

Indian Diaspora: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract:

People leave their homeland, some to follow their dreams, some run from war, hunger and some by the sense of adventure but leaving homeland and settled in abroad is a life changing experience. A UN report –International Migration Highlights by UNDESA said that the Indian Diaspora (18 million residing outside India), is the largest in the world. Over the last years, the prime minister has repeatedly called attention to the importance of Diaspora which will play a key role in the promotion of Indian foreign policy goals. The purpose of this paper is to provide a conceptual overview of Diaspora, growing significance in foreign Policy, its Issues, challenges and government initiative.

Keywords: Migration, Diaspora, India, Government, Policy, Country.

Introduction:

Many people moved from one place to another place in search of food and shelter since civilization. Migration is a movement of people from one place to other. Immigration is when person comes to a foreign country as a permanent resident. NRI is a person who has an Indian passport but stays outside India for job, business. PRI refers to the citizen lives in abroad for certain period due to educational, medical purpose. Emigration is settling in another country away from home country. So the entire phenomenon of human migration is included in a one term called Diaspora. The term ‘Diaspora’ derived from the Greek word ‘Diaspeirein’ which means dispersion. It was first used in the 6th century BC to explain the Jewish exile from Babylon and describe the population of Jewish living outside Palestine. In contemporary times, Diaspora refers to any person belonging to a particular country with a common origin or culture, but residing outside their homeland for various reasons. Diaspora signifies a movement and a spread of people outside their homeland. The government of India does not follow a specific definition but for them Indian Diaspora encompasses a group of people who can either trace their origins to India or who are Indian citizens living abroad, either temporarily or permanently.

Objective of the study:

The main objective of this paper is to discuss about the Indian Diaspora’s importance, issues and challenges and major steps taken by government.

Methodology: Here, descriptive and analytical method has been used and information’s are collected from secondary sources such as books, journals, newspapers, you tube etc.

The post-independence period witnessed the rise of a new migration known as the Diaspora. A huge number of Indians move to the USA, Britain, Australia, Canada and Western Europe. India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, pursued first policy name “active dissociation”. He was concerned on connecting with them and advocating them would impair the

sovereignty of host countries. So, the community interacted with Indian community only on national days or others important occasions, but the problems of Diaspora never given importance. Under the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi there was a boost in Diaspora policy. However the Indian Diaspora earnest during the regime of Atal Bihari Vajpayee government 1998-2004, he was given special attention to the Indian Diaspora. Under NDA-I that Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was first launched in 2003, which developed mutually beneficial linkages. The current Prime Minister Narendra Modi expanding those earlier efforts since the day he took office 2014. No other prime minister recognized the role of Indian Diaspora as a strategic asset in the all round development of the Indian country but only he brought the linkage between the Indian Diasporic community and development of the country. In his foreign trips and outreach activities he always persuades the community to contribute India's growth. Modi government made the Diaspora a key driver of the Indian Foreign policy. In 2015 BJP general secretary launched the Indian Diaspora Investments Initiative to make party's policy clear for the Diaspora community. Recently India celebrated 15th annual Pravasi Bharatiya divas. Diaspora diplomacy has the potential to spread Indian soft power, opportunities for national Interest, and contribute economically to India's development. So, this paper discussed about the growing significance of the Diaspora in Indian foreign Policy and its Issues and challenges and government initiative. As follows:

Significance and contribution of Indian Diaspora:

Focus on 'Make in India': Indians are counted amongst the most affluent communities around the world. So, Indian Diaspora can be facilitated to contribute to the Indian development by investing in various fields.

Political contribution: Many people of Indian origin hold top political positions in many countries which enhance India's political clout at multilateral institutions so it will enhance the India's soft power. It is not just a part of India's soft power, but a fully transferable political vote bank as well.

Economic contribution: India's Diaspora is one of the richest minorities in many developed countries Remittances sent by community effects the balance of payments and help to bridge a wider trade deficit, further the migrant workers facilitated the flow of tacit information, commercial, business ideas and technologies into the country.

Social contribution: The Diasporas provide important links and contact points between home and host societies by building transnational networks not only emotional or familial but also cultural, social and economic interest.

So, the Global Indian's can serve as bridges by providing access to markets, source of investment, expertise, knowledge and technology.

Issues and Challenges

Negative Impact: having strong Diaspora does not always translate to benefits for the home country. India had problems with negative campaigning and foreign funding, coming from abroad, for separatist movements like the Khalistan movement.

Heterogeneous community: Indian Diaspora has different demands from the Indian Government, like US, U.K. look for investment opportunities, Gulf Diaspora expected for welfare support, East-Asian Diaspora reconnect with the country on cultural grounds.

Returning Diaspora: India must facing issues in west Asia semi skilled workers who returned after the infrastructure project is over.

Regulatory system: There are many inadequacies of the Indian system for the Diaspora collaboration eg. grievances like red tape, multiple clearances, and distrust of government acting as hindrances for Diaspora.

Anti- Globalization: with the fear of losing jobs educational opportunities to the outsiders and for the anti globalization wave, there has increase hate against the community.

Various initiatives by Government:

Major steps taken by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs organizes for engaging the Diaspora around the world. As follows:

Indian Community Welfare Fund: This is a specialized fund established to assist workers in distress. The Indian Mission abroad will use the contingency fund for worker welfare. It is used for medicinal care, air passage and legal help for workers also for airlifting workers or paying penalty and fines in jails.

Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana: It was launched in 2012 to enable Indian workers to get life insurance. The scheme also encourages workers to save money for pension.

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana: It is compulsory insurance scheme for Indian workers with Emigration Check Required stamped on passports.

Know India Programme: It is a three week programme for Indian expatriates in the age group 18-26 years. One Indian state partner with central government and expatriate youth are introduced to Indian, culture, education and so on.

Scholarship Programme for Diaspora's Children: Under the scheme, there is provision for scholarship for engineering, law and science education for children of the Indian Diaspora for higher education.

Overseas India Youth Club: An initiative to keep the overseas youth in touch with the development of India by India Youth clubs abroad.

Tracing Roots Scheme: Under this scheme, an Indian Diaspora family can get its roots traced in any state in India on provision of paying a charge for the facility.

E-Migrate: The Indian government has launched an online platform for foreign employers who wish to recruit Indian citizens. The foreign employees need to register in the online registration system as the registration once done shall be inspected by Indian mission abroad. The employers can use the platform to recruit Indian workers by giving permits.

Madad: If Indian citizens living abroad wish to file consular related grievances, the new launched by the Indian government called Madad as a platform. The portal will act as a grievance redressed mechanism, allowing the ID greater accessibility and reach.

Suggestions:

- 1) India should formulate new policy which specially focused on Diaspora.
- 2) Transparency in policy matters: social Media tools have made easy to stay touch with home country so for greater good of the nation transparency in all policy decision is needed.
- 3) Improvement in ease of doing business provide a huge investment from Diaspora
- 4) Need for a strategic Diaspora evacuation policy from conflict zones.
- 5) India should formalize a rotation program where in top NRI, Scientist, Engineers, Doctor Managers, professional serve Indian Public sector for brief period.

- 6) India can open a separate Minister-of- state level for NRI administration.

Conclusion:

The Indian Diaspora has been a pride of India .The importance of Diaspora population has become a major factor in International politics. The Indian Diaspora communities are model minority, they are affluent, growing in numbers, many of them are willing to exert their influence in electoral politics and engaged in multinational business, this provide huge opportunities for Indian environment. Historically, India has benefited from its Diaspora in lobbying for the US-India Civilian Nuclear Agreement and their remittance inflow. So there is more potential for the Diaspora to contribute India's development. In the past, policies towards the Diaspora have been Inconsistent and often followed by poor implementation but in the present their success reflected in the Indian Government Scheme. Having a strong Diaspora does not always benefits the home country because India had problems with negative campaigning, foreign funding, coming back from abroad, separatist movement some time it impact the security of the state. In the present Scenario, India's Foreign policy aims to benefits the key project like Swachh Bharat, Clean Ganga, Make in India, Digital India and Skill India with Diaspora's contribution. So the Diaspora community became a strategic asset in the all round development of the country.

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