

# INDIA ABROAD

# LEGACY OF INDIAN DIASPORA



Indians have a long history of migration to many parts of world. According to the report of United Nations, India is the largest country of origin for expatriates and immigrant communities. From the shores of the subcontinent to the farthest corners of the world, the journey of the Indian diaspora unfolds as a saga of resilience, enterprise, and cultural vibrancy. Spanning centuries, this diaspora has left an indelible mark on the historical landscape, while simultaneously shaping the present and influencing the future.

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DELHI



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



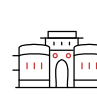
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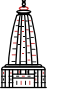
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## I. What does the term 'Diaspora' mean?

The term "diaspora" is **derived from the Greek word diaspeirein**, which means "dispersion". Over time, the term evolved, and now loosely refers to any **person/s belonging to a particular country** with a common origin or culture, **but residing outside their homeland** for various reasons.

- ▶ The **Government of India does not follow a specific definition for Diaspora**. Indian Diaspora encompasses a group of people who can either trace their origins to India or who are Indian citizens living abroad, either temporarily or permanently.
  - » It is **commonly understood to include Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI)**, of which PIO and OCI card holders were merged under one category — OCI — in 2015.

### Box 1.1 Key Terms related to Indian Diaspora

- ▶ **Person of Indian Origin (PIO):** A Person of Indian Origin (PIO) means a foreign citizen (except a national of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Iran, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal) -
  - ▶ who at any time held an Indian passport; or
  - ▶ who or either of their parents/ grandparents/ great grandparents was born and permanently residing in India as defined in Government of India Act, 1935 and other territories that became part of India thereafter, provided neither was at any time a citizen of any of the aforesaid countries (as referred above); or
  - ▶ who is a spouse of a citizen of India or a PIO
- ▶ **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI):** A PIO who is a foreign national and gets registered as Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder under Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 is an OCI.
- ▶ **Non-Resident Indian (NRI):** An Indian citizen who is ordinarily residing outside India and holds an Indian passport.

## 2. What are the factors responsible for growth of Diaspora?

Various factors responsible for migration of people to other countries and formation of diaspora can broadly be categorized as:

### ▶ Push factors

- ▶ **Economic hardships:** Poverty, lack of job opportunities, inequality, etc., can all push people to seek better economic prospects elsewhere.
  - » **For e.g.,** Contemporary Venezuelan exodus due to economic crisis.
- ▶ **Social discrimination:** Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation can motivate people to migrate in search of a more accepting society.
  - » **For e.g.,** Exodus of Rohingyas from Myanmar.
- ▶ **Conflict and persecution:** War, terrorism, ethnic or religious violence, and political oppression can force people to flee their homes.
  - » **For e.g.,** Migration of Jews from Germany during Holocaust.
- ▶ **Environmental factors:** Droughts, floods, earthquakes, and other environmental disasters can make peoples' homeland uninhabitable and lead to their displacement.
  - » **For e.g.,** Ongoing desertification in the Sahel region of Africa contributed to migration towards North Africa and Europe.

### ▶ Pull factors

- ▶ **Economic opportunities:** Job prospects, higher wages, and better living standards in other countries can result in increased migration.
  - » **For e.g.,** Doctors from India migrating to the US, UK, Canada, and Australia.
- ▶ **Political freedom and religious tolerance:** Countries with democratic governments and religious freedom can be appealing to people from more restrictive societies.
  - » **For e.g.,** Emigration of citizens of Hong Kong to countries like UK, Canada, etc., after implementation of the National Security Law in 2020 in Hong Kong.
- ▶ **Social amenities and services:** Access to better social amenities like educational and healthcare facilities, can attract people to certain countries.
  - » **For e.g.,** Influx of retirees in countries such as Spain and Portugal, due to their favourable social security systems.
- ▶ **Family reunification:** Joining family members who have already migrated can be another reason for people to move to another country.

➤ **Other factors**

- **Trade and globalization:** Trade routes and global economic networks can facilitate the movement of people and goods, leading to the formation of Diasporas in key commercial centres.
  - » **For e.g.** Historical migration of Indian traders and labourers to countries like Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

- **Technological advancements:** Improved transportation and communication technologies have made it easier and faster for people to migrate and stay connected to their homelands.
- **Cultural ties:** Existing cultural connections, historical influences, and shared languages can create natural draw factors for people to migrate to specific destinations.

**2.1. What is the historical context for growth and dispersion of Indian Diaspora?**

The South Asian migrants, or their ancestors, left the subcontinent as part of various migration patterns. In general, **four waves of South Asian migration** are emphasized.

- **First wave: Migration of traders** since earliest times which resulted in Indian coastal communities developing profitable ties with East Asia, Southeast Asia, East Africa, and Central Asia **in pre-colonial times.**
- **Second wave:** Migration of **indentured laborers during colonial time** in 19th and early 20th century to Mauritius, Malaya, Trinidad, Jamaica, Natal, Surinam, Fiji, Burma, East Africa, Canada, Thailand, among others.
  - **Abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833,** led to a huge demand for unskilled, cheap labourers in the plantation economies of many British colonies.
    - » Indentured Labor System **formally came into existence in 1834 and lasted until its abolition through legislation in 1917.**
  - Key difference of this wave as compared to first wave was that much of this was **'forced' and not voluntary.**
- **Third wave:** It involved **migrations after the Second World War,** including the **refugees and conflict-driven migration** resulting from partitions of India and

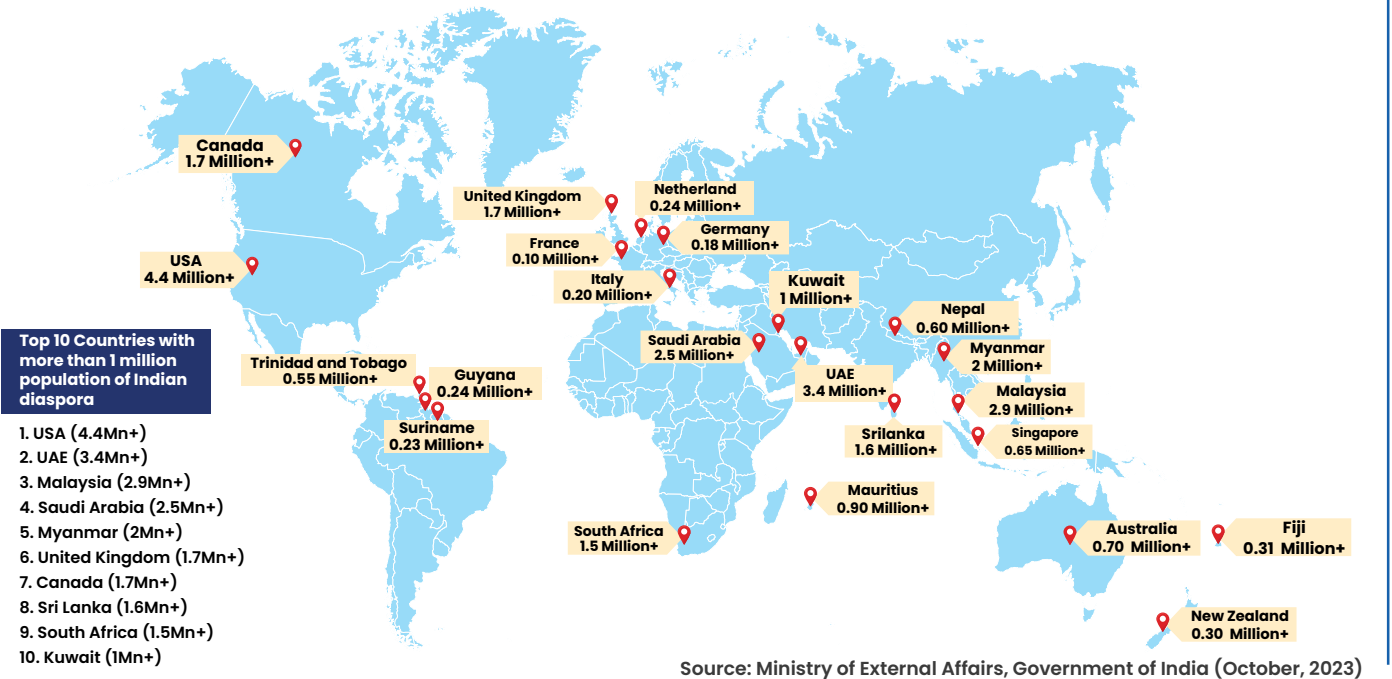
Pakistan in 1947, Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971, and Sri Lankan civil war.

- **During 1947 to 1962, Indians were unrestricted Commonwealth people** to enter, live, work, vote and hold public offices in the UK under the postcolonial ties, which contributed to migrations.
- The **oil-industry boom in the Gulf countries during 1970s** resulted in formation of 'Gulf Diaspora' in West Asian countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain.
- This wave also includes **contemporary skilled and professional migration,** driven by globalization, growth of IT-service industries, and economic opportunities.
- **Fourth wave:** Within the post-war period, pattern of **'twice migrants' or second (or third) time migrants** emerged.
  - For instance, Indian indentured labourers in Suriname who eventually settled in the Netherlands or those who were expelled from East Africa and ended up settling in the UK and Canada.



**Fig. 2.1. Geographical distribution of Indian Diaspora**

- According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), there are around 32.2 million Overseas Indians, including 13.6 million Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and 18.6 million Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).
- As per World Migration Report, 2022, India has the **largest emigrant population** of around **18 million** people living abroad, making it the **top origin country globally**.



### 3. What is the significance of diaspora, both for India and for destination countries?

Significance of the Indian diaspora extends both to India and their destination countries across socio-cultural, political and economic dimensions.

➤ **Socio-cultural**

- **Preserving and enriching traditions:** Indian diaspora carries a multitude of traditions – languages, regional folk dances, classical music forms like Carnatic and Hindustani, and diverse cuisines.
  - » Communities actively preserve these through language schools, cultural events, religious practices, and artistic expressions.
- **Cross-cultural exchange:** Diaspora communities organize festivals like Diwali, introducing host communities to Indian culture and fostering understanding and appreciation of cultural pluralism, cosmopolitanism, etc.
  - » Diasporas also incorporate elements of their host cultures, leading to rich **cultural fusions** like **Indo-Caribbean cuisine**.

➤ **Economic significance**

- **Remittances:** India is ranked as top recipient of global remittances by World Bank. This contributes

significantly to the economic well-being of millions of Indian families, contributing to poverty reduction and development.

- » **Remittances are countercyclical in nature and tend to increase during economic downturns** or periods of recession. This occurs because migrants often feel a stronger sense of obligation to support their families back home during difficult times.
- » Remittances also **help improve sovereign ratings** and its ability to repay debt due to their large size relative to other sources of foreign exchange, and indirect contribution to public finances.

- **Trade and commerce:** Indian diaspora help facilitate trade between India and their host countries, by opening up new markets and opportunities. Diaspora populations consume Indian products and introduce such products to their host countries.

▶ **Investment and entrepreneurship:** Skilled members of Indian Diasporas may invest in businesses or transfer their knowledge and expertise back to India, supporting innovation, technological advancement, and entrepreneurship within the country.

▶ **Political significance**

▶ **Bridging the gap:** Indian diaspora acts as an **informal ambassador** to facilitate communication, build trust, and resolve issues arising between India and their host countries.

▶ **Advocacy and influence:** Indian diaspora actively lobby their local governments and international organizations on issues important to India. This ranges from advocating for trade agreements to raising awareness about human rights concerns.

▶ **Socio-political change:** The Indian diaspora can advocate for marginalized communities within India by raising awareness about human rights violations, supporting social justice movements, and lobbying for policy changes promoting equality and inclusion.

» **For e.g.,** Ghadar movement, spearheaded by Indian Diaspora in North America during colonial times.

**Box 3.1. Role of Diaspora in protection and promotion of Indian culture**

▶ **Spread of Native Language:** According to world language database **Ethnologue, Hindi was the 3rd most spoken language in the world in 2019.**

▶ **Fiji** recognized **Hindi as an official language.**

▶ **Traditions and festivals:** Ramlila is organized in Southeastern countries like Indonesia.

▶ **Cultural exchange:** Spread of Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian cuisines, cultural events, etc.

▶ **Literary writings and creative works:** Socio-cultural experiences of the Indian diaspora have been voiced by writers like **Salman Rushdie, Raja Rao, Amitav Ghosh,** among others.

▶ **Female writers** of Indian diaspora like **Anita Desai, Kamla Markandaya, Bharti Mukherjee,** etc., have also delineated their striving for preserving culture and identity in their host countries.

▶ **Influence and awareness:** Blogging, storytelling, social-media engagement, etc., promote understanding of Indian culture, people, and society.

**Box 3.2. Remittances Flow in India**

▶ India is the **largest recipient of the remittance** across the globe.

▶ India received an estimated \$125 billion in remittances in 2023 (**World Bank**).

▶ **Share of remittances** in the economy is around **3.4% of the GDP.**

▶ **Source Countries:** Remittances from the **US, UK, and Singapore** (High-skilled migrants) collectively account for **36 % of total remittances.**

▶ **UAE is the second-largest source of remittances to India after the US,** accounting for 18% of the total.

**Box 3.3. Significance of Indian Diaspora for their Host Countries**

▶ **Compliments local labor force:** Indians contribute significantly to the skilled/ semi-skilled workforce in many countries. This adds talent and innovation to host countries.

▶ **Businesses and entrepreneurship:** Indians are known for their entrepreneurial spirit, starting businesses and creating jobs in their host countries. This contributes to economic growth and diversification.

▶ In OECD countries for example, entrepreneurship is higher among immigrants than among native-born.

## 4. What are the challenges due to growth of the diaspora?

Due to growth of diaspora, several issues and challenges emerge at individual, familial, societal and national levels. Further, these challenges also vary depending upon factors such as the host country, cultural differences, and individual circumstances, among others.

### ➤ At individual and family level

- **Family disruption** due to migration of the breadwinner or primary caregiver can be particularly acute.
- **Separation of parents and children** may give rise to **psychosocial challenges** and increase the vulnerability of those left behind in countries of origin.
- **Loss of a sense of identity and belonging** for some individuals. Issues may also arise within families, for instance when children feel stronger attachment to a country different from that of their parents.

### ➤ At societal and national level

- **Brain drain:** Skilled professionals or talent leaving the country can hamper development and economic growth, particularly in sectors demanding specific skills.
- **Remittance dependence:** Overreliance on remittances from the diaspora can create economic instability if those flows fluctuate or decline.
- **Erosion of cultural heritage:** Loss of connection to traditions and language skills by those living abroad can weaken the cultural fabric of the homeland.
- **Political influence and interference:** Diasporas may exert pressure on the government of their country of origin through lobbying, financial support to political parties and shaping public opinion over social media platforms. This can potentially cause internal political tensions or fuel conflicts.
- **Loss of tax revenue:** If a significant portion of the population resides abroad, the government may face challenges in generating tax revenue for public services and infrastructure development.

- **Costs of transfer of remittances and lack of financial inclusion:** Because of money laundering and financing terrorism concerns, customer due diligence procedures tend to be cumbersome for all remittance transfers.

- » High costs related to customer due diligence may end up **turning customers away from formal financial institutions**, thereby diminishing government oversight of financial transactions and potentially **driving these transactions through unregulated channels**.

### ➤ For destination country

- **Social integration and cohesion:** Large inflows of immigrants can strain social services and resources, potentially leading to tensions with the native population.
- **Cultural clashes and prejudice:** Differences in customs and traditions between the diaspora community and the host society can lead to misunderstandings and discrimination.
- **Security concerns:** Integration challenges and marginalization of diaspora communities can create conditions for extremism and social unrest.
- **Economic competition:** Skilled or low-skilled workers from the diaspora may be perceived as competition for jobs by the native population, creating friction in the labor market.
- **Political pressure and activism:** Diasporas may lobby for policies in their host country that benefit their country of origin, potentially conflicting with the interests of the host nation.



#### 4.1. What are the region-specific challenges faced by the Indian Diaspora?

Indian diaspora encounters a myriad of challenges that shape their experiences and identities abroad. Some major region-specific challenges faced by the Indian diaspora are:

##### ▶ West Asia

- ▶ **Vulnerability to regional conflicts:** Volatile political landscape in West Asia exposes Indian expatriates to the risk of violence and conflict.
  - » For e.g., Yemen Civil War, ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine, etc.
  - » These situations can necessitate **complex and costly evacuation operations** by Indian government.
- ▶ **Labor market uncertainties:** Job losses due to factors like "**Saudisation**" policies in Saudi Arabia can force sudden and unexpected returns to India, potentially leading to unemployment and economic hardship, particularly among low-skilled or semi-skilled workforce.
- ▶ **Exploitation and unfair labor practices:** Unscrupulous employers may take advantage of migrant workers' limited legal knowledge and language skills, subjecting them to wage theft, poor working conditions, or even physical abuse.
- ▶ **Discrimination and prejudice:** Indian communities in West Asia face discrimination based on their ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status. This can lead to social exclusion, psychological stress, and difficulties in accessing essential services.
- ▶ **Source of extremism and terrorism:** Presence of terrorist organizations like Islamic State creates a threat for Indian diaspora residing in the region.

» **Radicalization and recruitment of Indian youth for terror activities** by these organizations is another national security and social concern.

##### ▶ Europe, North America and Australia

- ▶ **Boost to secessionist movements:** Pro-Khalistan protests in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia results in geo-political tensions and threatens India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- ▶ **Discrimination and Racism:** Members of the Indian diaspora may face discrimination and racial violence based on their ethnicity, skin color, or cultural background.
- ▶ **Educational and Professional Recognition:** Qualifications and professional experiences gained in India may not always be immediately recognized or valued.
- ▶ **Workplace Challenges:** Indian professionals may encounter challenges in the workplace, such as glass ceilings, biases, and stereotyping. Achieving career advancement and equal opportunities can be hindered by these factors..
- ▶ **Legal and Immigration Issues:** Uncertainties in immigration policies, residency status, etc., can cause stress for these factors.
  - » For e.g., Uncertainties surrounding H1B Visas during the tenure of the US President Donald Trump.

#### Box 4.1. Various Evacuation Operations by Indian Government

- ▶ **Operation Kaveri (2023):** To evacuate Indians from Sudan.
- ▶ **Operation Ganga (2022):** To rescue Indian students from Ukraine in the middle of a war with Russia.
- ▶ **Operation Devi Shakti (2021):** To evacuate people from war-torn Afghanistan.
- ▶ **Vande Bharat Mission (2020):** To bring back Indians stranded in foreign countries during COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ **Operation Sankat Mochan (2016):** To evacuate Indians from South Sudan.
- ▶ **Operation Raahat (2015):** To evacuate Indians from Yemen.



## 5. What are the measures taken by Indian Government to address challenges faced by diaspora and strengthen ties with them?

Government of India has undertaken several measures to address various challenges faced by the Indian diaspora and establish meaningful socio-cultural and economic ties with them. These include the following-

**Table 5.1. Measures taken by Indian Government for Diaspora Population**

<p><b>Institutional measures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Merger of Ministry of Overseas India Affairs with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in 2016:</b> It was aimed to bring better synergy for realizing the objectives of bringing Indian diaspora closer to India.</li> <li>➤ <b>Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra:</b> Inaugurated in 2016 in New Delhi, Kendra is expected to develop into a hub of activities for sustainable, symbiotic and mutually rewarding economic, social and cultural engagement between India and its Diaspora.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Established on the recommendations of a <b>high-level committee (2002)</b> on Indian Diaspora headed by <b>L M Singhvi</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OS):</b> Set up by the Government of India in 2008, as a not-for-profit Trust to facilitate Overseas Indian philanthropy into social and development projects in India.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement initiatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Overseas Citizenship of India scheme:</b> To register specified PIOs as Overseas Citizen of India.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It was introduced through <b>Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2005</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Pravasi Bharatiya Divas:</b> Union government's flagship event for Indian diaspora. It is <b>hosted every two years on January 09</b> to mark the contributions of the Indian community abroad in the development of India.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas</b> events are also organized to reach out to members unable to participate in annual PBD in India.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Education and Research:</b> Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN), Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) Summit, Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS), Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme, Study India Programme, etc.</li> <li>➤ <b>Diaspora Welfare programmes:</b> National Pension scheme for NRIs, scholarship program for diaspora children, Indian community welfare fund, etc.</li> <li>➤ <b>Socio-cultural awareness and engagement:</b> Know India Programme, Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana, Bharat ko Janiye Online quiz, etc.</li> <li>➤ <b>Rewards and recognition:</b> Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award conferred by the President of India as part of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention on NRIs, PIOs or an organization/institution established and run by them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital Outreach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>e-Migrate system:</b> Unique computerized system to regulate Emigration Check Process required for overseas employment of less educated blue-collar workers.</li> <li>➤ <b>Students Registration Portal:</b> Provides a database of students to contact the students in the event of an emergency.</li> <li>➤ <b>Online Services for overseas voters:</b> To increase political engagement of NRIs, the Election Commission of India enabled online enrolment of overseas/ NRI electors.</li> <li>➤ <b>Pravasi Rishta Portal:</b> Dynamic portal to establish an effective three-way communication between the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Missions, and the Diaspora.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Economic measures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Liberalization of FDI norms:</b> Investor friendly FDI policy under which most sectors except certain strategically important sectors are open for 100% FDI under the automatic route.</li> <li>➤ <b>Entrepreneurial engagement:</b> India-France Business Summit (2023), US-India Business Council, B2o India 2023, etc.</li> <li>➤ <b>Financial measures:</b> Liberalized Remittances scheme, Voluntary Retention Route to motivate long-term investment by FPIs in Indian debt market, investment by NRIs in G-Secs under RBI Retail Direct, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bilateral and multilateral arrangements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements (MMPAs):</b> India has signed MMPAs with several countries to ensure welfare and safety of Indian diaspora. It includes MMPAs with France, Italy, etc., EU-India Common Agenda for Migration and Mobility (CAMM), among others.</li> <li>➤ <b>Labour Manpower Agreements (LMA):</b> India has signed LMAs with six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, to facilitate the entry and presence of Indian manpower in these economies.</li> </ul>

### 5.1. What are the International Instruments for Protection of Diaspora?

There are several international instruments and mechanisms aimed at protecting the rights and promoting the well-being of diaspora communities around the world. Some of the key ones include:

- **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018):** Designed to support international cooperation on governance of international migration and provide space and flexibility to states to implement policies based on their own migration realities and capabilities.
    - ▷ It is **legally non-binding** in nature.
  - **New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016):** Commits to protect human rights of all refugees and migrants regardless of status, strengthen global governance of migration, among others.
  - **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990):** It seeks to prevent and eliminate exploitation of all migrant workers and their family members throughout the entire process of migration.
  - **International Organization for Migration (IOM):** It is a part of the UN System as the leading inter-governmental organization promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all.
  - **Other instruments: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), etc.**
- Note: India has not ratified** the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. However, **India is a signatory to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018).**



## 6. How can meaningful connections with the Indian diaspora be created and nurtured?

Creating and nurturing meaningful connections with the Indian diaspora involves a multi-faceted approach that encompasses cultural, social, economic, and governance aspects.

### ➤ Statutory and policy measures

- **Policy for diaspora:** MEA should draft a clear policy document on the diaspora which would serve as a guiding principle for engagement with the community.
- **Emigration Management Bill:** Parliament should enact Emigration Management Bill to establish an emigration framework, liberalize clearances, and strengthen welfare for overseas migrants.
- **Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian Bill, 2019:** Government should enact the law for the benefit of NRI women in the backdrop of increasing cases of women being deserted in NRI marriages.
- **Database on Indian diaspora:** Indian Embassies should encourage the diaspora to register themselves, which would assist in informed decision making and ensure effective implementation of welfare schemes.

### ➤ Institutional measures

- **Inter-ministerial Coordination mechanism:** Involve all relevant national ministries and subnational authorities to identify and ensure alignment of migration-related policy priorities.
- **Grievance redressal:** Unified grievance redress mechanism through Centralised Public Grievance Redressal and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) for efficient and effective resolution of grievances.
- **One Stop Centers:** Establish overseas centers to help distressed NRI women and overseas Indian.
- **Leverage Diaspora Finance:** Incentivize diaspora finances through instruments like **Diaspora Bond** to improve access to international capital market and support balance of payments.

» Diaspora bond is a **debt instrument** issued by a country, a sub-sovereign entity or a private corporation **to raise financing** from its overseas diaspora.

### ➤ Knowledge, expertise and skills

- **Skilling of potential migrant workers:** Improve the quality of domestic skilling and standardise curricula across the country.
- **Knowledge Networks and Skill-Sharing Platforms:** Create robust online platforms and networks that connect diaspora professionals with businesses and organizations in India. This will help convert the 'brain-drain' into 'brain-gain' through knowledge and skills sharing.
- **Financial inclusion:** Accessible and gender-responsive financial education of migrants and their families to foster informed choices about the use of remittances and remittances-linked services.

### ➤ Safety and security

- **Portability of entitlements and benefits:** Promote and use bilateral and/or multilateral agreements to provide social security coverage and benefits, as well as portability of social security entitlements, to migrant workers.
- **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs):** Use of bilateral/ multilateral MLATs can help improve victim support system, prevent frauds, combat organized crime, etc., in a transnational scenario.

### Box 6.1. Success Stories on Diaspora Engagement

- An Overseas Indian in Malaysia sources **equipment from India's innovative manufacturers** to derive better yields on sugarcane crushing as against importing low-cost equipment from China.
- A working Professional in the USA creates **long-term Knowledge Circle footprint** based on **transfer of knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights** in India.
- A working executive in an Overseas IT firm assists an Indian entrepreneur **to distribute mobile gaming apps in global market.**
- An Overseas Indian develops a new **concept of designer ethnic furnishings** from India for global markets by **developing a team of committed artisans and manufacturers in India**, while **simultaneously doing seed marketing abroad.**

**Box 6.2. In Conversation! Role of Indian Diaspora in making India Self Reliant**



**Vinay**

Vini, have you ever thought about how we can leverage the immense potential of the Indian diaspora to make India truly self-reliant.

Yes, Indians are counted amongst the most affluent communities in some regions of the world. This source of capital can be tapped by encouraging them to invest in India. They could bring in expertise, capital, and networks to drive innovation and growth.

And let's not forget about knowledge transfer and skill development. Diaspora members could mentor and train local talent, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and excellence in India. This is now being termed as Brain Gain!

I agree. By fostering closer ties with the diaspora, we can also harness their influence in international forums and lobby for India's interests on the global stage. This could enhance our diplomatic clout and strategic partnerships.

Absolutely, Vini. It's all about tapping into the diverse talents, resources, and networks of the Indian diaspora to drive sustainable development and prosperity in India.



**Vini**

**Conclusion**

The journey of the Indian diaspora is an ongoing saga, continually unfolding with new chapters. The diaspora's capacity for innovation, leadership, and cross-cultural collaboration positions it as a catalyst for positive change in an increasingly interconnected world.



## TOPIC AT A GLANCE

### India Abroad: Legacy of Indian Diaspora

- ⊖ Diaspora refers to person(s) belonging to a particular country with a common origin or culture, but residing outside their homeland for various reasons.
- ⊖ India has the **largest emigrant population of around 32 million** people living abroad, making it the **top origin country globally**.



#### Factors responsible growth of Diaspora

- ⊖ **Push Factors:** Economic hardships, Social discrimination, Conflict and persecution, Environmental factors etc.
- ⊖ **Pull Factors:** Economic opportunities, Political freedom and Religious tolerance, social amenities and services, family reunification, etc.
- ⊖ **Other Factors:** Trade and globalization, technological advancements, cultural ties, etc.



#### Significance of Indian Diaspora

- ⊖ **Socio-cultural:** Preserving and enriching traditions, Providing cross-cultural linkages etc.
- ⊖ **Economic:** Remittances, Facilitation of trade and commerce, boost to investment etc.
- ⊖ **Political:** Informal ambassador to facilitate communication, advocacy and influence for policies significant to India.
- ⊖ **Significance for host countries:** Compliments local labour force, boost to entrepreneurship and businesses, etc.



#### Government Measures to strengthen ties with Indian Diaspora

- ⊖ **Institutional:** Merger of Ministry of Overseas India Affairs & Ministry of External Affairs, Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, etc.
- ⊖ **Engagement initiatives:** Overseas Citizenship of India scheme, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, etc.
- ⊖ **Digital Outreach:** e-Migrate system, Students Registration Portal, Pravasi Rishta Portal, etc.
- ⊖ **Economic measures:** Liberalization of FDI norms, Entrepreneurial engagement such as US-India Business Council, etc.
- ⊖ **Bilateral and multilateral arrangements:** Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements, Labour Manpower Agreements.



#### Historical Context for Growth of Indian Diaspora

- ⊖ **First wave:** Migration of traders from Indian coastal communities in pre-colonial times.
- ⊖ **Second wave:** 'Forced' migration of indentured labour during colonial times.
- ⊖ **Third wave:** Migrations after World War –II, formation of Gulf Diaspora during oil-industry boom in 1970s, and skilled and professional migration.
- ⊖ **Fourth wave:** 'Twice migrants' or second (or third) time migrants within the post-war period.



#### Challenges due to Growth of Indian Diaspora

- ⊖ **At individual and family level:** Family disruptions, psychological challenges, loss of sense of identity and belonging, etc.
- ⊖ **At societal and national level:** Brain drain, economic instability, erosion of cultural heritage, loss of tax revenue, etc.
- ⊖ **For destination country:** Prejudices and cultural clashes with native communities, marginalization of diaspora communities, etc.
- ⊖ **Region specific challenges**
  - **West Asia:** Regional conflicts, exploitation and unfair labor market practices, source of extremism and terrorism, etc.
  - **Europe, North America and Australia:** Boost to secessionist movements in India, discrimination and racism, etc.



#### Way Forward

- ⊖ **Statutory and policy measures:** Clear policy document on the diaspora, Enacting Emigration Management Bill, etc.
- ⊖ **Institutional measures:** Inter-ministerial Coordination mechanism, One Stop Centres to help distressed NRI women, etc.
- ⊖ **Knowledge, expertise and skills:** Skilling of migrant workers, Robust online platforms and networks to convert 'brain-drain' into 'brain-gain', etc.
- ⊖ **Safety and security:** Bilateral and multilateral agreements to provide social security coverage Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties etc.

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