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## A master's degree, a turning point



Recent graduate Maninder Singh Hunjan poses with his diploma after a graduation ceremony on May 7. Courtesy photo.

**May 17, 2010**

Recent graduate Maninder Singh Hunjan, who was born in Pandher Kheri, a small village in Punjab, India, never planned on moving to a big city like Boston, let alone attending Northeastern University.

But Hunjan, who graduated earlier this month with a master's degree in **telecommunication systems management**, says he couldn't have picked a better place to get a jump-start on a career in software development.

He calls studying at Northeastern the "turning point of my life." His one-year co-op as a quality engineer at a Burlington,

Massachusetts-based branch of Nokia, the multinational communications corporation that manufactures mobile devices, was a key experiential learning opportunity that "opened doors to my professional life," says Hunjan.

"Everything is going mobile — even in developing countries," he says. Hunjan, who graduated from Punjab University in 2006 with an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering, adds, "I want to be part of this technological boom."

Hunjan plans to develop mobile applications for Nokia if he returns to the company as a full-time employee over the summer. But he has even bigger aspirations: He wants to earn an MBA or a PhD in public policy so that he can help rebuild and transform India's government, which, he says, neglects funding its infrastructure and educational system.

He wants to be the change that the country's people have waited more than 60 years for by "figuring out a way to reach the people."

Hunjan's ambitious plans reflect a traumatic past. His father, who served as village chief, was murdered when he was 4 years old. His dad's tragic death made him realize that change begins and ends with his willingness — and drive — to make a difference.

"I am always willing to take guidance and inspiration from successful people and have the confidence to do it on my own," he says. "I never look back. I just go forward."

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