

From Maharashtra to Atlanta: India's Emergence as a Project Management Super Power¹

[John Schlichter](#)

It was a pleasure having lunch with India's incoming Consul General Dr. Swati Kulkarni just two weeks after her arrival to that post to discuss collaboration between leaders in academia and business from the world's two largest democracies. As an academic and consultant in the domain of Organizational Project Management (OPM), which is strategy-implementation through projects, I noted India is the fastest growing market for project management oriented employment in the world. India's organizations will require 70 lakh new project managers in the next 10 years. Infrastructure will be a particularly active catalyst for project management in India, especially in industries like roads and railways and initiatives like smart cities.

The honorable Consul General can help meet India's growing demand for capable project management by fostering collaboration between academia, consultancies, and the Indian Institute for Project Management (IIPM), which was established in 1989 by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in response to cost overruns on large infrastructure projects. Project management has continued to be a national priority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Dr. Kulkarni has acted swiftly to reach out to local leaders, demonstrating the Consul General's proactive approach to diplomacy. She is a career diplomat who holds M.B.B.S. degrees from the Government Medical College, Nagpur in India. She joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1995, served as Consul General in Cape Town, South Africa (2012-2014) and as Deputy Head of Mission in Muscat, Oman (2008-2012), two posts pervaded by projects.

¹ How to cite this article: Schlichter, J. (2018). From Maharashtra to Atlanta: India's Emergence as a Project Management Super Power. *PM World Journal*, Vol. VII, Issue X – October.



Left to right: John Schlichter, Swati Kulkarni, and Shailesh Lakhtakia.

While in South Africa and Oman, the CGI witnessed firsthand the importance of large infrastructure projects, especially those involving water. South Africa's water shortage has become a national crisis, and Oman's Sultanate has made water infrastructure a national priority of the [PAEW](#), which is currently transforming its Organizational Project Management capabilities using a model I conceived called "OPM3" to cope with rapid industrialization and a growing population base. These are some of the same challenges India continues to grapple. It will be helpful to India for the Consul General to foster dialog within India's government regarding state-sponsored project benchmarking throughout India using an OPM3-type approach.

Dr. Kulkarni's husband Mr. Vijay Jayant Kulkarni is a merchant mariner by profession. The couple has two daughters, who are witnessing their mother embark on her diplomatic mission in Atlanta as the first woman appointed to this post.

About the Author



John Schlichter

Atlanta, GA, USA



John Schlichter coined the term "Organizational Project Management" or "OPM," which is the system for implementing the business strategy of an organization through projects. OPM became a global standard and is how companies throughout the world deliver projects valued in billions if not trillions of dollars. "John has contributed greatly to PMI," Greg Balestrero, CEO, PMI Today, 2002. "In John's role as the leader of PMI's OPM3 program, he has immeasurably contributed to the growth of the profession," Becky Winston, J.D., Chair of the Board of Directors, PMI Today, 2002. Having created OPM3© (an international standard in project, program, and portfolio management), John founded OPM Experts LLC, a firm delivering OPM solutions and a leading provider of maturity assessment services. Industry classifications: NAICS 541618 Other Management Consulting and NAICS 611430 Training. John is a member of the adjunct faculty of Emory University's Goizueta Business School.

John can be contacted at jschlichter@opmexperts.com or frank.john.schlichter.iii@emory.edu.