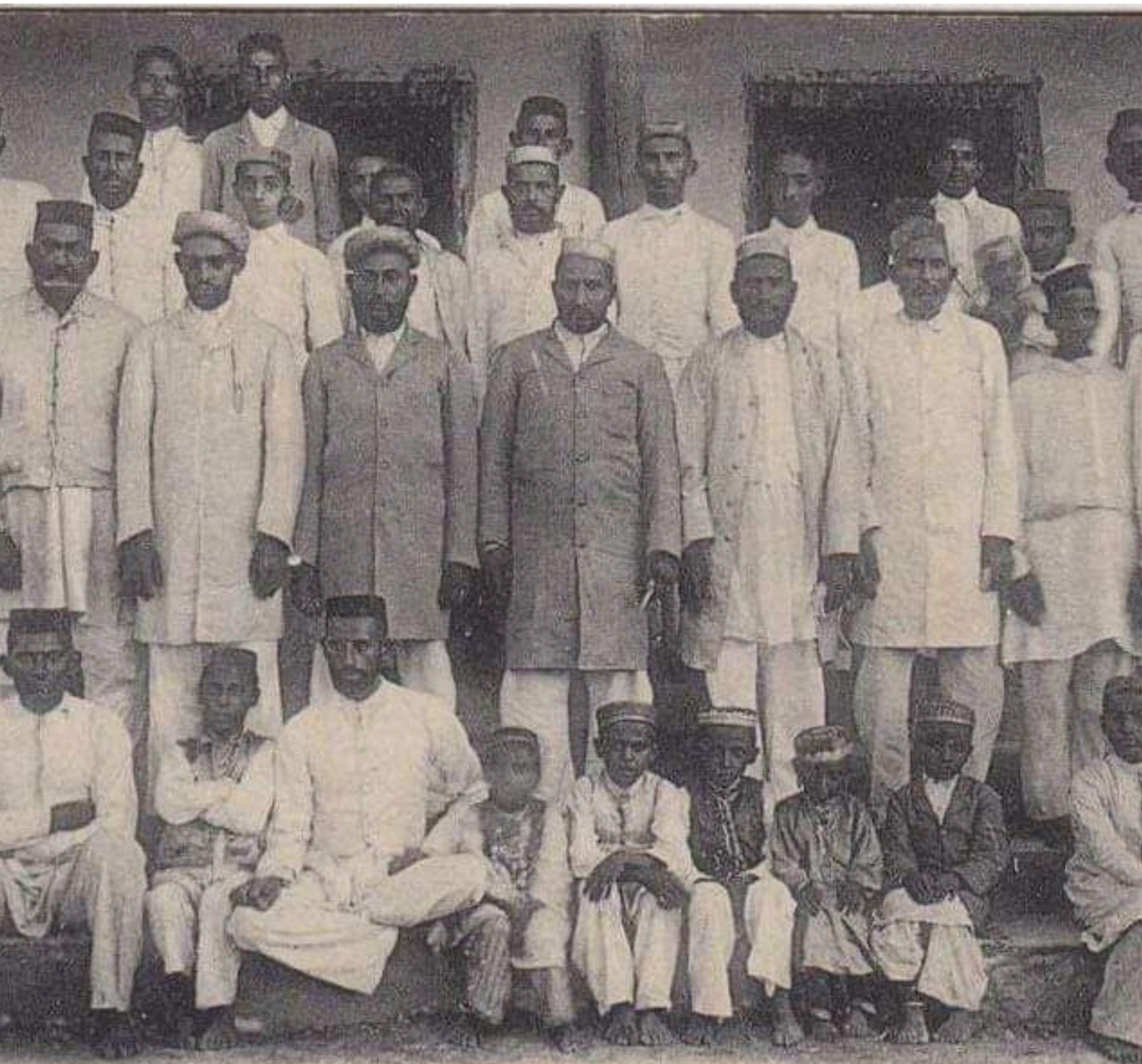


December 2024

Volume 1, Issue 9

PRAVASI PULSE



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Letter from the *Editor*



Dear Readers, Contributors, and Esteemed Members of Our Diaspora

As we step into the final month of this remarkable year, it is with immense joy and gratitude that I welcome you to the December 2024 edition of Pravasi Pulse.

First, let me express our sincerest apologies for the delay in bringing you the November edition. We deeply regret any inconvenience caused. However, the past month turned out to be extraordinary in terms of our engagement with the Indian diaspora. I had the privilege of immersing myself in the vibrant and resilient culture of the Indian-origin community in Madagascar—a journey that has left me profoundly inspired.

This November, we celebrated Diwali with the Gujarati community in Madagascar. Witnessing their traditional festivities in an earlier French colony like Madagascar was a truly humbling experience. Their cultural practices, language, and culinary traditions remain remarkably preserved even after 200 years of migration, serving as a testament to the resilience of the Indian diaspora.

Beyond the festivities, I had the honor of meeting some of the key business leaders of Indian origin, who have been pivotal in shaping Madagascar's economic landscape. Figures such as **Mr. Ylias**

Akbaraly, Hassanein Hiridjee, Moustafa Hiridjee, Hassanein Yavarouhoussein, Karim Barday, Zouzar Bouka, Eileen Akbaraly, and many more are driving innovation and growth in Madagascar. The interactions with members of the Hindou Samaj, Khoja Jamat, Ismaili communities, Bohra Community and others were equally enriching. Their stories are a source of immense pride and inspiration, reminding us of the far-reaching contributions of the Indian-origin community.

For me, as a researcher and an explorer of diaspora studies, this journey has been nothing short of transformative. The spirit of this community, their adaptability, and their deep-rooted connection to their heritage are lessons for us all.

This month has been truly phenomenal for us at Pravasi Pulse. We are thrilled to share that we are now officially a registered **Section 8 non-profit company** and will henceforth be known as the Pravasi Setu Foundation. This marks a significant milestone in our journey as we continue to serve as a bridge connecting the Indian diaspora and migrants worldwide. Our mission to amplify voices, celebrate heritage, and drive impactful research now has a stronger foundation to build upon. We are excited to share the official press release of this achievement, which is attached to this edition. This transformation empowers us to expand our work and bring even greater value to the diaspora community globally.

As we reflect on 2024, we feel an immense sense of pride in having been able to bring you Pravasi Pulse completely free for the entire year. It is our commitment to continue this initiative, making sure this magazine remains accessible to all, as we document and celebrate the stories of the Indian diaspora worldwide.

However, looking toward the future, we may need to explore fundraising initiatives to sustain and grow our efforts. We look forward to your generous support in any form—whether through contributions, ideas, or simply sharing our work with others. Together, we can ensure that Pravasi Pulse continues to thrive as a voice for the global Indian diaspora.

As we close this chapter of 2024, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to all of you for a happy and prosperous New Year. May 2025 bring new opportunities, stronger connections, and continued pride in our shared heritage.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey.

Warm regards,
Prakash Kumar Jha
Editor-in-Chief
Pravasi Pulse

Press Release



Indian Diasporic Network Evolves into Pravasi Setu Foundation to Expand Focus on Migration Issues

New Delhi, October 23, 2024

The Indian Diasporic Network, a leading organization dedicated to addressing the challenges faced by the Indian diaspora, today announced a major rebranding. The organization will now be known as the **Pravasi Setu Foundation**. This name change marks a significant step forward as the Foundation expands its scope to address the broader concerns of both **internal migration within India** and the **global Indian diaspora**.

For years, the Indian Diasporic Network has been at the forefront of research, advocacy, and community-building efforts, providing a platform for dialogue and action on issues affecting the Indian diaspora worldwide. The transition to **Pravasi Setu Foundation** reflects the organization's growing ambition to act as a **bridge (Setu)** between **migrant communities** and **policymakers**, creating a more integrated approach to migration.

Expanding Our Vision and Mission

The **Pravasi Setu Foundation** is committed to continuing its legacy of impactful work, with a renewed focus on:

- **Research:** Deepening our exploration into migration trends, policy impacts, and socio-economic challenges, both within India and across borders.
- **Advocacy:** Strengthening our voice in influencing migration policies at national and international levels, ensuring that the rights and needs of migrants are acknowledged and addressed.
- **Community Building:** Supporting both internal migrants and the Indian diaspora through cultural exchanges, scholarships, research grants, and partnerships with global organizations, academic institutions, and governments.

About Pravasi Setu Foundation

The Pravasi Setu Foundation (formerly Indian Diasporic Network) is a registered **Section 8 non-profit organization** focused on empowering internal migrants and the Indian diaspora through research, policy advocacy, and community-building initiatives. The Foundation aims to act as a bridge between migrants and policymakers, fostering collaboration and inclusivity on migration issues globally.

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Pravasi News Digest



Britain's Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, has acknowledged the profound contributions of the Indian diaspora to the UK's National Health Service (NHS). Speaking at the India Global Forum's annual Diwali celebration in London, Streeting emphasized that since the NHS's inception in 1948, Indian-origin medical professionals have been instrumental in its development. He highlighted that the successive generations of the Indian community continue to shape the NHS's future. Streeting also pointed to India's advancements in primary healthcare and medical research as valuable models for the UK, underscoring the importance of the UK-India partnership in modernizing healthcare systems.

In a landmark move, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro signed Senate Bill 402 into law on October 21, 2024, officially recognizing Diwali as a state holiday. This legislation celebrates the rich cultural heritage of the Indian diaspora and the traditions of over a billion Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists worldwide. Governor Shapiro emphasized that Diwali symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance, values that resonate deeply within the Commonwealth. While the designation acknowledges the festival's cultural significance, it does not mandate closures of schools, government offices, or businesses. This recognition reflects Pennsylvania's commitment to honoring the diverse traditions that contribute to its vibrant community.



During her historic visit to Mauritania on October 16, 2024, President Droupadi Murmu emphasized the pivotal role of the Indian diaspora in India's aspiration to become a developed nation by 2047. Addressing the Indian community in Nouakchott, she lauded their significant contributions to both India's progress and Mauritania's socio-economic development. President Murmu highlighted the cultural affinities between the two nations, noting shared values such as strong family ties and respect for elders. She also identified potential areas for enhanced cooperation, including human resource development, infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, skill development, and digital innovation. This visit marked the first by an Indian head of state to Mauritania since its independence in 1960, underscoring the deepening ties between the two countries.



The Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia hosted the 2024 edition of its flagship diaspora engagement event, Pravasi Parichay, from October 22 to 28 in Riyadh. Inaugurated by Ambassador Dr. Suhel Ajaz Khan, the week-long festival celebrated India's rich cultural and linguistic heritage. The opening ceremony, themed "Classical Languages of India," featured a unique play highlighting all 11 of India's classical languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Odia, Pali, Prakrit, and Sanskrit. The event also showcased a quiz competition and a painting exhibition by women artists. From October 24 to 26, "States' Days" were observed, with 14 Indian states presenting their distinct art, culture, and cuisine through dedicated pavilions. Over 450 performers participated, featuring traditional dances like Rajasthan's Kalbelia, Kerala's Mohiniyattam, Tamil Nadu's Bharatnatyam, and Punjab's Bhangra, among others. This vibrant celebration fostered unity among the Indian community in Saudi Arabia while promoting India's diverse cultural heritage.



In a pioneering initiative, the National Archives of India (NAI), in collaboration with the Indian Embassy in Muscat, has digitized over 7,000 historical documents from 32 prominent Indian families in Oman, some dating back to 1838. This project, titled 'The Oman Collection – Archival Heritage of the Indian Community in Oman,' marks NAI's first overseas effort to preserve diaspora heritage. The digitized materials, including personal diaries, trade invoices, and photographs, provide a vivid narrative of the Indian community's migration, cultural integration, and contributions to Omani society since the 19th century. Additionally, oral histories were recorded, capturing personal anecdotes and migration experiences, further enriching the archival records. This endeavor not only safeguards the rich heritage of the Indian diaspora in Oman but also underscores the enduring ties between India and Oman.

The Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) has expressed deep concern over escalating human rights violations against religious minorities in Bangladesh, particularly following the arrest of Hindu spiritual leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari on sedition charges. In letters addressed to U.S. President Joe Biden and President-elect Donald Trump, FIIDS highlighted over 200 recent attacks on Hindu temples and communities since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5, 2024. The organization urged U.S. leaders to call upon Bangladesh's interim government to protect minority communities, ensure their safety, and uphold secular principles. FIIDS also called for an independent inquiry into the violence and the immediate release of Das, emphasizing the need for international attention to prevent further atrocities.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, during his visit to Germany on November 28, 2024, engaged with the Indian diaspora in Munich to discuss investment opportunities in the state. He highlighted the symbolic significance of the Ashoka Chakra in India's national flag, interpreting its 24 spokes as representing the hours of the day and emphasizing the continuous passage of time. Yadav also reflected on Ujjain, known as 'Mahakal ki Nagari' (the city of Mahakal), underscoring the importance of aligning destiny with effort to achieve success. This interaction aimed to strengthen cultural ties and encourage diaspora participation in Madhya Pradesh's development.

A group of Indian expatriates in Stockholm, led by Bhagalpur native Rohan Karn, is actively promoting India's rich cultural heritage through the Nrityangan School of Dance (NSD). Their recent event featured captivating performances in classical and semi-classical dance forms such as Bharatnatyam, Kathak, and Rabindra Sangeet, beginning with a traditional Saraswati Vandana. The program was attended by Leena Nayyar, Attaché (Commerce) at the Embassy of India in Sweden, along with embassy officials, families, and students, creating a lively and spirited atmosphere. Karn, a software engineer, emphasized that their aim is to spread the essence of India's rich art and heritage while promoting people-to-people connections through cultural exchanges. NSD, founded by West Bengal's Ishita Mitra, includes dedicated members such as Swagata Bhattacharya, Sangeeta Dutta, Karikalacholan Subhramanian, Shravani Kuchi, Shreyashi Bhowmick, Subhdeep Das, and Urmimala Banerjee. Their collective efforts are building a unique cultural bridge between India and Sweden, enriching the diaspora's sense of identity and ensuring global appreciation for India's artistic legacy.



During his historic visit to Guyana on November 20, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a warm and spirited welcome from the Indian diaspora, many of whom trace their roots back over 185 years. Addressing the community, he lauded their significant contributions across various sectors in Guyana and emphasized the enduring cultural connections between the two nations. In a symbolic gesture reflecting the close India-Guyana ties, PM Modi was presented with the 'Key to the City of Georgetown' by the mayor. This visit, the first by an Indian head of state in over five decades, underscores the deepening bonds fostered by the Indian diaspora's presence and influence in Guyana.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called upon the global Indian community and friends of India to participate in the 'Bharat Ko Janiye' (Know India) Quiz, an initiative aimed at strengthening the connection between India and its diaspora. He emphasized that the quiz offers a unique opportunity to rediscover India's rich heritage and vibrant culture. The fifth edition of the quiz, launched by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on November 11, 2024, is open to Non-Resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin aged 14 to 50. Participants have until December 11, 2024, to complete the online quiz, which consists of 30 questions to be answered within 30 seconds each. The top 30 scorers will be invited to a two-week immersive 'Bharat Ko Janiye Yatra' (Know India Tour) and will participate in the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Bhubaneswar from January 8 to 10, 2025. Certificates of participation will be awarded to all participants.

The Canadian foreign ministry clarified that it did not block the Indian diaspora media outlet 'The Australia Today,' attributing the inaccessibility to Meta's broader policy of restricting news content in Canada following the enactment of the Online News Act in 2023. The outlet had claimed selective blocking after publishing content related to India's External Affairs Minister and Australian Foreign Minister. However, Canada's government emphasized that the restrictions were not due to any intervention, highlighting the challenges faced by diaspora media amidst corporate policies and legislative changes.



During his visit to Nigeria on November 17, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was warmly received by the Indian community in Abuja, who greeted him with chants of 'Vande Mataram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'. Expressing his gratitude, PM Modi described the reception as "heartwarming" and noted the vibrant presence of the Indian diaspora in Nigeria. This visit marks the first by an Indian Prime Minister to Nigeria in 17 years, underscoring the strengthening ties between the two nations.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, alongside Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, launched the official website for the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention, emphasizing the Modi government's commitment to the well-being of over 35 million Indians abroad. Scheduled for January 8-10, 2025, in Bhubaneswar, the convention will focus on the theme "Viksit Bharat ki Sankalpna Mein Pravasi Bhartiyaon Ka Yogdan" (Diaspora's Contribution to a Developed India). Minister Jaishankar highlighted the diaspora's role as a pillar of strength in addressing global challenges and invited them to register in large numbers to celebrate shared roots and contribute to India's development journey.

Upon his arrival in Rio de Janeiro for the G20 Leaders' Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was warmly received by the Indian diaspora in Brazil. The community greeted him with traditional dandiya dances, vibrant Gujarati attire, and Vedic chants performed by Brazilian scholars. Expressing his gratitude, PM Modi shared on X (formerly Twitter), "Deeply touched by the warm and lively welcome from the Indian community upon arriving in Rio de Janeiro. Their energy reflects the affection that binds us across continents."



On behalf of Pravasi Setu Foundation, we were honored to felicitate His Excellency Bandaru Wilson, the Ambassador of India to Madagascar. His Excellency's exceptional dedication to fostering strong ties between India and Madagascar, and his unwavering support for the Indian diaspora, have been truly inspiring. His visionary leadership and commitment to promoting cultural, social, and economic collaboration between the two nations make him a remarkable representative of India abroad. We are profoundly grateful for the guidance and encouragement he has extended to us during our endeavors.



The "Samosa Caucus," an informal group of Indian-American lawmakers in the U.S. Congress, has expanded to six members following the 2024 elections. Suhas Subramanyam's election from Virginia marks a significant addition, joining incumbents Ami Bera, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna, Pramila Jayapal, and Shri Thanedar. This growth reflects the increasing political influence of the Indian American community in the United States.



President-elect Donald Trump has appointed Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy to lead the newly established Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). This initiative aims to streamline federal operations by dismantling unnecessary bureaucratic structures, reducing wasteful expenditures, and reforming existing agencies. The acronym DOGE notably aligns with Musk's favored cryptocurrency, Dogecoin. Both Musk and Ramaswamy are expected to provide external advisory support to the White House and collaborate with the Office of Management and Budget to implement large-scale structural reforms.

President-elect Donald Trump has nominated Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, a Kolkata-born physician and Stanford University professor, to lead the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Bhattacharya, known for his critical stance on COVID-19 lockdowns and vaccine mandates, co-authored the Great Barrington Declaration, advocating for herd immunity through natural infection. His appointment reflects a significant shift in public health policy direction. The nomination requires Senate confirmation.



On behalf of Pravasi Setu Foundation, we had the distinct honor of felicitating Mr. Ylias Akbaraly, a person of Indian origin and the visionary leader of Groupe Sipromad. His extraordinary contributions to Madagascar's economic, social, and cultural development, along with his efforts to make the nation a leader in the Indian Ocean region, are deeply inspirational. His philanthropic endeavors through the Akbaraly Foundation stand as a testament to his unwavering commitment to holistic progress.

On behalf of Pravasi Setu Foundation, we felicitated Mr. Hassanein Hiridjee, a prominent person of Indian origin and the driving force behind AXIAN Group. His unparalleled contributions to Madagascar's economic landscape, particularly in sectors like telecommunications, energy, and finance, have been pivotal in driving national development. Mr. Hiridjee's commitment to sustainability and innovation underscores the impactful role of the Indian diaspora in shaping global progress.



We were honored to felicitate Mr. Hasnaine Yavarhoussen, a dynamic person of Indian origin and the visionary behind Groupe Filatex, for his outstanding leadership and dedication to Madagascar's growth. His influence across sectors such as renewable energy, real estate, and industrial development reflects his profound contribution to national progress. Furthermore, his efforts to bring Malagasy art and culture to international platforms have had a generational impact.



On behalf of the Pravasi Setu Foundation, we had the immense honor of felicitating Mr. Moustafa Hiridjee and his esteemed father, Mr. Raza Aly Hiridjee, for their outstanding contributions to the socio-economic and cultural development of Madagascar. Mr. Moustafa's visionary leadership and his dedication to preserving the legacy of Indian-origin communities are truly inspiring, while Mr. Raza Aly's decades of selfless service and unwavering efforts to promote Gujarati language and culture stand as a beacon of pride for the diaspora. Their exemplary work reflects the values we cherish, and it was a privilege to recognize their achievements.

It was a privilege to felicitate Mr. Zouzar Bouka, a distinguished person of Indian origin and the Chairman of Vision Madagascar (ViMa). His visionary leadership and transformative impact on Madagascar's economy and society are exemplary. As a pioneer in innovative business models and a dedicated advocate for socio-economic progress, Mr. Bouka has made lasting contributions, including the establishment of platforms like the World Trade Center Antananarivo and his promotion of cultural and sports initiatives.



It was a special moment to felicitate Miss Eileen Akbaraly, a person of Indian origin and the founder of Made For A Woman, for her groundbreaking work in empowering women artisans and elevating Malagasy fashion to international prominence. Her unique blend of sustainability, cultural preservation, and social impact represents a new era of responsible entrepreneurship. Miss Akbaraly's work showcases how businesses can make a profound difference in the lives of vulnerable communities.



On behalf of Pravasi Setu Foundation, we had the privilege of felicitating Mr. Nitin, Vice President of Association Hindou Samaj Madagascar. A distinguished person of Indian origin, Mr. Nitin has been instrumental in fostering community cohesion and preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Indian diaspora in Madagascar. We are deeply grateful for the unwavering support he has shown towards our work and for his invaluable contributions to our initiatives. His dedication and leadership within the community continue to inspire us all.



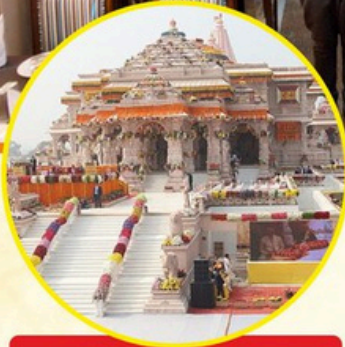
Pravasi Setu Foundation was privileged to be a Networking Partner for the International Symposium organized by the School of Liberal Education, Galgotias University, titled "Migration of Indian Indentured Labourers in Fiji and Impact on Their Families: Building Perspectives". The event, conducted under the Seed Fund Grant Project, brought together experts, academicians, and thought leaders to explore the legacy and socio-cultural impact of Indian indentured migration. As a Networking Partner, we facilitated meaningful connections and collaborations, strengthening the symposium's objective to promote dialogue and collective understanding of the Indian diaspora's history and its enduring influence.



PRAVASI BHARTIYA EXPRESS

In order to showcase the cultural richness of India and to promote the tourism in India, Ministry of External Affairs in association with Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. introduces Pravasi Bhartiya Express.

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Train Name – Bharat Gaurav "Pravasi Bhartiya Express"

Train Tour Originating Station – Delhi Safdarjung

Train Tour Duration – 14 Nights-15 Days

Total Tour Duration (Including Pre Tour & Post Tour) – 16 Nights-17 Days

Train Departure Date – 09.01.2025

Departure Time – 1500 Hrs

Destinations & Visits Covered:

Delhi – Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhawan, India Gate, Bangla Saheb, Gurudwara.

Ayodhya – Ram Mandir, Hanuman Garhi, Kanak Bhawan, Aarti at Saryu River

Patna – Buddha Smriti Park & Patna Saheb Gurudwara

Gaya – Vishnupad Temple, Mahabodhi Temple(UNESCO Site), 80 ft Buddha Statue

Varanasi – Sarnath, Kashi Viswanath Temple, Evening aarti at River Ganges

Mahabalipuram – Shore Temples (UNESCO Temples)

Rameshwaram – Dhanushkodi & Ramanathaswamy Temple

Madurai – Meenakshi Temple

Cochin – Old Churches in fort Area, Chinese fishing Net and cruise ride on Cochin Harbor.

Goa – North & South Goa Tour, The Basilica of Bom Jesus (UNESCO Site)

Ekta Nagar – Statue of Unity (World's tallest Statue of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel)

Ajmer – Dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti

Pushkar – Bramha Temple & Lake

Agra – Taj Mahal (UNESCO Site)



Pravasi Bhartiya Express: Route



Services Include:

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- Accommodation in 4 star / Similar Category Hotels as per the tour itinerary.
- Meals – All on board and off board meals as per the itinerary
- Road transport by air conditioned Coaches
- Security arrangements on train.
- Licensed tourists guides at the Archaeological Monuments.
- Entry fees at the Monuments.
- Services of IRCTC Tour Manager throughout the tour.

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Last Date to Apply for 81st KIP : 9th December 2024



DIASPORA LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS: THE ROLE OF THE INDIAN DIASPORA IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Introduction

The Indian diaspora, comprising millions of people spread across the world, plays an important role in global governance, leadership, and community development. In the face of modern crises such as pandemics, geopolitical conflicts, and environmental catastrophes, this diaspora has increasingly become a force for resilience and leadership. From offering aid during the COVID-19 pandemic to addressing climate change, the Indian diaspora is actively contributing to both their home country and their adopted nations. This article analyses how members of the Indian diaspora have handled crises by stepping into leadership roles, while also highlighting the cultural, political, and economic influence they wield across various sectors.

Historical Context of the Indian Diaspora

The Indian diaspora is one of the largest and most diverse in the world, with over 18 million Indians living abroad (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2022). Historically, migration from India began as a response to economic and political turmoil, particularly during British colonial rule. Over time, migration patterns evolved, with Indian professionals seeking opportunities in countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Today, members of the Indian diaspora are prominent in fields such as technology, healthcare, and academia, and have contributed to the global economy in meaningful ways (Bhatia, 2018).

Diaspora Leadership in Times of Crisis

In times of crisis, the Indian diaspora has demonstrated exceptional leadership by mobilizing resources, advocating for change, and addressing global challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic exemplifies the role that diaspora communities can play during emergencies. Indian doctors, scientists, and professionals were at the forefront of healthcare responses, both in their host countries and in India. The United States alone saw Indian-American doctors make significant contributions to managing the healthcare burden during the pandemic (Sahoo & Pattanaik, 2020). Additionally, various diaspora organizations coordinated global fundraising efforts, raising millions of dollars for relief efforts in India (Sharma, 2020).

The Role of Indian Diaspora in Advocacy and Social Justice

Besides healthcare, members of the Indian diaspora have been active in campaigning for social justice and environmental sustainability. The rise of global social movements, such as Black Lives Matter and climate change activism, has seen the participation of Indian-origin leaders who utilize their platforms to advance these causes. For example, environmental activists like Sunita Narain have become globally recognized for promoting sustainable development and environmental justice, while Indian-origin entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley are pushing for corporate accountability on climate action (Gupta, 2022).

In the realm of social justice, diaspora communities have been vocal advocates for marginalized populations. Indian-Americans, for instance, have been at the forefront of movements for racial equality in the United States, standing in solidarity with other minority groups. Furthermore, advocacy for gender equality within diaspora communities has also gained momentum, with Indian women breaking barriers in fields like business, STEM, and politics (Raj & Singh, 2021). These leadership efforts are not limited to Western countries; Indian diaspora members

across Africa and the Middle East have similarly played important roles in advocating for social justice within their regions.

Economic Leadership and Entrepreneurship

One of the most significant areas where the Indian diaspora has shown leadership is in the economic realm. Indian-origin entrepreneurs have established successful businesses across various sectors, often connecting India with the global market. The contributions of the Indian diaspora to the global technology sector, particularly in Silicon Valley, are well-known. CEOs like Sundar Pichai of Google and Satya Nadella of Microsoft exemplify the leadership potential of the Indian diaspora in the global business landscape (Bhatia, 2018).

In times of crisis, such as economic recessions, Indian-origin business leaders have played critical roles in steering their companies through turbulence. Their success is not only reflected in corporate profitability but also in their philanthropic activities, as many have committed to donating significant portions of their wealth to causes related to poverty alleviation, healthcare, and education in India and abroad (Sharma, 2020). These entrepreneurs act as bridges between India and the world, fostering cross-border collaborations that contribute to both economic resilience and cultural exchange.

Cultural Leadership and Fusion

Cultural fusion is another area where the Indian diaspora has shown remarkable leadership, blending Indian traditions with local cultures to create new forms of cultural expression. This blending is visible in the arts, cuisine, fashion, and literature produced by diaspora members. Indian diaspora writers, such as Jhumpa Lahiri and Salman Rushdie, have used their literary works to explore themes of identity, migration, and belonging, offering nuanced perspectives on what it means to be both Indian and global (Lahiri, 2014).

In addition to literature, Indian diaspora artists in other fields have also used their craft as a form of resistance and advocacy. For instance, filmmakers of Indian origin have used cinema to challenge stereotypes about South Asian communities and to address pressing social issues like immigration, gender inequality, and mental health. These artistic contributions not only enrich global culture but also encourage cross-cultural understanding, helping to bridge the gap between different communities (Ghosh, 2018).

Mental Health and Well-being in the Diaspora

While the Indian diaspora has made significant contributions to global leadership, the challenges they face-particularly in terms of mental health- should not be overlooked. Being a part of a diaspora often involves living in complex identities and dealing with issues of discrimination, isolation, and cultural dislocation. These mental health challenges have been increased during global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw a rise in anxiety, depression, and other psychological conditions among diaspora members (Bhugra & Becker, 2020).

Diaspora communities have responded by developing mental health support networks and resources to address these issues. In countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom, mental health organizations led by Indian-origin professionals have emerged to provide culturally sensitive counseling and therapy to those in need. These efforts highlight the importance of mental health leadership within the diaspora, ensuring that individuals are supported as they explore both personal and global crises (Sharma, 2020).

The Future of Diaspora Leadership

As the world faces increasingly complex global challenges-ranging from climate change to geopolitical conflicts-the role of the Indian diaspora in shaping solutions will continue to grow. Diaspora leaders are uniquely positioned to act as mediators between India and the world, promoting international collaborations

that address these crises. Moreover, the younger generation of the Indian diaspora is stepping into leadership roles, bringing with them a fresh perspective on global issues and a commitment to social justice and environmental sustainability (Raj & Singh, 2021).

Looking forward, it is essential that diaspora communities continue to build on the progress they have made, ensuring that they are well-represented in global governance structures and international organizations. The leadership potential of the Indian diaspora is vast, and their continued contributions to fields such as technology, healthcare, and social justice will be critical in addressing the global challenges of the 21st century.

Conclusion

The Indian diaspora has displayed remarkable leadership across multiple sectors during times of global crises. Whether in healthcare, business, or social justice, members of the diaspora have stepped up to provide solutions and advocate for change. Their contributions not only benefit their host countries but also strengthen India's position on the global stage. As the world faces new challenges in the years to come, the Indian diaspora will continue to be a vital force in shaping global leadership and enhancing cross-cultural collaborations.

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Call for Articles: Exploring the Indian Diaspora in Madagascar



As we gear up for the January 2025 edition of Pravasi Pulse, we invite scholars, writers, and diaspora members to share unique perspectives on the Indian diaspora in Madagascar—a community defined by its resilience, culture, and contributions.

For this issue, we are focusing on these **key themes**:

1. **Leaders in Action:** Stories of diaspora leaders driving change in Madagascar.
2. **Cultural Fusion:** How Indian traditions blend with Malagasy culture.
3. **Youth Perspectives:** The role of young Indian-origin Malagasy in shaping the future.
4. **Belonging and Identity:** Challenges of mental health and citizenship in the diaspora.
5. **Philanthropy and Advocacy:** Diaspora contributions to social and environmental causes.
6. **Women of Impact:** Indian women breaking barriers in business and leadership.
7. **Entrepreneurial Success:** Stories of businesses connecting India and Madagascar.
8. **Art and Heritage:** Preserving culture and challenging stereotypes through creativity.
9. **Oral Histories:** Personal stories shaping the narrative of the Indian diaspora.

IMPORTANT DATE

Article submission deadline
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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CREATING THE INDIAN DIASPORA CAPITALISM

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A person who does not reside in India but his/her family lives here, can effortlessly be acquainted with the life appraises of their family members including relatives. It could have been possible with the advent of social media. It includes Facebook; X; Instagram; Threads; Blogs; Vlogs and so on. With its arrival, the traditional geographical barriers in founding communication have experienced new ventures and mediums. It led to increased virtual interaction across the world. Significantly, since the beginning of civilization, the role of the existing communication networks and channels have been put in use to establish the connection with the distanced people and places. All these means together, shape and sharpen the connectivity. Social media has certainly speeded up this process. Due to this, the role played by the diaspora communities have undergone several positive changes. They are now well-versed and connected with their traditional routes. Additionally, they play a key role in making a favourable attitude in foreign countries for their respective countries. The diaspora communities contribute and assist their countries in various ways. Seeing the immense potential of these communities, they are named diaspora capitalism. In this regard, a wide expansion of social media has amplified the ways for enlarged interconnectedness and reciprocity irrespective of the geographical proximities. It provides abundant junctures for the shared gesticulations and swaps for various dimensions at different levels i.e. economic, social, and cultural.

The diaspora communities work with full potential when they take pride in their ancestral countries. For this, familiarity with the identity and culture is formidable. Thussu (2013) findings are crucial in this regard. He underlines that social media facilitates Indian diaspora communities to stay connected with their respective countries. Also, it enables them to get acquainted with the upcoming festivals, fairs, and several other cultural practices etc. Essentially, they create a cultural space for their ancestral country on the foreign land. It assists in strengthening the soft power strategy. In the context of India, Singh & Verma (2020) adds that social media influencers, content creators, artists etc. use these platforms to promote the receptiveness of Indian culture across the world. The more exposure and promotion of these elements shape the global perceptions of Indian culture, cuisine, music, and films etc. It paves the ways for the development of industries like tourism in India and entertainment across the world.

The economic interactions are also hugely influenced by social media. Aneesh (2015) argues that platforms like LinkedIn, X, and WhatsApp have provided the reasons and mediums to the diaspora communities to connect with those entrepreneurs, investors, and business professionals who are working for the same projects in India. Saxenian (2006) says that social media assists in the knowledge transfer from one region to another region. Along with this, it also



generates investment awareness and widens the scope for the guidance, mentorship and collaborative efforts for the new ventures in India. Nanda & Khanna (2010) emphasizes that these platforms have huge potential for innovative-investment related ideas and for crowdfunding too. This enables the diaspora to engage with the startup and entrepreneurship in India.

Khadria (2010) focuses on the role played by social media in the marketisation strategies and providing the service cum logistics support to both Indian and global audiences. It includes a wide variety of products like fashion brands, food, and wellness services through platforms like Instagram and Facebook. Additionally, Kapur (2010) conveys that the expansion and reach of e-commerce has been multiplied by social media, paving the way for the growth and development of India's digital economy.

As per one Report of the World Bank published in 2021, social media makes a vast impact on remittance flows. It accounts for over \$80 billion annually. Ratha (2013) adds to this that

merely remittance is not an important function of social media but also to facilitate discussion forums and strategies which largely shape and determine economic behaviour. The positive role of Facebook must be seen in this regard.

Varadarajan (2010) expresses his consolidated opinion about the social media platforms and perceives them as platforms that engage with the political process. It represents the voices of the Indian diaspora on several issues that directly or indirectly make a huge impact on India. These areas are widely expanded up to policy-making also. Gupta (2017) writes that the political leaders use platforms like X and Facebook to establish dialogues with the diaspora, hence facilitating a sense of belonging. Considering the process of political narratives, this particular aspect is crucial.

Nanda & Khanna (2010) elaborates that social media is used by the Indian business sector to connect with the diaspora networks. It helps in creating a market for India-made products in the foreign land. Chacko (2007) sees the role of diaspora in acting as the intermediaries

between the market and people. They use their influence to assist in the expansion of the Indian brands in the global markets. Portes et al. (2002) explains the key role played by the diaspora communities in promoting the brands of their respective countries. It facilitates a better understanding of the trade and business alliance with the theories of transnational entrepreneurship.

Brinkerhoff (2014) interprets that the social media platforms have facilitated the mediums for diaspora communities in organizing the philanthropic efforts, supporting causes such as disaster relief, healthcare, and education in India. Mohapatra & Rath (2010) argue that through platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, diaspora members organise generous and altruistic activities. It helps in speeding up the process of social development in India.

In these different roles, social media platforms are working as a bridge between India and its diaspora communities across the world. It fosters the socio-economic and cultural ties between them. This further led towards the increased opportunities for trade, business and soft power. Thus, social media is creating a landscape between India and its diaspora.

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DALIT DIASPORA: FROM COLONIAL ROOTS TO MODERN IDENTITY, STRUGGLE, AND RESISTANCE

The Dalit diaspora refers to the community of Dalit people who have migrated from South Asia and other parts of the world, leaving their homes for better education and labour opportunities. From the British era to the modern era, according to the International Dalit Solidarity Network, there are an estimated 260 million Dalits worldwide who migrated from South Asia. In the book *Understanding Dalit Diaspora*, Professor Vivek Kumar divided the Dalit diaspora into two parts: the old and the new.

The word diaspora, derived from the Greek word *διασπορά* (diaspora), means “dispersion” or “scattering.” It comes from *δια* (dia), meaning “through” or “across,” and *σπορά* (spora), meaning “sowing” or “seed.” Historically, it referred to the dispersion of people from their homeland, particularly the Jews from Israel. Still, now it is used to describe any large group of people living outside their ancestral homeland. Since the British era, Dalits have spread all over the world for labour work, which Professor Vivek called the “old” diaspora. The “new” diaspora consists of semi-literate

Dalits who have emerged as students, industrial labourers, and other professionals. This diaspora has been divided into a history of British period migration to modern-day migration, with three phases of Dalit migration:

1. Indentured labourers (19th-20th centuries): Dalits migrated to British colonies like Fiji, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia.
2. Post-independence (1947): Dalits migrated for economic opportunities, education, and to escape caste violence.
3. Modern-day migration (late 20th century-present): Dalits migrate to countries like the US, UK, Canada, and Australia for better livelihoods and higher education opportunities.

Indian Dalit's were taken to various countries as indentured labourers by colonial authorities and later migrated independently for employment opportunities. According to Lal (1984:126- 130), of the 60,965 Indian indentured labourers who migrated to Fiji between 1879 and 1916, around 11,907, or 26.2 percent, were from lower castes such as Chamars, Koris, and Pasis.

Similarly, Brereton (1974:26) reports that between 1876 and 1885, the Hindu arrivals in Trinidad included 18 percent from Brahmin and other high castes, 8.5 percent from artisan castes, 32 percent from agricultural castes, and 41.5 percent from lower castes. Jain (1984:175) also notes that many people from untouchable castes, such as the Adi-Dravida, migrated to Malaysia, though he acknowledges the difficulty of substantiating this statistically. Sandhu (1969) describes the presence of South Indian Dalit's, including Cherumans, Parayans, and Pallans, who served as indentured labourers in Malaysia. He remarks that "Of the people of the subcontinent, the South Indian peasant, particularly the untouchables or low-caste Madrasi, was considered the most satisfactory type of labourer." The "new" Dalit diaspora, consisting of free labourers and skilled professionals, began migrating abroad before India's independence. Muman (2000:71), a Dalit from Punjab, recalls, "I came to Britain in the late 1960s from a remote village in India." Dalits began migrating to the United States in the 1970s, many as first-generation literates and professionals. This "new" diaspora is politically aware and has influenced the politically quieter "old" Dalit diaspora as well.

Not all diasporic Dalits lead secluded lives. A new wave of anti-caste resistance, rooted in transnational solidarity networks, is emerging on an international scale, signalling the powerful mobilization of Dalit communities worldwide. Through blogs, websites, online communities, and social media, diasporic Dalits are sharing personal experiences, recounting incidents of discrimination, addressing historical erasure through published research, and contributing Dalit perspectives to current debates. These digital platforms also empower them to assert their identities within a transnational context.

During the British colonial period, there were a few prominent Dalit writers and leaders who experienced a diaspora or had international exposure. While Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is the most prominent figure, there were others who either travelled abroad for education or experienced migration within the colonial framework. However, the body of Dalit literature specifically focused on diaspora from that era is relatively small due to the socio-economic barriers Dalits faced during British rule.

Colonial Beginnings: The Origins of the Dalit Diaspora

During British rule, many Dalit's were part of the indentured labour diaspora, particularly to colonies like Mauritius, Fiji, South Africa, Trinidad, and Guyana. Though not all of them produced literary works, their experiences have been documented through oral histories and folk traditions. Some Dalit writers and activists emerged later from these communities. The trope I'd 'coming out' a phrase that means disclosure of one identity that is otherwise sitgamatising is coming in yaschia dutt and Thenmozhi Soundararajan. Indentured Labourers' Experiences Dalit's were among the marginalized communities sent as indentured labourers to British colonies. While they faced brutal working conditions, caste discrimination often persisted even in these foreign lands. These experiences were significant in shaping the identity of Dalit's in the diaspora.

Though there are few well-documented Dalit writers with a diaspora experience during the British period, the global migration of marginalized communities under colonial rule laid the groundwork for later Dalit diaspora literature. The writings of Dalit leaders like Ambedkar and others inspired future generations of Dalit diaspora writers to reflect on the themes of identity, social mobility, and liberation in foreign lands.

First generation migration have been written in stories of Dalit diaspora, life narrative and caste in the US by Shweta majumat Adil and Anjana Naryan where they mentioned the story of Dalit activates of first generation migrated in abroad s.kumar and B.singh has Faced cultural and identity problems. S Kumar was born in North India and after his master's went to the US to complete his PhD. But this path of success is with painful reminders. B.Singh has similar experiences. According to Indian indentured labourers who migrated to Fiji between 1879 to 1916 about 11,907 that is 26.2 percent belong to lower castes like chamar, Sansi, Pasis.

In *Surviving in My World*, author Manohar Mouli Biswas shares his migration journey, which began following the partition of India and Pakistan. Biswas migrated from East Pakistan to India, making him a part of the first generation of diaspora who encountered significant educational and societal challenges, including resistance from his own family and oppressive societal norms. He questions the prevailing belief that the partition was purely based on religious factors. Alongside depicting his life as a subaltern, Biswas also reflects on his diasporic experiences. Originally, the Namashudras did not intend to migrate to India during the partition; however, due to economic hardships and personal grief, Biswas ultimately made the move. Once in India, he encountered numerous difficulties. He recounts:

“I had not a single paisa in my pocket, no food to eat, no shelter to sleep in, and no relatives to care for me—a vagabond, a complete refugee in India. Driven by extreme financial need, I often travelled on trains without a ticket. Sometimes, the ticket collector, moved by my condition, would allow me to continue my journey; other times, I was thrown out at unknown stations in the middle of the night. I recall a day when, in sheer desperation, I

approached a stranger's home seeking food to satisfy my hunger.”

Post-Independence Migration: Seeking Opportunity and Escape from Caste Violence

Thenmozhu Soundarajan Dalit rights activists, artists technologist and executive director of equality labs that she found with Aruna sanahapai and Valli karuakath the lab of South Asians ambedkarle origination she called herself as a coming out of she is second generation Dalit immigrant born of Dalit doctors who migrated to the US in the 1970 also from a small town though Tamil Nadu. Thenmozhi Soundararajan's work, *The Black Indians*, sheds light on how caste is embedded in the identities of Indians abroad, often as a normalized part of their ethnic and cultural expression. She reveals how Savarna dominance continues to shape global narratives around Indian culture, history, and identity, which results in the marginalization of the Dalit diaspora. According to Soundararajan:

Supporting this viewpoint, numerous testimonies by Dalits from across the globe are documented in *Caste in the United States: A Survey of Caste among South Asian Americans*, a 2018 report by Equality Labs, and another initiative led by Soundararajan. These accounts show that many Dalits, aware of the stigma attached to caste, often feel compelled to hide their identity to avoid exclusion within the diaspora community.

Modern Era: Identity, Struggle, and Global Resistance

Third-generation Dalit diaspora figures such as Yaschia Dutt add a modern perspective to the new Dalit diaspora. An author and activist, Dutt was born in India and later migrated to the United States. Her book, *Coming Out as Dalit*, explores her journey of confronting her caste identity and her experience of “passing” as non-Dalit in elite spaces, before reclaiming her heritage. Dutta's work highlights the complex layers of caste identity within the

diaspora, especially for those distanced from caste discrimination's physical spaces yet profoundly impacted by it.

Her narrative illustrates the third-generation Dalit diaspora's unique struggle with caste identity in foreign lands and their efforts to raise awareness about caste-based issues in international forums. Dutt narratives weaves the personal journey of coming to terms with Dalit identity in urban location with socio political commentary in significant moments in Delhi history from Adalat feminist perspective she is a third generation student who migrated in USA

for the better education opportunity she share her story of Identity through the digital media that mostly used by Dalit community nowadays for the explorer and telling their folktales and other stories through the blogs YouTube and many more she said I remember that my parent's inclination to keep Tegir caste identity because if the fear of being shunned by Indian community in the USA.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Dalit diaspora encompasses a complex history of migration, resilience, and identity evolution. From the early indentured labourers of the British colonial era to the highly educated and politically active Dalits of today, these individuals have traversed continents, adapting to new societies while contending with the pervasive shadow of caste discrimination. Despite varied circumstances and destinations, the diaspora's experiences share common themes of struggle, survival, and resistance. Modern-day diasporic Dalits have increasingly leveraged digital platforms, blogs, and social media to articulate their lived experiences, challenge cattiest narratives, and forge global solidarity networks. Figures like Thenmozhi Soundararajan and Yaschia Dutt exemplify a generation unafraid to confront and publicize their caste identities, fostering transnational

discussions on caste-based issues. Their stories underscore the enduring impact of caste outside India's borders and illustrate the ongoing journey of diasporic Dalits toward social justice, empowerment, and self-definition in diverse global communities.

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GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND THE INDIAN DIASPORA: PIONEERS IN SHAPING MIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES

Abhishek Kumar

Imagine a world map lit by threads of connection, stretching from bustling cities to remote villages, tying together distant lands with a shared sense of purpose and identity. This network embodies the global Indian diaspora—a community of over 35 million people across 146 countries—whose influence reaches beyond borders and generations. Far more than mere economic contributors, members of the Indian diaspora shape the global landscape, championing human rights, bridging cultural divides, and advocating for inclusive migration policies.

Celebrated annually through events like Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, India's diaspora is recognized for its invaluable role in enhancing India's global presence, from Silicon Valley's tech giants to healthcare networks in the Gulf. Recent reports, including The State of the World's Human Rights 2024, highlight how Indian communities are not just residents but active architects of progressive policies and intercultural dialogue in their host nations. These communities don't merely connect India to the world—they build a platform for global citizenship, weaving aspirations, rights, and responsibilities into a vision for a more inclusive world. This article delves into the powerful ways the Indian diaspora shapes international policies and builds bridges across nations, cultures, and futures.

Historical Context and Evolution of the Indian Diaspora

The Indian diaspora's journey began over a century ago, rooted in waves of migration that reshaped identities and forged global connections. In the 19th century, British colonial powers initiated large-scale movement through the indentured labor system, sending Indian workers to plantations across the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and East Africa. Often journeying under challenging conditions, these migrants established communities that preserved Indian culture, traditions, and languages even while adapting to their new surroundings. Tracing an Indian Diaspora by Raghuram et al. highlights how these early migrations laid the groundwork for a resilient diaspora identity rooted in cultural continuity and community support.

Post-independence migration marked a shift toward opportunity-driven relocation. From the 1950s onward, the allure of better economic prospects led waves of Indians to countries like the U.S., U.K., and rapidly developing Gulf nations. Initially driven by labor shortages in the U.K. and the oil boom in the Middle East, Indian migrants filled vital roles, from skilled technicians to construction workers. As noted by Neha Kohli in Indian Migrants in the Gulf Countries, these migration patterns contributed to the

economic landscapes of their host nations, while transforming India into a significant player on the global labor stage.

In the 1990s, with India's economic liberalization, the narrative shifted from "brain drain" to "brain gain." Economic reforms facilitated the return of skilled Indian professionals, who brought back knowledge, investment, and innovation. N.V. Varghese's work, *Education and Migration*, details how the diaspora became a strategic asset, contributing to India's growing tech and knowledge sectors, particularly in cities like Bengaluru and Hyderabad. This evolution from survival-based migration to a dynamic, policy-driven movement underscores the Indian diaspora's journey—from indentured laborers to global influencers. Today, the diaspora is not only a bridge between India and the world but a powerful force shaping global policy, economy, and cultural dialogue.

Economic Contributions and Developmental Impact

The Indian diaspora stands as a critical driver of India's economic growth, consistently channeling capital, expertise, and entrepreneurial energy back to its homeland. India is among the world's largest recipients of remittances, with inflows from the diaspora surpassing \$107 billion annually in financial year 2023-24 (*The Economic Times*), which strengthens both local and national economies. The *World Migration Report 2024* highlights how these funds contribute not only to household incomes but also to infrastructure, education, and healthcare, particularly in states like Kerala and Punjab, where dependence on remittances is substantial.

Beyond remittances, the diaspora's influence extends to India's technological and entrepreneurial landscape. Indian-origin entrepreneurs have been instrumental in building tech hubs around the world, especially in Silicon Valley. As *The Diaspora and India's Growth Story* by Shreya Challagalla illustrates, many Indian professionals in Silicon Valley drive cutting-edge innovation, founding influential tech startups and multinational companies. Their achievements have inspired a wave of "reverse

innovation" in India, seeding successful enterprises like Infosys and Wipro, and transforming cities like Bengaluru into global tech centers.

This phenomenon of "brain circulation," where skilled professionals contribute to both host and home countries, has also bolstered India's international reputation. N.V. Varghese in *Education and Migration* describes how Indian engineers, scientists, and business leaders in Western economies create networks that benefit both sides, facilitating knowledge transfer, collaborative research, and bilateral investments. These contributions not only support India's domestic development but also enhance its standing as a global knowledge and talent powerhouse.

Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

The Indian diaspora's role in cultural diplomacy has become one of India's most influential forms of soft power, projecting its rich heritage across continents. From Bollywood blockbusters captivating audiences worldwide to yoga studios dotting urban landscapes in Western cities, Indian culture has become a global phenomenon. Food delicacies like Chicken Tikka Masala, a widely consumed dish in India, is considered by many English citizens to be England's national dish. Kamni Kumari, in *Diaspora as Soft Power*, highlights how Indian cultural exports—like Bollywood, classical dance, cuisine, and yoga—have nurtured a broad cultural connection that enhances India's image globally, positioning it as a vibrant, diverse society. These cultural symbols do more than entertain; they foster a deep affinity for Indian traditions and values, especially in the U.S., U.K., and Canada.

Programs like *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* (PBD) actively support this soft power by fostering connections with the overseas Indian community. As the *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2023 Report* outlines, PBD conventions invite diaspora members to engage with Indian officials, celebrating their achievements and encouraging further cultural, economic, and social ties. This initiative not only strengthens diaspora identity but also motivates Indians abroad to become "cultural ambassadors," promoting India's interests in their host countries.

The Indian diaspora's influence is also political. In the U.S. and U.K., advocacy groups and community organizations lobby for India-related issues, from visa policies to support for India's development initiatives. Christine Huang et al. in *Views of India: Lean Positive Across 23 Countries* discuss how these efforts have successfully cultivated positive perceptions of India, often shaping policies that benefit both India and Indian communities abroad. Indian diaspora organizations serve as powerful lobbies, particularly in countries with large Indian populations, influencing public opinion and diplomatic relations in ways that only a well-integrated community can achieve.

Diaspora Advocacy in Migration and Human Rights Policies

The Indian diaspora plays an instrumental role in advocating for migration and human rights policies, leveraging its collective voice to champion fair treatment and equitable policies for migrant communities worldwide. This advocacy is most visible in countries like the United States, where visa reforms and labor rights have been hotly debated. Indian professionals, particularly in the tech sector, rely heavily on the H-1B visa program, which allows skilled foreign workers to fill critical positions in U.S. companies. However, as Dr. M.K. Gautam notes in *Indian Diaspora: Ethnicity and Diasporic Identity*, restrictive visa policies and lengthy processing times have spurred the Indian diaspora to mobilize for H-1B reforms. Through community organizations, lobbying, and collaborations with policy think tanks, the diaspora has pushed for fairer immigration policies, seeking to protect the rights of high-skilled workers who contribute substantially to the U.S. economy.

In the Gulf countries, where large numbers of Indian laborers work in construction, domestic work, and other essential sectors, the diaspora's advocacy focuses on labor rights and working conditions. Neha Kohli's *Indian Migrants in the Gulf Countries* highlights the harsh realities faced by Indian workers, who often encounter challenging working conditions, limited mobility, and, at times, exploitative labor practices due to indigenization policies. These policies

prioritize hiring local citizens over expatriates, making job security precarious for Indian laborers. In response, Indian diaspora organizations and Indian embassies in the Gulf region have taken a proactive approach by setting up welfare funds, legal aid, and helplines, while advocating with local governments to ensure fair treatment and safe working conditions for migrant laborers.

Beyond labor rights, the Indian diaspora has been at the forefront of broader human rights campaigns, often in collaboration with global human rights organizations. The *International Labour Migration: A Rights-Based Approach* emphasizes that migrant communities, including Indians, frequently face issues of discrimination, limited access to healthcare, and inadequate housing. Diaspora-led advocacy campaigns seek to address these inequalities, working with organizations like the International Labour Organization (ILO) to establish guidelines that promote dignity, safety, and fairness for all migrant workers, regardless of their nationality or occupation.

Through these efforts, the Indian diaspora underscores its commitment to global citizenship principles, advocating not only for economic equity but also for human rights and social justice on a global scale. Their influence in shaping policies and championing migrant rights demonstrates the potential of diaspora communities to foster inclusive and humane migration practices that benefit all involved.

Education and Knowledge Transfer: The Academic Influence of the Indian Diaspora

The Indian diaspora's academic influence has forged a powerful bridge for knowledge exchange, elevating both India and its host countries in the realms of higher education and innovation. Indian scholars and researchers occupy prominent positions in prestigious universities and think tanks worldwide, contributing to a favorable global perception of Indian intellectual and technological prowess. This academic diaspora has facilitated technological advancements and policy innovation, especially in areas like information technology and medical research, benefiting knowledge economies globally. Indian academics abroad not only share their expertise but also engage in collaborative research that

tackles pressing global challenges, from climate change to public health.

Programs such as the *Global Initiative for Academic Networks (GIAN)* and *VAJRA* (Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty) are key examples of structured initiatives that leverage diaspora expertise. These programs invite Indian-origin academics back to collaborate with local institutions, encouraging the transfer of knowledge and skills to India's growing educational and research landscape. Such initiatives enable Indian institutions to benefit from international expertise, fostering cutting-edge research, technological innovation, and a dynamic academic environment in India.

Student migration trends also underscore the diaspora's role in knowledge transfer. Each year, thousands of Indian students pursue advanced degrees in global hubs like the U.S., U.K., and Australia. This migration contributes significantly to host nations' economies while also creating a network of highly skilled professionals who can collaborate across borders. Many of these students eventually assume roles in academia or industry abroad, enhancing the intellectual and professional footprint of the Indian diaspora.

Challenges and Future Directions for Diaspora Engagement

While the Indian diaspora has made remarkable strides globally, it faces several challenges that impact its growth and integration in host countries. Immigration restrictions are among the most pressing, particularly in the U.S. and parts of Europe, where visa limitations and lengthy processing times can hinder professional mobility and family reunification. Neha Kohli's analysis on Indian migrants in the Gulf highlights additional hurdles, such as indigenization policies, which prioritize local employment over expatriate labor. These policies can lead to job insecurity, affecting Indian laborers who have limited protection under local labor laws. Furthermore, cultural integration issues persist in many regions, as diaspora communities work to balance preserving their heritage with blending into the social fabric of their host countries.

To address these challenges and maximize diaspora engagement, India can implement supportive policies. The *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* report recommends easing bureaucratic restrictions on diaspora investments to facilitate smoother financial flows back to India. Simplifying processes for student migration, particularly through targeted scholarships and research opportunities, would encourage younger generations to engage with India's development. Programs like the *Know India Programme* and initiatives for diaspora start-ups can further strengthen these connections, channeling skills and resources from abroad.

Looking ahead, the Indian government envisions a greater role for the diaspora in tackling global challenges, aligning with India's "Amrit Kaal" vision for sustainable growth. Diaspora-led climate advocacy could enhance India's environmental diplomacy, as Indian-origin professionals lead global efforts in sustainability and conservation. Additionally, collaborations in sectors like healthcare, education, and digital innovation hold vast potential to reinforce India's position on the global stage.

Conclusion

In the landscape of global citizenship, the Indian diaspora stands as a powerful force, bridging cultures, economies, and ideals of human rights across continents. From driving economic growth through remittances and entrepreneurial innovation to enhancing India's global image through cultural diplomacy, the diaspora's influence extends far beyond borders. As advocates for migrant rights and champions of fairer immigration policies, they embody the principles of inclusivity and cooperation that define true global citizenship.

Their contributions also resonate within India, where they play a vital role in knowledge transfer, sustainable development, and diplomatic outreach. However, to fully realize this potential, it's essential for both India and host countries to continue supporting and recognizing the diaspora's unique position on the global stage. Collaborative policies, streamlined processes, and expanded initiatives for diaspora engagement can further strengthen these global networks.

As we move into a future marked by interconnected challenges and opportunities, the Indian diaspora's role in shaping a more inclusive and equitable world cannot be overstated. By embracing their contributions and supporting their endeavors, we take a step closer to a world driven by shared values, mutual respect, and collective progress—principles at the heart of global citizenship.

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INDIAN FESTIVALS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: AN EPITOME OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY

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Indian festivals have long been a hallmark of the country's rich cultural heritage, representing the diversity of traditions, languages, and religions that coalesce to form a uniquely vibrant civilization. As the Indian diaspora has spread across the globe, these festivals have transcended geographic boundaries, finding new homes in foreign lands, including European countries. The Indian community in Europe is substantial, with estimates suggesting around 1.5 to 2 million people. The largest populations can be found in the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Italy.

The celebration of Indian festivals in Europe highlights India's rich cultural diversity while also serving as a symbol of global unity, where diverse cultures come together, and communities unite in the spirit of shared humanity.

This article delves into the significance of Indian festivals celebrated in European countries, exploring their cultural impact, their role in fostering unity and diversity, and how they serve as bridges between communities, breaking down barriers and building new connections across the continent.

The Indian Diaspora in Europe

The Indian diaspora in Europe has grown significantly over the past few decades.

Countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Italy have witnessed a rise in the Indian immigrant population, including students, professionals, and second-generation Indians. With this growing community, the desire to preserve cultural heritage and traditions has led to the widespread celebration of Indian festivals in European cities.

These festivals, ranging from the likes of Diwali, Eid, Holi, Pongal, Onam etc. are not just a glimpse of India's cultural vibrancy but also an opportunity for Indians to stay connected with their roots while introducing their traditions to European audiences. What makes these celebrations even more remarkable is the enthusiastic participation of locals, making these events a true celebration of unity in diversity.

This festival fervor is deeply echoed by the Indian diaspora residing in the European region. Sadia Tanveer, an Indian doctoral researcher, at the University of Oulu, Finland, says, "Celebrating different festivals as an NRI helps overcome homesickness by reconnecting with your roots and creating a sense of belonging in a new environment. Engaging in Indian festivals like Diwali or Holi with fellow NRIs brings emotional comfort and a "home away from home" feeling while participating in local or global festivals like Christmas, Thanksgiving, or Chinese New Year fosters

cultural exchange and builds community bonds. This blending of traditions promotes unity in diversity, as you share your heritage with others and embrace new cultures, creating a deeper appreciation of common human values and strengthening ties with both your homeland and your new surroundings.

Diwali: The Festival of Lights Across Europe

Diwali, one of India's most awaited and sought-after festivals, is celebrated with great enthusiasm across European countries. Diwali, which is popularly called the "Festival of Lights," embodies the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance. In Europe, Diwali celebrations have become a grand affair, attracting not only the Indian diaspora but also locals who partake in the joy of the festival.

The UK, home to a large Indian community, witnesses some of the most extravagant Diwali celebrations outside India. Leicester, which is referred to as the "Diwali capital" of Europe, hosts one of the largest Diwali festivals, with thousands and thousands of people gathering in the streets to watch fireworks, light candles, and participate in cultural events. The iconic Diwali lights in Leicester are turned on each year by local dignitaries, and the event is accompanied by live music, dance performances, and traditional Indian food stalls. Diwali celebrations in Leicester have long been considered one of the biggest in the world outside of India.

The popular Hindu festival of light had until now been marked in the city with two events - a lights switch-on event and a Diwali Day event, both along Belgrave Road starting from October 4th in 2024. (BBC) London, too, comes alive during Diwali. The celebrations in Trafalgar Square have become a major cultural event, with thousands of attendees enjoying traditional dances like Garba and Bhangra, listening to devotional songs, and partaking in the spiritual and cultural essence of the festival. The Diwali in London (DIL) event serves as a prime example of how Indian festivals in Europe act as a bridge, connecting communities from diverse cultural backgrounds. This year the celebration would

be in full swing at Trafalgar Square With an exciting line-up of music and dance, plus workshops, food, art and crafts and several other events.

In France, Diwali is celebrated in cities like Paris and Lyon, where Indian associations organize events that include the lighting of diyas (oil lamps), cultural programs, and Indian classical music performances. The vibrant markets selling Indian clothes, jewellery, and food are a taste of India to the French population, showcasing the beauty of Indian craftsmanship.

Germany, known for its multicultural society, also embraces Diwali with enthusiasm. Cities like Berlin, Munich, and Frankfurt witness large-scale Diwali events, often organized by Indian associations, where the festivities are accompanied by Bollywood music, dance performances, and Indian food stalls. The Indian Embassy in Germany also plays a role in promoting Diwali celebrations, fostering cultural exchange and strengthening ties between Indian and German communities.

Holi: The Festival of Colors

Another major Indian festival that has found a home in Europe is Holi, the festival of colors. Celebrated in the spring, Holi marks the arrival of the new season and the triumph of good over evil. The festival is characterized by the playful throwing of colored powders, symbolizing joy, love, and the vibrant spirit of life.

The UK's celebration of Holi has become a much-anticipated event, especially among younger generations. Events like Holi in the Park in London's Wembley Park attract thousands of participants, both Indian and non-Indian, who revel in the excitement of throwing-colored powders, dancing to Bollywood music, and enjoying the festive atmosphere. Holi celebrations in the UK often fuse traditional elements with modern party vibes, featuring DJ sets, food trucks, and live performances.

In the Netherlands, Holi celebrations have gained widespread popularity, with festivals being organized in cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague. The event attracts people from diverse backgrounds, highlighting how the festival's message of joy and unity

resonates across cultures. Dutch participants often join Indian revellers in dancing to Bollywood songs, enjoying Indian food, and, of course, covering each other in a rainbow of colours.

In Italy, Holi festivals are organized in major cities like Rome and Milan, drawing a mixed crowd of locals and Indian expatriates. The festival's growing popularity reflects the Italian public's increasing fascination with Indian culture. Holi events in Italy often feature yoga sessions, traditional Indian dance performances, and Indian street food, blending the essence of the festival with Italy's love for celebration and community.

Eid and Christmas: Interfaith Celebrations

Indian festivals in Europe are not limited to Hindu celebrations. The Muslim festival of Eid and the Christian festival of Christmas is also celebrated with a distinct Indian flavor in various parts of Europe, reflecting the interfaith harmony that is a core value of Indian society.

Eid, celebrated by Indian Muslims, has become a significant event in European cities with large Indian and South Asian populations. In cities like London, Paris, and Amsterdam, mosques organize special prayers, and Indian communities gather to celebrate with traditional foods, cultural performances, and family gatherings. Eid fairs, featuring Indian sweets like sewaiyan (vermicelli pudding) and savoury dishes like biryani, are a highlight, drawing people from different religious backgrounds to join in the festive spirit. Kunafa, a Turkish dessert is also becoming quite popular amongst Europeans and Indians diaspora during the festivities.

The celebration of Eid in Europe reflects the pluralistic nature of Indian society, where festivals from different religions coexist and are celebrated with equal fervour. This spirit of inclusion and respect for diversity is mirrored in the way European cities embrace these festivals, fostering an environment of mutual understanding and respect.

Indian Christians, too, celebrate Christmas in Europe with their cultural touch. In addition to attending church services, Indian families

in Europe often prepare traditional Indian Christmas dishes like plum cake, chicken curry, and appam (rice pancakes) during the festive season. These celebrations bring a blend of Indian and European traditions, symbolizing how cultural diversity enriches the holiday spirit.

Pongal and Onam: Celebrations of South India in Europe

While Diwali and Holi dominate the festival calendar, regional festivals from South India, such as Pongal and Onam, have also gained recognition in European countries with significant South Indian populations.

Onam, Kerala's festival of harvest, is widely celebrated by the Malayali community in Europe. Countries like the UK, Germany, and Switzerland witness grand Onam celebrations, where traditional events such as the Vallam Kali (boat race), Pulikali (tiger dance), and the elaborate Onam Sadhya (a traditional feast meal served on a banana leaf) are recreated. Onam's message of unity and prosperity resonates well with the European spirit of community, making it a popular cultural event among locals and Indians alike. Asiya Geeti who went to Europe for a project said "Celebrating Onam in Europe was a heartwarming experience. Alongside fellow Malayalis, I recreated Kerala's magic in London. We shared sadya feast, stories, and laughter, making the distance from home feel smaller. Onam became a bridge connecting our past to our present, our heritage to our adopted homeland. At that moment, cultural boundaries dissolved, and Europe felt like a tiny Kerala."

The Tamil harvest festival, Pongal, is celebrated with fun and frolic in countries with large Tamil communities, particularly in France and Switzerland. The traditional cooking of the Pongal dish (a sweet rice dish) in large outdoor gatherings symbolizes gratitude for the harvest and is accompanied by Tamil folk music and dance. The celebrations reflect how regional Indian festivals have found new expressions in European societies.

Cultural Integration and Unity Through Festivals

The celebration of Indian festivals in Europe is not just a cultural display for the Indian diaspora; it serves a larger purpose of fostering

cultural integration, unity, and mutual respect among diverse communities. Festivals are platforms for social and cultural exchange, where people from different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities come together to participate and share their happiness and joy of celebration.

Through these festivals, the Europeans are exposed to the rich traditions of India, fostering a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity that exists within the Indian community. At the same time, these festivals offer Indians living abroad a sense of belongingness, providing them with an opportunity to stay connected to their roots while embracing the multicultural environment of their host countries.

The Indian festivals celebrated in Europe are a testament to the fact that diversity is not a barrier but a source of strength and unity. By embracing each other's traditions, both Indians and Europeans are contributing to a global culture where differences are celebrated, and humanity's shared values are upheld.

Conclusion

The celebration of Indian festivals in European countries is a true epitome of unity and diversity. These festivals, whether Diwali, Holi, Eid, Onam, or Pongal, act as bridges connecting cultures, fostering a sense of global unity. They offer the Indian diaspora a way to stay connected to their heritage while contributing to the multicultural fabric of Europe.

In a world that often seems divided, these festivals serve as a reminder that unity can be found in diversity and that the celebration of culture transcends borders. Through the vibrant and joyful celebration of Indian festivals, Europe and India continue to strengthen their cultural ties, creating a future where diversity is embraced.



Call for Articles: Exploring the Indian Diaspora in Madagascar



As we gear up for the January 2025 edition of Pravasi Pulse, we invite scholars, writers, and diaspora members to share unique perspectives on the Indian diaspora in Madagascar—a community defined by its resilience, culture, and contributions.

For this issue, we are focusing on these **key themes**:

1. **Leaders in Action:** Stories of diaspora leaders driving change in Madagascar.
2. **Cultural Fusion:** How Indian traditions blend with Malagasy culture.
3. **Youth Perspectives:** The role of young Indian-origin Malagasy in shaping the future.
4. **Belonging and Identity:** Challenges of mental health and citizenship in the diaspora.
5. **Philanthropy and Advocacy:** Diaspora contributions to social and environmental causes.
6. **Women of Impact:** Indian women breaking barriers in business and leadership.
7. **Entrepreneurial Success:** Stories of businesses connecting India and Madagascar.
8. **Art and Heritage:** Preserving culture and challenging stereotypes through creativity.
9. **Oral Histories:** Personal stories shaping the narrative of the Indian diaspora.

IMPORTANT DATE

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