long activities of ATPIO and is organized as the followings: (2) ATPIO Annual Meetings; (3) ATPIO Webinars; (4) US-India Transportation Research Collaboration; (5) Selected Examples of Published Bilateral Research; (6) ATPIO's Other Collaborative Activities; (7) Current Initiatives; (8) ATPIO Accomplishments and Challenges; and (8) Conclusion.

2. ATPIO annual meetings

Since a large contingent of transportation professionals from India comes to Washington, DC to attend annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board (TRB), ATPIO holds its annual meetings on Sundays before the TRB annual meeting. TRB has been graciously facilitating ATPIO annual meetings at the same venue. ATPIO annual meetings provide a stage for transportation professionals from both US and India to network together, listen to technical presentations, partake in policy level discussions, showcase emerging technologies, brain-storm, garner help for near future ventures and promote transportation themed

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Table 1
Presentations at ATPIO Annual Meetings at Washington D.C. (2011–2013).

Month, Year & # of attendees	Presentations
Jan 2011 70 attended	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Economic Development in India: Opportunities and Challenges”, Mr. V.S. Senthil, IAS, Honorable Minister (Economic), Embassy of India, Washington, D.C. 2. “Enhancing Indo-US Partnership in Science and Technology”, Michael Cheetham, Executive Director, Indo-US Science and Technology Forum and India Science and Technology Partnership. 3. “Elsevier’s Interest and Initiatives in Indian Transportation Research”, Chris Pringle, Executive Publisher – Geography & Transport, Elsevier, United Kingdom.
Jan 2012 72 attended	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Indo-US Collaboration between UNL and IIT-M in the Area of ITS”, Dr. Larry Rilett, Professor of Transportation Engineering, and Keith W. Klassmeyer Chair in Engineering and Technology, University of Nebraska Lincoln. 2. “Activities of Overseas Transportation Professionals from China and India: Some Observations”, Dr. Kumares Sinha, Edgar B. and Hedwig M. Olson Distinguished Professor of Civil Engineering, Purdue University. 3. “Role of CTRG in Promoting Transportation Research in India”, Dr. S. Velmurugan, Scientist, Central Road Research Institute, India. 4. “World Conference on Transport Research in India”, Dr. S.L. Dhingra, Institute Chair Professor and Dr. K.V. Krishna Rao; Head of the Civil Engineering Department, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, India. 5. “TRANSED 2012 India”, Mr. Arvind Singh, Honorable Minister of Transport, Capital Region, Delhi and Ms Abha Negi, Sr. General Manager, Jindal SAW Ltd.
Jan 2013 68 attended	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “India- ITS Policy Issues”, Dr. CSRK Prasad, Professor and Head, Transportation Division, Department of Civil Engineering, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Warangal, India. 2. “Updates on Transportation Planning and Implementation Methodologies for Developing Countries (TPMDC) Silver Jubilee”, Dr. Gopal Patil, Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, India. 3. “2nd Conference of Transportation Research Group of India”, Professor Partha Chakraborty, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, India.

Table 2
Presentations at ATPIO Annual Meetings at Washington D.C. (2014–2016).

Month, Year & # of attendees	Presentations
Jan 2014 58 attended	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Activities and Future Plans of the Transportation Research Group (TRG) of India”, Dr. Ashish Verma, Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, India. 2. “Updates on upcoming 2014 conference on Transportation Planning and Implementation Methodologies for Developing Countries (TPMDC)”, Dr. Gopal Patil, Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, India. 3. “Transportation Research at IIT Roorkee”, Professor Satish Chandra, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, India.”
Jan 2015 62 attended	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Remarks on ATPIO Collaborative Activities”, Dr. Kumares Sinha, Edgar B. and Hedwig M. Olson Distinguished Professor of Civil Engineering, Purdue University, USA. 2. “Updates on recently completed 2014 conference on Transportation Planning and Implementation Methodologies for Developing Countries (TPMDC)” – Dr. Gopal Patil, Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, India. 3. “Activities and Future Plans of the Transportation Research Group (TRG) of India” – Dr. Ashish Verma, Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, India. 4. “Transportation Engineering Activities at IIT Kharagpur”, Dr. Sudeshna Mitra, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur, India. 5. “ATPIO initiated Student Support Program” – Dr. Anuj Sharma, Dr. Sabya Mishra, and Dr. Sushant Sharma, ATPIO Board Officers.
Jan 2016 65 attended	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “World Conference on Transport Research Society (WCTR) – 2019” – Dr. Vedagiri Perumal, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, India. 2. “TRG and 2015 CTRG Report” – Dr. Tom Mathew, Professor, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, India and Dr. Abdul Pinjari, Associate Professor, University of South Florida. 3. “Accessibility and Safety Workshop in India” – Dr. Lalita Sen, Professor Texas Southern University; and Ms. Abha Negi, Chairperson, Global Forum for Empowerment.

initiatives. Tables 1 and 2 below illustrate the types of technical presentations made at some of the past ATPIO Annual Meetings.

It is worth noting that networking at ATPIO annual meetings has resulted in several joint publications (select few discussed in Section 4 below) involving academics from US and India. One example of the beneficial impact of ATPIO enabled networking is the exchange of research methodology, utilization of available technologies and testing of ideas under both homogenous and heterogeneous settings done in the areas of traffic operations (Anusha et al., 2015; Ramesh et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2013; Vanajakshi et al., 2010). Section 4 also illustrates similar benefits of ATPIO enabled exchanges in more detail. Another not so obvious benefit is that undergraduate and graduate students attending ATPIO annual meeting get a unique opportunity of being exposed to a global view of the field of

transportation. This indeed challenges them to think beyond the artificial constraints levied by national boundaries.

3. ATPIO webinars

ATPIO understands that most research in the field of transportation can be considered as applied research. Applied research inherently implies that it needs to include transfer of resulting knowledge and technology for implementation. Therefore, over the past decade ATPIO has held free webinars on topics like Nanotechnology, Transportation Asset Management, Congestion Management, Management of Complex Projects, Performance Specifications, Public Private Partnerships and Smart Cities-Transportation Context. These webinar presentations were based on cutting edge research findings like those of recent Second

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