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PRAVASI PULSE



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AN INITIATIVE OF INDIAN DIASPORIC NETWORK



Letter from the *Editor*



*Wherever we go,
we create a
"mini-India"
there-*

*PM Modi address to
Indian diaspora in
France*

Dear Esteemed Readers,
Welcome aboard to the inaugural voyage of Pravasi Pulse, a beacon illuminating the vibrant tapestry of the Indian diaspora worldwide. As your Editor-in-Chief, it's my privilege to unveil a platform aimed at bridging the geographical and cultural distances between India and her dispersed children.

Attempting to encapsulate the essence of the Indian diaspora in mere words is a daunting task. It encompasses a tapestry of migratory journeys spanning centuries, forging a community rich in diversity—be it in religion, region, language, or culture. Yet, amidst this diversity, runs a common thread binding us all: our shared heritage and indomitable spirit rooted in the soil of Bharat Mata.

Pravasi Pulse is singularly focused on the Indian diaspora, aiming to cover a broad spectrum of topics and stories that have an impact on the lives of the Indian diaspora living abroad. This magazine fills a significant gap in the media landscape, as currently, there are no other publications that serve this unique and important niche. This endeavour is a source of immense pride for us, as we strive to provide a voice and platform for the Indian diaspora, bringing their stories and issues to the forefront.

Pravasi Pulse embarks on a noble mission to spotlight the myriad achievements of our diaspora while shedding light on the challenges they navigate. Our vision extends beyond mere illumination; we seek to cultivate a sense of unity and collaboration, knitting together the diaspora with the motherland, Bharat.

In a world ever more connected, the chasm between hearts seems to widen. Pravasi Pulse endeavours to bridge this gap, envisioning a global network—a familial bond—where the proud sons and daughters of the homeland, Bharat, stand in solidarity, bolstering one another and contributing collectively to the advancement of our homelands and host nations.

Within these pages, you'll find narratives celebrating the triumphs of our diaspora across diverse fields, as well as thoughtful explorations of the obstacles we confront. We take pride in showcasing our cultural heritage, recognizing it as a unifying force that binds us together. Moreover, we offer insights into fostering the development of both India and our adopted lands through collaborative efforts.

As we embark on this collective odyssey, I urge you to join hands with us, share your stories, and actively participate in shaping Pravasi Pulse into a resonant voice for the Indian diaspora. Together, let's script a narrative of unity, resilience, and progress.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Let us, therefore, unite in service, transforming Pravasi Pulse into a guiding light for our community, amplifying our achievements, confronting our challenges, and celebrating our unity.

With warm regards,
Prakash Kumar Jha
Editor-in-Chief
Pravasi Pulse

Pravasi News Digest

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a massive crowd of over 65,000 Indians at the 'Ahlani Modi' event in Abu Dhabi on February 13, 2024. He expressed his gratitude to the Indian diaspora for their contributions to the development of both countries. He also inaugurated the BAPS Hindu temple, the first of its kind in the UAE, and said it was a symbol of India's cultural diversity and harmony.



- Prime Minister Modi received a warm and enthusiastic welcome by the Indian diaspora in Qatar, who gathered in large numbers to greet him and listen to his speech. He praised the community for their achievements and aspirations, and urged them to continue to work hard and make India proud.

- The Indian diaspora in Canada, estimated at 2.3 million, is playing a vital role in strengthening the bilateral ties between the two countries, according to Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh. He made this remark while meeting a high-level delegation led by Scott Moe, the Premier of Saskatchewan province, on Wednesday. Singh said that the Indian community in Canada has achieved success in all walks of life and has contributed to the development of both nations. He also invited the Indian diaspora to participate in the VAIBHAV fellowship programme, which aims to connect Indian researchers with their counterparts abroad.



- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh received a warm welcome from the Indian diaspora in London, where he visited India House on January 10, 2024. He was greeted by enthusiastic chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram" by the Indian community, who expressed their pride and support for India.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted the Indian diaspora on the occasion of Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD) on January 9, 2024. He appreciated their achievements and contributions to the global community and to India's progress. He said that they represent the spirit of India and its diversity in various fields such as technology, politics, culture, and innovation. He also referred to the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915, which marked the beginning of the freedom struggle. PBD is celebrated every year to honour the overseas Indian community and to connect them with their roots.



Narendra Modi ✓
@narendramodi

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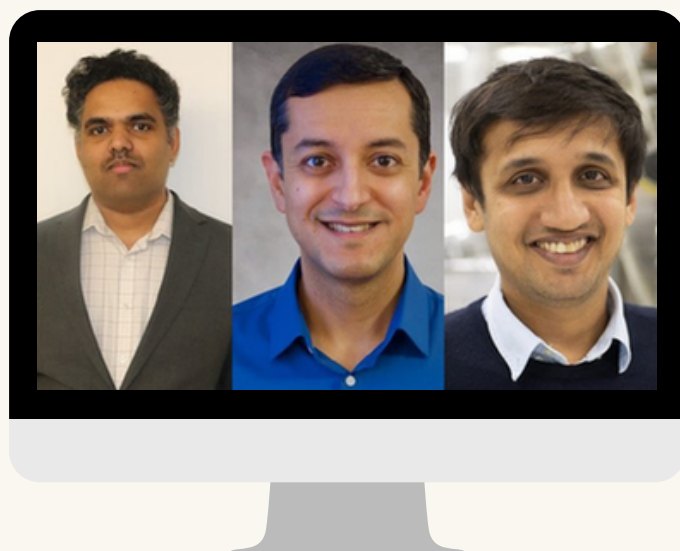
Greetings on Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas. This is a day to celebrate the contributions and achievements of the Indian diaspora worldwide. Their dedication towards preserving our rich heritage and strengthening global ties is commendable. They embody the spirit of India across the globe, fostering a sense of unity and diversity.

7:50 am · 9 Jan 2024 · 984.1K Views

- The Indian diaspora across the world celebrated the consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya with festive fervour and enthusiasm. In New York, Times Square was illuminated with the colours of the Indian flag and images of Lord Ram, as thousands of people gathered to witness the historic event. In Mexico, a new Ram temple was inaugurated in Queretaro, coinciding with the ceremony in Ayodhya. In Houston, a massive car rally was organised by the Hindu American community, displaying banners and flags of India and chanting slogans of Jai Shri Ram. The Indian diaspora expressed their joy and pride in being part of the cultural and spiritual heritage of India. In addition to these, the Indian diaspora in other countries also marked the occasion with various events and activities. In Mauritius, the Hindu temples lit earthen lamps and recited the Ramayan Path. In France, a grand rath yatra was held from Place De La Chapelle to the Eiffel Tower. In Canada, three municipalities declared January 22 as Ayodhya Ram Mandir Day. In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni praised the Indian diaspora for their role in the economic development of his country. The event was also live-streamed at various Indian embassies and consulates across the globe.



- The Indian government has launched a new fellowship scheme called Vaibhav to attract Indian diaspora scientists to collaborate with Indian institutes on various science and technology projects. The scheme will provide a grant of Rs 4 lakh per year to the selected scientists, who will spend 1-2 months annually in India for up to three years. The first batch of 22 fellows has been chosen and will join the institutes in April 2024. The scheme aims to enhance the scientific capabilities and human resources of India, and foster partnerships with the global scientific community.
- Three young scientists of Indian origin have been honoured with the Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists in the UK, which recognise research that is transforming medicine, technology, and our understanding of the world. The awards, given by the Blavatnik Family Foundation and the New York Academy of Sciences, include grants totalling 480,000 pounds. The recipients are Rahul R Nair, a materials physicist from The University of Manchester, Mehul Malik, a quantum physicist from Heriot-Watt University, and Tanmay Bharat, a structural biologist from the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology. Nair was named Laureate in Physical Sciences & Engineering for developing novel membranes based on two-dimensional materials that enable energy-efficient separation and filtration technologies. Malik was a finalist in the same category for advancing quantum communications through techniques that harness high-dimensional entanglement. Bharat was a finalist in Life Sciences for creating atomic-level pictures of cell-surface molecules produced by microscopic bacteria and archaea.
- The National Security Agreement, proposed by the Biden-Harris administration, aimed to address immigration issues impacting the Indian diaspora in the US. It included provisions like safeguarding aged-out children of H-1B visa holders, granting employment authorization to certain spouses of H-1B visa holders, and raising green card quotas to alleviate backlogs, particularly affecting applicants from countries like India. Despite its potential benefits, the bill was dismissed by Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, who argued it wouldn't address the broader border crisis. Consequently, the fate of these reforms remains uncertain due to significant bipartisan and interest group opposition.



- The role and achievements of the Indian diaspora in Australia were praised by Australian MP Andrew Charlton, who represents the constituency of Parramatta, which has a large number of Indian-origin residents. Charlton is also the author of a book titled 'Australia's Pivot to India'. He said that the Indian diaspora has made massive contributions in various fields, such as business, politics, media, and culture, and has enriched the Australian society with its diversity and talent.
- An Indian-origin professor from Australia, Brajesh Singh, has won the 2023 Dorothy Jones Prize for his outstanding research in microbiology. His work has provided solutions to global challenges such as environmental degradation and food insecurity, and has informed policy decisions at various levels. He has also developed innovations for the bioeconomy and sustainable agriculture, and has collaborated with several international organisations, including the UN FAO. The prize is part of the Applied Microbiology International Horizon Awards, which recognise the best minds in the field.

- Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni praised the Indian diaspora for their significant role in the economic development of his country, during the 19th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit in Kampala. He expressed regret for the expulsion of Asians, mainly Indian Ugandans, by the former dictator Idi Amin in 1972, and said that his government had returned their properties and welcomed them back. He also mentioned the 900 factories built by the Indian returnees since their arrival.



- Smital Dhake, a 26-year-old data scientist of Indian origin, has won the 'Newcomer of the Year' award in the 2023 RailStaff Awards in the UK. The award recognises her exceptional skill, tenacity and professional achievement in the rail industry. Dhake, who joined Alstom, the UK and Ireland's leading supplier of new trains and train services, in July 2022, is the first and only data scientist in the company. She has applied her expertise in robotics and artificial intelligence to develop the Modular Advanced Route Setting (M-ARS) System, which uses machine learning to predict and resolve conflicting train movements. Dhake has also achieved IRSE competence and delivered safety-related works in record time. She said that the award will inspire her to keep up the hard work and also inspire others who are new to the industry

- The Know India Programme (KIP), a flagship initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs to connect the Indian diaspora youth with their ancestral homeland, completed 20 years in 2023. The programme was launched in 2003 with the aim of providing exposure to India's history, culture, development, and democracy. The programme consists of a three-week visit to India, during which the participants interact with various institutions, leaders, and experts, as well as visit places of historical and cultural significance. The programme also offers opportunities for learning Yoga, Ayurveda, and classical arts. The 70th edition of the KIP, held from 11 to 29 December 2023, welcomed 34 participants from nine countries, including Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Myanmar, Malaysia, and Colombia

- Three people of Indian origin were among the recipients of the highest awards on Australia Day 2024. Harinder Sidhu, the Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand, was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her service to public administration and foreign affairs. Professor Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, a natural resource management researcher and gender equality advocate, was honoured with the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) award for distinguished service. Dr Ramananda Kamath, a paediatric gastroenterologist received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services to the respective fields. They expressed their gratitude, pride, and inspiration for being recognised for their achievements and contributions to Australia and India.

- Meira Chand, an 81-year-old Indian-origin writer, received the Cultural Medallion, the highest arts accolade in Singapore, for her artistic excellence and contribution to the country's arts and culture scene. Chand, who was born in London to a Swiss mother and Indian father, is an award-winning novelist known for her depiction of multicultural societies. Her novel 'The Painted Cage' (1986) was longlisted for the Booker Prize. She was one of the three recipients of the award, along with fellow novelist Suchen Christine Lim and Malay dance veteran Osman Abdul Hamid. The award comes with an SGD 80,000 grant for each recipient to support their artistic pursuits



- An Indian-origin doctor, Ravi Solanki, has been honoured with the Royal Academy of Engineering President's Special Award for Pandemic Service in the UK. He received the award along with Raymond Siems, an engineer, for their volunteer work to build a website for a new NHS charity called HEROES. The website provides support and resources to healthcare workers during the COVID-19 crisis. Solanki and Siems used their skills in neurology and machine learning to create a secure and user-friendly platform that has raised over 1 million pounds for the charity
- The Law Commission of India has suggested a comprehensive law to regulate the marriages of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) with Indian citizens. The proposal aims to prevent fraudulent and deceptive practices such as false promises, misrepresentation, and abandonment of spouses. The Commission has recommended that all such marriages should be compulsorily registered in India within 30 days. The law should also cover aspects such as divorce, maintenance, custody, and service of judicial documents. The Commission has also proposed amendments in the Passports Act, 1967, to require the declaration of marital status and the linking of spouses' passports
- The Indian diaspora, estimated at over 30 million, is a powerful force in the global arena, influencing various sectors such as technology, politics, culture, and innovation. At the #DavosBrainstorm2024, Rahul Kanwal, Executive Director of Business Today, had an exclusive conversation with Asha Jadeja Motwani, Investor, Philanthropist, and Founder of the Motwani Jadeja Foundation, about the role of the Indian diaspora in India's growth story. Motwani shared her insights on how the Indian diaspora can leverage its network, skills, and resources to support India's development and foster stronger ties with other countries.

As we celebrate the launch of our inaugural magazine, we acknowledge our modest beginnings, including limited resources and personnel to comprehensively cover all news pertaining to the Indian diaspora globally. Consequently, there may be significant news, events, awards, and recognitions that could have escaped our attention. We warmly invite you to contribute by sharing such information with us at indiandiasporicnetwork@gmail.com. Your contributions are highly valued, and we look forward to featuring them in future editions.

NAVIGATING THE TRENDS OF DIASPORA DIPLOMACY IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

By Sweta Basak
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Due to their recognition as "soft power" in the context of foreign policy strategy, diasporas have become increasingly influential. Beyond their active engagement in the host nations, they also function as a driver or stimulant of the economic growth of their home countries. Being transnational communities, diasporas are now significant non-state players that influence international politics and economic relations. That being said, the purpose of this paper is to examine the role that the expatriate community has had in Indian foreign policy in recent decades. Owing to the liberalization and globalization of the global financial landscape, as well as the rapid progression of communication and transportation technology that have shortened distances in time and space, the diaspora groups now have much closer socioeconomic, political, and cultural links to their home nations.

As a result, overseas communities are now more important than ever not just on the global stage but also in their home nations' internal political and economic concerns. They eventually were recognized as an "invariable bridge" with significant political and economic ramifications for both their home nation and the host country.

**THE SUN NEVER SETS
THE INDIAN DIASPORA**
The Indian diaspora, which makes up a sizable portion of the worldwide diaspora, is not exempt from the concurrent trends above stated; in the past few years, it has surged to exercise influence over India's foreign policy and transformed into an indispensable strategic asset. Acknowledging its rightful place on several fronts, India has been making determined attempts to interact with and capitalize on its diaspora, which is thought to number the 25 million and is spread over 136 nations. The High-Level Committee Report on Indian Diaspora, published by the Government of India, accurately notes that "The Sun never sets in the Indian Diaspora," given its scope and growth.

**THE SPORADIC AND
PATCHY NEXUS:
DIASPORA AND
FOREIGN POLICY**
Owing to the diaspora's ingrained engagement in international affairs, it is acknowledged that diaspora policy and foreign policy are convergent. Nonetheless, due to a reckless disposition, the connection between Indian diaspora policy and foreign policy has been inconsistent.

Even though British interests were the primary focus of foreign policy during the pre-independence era, the Indian government of the time showed a sincere interest in safeguarding the diverse concerns of Indian expatriates, who were considered "British subjects" despite their residence outside of the British Empire. Through deputations from Congress members, the Indian political elites demonstrated unity and expressed their concerns to the Indian expats. The Indian National Congress spearheaded the independence campaign, and one of its main concerns was the condition of Indians living overseas. The Indian labour migrants sent money home to support their families. One may claim that up to 1947, there was a mutually beneficial relationship between the home country and the diaspora. The notion of diaspora policy underwent a paradigm shift following India's independence in 1947 since the country's foreign policy was shaped by Nehruvian principles of non-alignment, respect for sovereignty, and opposition to imperialism and racial apartheid. In terms of the economy, India dec-

ided to pursue economic development through self-reliance. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was India's prime minister at the time, said unequivocally that ethnic Indians who wished to stay overseas would be treated as citizens or nationals of their new countries. They were urged to struggle for the emancipation of their adoptive homeland and assimilate into the host culture. Following a pause, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Nehru's successor, and Srimavo Bandaranaike resolved the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka. Otherwise, succeeding administrations carried on and expanded the Nehruvian movement until 1980.

Subsequently, neither the Indian foreign policy nor the Diaspora policy changed, even though India's foreign policy under Indira Gandhi switched from Nehruvian idealism to realism. Indeed, she caused herself a great deal of unpopularity between 1968 and 1972 during the East African Indian problem. However, because of the Balance of Payment issue and oil shocks, the government pushed for a remittance-centric strategy, particularly for Gulf Indians. Later, during Rajiv Gandhi's government, there was a little change in diaspora policy as well, as foreign policy emphasis shifted from realism to inter-third-world cooperation.

In 1986, our relationship with Fiji was strained because of the Fiji-Indian dispute, which he attempted to resolve and provided his friendly support for. In addition, he took administrative actions such as creating the Indian Overseas Affairs Department in 1984 after seeing the potential of the Indian diaspora as a strategic asset. He also welcomed talented Indian diaspora individuals like Sam Pitroda to fulfil his vision of India in the twenty-first century. Until the National Democratic Alliance administration led by the Bharatiya Janata Party took office, there were no proactive measures or definite, consistent policies in place to address or engage with Indians living abroad.

Following the end of the Cold War, a multipolar foreign policy emerged, the global economy underwent a structural shift, and the Indian economy faced a persistent foreign reserve crisis in the 1990s. These factors made it easier for the Narasimha Rao-led government of India to announce radical economic reforms like liberalization, privatization, and globalization (LPG). The Indian Diaspora was able to take advantage of the numerous economic prospects presented by the open and unrestricted Indian economy with the introduction of a new economic model. Because of the significant investment and remittances from the Indian diaspora, the foreign exchange issue was overcome. The Indian government then revised its policy toward the diaspora and altered its perspective on it. The BJP-led NDA administration has taken significant action to capitalize on the Indian diaspora.

Given this, extensive policy measures, both short- and long-term, were announced to engage the country's diverse diaspora during its tenure. These measures included the appointment of a High-Level Committee on Indian Diaspora, the introduction of the PIO card scheme, the annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on January 9th, the presentation of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards, the provision of Dual citizenship (OCI), and more. A distinct Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs was formed by the succeeding UPA administration, and it has launched many programs to interact with the diaspora. One may comprehend the reciprocal influence between Indian foreign policy and diaspora policy from the arguments above.

THE RAMIFICATION OF DIASPORA AND FOREIGN POLICY LINKAGES:

There have been positive as well as negative consequences for India from the connections between Indian foreign policy and diaspora policy. In hindsight, they were greatly impacted by the Indian freedom movement during the battle for independence. In response to the urgent cry of Indian leaders, they braved foreign territory to free their motherland. Adi Patel, Chhedi Jagan, and Koya were among the Indian expatriates who spearheaded the Indian liberation movement and the political awakening inside

their various established nations. India was politically impacted by the beginning of the Gadar movement, the formation of the Azad Hind Fauj and the Komagata Maru tragedy.

Mahatma Gandhi, who emerged into a diaspora, was undoubtedly a guiding light in the quest for political independence for India. The Indian Diaspora was not supposed to contribute in any way to India's political or economic growth after independence, since Nehruvian principles dominated Indian foreign policy. There were political and economic ramifications to this viewpoint. One of them was that India could not intervene when a segment of its diaspora faced extreme hardships, whether economic, social, or political discrimination. For example, in South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Burma. Another disadvantage was that, even though they maintained informal connections with their family back home, they were discouraged from contributing to the economic growth of independent India.

After globalization and significant structural changes to the Indian economy, the diaspora in India was later seen as a feasible and probable source of support for the looming foreign exchange crisis of the 1990s. Resuming interactions with the Indian diaspora has significant effects on India's internal and global political and economic processes. The tremendous lobbying efforts of the Indian community in the US were commendable as they led to the rejection of the Burton Amendment, the breaking of the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Co-operation Agreement, and the defence of India's nuclear tests in 1998 and the 1999 Kargil conflict. The Indian Caucus on Capitol Hill, along with other advocacy and lobby groups, played a crucial role in advancing India's national and security objectives on several occasions.

India's diplomatic ties with other nations have been impacted by the substantial presence of a diversified Indian diaspora around the globe. India's relations with the Gulf countries have long been tainted by the exploitation and mistreatment of Indian labourers there. Remittances decreased as a result of the First Gulf War, which prompted many Indian migrants to escape. It worsened India's unfavourable balance of payments situation in the 1990s. The recent Libyan Crisis in North Africa and the wars in Iraq and Kuwait have had a rapid impact on our foreign policy toward the area. Furthermore, there were serious worries about India's diplomatic relations raised by the recent dispute surrounding the evacuation of Indian workers from Saudi Arabia. Deterioration of relationships has also resulted from uneasy interactions between the Indian community and their respective governments.

India's diplomatic mission in Fiji had to shut down as a result of the coup. Both sides responded negatively to the HINDRAF movement of Indians in Malaysia. There were also some responses from India to the South African radio host's statements. Following this, the Indian Mission was instructed to maintain a continuous state of alertness between the African and Indian populations. In 2004, a global Sikh movement in support of French Sikhs living in India and the diaspora gave rise to the ban on turban wear among Sikhs in France. France decided in response to pressure from Sikhs throughout the world and the Indian government, particularly under the new leadership of Sikh Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Reflecting on the domestic political paradigm, it was witnessed that in the US and the UK, the Indian diaspora demonstrated support for anti-emergency groups during the declaration of emergency on the home front. In Punjab, Gujarat, Kerala, and Andhra, they have been financing the state elections. Parliamentarians in these nations were under pressure to take into account the interests and concerns of the Indian people because of their enviable position in the US, UK, and Canada.

DIASPORA IN THE ECONOMIC GROWTH STORY:

Remittances and investments from the diaspora supported India's economic expansion and helped it overcome its foreign reserve issue. In recent times, India has surpassed China in the amount of international remittances received. The Indian diaspora has played a pivotal role in mediating and enabling global commerce and investment due to the prominence of Indian technocrats, entrepreneurs, and management consultants. Certain Indian-American venture investors have provided funding to Indian research and development firms that are expected to generate patents and novel products in the fields of semiconductor design and wireless technologies.

The top three in this category are Norwest Venture Group, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, and West Bridge Capital. As an outcome, they have been actively helping India transition to a knowledge-based economy. To provide healthcare that meets international standards, they have built hospitals such as Apollo, Medicity, and Escorts. Without a doubt, since the Indian economy underwent structural changes, they have evolved into a facilitator of economic progress.

Way Forward: Diaspora Diplomacy as a Strategic Asset:

It is possible to contend that Indian foreign policy and diaspora policy are simply two sides of the same sword. It is both productive and counterproductive. India has not yet fully capitalized on the Indian Diaspora's potential in the area of foreign policy. To capitalize on the increasing number of Indians living abroad, a concrete and meticulous policy for the diaspora is essential. India might achieve its long-held goal of becoming a superpower and advance significantly in its international affairs with the adaptable role of the diaspora.

Equipped with newly acquired skills and motivated by their civilizational ideals, the twenty million Indian Diaspora has elevated their prominence in the international realm. Despite their diversity—having come from various historical and cultural migratory contexts—they are bound together by their strong emotional and cultural ties to Mother India and their "Indianess." These are a miniature version of India. To preserve India's cultural diversity, they do serve as a tactic for "soft power diplomacy." They have served as advocates, mediators, bridges, lobbyists, and facilitators for giving India's economic and national security objectives the highest level of priority. Indian academic intellectuals' experience at US and EU colleges might be useful in raising the bar on higher education. India can increase its human capital by utilizing the youth from its well-exposed diaspora as partners.

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THE INDIAN DIASPORA AND ONLINE JOURNEYS: THE EMERGENCE OF A DIGITAL DIASPORA

By Dr. Anindita Shome

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The Indian diaspora has witnessed rich representations in fictional narratives, cinema, theatre, food, clothing, and several forms of popular culture. The uniqueness of the Indian diaspora has been captured through the pages of novels, poetry, theatrical forms, fusion of musical forms, food cultures, and so on. The creative and non-creative representations of the diaspora have been read and discussed widely in the diaspora as well as in the homeland.

In the last few decades, there has been the dawn of an Indian digital diaspora through virtual identities and representations.

The digital spaces are occupied and utilised by the Indian diaspora to reconstruct and build their diasporic identities. The offline identities take new forms in the digital spaces and create spaces for unprecedented diasporic narratives. The Indian diaspora food blogs have sustained popularity for several decades now.

The diasporic journeys of the Indian diaspora are brought alive in the food narratives of the diasporic food bloggers. The development of social media platforms has led to the presence of many Indian diaspora virtual pages.

The Indian digital diaspora is being constructed through self-representations of Indian diasporics in online spaces; representations of the official Indian diasporic digital pages; the digital spaces run by diasporic organizations; educational and skilling networks; and so on. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, have abundant representations of the Indian diaspora, especially the younger generations. Indian diaspora stand-up comedians have been gaining recognition in the offline comedy spaces as well as the online social media spaces. Blogs have retained their popularity in the present era, and there are Indian diaspora blog posts on varied aspects of diasporic identities and journeys. The heterogeneities of the Indian digital diaspora are true representations of the rich diversities of the Indian diaspora.

The Indian digital diaspora can be argued to be intergenerational and intersectional. The gendered diasporic journeys and lived experiences can be explored through digital narratives. The offline support organisations and networks fighting against different forms of gender-based violence have a strong virtual presence to disseminate information and awareness on gender-based violence in diasporic spaces. There are online networks and support systems formed through the digital narratives of organisations and individuals who are working towards similar causes of the diaspora. The often-neglected lived experiences of the women and the third gender in the diaspora find powerful expression in the digital spaces. The online platforms are apt to discuss and commence dialogues on topics which do not find a voice in the offline spaces. The digital diasporic spaces give the diasporic youth powerful platforms to assert their identities and narratives. The intergenerational ways of the Indian diaspora are depiction in the diasporic youth blogs and social media content. The Indian Diaspora's second, third- and subsequent generations form a crucial part of the diaspora. They hold significance for the host land as well as the homeland. A study of the diasporic youth's choices and lived experiences often reveals the changes in a diaspora through the generations and decades. The stereotypical understanding of the Indian diasporic youth, as confused and lost between two cultures and nation-states, has been challenged and contested through powerful representations of Indian diasporic youth on social media and other forms of digital representation.

The spaces occupied by the Indian diasporic youth offer immense possibilities for the homeland. The Indian diasporic youth can contribute to the homeland through the transfer of knowledge, technology, and other collaborations. There remain possibilities of future investments in the homeland if there are stronger connections and ties between the homeland and the diasporic youth. The virtual presence of the Indian diaspora youth is also breaking age-old stereotypes and asserting their multiple belonging/s as a diaspora. The educational online networks communicate the knowledge on contemporary skills needed for the job markets in the adopted land; the admission process of various universities; and so on. The youth diasporic representations and narratives formed online reflect the journeys of the Indian diaspora from the pre-colonial age to the postcolonial era. The amalgamation of homeland and adopted land identities, cultures, and traditions; the fusion of dance and music forms; the inherited homeland stories, memories and habits; the visits to the homeland; and the negotiations between the private and public spaces in the diaspora by the youth diasporic construct an inimitable digital diaspora. The Indian digital diaspora opens spaces for building and retaining ties with kith and kin in the homeland and across other adopted lands. The Indian Government has official pages addressing and celebrating the Indian diaspora as well as deliberating on the diaspora issues in the adopted land. The diaspora acts as the link between the homeland and the adopted land, and the virtual spaces offer new opportunities for better linkages between the two nation-states. With the Indian diaspora settled in almost every nation-state around the world, the digital spaces are ideal to foster and retain ties between the Indian and the Indian diaspora. Innovative policy-making regarding the Indian diaspora can gain momentum if digital spaces are taken into account and utilised.

The online worlds and the experiences in the digital spaces can be understood as a continuation of our real-life/offline experiences. Therefore, there is a need to study and analyse the evolving Indian digital diaspora and its results on the homeland and the adopted land. There are immense possibilities hidden in the digital diaspora spaces, and harnessing those opportunities would lead to better ties between the homeland, the diaspora, and the adopted land. The unfolding of the interdisciplinary Digital Humanities studies coincides with the growing of digital diasporas around the world. The Indian digital diaspora can be deliberated in academic and non-academic spaces. An intersectional understanding of the digital diaspora would offer multiple, diverse perspectives on the subject. The Indian digital diaspora provides ideas for deeper connections with the homeland at present as well as offer ideas for future association.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF GIANTS: HONORING STALWARTS IN DIASPORA SCHOLARSHIP

This section is devoted to acknowledging the individuals whose lifelong dedication has significantly contributed to the academic enrichment of Indian diaspora studies. Among the numerous luminaries in the field, one figure stands out as both a personal inspiration and a beacon in diaspora studies: Professor Ajay Kumar Dubey.

My initial exposure to the complexities of the Indian diaspora was during my master's program, under the tutelage of Professor Dubey. The profound insights imparted by him were so compelling that they inspired me to pursue further research in this domain, leading to my decision to undertake a doctoral study on the subject. Fortuitously, Professor Dubey is also my supervisor during this pivotal phase of my academic journey.

As we initiate the publication of *Pravasi Pulse*, a magazine dedicated to exploring the diverse narratives of the Indian diaspora, it is apt to honour an individual whose scholarly contributions have not only inspired this venture but have also laid the foundational framework upon which we build.

Professor Dubey, an eminent figure in International Relations and Diaspora Studies, has spent decades researching Indian migration, Indo-African relations, and the broader dynamics of diaspora communities. His distinguished career at Jawaharlal Nehru University, encompassing roles from Professor to Director of various centers of excellence such as the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study (JNIAS) and the Special Centre for National Security Studies (SCNSS), highlights his unwavering dedication to academic leadership and excellence. His efforts were instrumental in the establishment of the Centre for African Studies at JNU, encouraging a significant number of scholars to explore not only African studies but also diaspora studies in their doctoral research.



As an author and editor, Professor Dubey has made invaluable contributions to the diasporic literature corpus, with seminal publications including:

- India and Africa's Partnership: A Vision for a New Future (Springer, 2016)
- Trends in Indo-African Relations (Manas Publications, 2010)
- France and Africa: An Indian Perspective (Kalinga Publications, 2009)
- India and Francophone Africa under Globalisation (Kalinga Publications, 2009)
- Government and Politics in Mauritius (Kalinga Publications, 1997)
- Indo-African Relations in the Post-Nehru Era (Kalinga Publications, 1990)
- Indian Diaspora Contributions to their New Home (MD Publications, 2011)
- Indian Diaspora in Africa: A Comparative Perspective (MD Publications, 2009)
- Indian Diaspora: Global Identity (Kalinga Publications, 2003)

Professor Dubey was also a member of the High-level Committee under the Vajpayee government chaired by L.M. Singhvi, which led to transformative measures in the Indian government's engagement with its diaspora, including the implementation of Overseas Citizenship and the inception of *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas*.

In addition, Professor Dubey has authored numerous papers on African studies and the Indian diaspora and has served as the Book Series Editor for "Africa's Global Engagement: Perspectives from Emerging Countries" by Palgrave Macmillan, Nature Springer, and as Editor-in-Chief of several esteemed journals, including *Africa Review* (Routledge, U.K.), *Diaspora Studies* (Taylor and Francis, U.K.), *Insight on Africa* (Sage Publications), and the *Journal of Global Diaspora Studies* (World Association of Diaspora Studies, South Korea), all indexed in prestigious databases like SCOPUS and Web of Sciences.

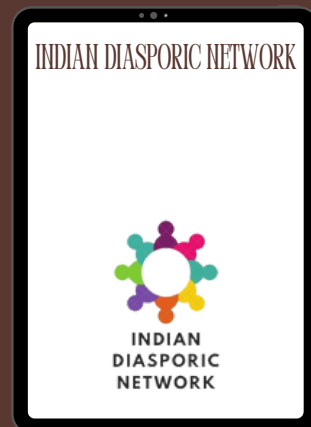
His role as an educator and supervisor is where Professor Dubey's influence is most deeply felt. Guiding numerous students through their M.Phil. and Ph.D. journeys, his mentorship has illuminated the path for emerging scholars, including myself. His commitment to academic rigor, critical thinking, and empathetic engagement with diasporic issues has left a lasting impact on all fortunate enough to have been mentored by him.

As *Pravasi Pulse* endeavors to interlace stories of migration, identity, and cultural exchange, we draw inspiration from Professor Dubey. His illustrious career, characterized by a steadfast dedication to diaspora studies and academic excellence, sets an exemplary standard for us all.

Thus, it is with profound respect and gratitude that we dedicate the inaugural issue of *Pravasi Pulse* to Professor Ajay Kumar Dubey, a distinguished pioneer of Indian diasporic literature and a beacon for generations of scholars and practitioners in diaspora studies.

With the highest regards,
Prakash Kumar Jha
Editor-in-Chief, *Pravasi Pulse*

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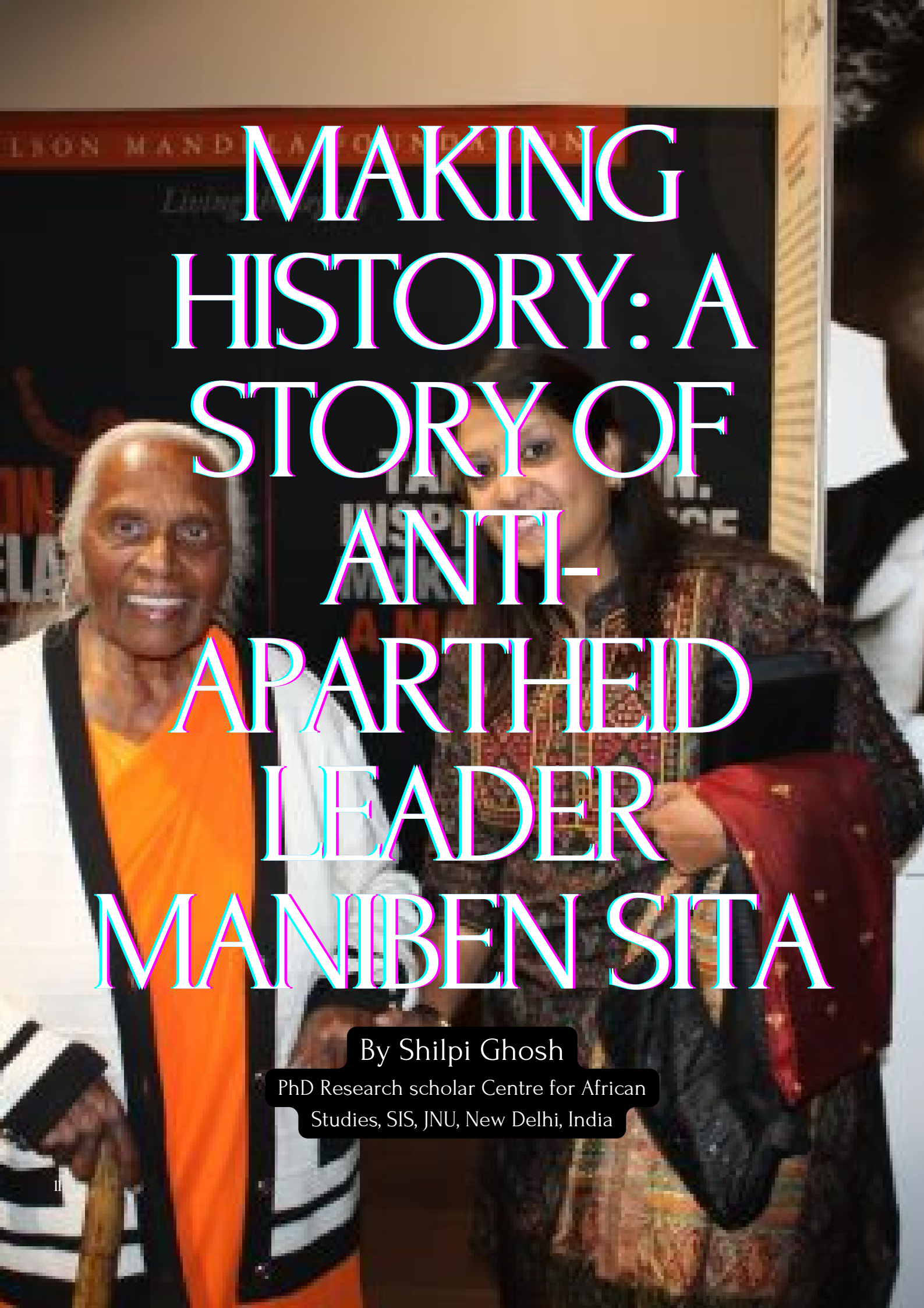


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MAKING HISTORY: A STORY OF ANTI- APARTHEID LEADER MANIBEN SITA

By Shilpi Ghosh

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This article explores the life and legacy of Maniben Sita, an Indian-origin anti-apartheid activist in Africa, emphasizing the pivotal role of Indian-origin women in the continent's liberation movements.

As they say stronger women build stronger nations. It is true that since the very ancient times, they have been playing crucial roles in various spheres of life. They are the nation's true builders. They establish the institution of family, build homes, bring up children and make them good citizens.

"Nation is based on the undying patriotism commanded of women as mothers and sisters" Cynthia Enloe notes in her work 'The Curious Feminist'. For women of India and elsewhere, freedom struggle emerged as a place where within the struggle against culturally oppressive British rule, they could create their independent identity. Freedom struggle was never a unilateral effort by any political party or male leaders.

However, the narratives on women's contributions to the freedom struggle and nation-building narratives in India have historically been overshadowed by topics like the celebratory history of the Congress Party, other political parties, or political figures like Nehru, Subhash, and Gandhi, who had a significant impact on India's attaining independence.

Similar to this African historiography has also placed enough emphasis on the African National Congress and its contributions to South Africa's democratic transition and fails to take a more gendered perspective. Even the apartheid discourses are overwhelmingly centred on men, focussing on their struggles, their exiles and their accomplishments.



Due to this the contributions of various Indian and African women throughout history remain unexplored and on the fringe. There were Indian women like Kasturba Gandhi, Jagrani Devi Bhawani, Dayal Bai Fatima, Sheikh Mehta, Valiamma Munuswami Mudliar, and Veerammal Naidoo who had made a joint effort to fight for racial equality and against racism in South Africa. However, over the past decade, there has been a lot of research and analysis done on the role of women in different spheres of life.

The motto of studying women who made remarkable impacts on the history of the nation highlights the various psychological and physical hardships women faced during the battle. It also focussed on the contribution of some Indian and African women in the public sphere and the decision-making process. As Steve Biko had said "Women must be at the forefront of nation-building to bring South African citizenry together and therefore, develop a whole new ethos of human existence".

Indeed, Africa witnessed some remarkable women who took conspicuous leadership positions in the freedom struggle against apartheid. One such hero is Maniben Sita. Maniben Sita was an Indian-origin South African who dedicated her whole life to the nation's struggle. Very little is known about Maniben Sita. She was born on December 24, 1926, in Transvaal (now Gauteng), Asiatic Bazaar (Marabastad, Pretoria). Her family was very politically active both in native India and South Africa. Her father, Nana Sita, was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. As her father learned so much from Gandhiji and it ultimately helped them, she frequently thought of him as their adopted grandfather. Nana Sita then joined the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) in 1928. He was also an executive member of the Pretoria branch. He stood uncompromising against the oppressive and unfair laws, which made him famous across South Africa. He had come to Pretoria, as a young lawyer to fight a case for a local Indian merchant. Soon, he came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha struggle in South Africa. Even after Gandhi left, Nana Sita continued to be part of the resistance for a long period. Everyone in her family including all her siblings joined in the fight for democracy and justice throughout South Africa.

Maniben, though very young was also greatly influenced by Gandhi's teachings on ahimsa, peace and Satyagraha. She got engaged in politics at the time when India was under British dominion, figuring out the mode of freedom struggle to be taken. Some young radicals were supporting Indian political leaders having a more proactive stance but some more conservative senior members supported a quieter resistance through the exchange of dialogues with British counterparts. At the Transvaal Indian Congress too, there was rising tension between the two factions. The meetings at TIC were becoming more and more violent. Maniben, at the tender age of thirteen, was introduced to these complexities through the political lenses of her father, who would narrate to her the terrible instances that were happening at the congress. She was then made aware of the challenges being faced by Indian communities. And this is how her political activism sparked. She completed her studies at the Indian High School. She completed her matric at a college in Silverton, Pretoria. On passing matric, she enrolled for a BA degree with the University of South Africa (UNISA) and later on qualified as a teacher, and began her active political career in her trademark orange Saree. She had a great command of the English language and was very articulate in her thoughts and speeches. In the 1946 campaign of passive resistance against the Ghetto Acts, she travelled to Asiatic Bazaar every day. She would organise groups of women called Local Women Activists group, to go to the prisons.

She had to motivate these women by narrating the brave stories of women of early uprisings and how it is a matter of joy when something is done for the nation. There were only ten women when the struggle began, but the number multiplied very quickly. She also helped in the formation of the Indian women's support league and helped to raise awareness and funds for TIC. Maniben devoted her entire life to fight against apartheid, in all its forms. During which she was jailed many times. In 1952, she was arrested for three months jail sentence for occupying bench at railway station, which was reserved only for whites. Sita also joined fellow South African activist Dr Zainab Asvat in a march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The march was against the Group Areas Act. It led to the establishment of the Indian National Council (later named as South African Indian Council- SAIC); an advisory committee appointed by the South African Government. Sita continued her movement against the Group Areas act, even after the death of her father Nana Sita, in 1969. She defied the act by remaining in the house situated at Van der Hoff Street, which was part of the White suburbs in Pretoria. However, in 1976, they were threatened by the government with the expropriation of their property, so they reluctantly decided to move to another area South west of central Pretoria called Laudium, a newly built Indian township (classified during the apartheid regime).

She joined in solidarity with the 1980 school boycotts started by students of Laudium High school and Himalaya Secondary school. In 1982, elections were held in South Africa. There was a rising demand for reviving the South African Indian Council (SAIC), for which TIC was revived again and Sita was made its executive member. TIC along with United Democratic Front (UDF) called for boycotting the elections. They believed that this was a strategy by the Apartheid government to give coloured and Indian South Africans a false sense of power by participating in a parliamentary system. When in reality, all they wanted was to isolate these groups from the black population. Sita too actively, took part in campaign boycotting elections in Transvaal and Natal provinces. She kept reminding people that these elections were not democratic. During the day of the election, she along with Dr Muthal Naidoo, a South African playwright of Indian descent, sat outside the polling booth all dressed in black. Driving her bakkie, Sita in number of meetings, events, protests in fight against apartheid. She spoke courageously at the public gatherings. In 1985, Sita was to represent TIC at the funeral of UDF activist Cradock Four, who had been brutally murdered by the apartheid authorities. She took a rented bus for travelling. The bus was halted and all the passengers were arrested and sent to Diepkloof Prison (also called Sun city), Transvaal. Sita was imprisoned for 87 days in isolation.

Sita in an interview said, that the hardest part of the prison life was to get locked up at four in the evening till seven in the morning, with nothing to do, but it did not let her determination to fight against the apartheid die down. In another even where she receiver Mahatma Gandhi Satyagraha Award in 2011 she narrated another prison incident. When asked by a senior police official despite not knowing activist Cradock four, why she attended the funeral, leading to her arrest. She said that what united these activists and her was the motto behind the struggle. They all wanted to ensure human dignity for all in the country of their birth. She also said bravely that the once powerful British empire could no longer challenge them with their guns. She declared that until they get what they want, they will continue to follow what their leader Gandhi taught them.

She kept actively taking part in fight against anti-apartheid. She also supported the movement calling for the unbanning of the African National Congress and the freedom of Nelson Mandela. In 1994, when South Africa gained independence elections were held nationally and locally. Maniben was elected in Centurion Town Council, representing her ward in Laudium, serving a five-year term and preferring not to be re-elected. Sita was incredibly upset by the growing corruption in the newly independent administration. She pleaded for moral leadership as well as honourable elected officials and public servants to be at the forefront. Sita continuously stood for the oppressed and marginalised communities in South Africa. Even at the age of 91, she took part in a forty-day hunger strike at the Union buildings for Palestinian prisoners. In honour of Mandela's ninetieth birthday in 2008, Maniben sent a handmade cushion to the Nelson Mandela foundation along with a note expressing her hope that Mandela would be touched by its contents. Upon closer inspection, the cushion revealed her 1963 notebook, extra entries from 1962, a copy of booklet *I Accuse!* which contained transcripts of Mandela's courtroom speeches. Maniben had hidden these documents under the cushion cover so that they would not be taken away during the raids by colonial police at her family's home. Today, a duplicate of her diary is on display at the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Maniben was awarded the Valliamma Muliur Women Award in 2013, for her exceptional contributions to society.

She actively voiced her opinion that women today, have more opportunities to take action against evils in society and that they should voice it more vigorously. She was also awarded the Ahmed Kathrada Award of Excellence for her lifelong leadership in 2018, by the Congress of Business and Economics. She died on 7th July 2021 after suffering from Covid-19 at the age of ninety-four. Indian High Commissioner Ruchira Kamboj, visited Maniben personally at her house. She was amazed to see the simple, uncomplicated and independent life of Maniben.

At the age of 91, she still had all the recollections of her father's freedom struggle memories. She often said that her life was very simple as she followed the principles of her father, who in turn followed the teachings of Gandhiji. She said, "You can never lose hope because the majority of the people are good people, and because they are good, we still have a hope that South Africa will go forward." She lived a straightforward, self-reliant, and very simple life. She respected each person equally. She lived a traditional Hindu life and followed celibacy. She cooked for herself and avoided being a burden on anyone. As a proponent of non-violence, she also adopted a strict vegetarian diet and lifestyle, and she wrote a cookbook titled "Give Me Vegetables". She was constantly willing to mentor, educate, and talk to community people about human rights, equality, and dignity. In her distinctive orange sari, she was easy to identify. She never called herself a politician. Though her activism strongly believed in equality regardless of race, creed, class or religion. She showed sympathy for all species existing. She said, "Democracy is wonderful to have because the dignity of every human being is respected but what casts a shadow on our democracy is the corruption going on everywhere and also the violence." She was passionate about encouraging young girls to seize the opportunities presented to them. She acted as a moral compass, a rock of power, and a lighthouse. She will be remembered for her lifelong dedication to the causes of freedom, anti-apartheid and justice. She was a fearless public speaker, principled in her opposition and unwavering in her commitments. Uncompromising, courageous Sita will be long remembered for standing up for freedom and justice in South Africa and the entire world.

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CALL FOR ARTICLES



Following the successful launch of our inaugural magazine edition in March 2024, Pravasi Pulse, presented by The Indian Diasporic Network, is thrilled to continue our exploration and celebration of the Indian diaspora with our upcoming April edition. Our first issue illuminated the diverse experiences, achievements, and challenges of the Indian community worldwide, featuring insightful sections on global coverage of the diaspora, Pravasi literature, book reviews, social issues, and inspiring success stories.

As we prepare for the second edition, we are reaching out once again to authors and contributors from various fields to enrich Pravasi Pulse with their expertise and perspectives. For this edition, we are particularly interested in expanding our content to include the following topics and sections:

- ✓ Global Coverage on the Indian Diaspora for February and March 2024
- ✓ Diaspora and Innovation
- ✓ Pravasi Literature
- ✓ Diaspora in Policy and Governance
- ✓ Cultural Fusion and Identity
- ✓ Spotlight on Youth Diaspora
- ✓ Success stories

IMPORTANT DATE

Article submission deadline MARCH 20, 2024	Publication APRIL 1, 2024	Word Limit 1000-2500 words
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FROM MARGINALIZATION TO DIPLOMATIC EMINENCE: THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN DIASPORA

By Aayushi Modi



Politics, globally, used to have an elite connotation in the past. Not everybody could be a part of a political system although the definition of politics contradicts this very idea. The “learned” people were making decisions about everyone that the “unlearned” were not even allowed to be a part of. Colonialism and Imperialism made this notion more complex by invading the politics of the East and the global South by promoting Western hegemony which empowered the colonisers to take up large spaces of politics in the East and the Global South that did not belong to them. The administration that kept Eastern and Southern civilisations alive and running was found to be faulty and impractical by the Orientalist scholars of the West, which made it easier for the colonisers to influence the tribes and the local people to believe that they might be lacking in political knowledge. Such was also the case of certain South Asian communities who would later become immigrants or the diaspora.

A colonial power in one country found it comfortable to transfer labourers and other workers as indentured labourers to another country (since slavery was abolished) with the same colonial ruler. (Hui & Kambhampati, 2020) If the colonial rulers of the host country were different, then the transfer would be done to strengthen the relations and cordiality between those two colonial rulers. This inherently becomes a political strategy to “improve” the condition of poverty in the colony and to ease administration. These indentured labourers soon became accustomed to the lifestyle of the host countries and were able to adapt to an upgraded but resistive lifestyle than they had in their home country, hence the imposition of indentured labour soon progressed into wilful immigration adding more to the diasporic population and narrative. They came as traders, labourers, students, and so on. They were able to integrate with the culture of the host country and in some cases even assimilate into it. (Gautam, 2013).

They sustained themselves by retaining their original cultural, religious and ethnic identity by forming self-maintained organised associations in their home countries. (Gautam, 2013). However, this happened much later when colonisation was receding. The indentured labourers saw violence, abuse and misuse of their labour by the colonial governments. (Dow, 2023). They had just hoped for a better living situation but much to their dismay, the colonisers never wanted it to be that way. It soon became a humanitarian crisis for the home country, for example, as stated by Dow (2023), “Indian Nationalists saw indenture as a humanitarian crisis which not only affected the individual lives of the indentured workers but also undermined the position of India and Indians within the British Empire more generally.”

Hence, it becomes inherent that they were treated poorly and were given no importance in the context of political matters.

Yet, on the other hand, recent decades have seen a rise in the political power and influence of the diaspora in their host countries (with special emphasis on the Indian diaspora personalities) that eventually has led to a sort of symbiotic relationship between the home and the host country. How does one explain this trend? Why do Indian immigrants and their offspring succeed in Western systems that are designed to assist locally born and educated Westerners? One plausible explanation is Indians' acquaintance with English, which stems from two centuries of British colonialism. But language alone does not ensure success. In any event, this does not explain Indians' success in non-Anglophone European countries. In Germany, for example, 58% of Indian-origin workers have professions that need a university degree or equivalent expert skills.

Another possibility is that Indian immigrants are more driven. That is correct, although Indians appear to surpass other immigration groups. Among the many nations and ethnicities in the United States, persons of Indian heritage have long held the fortunate distinction of earning and retaining the greatest per capita income. First-generation Indian emigrants grew up without taking riches for granted, overcoming obstacles such as limited resources, stringent government regulation, and bureaucratic sloth. Most people have either experienced or witnessed enough deprivation to want to avoid it. They possess the “fire in the belly” that many Westerners, raised in freer, more prosperous homes, may have lost. Furthermore, India's history and pluralism have introduced Indians to individuals from other languages, religions, and civilizations. Adapting to the “other” is a deeply entrenched behaviour. As a result, Indian emigrants will feel quite at home working for multinational firms.

Growing up in an environment of democracy has provided Indian-born professionals with habits and values like individual initiative, logical thinking, and autonomy in expression, all of which are valued in the business sector. In the meantime, respect for hierarchies allows Indians to be perceived as original and creative while remaining “safe,” rather than dangerous or revolutionary- a mix that aids their integration into their new societies and advancement inside enterprises. Similarly, India's support of diversity and condemnation of excess facilitates Indians' adaptation to competitive circumstances. Indians benefit from a culture that values education and learning, tightly knit families, and an excellent work ethic. Most Indians coming from middle-class families presumably grew up seeing excellence honoured and aspiring to receive similar recognition. When such exchanges do not occur (sometimes over many generations), but individuals continue to identify with their homeland and co-ethnics overseas, the result is a diaspora. In this way, while not all diasporas are transnational communities, transnational

communities do emerge within them. Today, technology makes it much easier for organisations to function as transnational communities to maintain their identities and mobilise politically. Staying in contact has become more economical because of low-cost plane travel and phone calls, the Internet, and satellite TV. Indeed, the rise of diaspora-related websites demonstrates the strength of shared interests and identities. Diasporic identifications might be various, depending on the criteria utilised. The same person may regard herself as a member of a global Hindu population or a dispersed group of Swaminarayan (sect), Indians (nation-state), Gujaratis (state or language), Patidars or Patels (caste and sub-caste), Suratis (dialect and region), or peasants. These are not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, any of a person's identities can be dormant or active transnationally. (Vertovec, 2005).

An example in this context of Indian Diasporic people rising to power in their host country is that of Mauritian PM Pravind Jugnauth and the diasporic diplomacy exhibited to Indians residing in Mauritius by the Indian government. Diasporic diplomacy, as exemplified by the case of India and Mauritius involves leveraging the cultural, historical, and socioeconomic ties between diaspora communities and their countries of origin to strengthen bilateral relations, foster mutual understanding, and promote shared interests. In the context of India and Mauritius, the care India has towards the Indian diaspora plays a significant role in enhancing diplomatic relations through various channels, including cultural exchanges, educational cooperation, and people-to-people contacts. One notable aspect of diasporic diplomacy between India and Mauritius is the exchange of high-level visits between political leaders. For example, Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth's visits to India, including his attendance at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and other official events, highlight the close ties between the two countries and underscore their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation. Similarly, President Ram Nath Kovind's state visit to Mauritius marked the 50th anniversary of Mauritius's independence and reaffirmed India's support for the country's development and prosperity. Cultural diplomacy also plays a crucial role in India-Mauritius relations, with initiatives such as the establishment of the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture and the organization of cultural exchange programs and events.

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These activities not only showcase India's rich cultural heritage but also deepen the cultural bonds between the two countries and contribute to promoting mutual understanding and friendship. India's assistance in the establishment of educational and cultural institutions in Mauritius, such as the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Rabindranath Tagore Institute, reflects its commitment to promoting Indian culture and education abroad. These institutions serve as hubs for academic exchange, research collaboration, and cultural dialogue, fostering greater cooperation and goodwill between India and Mauritius.

India's support for development projects in Mauritius, such as the Metro Express Project and the construction of healthcare facilities and educational institutions, demonstrates its commitment to enhancing the socioeconomic development of the country and improving the lives of its citizens. These projects not only contribute to infrastructure development but also create opportunities for economic growth and employment generation, further strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two nations. Hence, the Diaspora is unique to India.

Residing in various locations, its members have achieved extraordinary success in their chosen professions by unwavering dedication and hard effort. Furthermore, they have maintained emotional, cultural, and spiritual ties to their native land. This strikes a positive chord in the hearts of Indians. (Vertovec, 2005). In conclusion, the trajectory of the political status of the diaspora, exemplified by the case of Mauritius and its Indian diaspora, reflects a journey from historical marginalization and exploitation to contemporary prominence and influence. Through diasporic diplomacy and concerted efforts to nurture cultural, educational, and economic ties, India and Mauritius have forged a robust partnership that benefits both nations and strengthens the global Indian community. As diaspora communities continue to thrive and contribute to their host countries' political, economic, and social fabric, their political status and influence will likely continue to evolve, shaping the dynamics of global governance and international relations in the years to come.

Echoes of Defiance Against Indentured Labor:

STORY OF KUNTI AND NARAINI

An excerpt from Prof. Brij V Lal's book "Girmitiyas: The Origins of the Fiji Indians"



INDENTURED women, especially those in Fiji, unwittingly played a very large part in the movement to abolish the indenture system. The Indian public had for a long time been aware of the sorry plight of the Indian labourers overseas, but it was the news of the molestation and abuse of Indian women on the plantations that outraged them most. The campaigns in India to stop the degradation of Indian women in the colonies received wider public support than any other movement in Indian history, more even than the independence movement. The Government of India, which had been under pressure for some time from Indian nationalists to end the system, finally moved and waived protests from the colonial planters and abolished the indenture system in 1916.

The stories of the treatment of two Fiji Indian women, Kunti and Naraini, attracted special attention, and their names are remembered in Fiji even today. Kunti, a 20-year-old woman from Lakhuapur village in Gorakhpur, had emigrated to Fiji with her husband in 1908. Her first four years on the plantation were unexceptional until 10 April 1912, when the overseer allocated Kunti an isolated patch in a banana field, away from all the other workers, apparently to molest her sexually. Kunti resisted his demands until nearly overtaken, she jumped into the river in desperation. She was, however, rescued by a boy, Jaidev. Kunti's story was published in the *Bharat Mitra* and became widely known, which prompted the Government of India to ask the Government of Fiji to institute an enquiry into the treatment of indentured Indian women.

Naraini's plight was equally sorry, if less sensational. The overseer of an estate in Nadi asked Naraini to present herself at work three or four days after giving birth to a (dead) child. Naraini refused, arguing correctly that it was the recognized practice for women to absent themselves from hard labour for up to three months after giving birth. The overseer, taking umbrage at Naraini's refusal, then beat her severely; barely able to walk, Naraini was carried to the hospital on a stringed bed. The overseer was arrested, and the case came before the Supreme Court of Fiji. But much to everyone's surprise and consternation, he was found not guilty and acquitted. Naraini later lost her senses and spent the rest of her life as an insane vagrant.

"FROM HOMELAND TO HEARTLAND: SOCIAL IMPACTS OF INDIAN DIASPORA IN THE U.S.A"

By Alok Chaudhary



Introduction

The Indian diaspora in the United States has a tremendous legacy from the 1960s after easing immigration policies by the U.S.A. government. In pursuing higher education and economic well-being, the Indian diaspora looked forward to settlement on U.S. soil. Now, more than 4.4 million Asian Indian diasporas play a significant role in the U.S., especially in the sphere of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The contribution of the Asian Indian diaspora is not limited to only STEM but also to the fields of business and arts.

Cultural Diversity via Indian Diaspora

Indian Diasporas are the second-largest immigrants in the U.S. after Mexicans comprising more than 4.4 million individuals. A national survey namely the Indian Americans Attitude Survey (IAAS), 2020 conducted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Indian Americans are highly educated, young, well-employed, and even earn higher incomes, compared to the American workforce. Indian Diaspora made the channel for the exchange of Indian values and bringing closer to U.S. society for instance Truth and righteousness, Peace, Love, and nonviolence, respect for elders, and holding democratic values, enriching the cultural tapestry of American society. The amalgamation of the Indian and American cultures produced cultural duality for the betterment of society with strong family values, the dignity of labour, honesty in public life, and empowerment of youth and women as tools for a brighter future.

Indian Professionals Making Waves in America

Indian Diaspora in the U.S. is around 0.7% of the U.S. population but they hold prominent positions in various sectors. Merrill Lynch, a U.S. investment firm, has estimated 200,000 millionaires of the Indian diaspora boosting the American economy. According to entrepreneur and venture capitalist Mr M.R. Rangaswami, despite being one per cent of the U.S. population, the Indian Diaspora constitutes 7% of the doctors and 10% of the IT professionals. Furthermore, the Professional achievements of the Indian Diaspora can be seen in the report of Fortune 500, there are around 60 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) at apex-level corporate sector companies in the list of Fortune 500. Sundar Pichai of Google, Satya Nadella at Microsoft, Nikesh Arora at Palo Alto Networks, Arvind Krishna at IBM, and Shantanu Narayen at Adobe Inc., etc are examples of brilliance. The potential of the Indian Diaspora is not limited to only the IT sector and managerial achievements but also around 20,000 Indian Americans serving in the capacity of professors in several universities in the U.S.A.

Diverse Voices and United Front for Shaping American Democracy

The U.S. India Political Action Committee facilitates to provides a national-level platform for local leaders and organizations for transnational political activism and seeks to make its voice heard in electoral politics of the U.S.A. Despite being a small percentage of the population, it makes them notable contributions to U.S. politics and are ready as political stalwarts in the U.S.A. As per Mr M.R. Rangaswami, between 2012 and 2016, one per cent of the U.S. Congress members were of Indian origin and Kamala Harris is a prominent example of them. Indian Diasporas influenced bilaterally and regional politics and strived to bridge the gap between the U.S.A. and India.

Conclusion

The Indian Diaspora in the USA enriched several social impacts, for instance, cultural diversity, professional upliftment, and economic well-being for both themselves and US society, including prosperity in educational research, innovation, social and political activism, and exchange of cultural values in shaping the social fabric of the American heartland. As this diaspora continues to evolve and proliferate, it is likely to further enrich the USA's social landscape.

An Analytical Study of the Indian Diaspora Writing in English Literature: Exploring the Themes of Identity, Culture, and Ethnicity

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This paper explores the connection between diaspora and Indian literary fiction, focusing on themes of identity, culture, and displacement. It analyzes how diasporic literature reflects authors' experiences of estrangement and the search for self-identity, examining the influence of socio-political and cultural factors on these narratives and their exploration of homesickness and patriotism.

The term Diaspora is derived from the Greek word "diaspeire" which refers to the act of dispersing or spreading seeds (Anand,2010). Diaspora is the term used to describe the scattering of a population from their native land. It defines those people who relocate from their area and establish themselves in a foreign country. While residing in the new place they frequently engage in discussions with their homeland, thereby preserving and disseminating their cultural, ethnic, and identity aspects of various geographical regions (Anand,2010). Whereas Diasporic Literature refers to the works that are written by the author who lived outside their homeland. In Diasporic Literature author is distinguished by feelings of estrangement, longing for the past, solitude, quest for self-identity, and perpetual uprooting of one's being. Diasporic works explore the emotional experiences of emigrants and centre on the lives of immigrants, delving into their inner and outer struggles in an unfamiliar territory (Dubey, 2003).

The chief characteristic feature of this literature is the quest for identities, culture and ethnicity. This paper also explores the theme of the identity of the diasporic writer in their literary work what the changes affect the writing due to geographical change and how immigration affects the writing of the author.

The Theme of identity' has become an important question to be studied in the last few decades, especially in the diasporic literature. This article explores the theme of identity, culture and ethnicity and the concept of self-identity on a deeper level within the parameters of literary analysis and further examines how it changes across locations in the contexts in these texts based on a different geographical change. In Indian Diasporic fiction, the question of identity has received much attention concerning writers such as Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Nair, Jhumpa Lahiri Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and many others.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of a research work pertains to the analytical framework deployed to analyse the literary texts at hand through the research lens. Therefore, the paper proposes to use a sociological lens for this research. These approaches have been chosen to locate the selected texts in their social, political and cultural background so that texts cannot be understood in isolation from their larger socio-political realities. This article will look at the social, historical, political and cultural factors that affect the depiction of literary writing and the feeling of homesickness, patriotism and the missing identity that is visible in the writing of Diasporic writers. This paper will also analyse how the voice of the Author has been represented in the literary work chosen for the study. The research seeks to deploy a multi-dimensional approach by exploring the influence of literature, history, and politics on the understanding of the theme of identity. This paper focuses on the analysis of Indian Diasporic Literary Fiction in English. The primary work of this paper is on some of the prominent 21st-century writers, namely Anita Desai's 'Bye Bye Black Bird', Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake' and Bharati Mukherjee (Jasmine). With these texts, this study will analyse the representation of themes of identity, culture and ethnicity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature related to the Indian diaspora is very popular nowadays and the current Indian works in English extensively depict various challenges arising from migration and diaspora, such as dislocation, fragmentation, racial discrimination, marginalisation, identity conflicts, and cultural clashes. These are the themes that are highlighted in this paper. Diasporic Literature holds a significant position in the literary domain due to its portrayal of cultural dilemmas, the search for identity, multiculturalism, and the universal qualities of human existence (Mandal, 2015).

It represents the merging of several cultures and the change in the culture happens due to the change in the location. On the other hand, the identity of the person never becomes the same it changes due to various reasons and it changes mainly due to the change in experience. The Latin word "Idem" which means the same or continuity is where the word identity comes from. The social role, personal traits, and aware self-images are all part of the term. The real me is there. It's going through all of the Diasporic work.

Diasporic literature explores the identities formed in multiple places, languages, religions and cultures of Homeland and Host land (Rayaprol, 1997), Indian diasporic writing has taken on a new identity as it adapts to new cultures and becomes more accepted in the chosen country. Diaspora brings together people of different languages, cultures, and ways of thinking, creating what Homi Bhabha called a hybridist (Prinz, 2019). So, this paper also represents the author's experience thought literary writing and mentions the reason why the identity of the protagonist varies due to the different experiences that impacted the culture and ethnicity. The scattered population exhibits a sense of cultural belongingness. Throughout history, individuals have relocated in pursuit of improved prospects. Diasporic author absorbs the ideals of their homeland and integrates into the surrounding area where they live. They experience a division in their thoughts, which they must integrate. Initially, numerous obstacles arise in their journey, but finally, they make a significant impression on their environment (Mandal, 2015).

While shifting from one place to another, not only food habits, clothes, living style, and language transform, but a complete identity transition takes place due to the change in their social culture and geography. This Hybridity and multiculturalism create a new path of change. Through the new experience, their literary work becomes more unique and the works of diaspora writers relate to multiple dimensions like the loss of inheritance, tradition, hybrid cultures, the pain of unbelonging, alienation, estrangement and isolation. In this regard, famous Indian Diasporic writer in English like V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Chitra Divakaruni, Meena Alexander, Jhumpa Lahiri and many others, explores problems and possibilities engendered by the experience of migrant and diaspora life. This paper aims to look at the literary change that happened due to to demonstrate that the study of diasporic literature is both an analytical category and also an understanding of the conflicts related to Identity, Culture, and Ethnicity that are emphasised in the chosen novels Anita Desai's 'Bye Bye Black Bird', Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake' and Bharati Mukherjee (Jasmine). Diasporic Indian writing in English is characterised by its diversity and complexity, emphasising intercultural linkages rather than being a uniform and homogeneous genre. There are a lot of different sociocultural identities, cultural practices, regional identities, settlement patterns, and socioeconomic changes in this writing, which makes it very different (Rayaprol, 1997). The Indian diaspora is very diverse, which gives diasporic writers a lot of material to use in their writing to explore national identity and racial differences.

In diasporic literature, writers bring their characters' feelings of not having a place to call home and their efforts to straddle culture with their characters. This is reflected in the work of Diasporic writers, just like in the novel 'The Satanic Verses' by Salman Rushdie in which he uses the method genre to talk about migration by using figures of speech in this work protagonist represents the two identities and changes take place simultaneously whereas Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her book 'The Mistress of Spices' makes the main character, Tilo into a foreigner who shows the pain of migration though this character author is representing the homesickness and inheritance, hybrid cultures, pain of unbelonging. The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh shows how rootless a character can feel who was born and raised in a faraway land. In his book Afternoon Raag, Amit Chaudhari writes about the lives of Indian students at Oxford.

These writers also showed the good things about being moved. There are some good things about being a migrant, like the chance to see things from two different points of view and experience different cultural styles. Second-generation diasporic Indian writers like Meera Syal, Shashi Tharoor, Hari Kunzru, Sunetra Gupta, Jhumpa Lahiri, etc. have faithfully demonstrated the lives of both the first and 2nd eras. This advantage makes it easier for Diasporic Indians, especially those from the second generation, to deal with having two identities at the same time. A lot of second-generation Indian writers, like Meera Syal, Shashi Tharoor, Hari Kunzru, Sunetra Gupta, Jhumpa Lahiri, and others, have written about the lives of both first-and second-generation refugees (Singhvi, 2017). Now I will focus on the Primary work of this article by analysing the literary text of the Indian Diasporic writing.

The theme of identity, Culture and Ethnicity in the work of Anita Desai's 'Bye-Bye Black Bird'

Anita Desai looks at the idea of identity from the point of view of a person's social, cultural and national identity. The main characters of the novel Adit, Dev, and Sarah all have fractured psyches because they define themselves by a small part of who they are and what's going on around them while ignoring or hiding many other parts of who they are in different parts of their lives. Desai is known for how she writes about immigration, separation, and loneliness. There are three parts to the book. First is Arrival, then Discovery, and finally Recognition Departure. Dev has come to England to go to college. He moves in with Adit and Sarah. He gets angry when he sees Indians being slandered in public or private places. In the second part, they change and start to enjoy the country's beauty. In part three, Adit, who was once happy living in England, starts to miss his home country.

Desai shows the struggle of people who can't protect their ethnic roots and try to make new roots in a foreign land, but end up being unable to connect with their roots. Dev has an identity problem in the book because his ideal picture of England is very different from the real England that he sees. The strange atmosphere of English life threatens Dev's basic sense of self-worth and honour. As he lives on the edge of life in England, without a family, a job, or a way to join the elite group of cosmopolitanism and internationalism, he turns to his Indian heritage. As a writer, can understand how the author's mind works by comparing how much he likes many things about English life to how frustrated and angry he is getting, which he lets out through his England-bashing from his safe and stable Indian identity that no one can take away from him. England failed to live up to his standards and accept him as a person, so he is unconsciously getting back at them.

Theme of identity in the work of Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake'

Jhumpa Lahiri is one the known personalities in Female writing in the Indian Diaspora. She wrote about an immigrant in different parts of the world. Through the character of Ashima in *The Namesake*, she has shown how the Diaspora can be homeless, moved around, and feel alone. To show how immigrants think and act, she looks at her character's problems, worries, and attitudes. The book is about Ashok and Ashima Ganguli, two first-generation refugees from Kolkata, West Bengal, India, to the United States, and their children Gogol and Sonia, who were born in the United States. The novel's title shows Gogol's fight. Gogol is the son of Ashok and Ashima. They are Indian and moved to the United States to find their place in the society where Gogol was born and raised with his strange name. In this work, Lahiri mentions Indian culture and tradition and how the protagonist tries to follow in the US. In India, names do mean something. India has a lot of rules about how to name a child. Indian kids usually have two names: one that they use at home and one that they get permission to use. Domestic names are for family, neighbours, and close friends.

Gogol feels stuck between the country where he was born (the United States) and the country where his parents were born (India). To keep ties with their home country, his father works hard to teach their children the principles of that country. Gogol is becoming more like the people and ways of life in his home country. His home country doesn't fully accept him either, and he has to keep figuring out his national identity while moving back and forth between the two. He finds that he is pretty much an outsider in both countries. There he is an American, and here he is an Indian. Over time, he slowly learns that his name is unique, which will cause problems with his identity as he gets older.

In her book, "The Namesake" Lahiri writes about expatriates who are tormented by two cultures: their home country and the country they have moved to. The second generation of diaspora goes through some cultural displacement, a sense of being in-between, and a sense of hybridity. Gogol is full of worries about his parents, who haven't been able to fit in with life after adoption yet. Ashok and Ashima Ganguli, along with their children Gogol and Sonia, live abroad and are always switching between the past and the present. The novel probes into the inner psyche of characters and brings out a stirring and teasing sense of identity through the clash of cultures.

Theme of identity in the work of Bharati Mukherjee's "Jasmine"

"Jasmine" is a story about an Indian woman. It starts with her birth and her early years in a small village in India. In addition, it talks about her move to America and how hard it was for her to find herself and become an American. After the prediction comes true, Jasmine goes on, showing that the stars have moved and the heroine is getting strong enough to change from a weak, submissive Indian wife to a strong, independent Indo-American woman who lives mostly in the present and doesn't worry about the past or the future. When she gets married to Prakash, he changes her name to Jasmine. As soon as Jasmine gets to the United States, she stops being shy and puts on a cool T-shirt, tight cords, and running shoes. As her clothes change, so does the society. Due to the changes her uniqueness starts to fade always She goes from being a "visible minority" to being just another foreigner with this change. The main character's change of identity from Jyoti to Jasmine to Jane to Jase shows the end of one Image and the beginning of a new one, which is a good thing. It is hard to get to know Jasmine's true self because she changes so quickly from one event to the next that her identity is hard to pin down. The broken pitcher is brought up over and over again, which represents the deaths of Jasmine's different selves. When Jasmine talks to Dr. Mary Webb, she says that as a Hindu, she believes in rebirth, but that it means different things at different times. She has seen how the Indian refugee's lives are pointless and how they have to hide their Indian heritage. In general, the book shows how strong a woman can be to fight and adjust to life in the brave new world, not how bad immigration is. To sum up, Long Jam Monika Devi says that Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine is Jasmine's journey toward finding her true identity. Her trip to America is part of her search for who she is. Even when the main character faces problems, learns about herself, creates a new identity, and ends her old life. Transformations called metamorphoses have been used by Mukherjee in Jasmine's life as she looks for her true self.

CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the deep theme of identity in Indian Diasporic Literary Fiction by looking into the complicated relationship between migration and literature. Diasporic literature explores the emotional experiences of immigrants, focusing on their inner and outer battles in new places. It is marked by feelings of isolation, longing, and a constant search for self-identity. The key idea of this study is how important the theme of “identity” is in diasporic writing, especially in the works of well-known writers like Anita Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Bharati Mukherjee. The study used a sociological view to look at works like “Bye Bye Black Bird,” “The Namesake”, and “Jasmine.” It looked at how social, political, and cultural factors affected how homesickness and patriotism were portrayed, as well as how these things affected the identity of writers who had moved to different places. The literature review focused on the variety and complexity of Indian diasporic writing, showing the problems that come up because of movement, being moved, identity conflicts, and cultural clashes. A thematic study of chosen works showed how characters’ identities changed over time and how moving to a new place affected their cultural and ethical ties. Diasporic writing has helped us learn more about ideas like hybridity, multiculturalism, and the search for identity that everyone has. In the end, this study adds to the larger conversation about diasporic writing by focusing on how identity, culture, and ethnicity are shown in a variety of ways. In these chosen works, there are powerful examples of how literature shows how complicated life is, showing how identities change as a result of movement, cultural mixing, and the search for a sense of belonging in a circumscribed setting.

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Beyond Borders: A Comparative Look at India and China Diaspora Engagement

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Introduction:

In today's interconnected and globalized world, diasporas play a crucial role in shaping societies and economies across the globe. These communities consist of individuals who reside outside their country of origin but maintain strong socio-cultural and emotional connections to their homeland. Various factors such as political instability, economic opportunities, historical events, and environmental challenges often compel individuals to leave their native countries, leading to the formation of diverse diasporic communities.

Estimates suggest that approximately 281 million people worldwide belong to various diasporas, highlighting the widespread influence and significance of these communities. India, in particular, boasts a substantial diaspora, with more than 30 million individuals living in 205 countries around the world. The majority of the Indian diaspora is concentrated in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Gulf countries, contributing to the cultural, social, and economic landscape of both their host countries and their homeland.

Comparing China and India's engagement with their respective diasporas reveals distinct approaches to fostering economic and socio-cultural ties. While China has strategically leveraged its diaspora for economic and cultural exchanges, India has yet to harness this potential fully. Although the Modi government has undertaken various initiatives since 2014 to engage with the Indian diaspora, there remains considerable work to be done. India can learn valuable lessons from China's proactive engagement and utilisation of its diaspora for national development.

Recognising its untapped potential, India must prioritise and enhance its efforts to engage with its diaspora, leveraging their expertise and networks for economic and socio-cultural advancement. India's potential in this regard remains largely untapped, indicating the need for more concerted efforts to leverage its diaspora for mutual benefit and national growth.

China's Diaspora Policies of Engagement Overseas Chinese:
China has formulated a comprehensive diaspora engagement policy and established institutional frameworks.

The Chinese government has endeavoured to embrace all ethnic Chinese, regardless of their nationality or migration date, as integral members of the Chinese family, emphasising the significance of ethnic identity and pride in one's heritage, similar to India's approach. Both the Chinese and Indian governments aim to broaden and de-territorialize the notion of Chinese or Indian; to stimulate economic and social development. However, their diaspora policies diverge in focus. While China's Roots Seeking initiatives for overseas youth promote Chinese language and culture abroad, China has actively sought the return of its highly skilled diaspora through employment and scholarship programs over the past two decades. Beijing has actively sought to embrace all individuals of ethnic Chinese descent, regardless of their nationality or migration history, as integral members of the Chinese community, thereby strengthening their connection to the Chinese nation. In 1993, during the Third Plenum of the 14th Party Congress, the Chinese government introduced the Twelve Words policy, which focused on supporting overseas studies and encouraging the return of Chinese students. In 2013, Xi Jinping expanded this policy by adding four additional characters, *fahui zuoyong* (playing a role), reaffirming the commitment of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the government to ensure that the Chinese diaspora upon returning to China, could actively contribute to the nation's development and continue to contribute while residing overseas.

A notable example is China's flagship program, 1000 Talents, which offers prestigious academic positions and significantly higher salaries to senior Chinese scholars with PhDs obtained overseas, attracting many participants. Additionally, China endeavours to attract innovators, particularly in engineering and high technology sectors, through lucrative salary packages and incentives, resulting in the return of individuals under the 1000 Talents program, surpassing the initial target. Overseas Chinese exhibit a strong sense of shared identity and attachment to China, contributing significantly to its economic growth. This is attributed to patriotic sentiments and China's extensive diaspora engagement policies and institutional frameworks. China has consistently welcomed all ethnic Chinese into the Chinese family, encouraging overseas studies and supporting their role in China's development, as demonstrated by policies such as the Changjiang Scholars Program and the 1000 Talents Program. China's outreach to its diaspora extends beyond policies, encompassing media strategies like China Radio International and China Central Television, which broadcast globally in multiple languages, including those spoken by the diaspora. Moreover, China prioritises the protection of overseas Chinese citizens through initiatives like the Emergency Call Center of Global Consular Protection and Service, established by the Chinese Foreign Ministry in 2014.

Xi Jinping's initiatives to rejuvenate the nation and achieve the Chinese Dream since 2012 have laid the groundwork for China's current diaspora engagement efforts. China's success in attracting a significant number of sea turtles (returnees) and ethnic Chinese foreign direct investment underscores the effectiveness of its diaspora engagement strategies, emphasising technical expertise and international exposure as critical assets.

India's diaspora engagement policies:

During his tenure from 1998 to 2004, Atal Bihari Vajpayee is credited with fostering significant engagement with the Indian diaspora to develop mutually beneficial connections. Current Prime Minister Narendra Modi is increasingly recognised for his enthusiasm in expanding upon these earlier efforts. Modi's vigour in this arena has been evident since assuming office in May 2014, reflected in his public statements. During foreign visits and interactions with India's expatriate communities, he encourages them to actively contribute to India's growth narrative. Unlike the Indian National Congress, which tends to distance itself from the diaspora, viewing them predominantly as liabilities, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) regards the Indian diaspora as an invaluable asset. A notable incident highlighting this difference occurred in 1964 in Burma (now Myanmar), when General Ne Win's nationalisation of businesses severely impacted the substantial Indian trading community, resulting in loss of livelihoods, lack of compensation, and expulsion of up to 300,000 individuals from the country. At the time, the Indian Government refrained from aiding the diaspora, asserting that the events were solely within domestic jurisdiction. Similarly, in 1972, when approximately 70,000 Indians faced persecution under Idi Amin's regime in Uganda and were subsequently expelled, many sought asylum in England after the Indian government neglected their plight.

A detailed examination of the manifestos of both parties in the 2014 elections underscores a disparity in their approaches toward India's expatriate communities. The BJP's manifesto explicitly stated its intention to collaborate with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) through proactive diplomatic strategies to enhance "Brand India". It emphasised harnessing the vast resources of NRIs, PIOs, and professionals settled abroad to amplify India's global presence. In contrast, the Congress party's manifesto highlighted a more protective stance, prioritising safeguarding Indians overseas from exploitation or threats, including advocating for Tamilian interests in Sri Lanka and establishing youth exchange centres in India.

Ram Madhav, BJP's general secretary, elucidated his party's stance during the launch of the 2015 Indian Diaspora Investment Initiative, emphasising the potential of the Indian diaspora to advocate for India's interests while being loyal citizens abroad. This approach mirrors the proactive role played by the Jewish community in the United States in safeguarding Israel's interests. The BJP's policy contrasts with the historical approach of the Congress, which has been inclined to sever ties with emigrants, while the BJP tends to foster and nurture these connections. This overview delves into the burgeoning significance of the diaspora in Indian foreign policy and the ensuing challenges and opportunities. Moreover, in its 2019 manifesto under foreign policy, the BJP reiterated its commitment to deepen the relationship of culture and heritage with people of Indian origin by creating an institutional mechanism. This mechanism aims to regularly engage with them and launch the Bharat Gaurav campaign to increase interaction among the Indian diaspora and enable their continuous engagement with Indian missions. Additionally, the BJP pledged to strengthen the MADAD portal as a single-point avenue for information and services for Indians living abroad.

The engagement of India's diaspora to enhance the economic conditions and international image of the country has been a longstanding endeavour, gaining renewed vigour in recent times. At the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in January 2017, the Indian Prime Minister highlighted the shift from brain drain to brain gain, symbolising the recognition of Non-Resident Indian (NRI)/Person of Indian Origin (PIO) individuals contributions. The diaspora's perception of India has evolved beyond sentimental attachment, supported by the government's efforts to ease travel and residency policies. Initiatives like the PIO and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards, merged by the present government, offer lifetime visa access and various benefits akin to citizens. New Delhi has streamlined procedures and established single-window clearances to attract diaspora investments, alongside investing in training programs for low-skilled Indian youth seeking employment abroad. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proactive outreach to the diaspora is evident in his engagements across various countries, fostering soft power and informal diplomacy. The engagement with diaspora members as informal ambassadors aims to strengthen India's ties globally. Furthermore, the substantial remittances and encouragement for diaspora members to invest in social projects underscore the government's strategy.

Recent policies by the government encompass consular services, protection, and outreach activities for NRIs and OCIs, alongside initiatives encouraging diaspora contributions to India's growth through philanthropy, knowledge transfers, and investments. The reinvigoration of schemes like the Know India Program and the introduction of youth-centric outreach initiatives demonstrate a multifaceted approach to engaging with the diaspora.

Conclusion:

Much more must be done to harness the benefits of India's diaspora fully. Addressing challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic hurdles, and labour market regulations is essential to encourage PIOs and NRIs to invest in India. While India does have programs like the Know India program, they pale in comparison to China's extensive initiatives, with India admitting around 35 participants annually compared to China's intake of approximately 30,000 individuals. India also faces shortcomings in offering attractive employment opportunities to overseas Indians compared to China's robust initiatives like the 1,000 Talents program and support for overseas studies. India's efforts to protect its diaspora in challenging situations, while commendable, lack a formal strategic diaspora protection policy or a comprehensive emergency plan. Additionally, India's scholarship programs for diasporic children are limited compared to China's broader initiatives.

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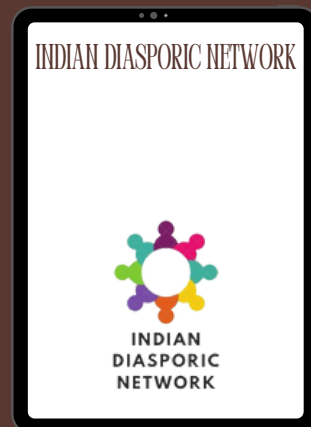
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Although India's official broadcasters cover a wide range of countries and languages, they lag behind counterparts like China Radio International and China Central Television in terms of international presence. To unlock the full potential of its diaspora, India must expand its globally-oriented programs and schemes and enhance their visibility worldwide. Furthermore, while some Indian states like Kerala and Gujarat have robust diasporic infrastructures, others lag, highlighting the need for both central and state governments to drive policy initiatives. In conclusion, while China and India have differing approaches to engaging with their diasporas, both recognise the diaspora's importance beyond economic remittances, acknowledging their role in providing access to markets, knowledge, capital, expertise, and best practices. India, however, must ramp up its efforts to fully leverage its diaspora's potential. Although historically, India has benefited from its diaspora, its success in contributing to India's growth story will depend on effective schemes, policies, and outreach activities by the government. The diaspora can significantly contribute to India's key projects like Swachh Bharat, Clean Ganga, Make In India, Digital India, and Skill India, making it imperative for India to unlock their potential. The present government's focus on the diaspora is strategic, recognising them as a valuable asset to India's foreign policy objectives

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Following the successful launch of our inaugural magazine edition in March 2024, Pravasi Pulse, presented by The Indian Diasporic Network, is thrilled to continue our exploration and celebration of the Indian diaspora with our upcoming April edition. Our first issue illuminated the diverse experiences, achievements, and challenges of the Indian community worldwide, featuring insightful sections on global coverage of the diaspora, Pravasi literature, book reviews, social issues, and inspiring success stories.

As we prepare for the second edition, we are reaching out once again to authors and contributors from various fields to enrich Pravasi Pulse with their expertise and perspectives. For this edition, we are particularly interested in expanding our content to include the following topics and sections:

- ✓ Global Coverage on the Indian Diaspora for February and March 2024
- ✓ Diaspora and Innovation
- ✓ Pravasi Literature
- ✓ Diaspora in Policy and Governance
- ✓ Cultural Fusion and Identity
- ✓ Spotlight on Youth Diaspora
- ✓ Success stories

IMPORTANT DATE

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