



ROLE OF INDIAN DIASPORA IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY WITH SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT Diaspora can play an important role in the economic development of countries. It can promote trade and foreign investments (FDI), spur entrepreneurship, create businesses and transfer new knowledge and skills. The diaspora is not seen as a brain drain entities, but as potential opportunity to use knowledge, experiences, education skills, entrepreneurship and development of management skills. In the present context the Indian diaspora constitutes in the economic, social and cultural force in the world today. Due to diaspora, with the objective to promote the private sector, bilateral trade target has been set to increase to \$ 18 billion by 2018 for the growth and development. India and South Africa relations are widely appreciated and recognized in industry, enterprise, education, expertise and economic development.

KEYWORDS : Indian Diaspora and South Africa, bilateral relations, Historical linkages with India

Introduction

In an academic discourse, the concept has been derived about diasporas. Though the thought has gained popularity in the 1980s, but the genesis of the diaspora is very old. Terminologically, the word 'Diaspora' is derived from the Greek word- 'peiro' which means to sow seeds, and the preposition 'dia' means 'over'. At the beginning of the 1950s and 1960s, the scholar used it with the reference to the African Diaspora. However, it has come to be used more widely in the last two decades.² Genesis of the diaspora is very old, but in the present scenario, it is prevalent today in all the counties. Countries recognize their diaspora as an important political lobby for promoting their countries' interests. It is a bridgehead for economic marketing of the home countries' goods, a means for acquiring transferable skills like information technology and above all it is a rich resource for remittances and profitable incomes.³ Many countries have established departmental setup and service unit to meet the needs of their diasporas demands and represent their concerns to the other governmental departments.⁴ The effect of the diaspora's engagement is felt strongly in the many areas like trade, investments, skills and knowledge transfers.

Importance of Indian Diaspora in South African Politics

India has strong relations with South Africa that relationship can be seen from ancient time when many Indian's like Dr. Yusuf Mohammad Dadoo, Ayesha Dawood, Amina Desai, Ahmed Kathrada and Fatima Meer etc. supported Africans against apartheid. Indian immigrant indentured laborers had faced lot of sufferings and hardships, in the beginning of the life in South Africa. They were treated as slaves. They barred from all basic amenities. There were many restrictions for access to better education of their children and they also prohibited from public places which were reserved for the Whites such as sea beaches, restaurants and special classes in railways. A series of legal restrictions and discriminatory laws were implemented against the Indians in South Africa,⁵ which are as follows:

- A "£" 3 Tax on ex-indentured Indians by the Natal colony- that is 'the Act 17 of 1895'
- The Transvaal Owners Act 3 of 1885, that prohibited Indians from purchasing lands.
- The Franchise Act of 1896, by which all Indians in Natal were disenfranchised.
- The Asiatic Law Amendment Bill (The Black Act) of 1907- it introduced the mandatory registrations and fingerprints of all Indians and required compulsory to carry it to all the time with them.

Apart from it, there were many other legal restrictions against Indians in South Africa. Indian diaspora fought with all the odds for the black people in the national movement against the discriminatory provisions. With the above discussion, it is clear that India had a long relationship with South Africa, which is becoming stronger day by day. China and India are more engaging in economic and trade relations with the African continent. Multilateral agreements held between both the countries. On July 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited Africa. For promoting economic relations bilateral trade target is set to increase to \$ 18 billion by 2018. According to the Department of the

Trade and Industry of South Africa, Indian companies have invested in the South African market up to \$ 6 billion till 2014 and it will be reached to \$ 7 billion in the coming years. In addition, South Africa is the third largest African investor country in Indian market with a Foreign Direct Investment stock of \$ 112 million according to 2014 statistics.⁶ In the same way, South Africa's investment in the Indian market is led by major corporate like SAB Miller, ACSA (Upgrading for Mumbai Airport) SANLAM and Old Mutual (insurance), ALTECH (set top boxes), Adcock Ingram (pharmaceuticals), and Rand Merchant Bank (Banking). Some analysts point out that major things are needed to push forward the private sector relations.⁷ It is pointed out that the major steps are needed for fast expansion of economic growth in the private sector which got support from diaspora community.

Currently, India is on the fifth place for consumption of energy in the world and expected to become third largest consumer by 2020.⁸ The largest Indian Diaspora in South Africa is an important point of contract at the large business level because these existing connections provide often business opportunity and purposes.⁹ In India-Africa Forum Summit (October 26-29, 2015), all 52 African countries have taken part. It focused on building up a knowledge bridge and bolstering diaspora as a people to people contact. At the summit, India has announced lines of credit worth the US \$ 10 billion in concessional cooperation in Africa.¹⁰

Importance of Diaspora in India

Now, the diaspora is not seen as a brain drain entities and the Indian diaspora constitutes in the economic, social and cultural force in the world today. The Indians who live overseas are achieving places in industry, enterprise and education. As well as their economic achievements are widely appreciated and recognized. These people contribute extremely to the growth of our nation and development in various areas.¹¹ With this addition the Pravasi Bharti Divas (PBD) Africa program was conducted successfully from 1-2 October 2010, at the International Convention Centre, Durban, South Africa. The theme was the role of the Diaspora in 'India-Africa: Building bridges'. Addressing the convention, Mr Pravin Jamanadas Gordhan, Minister of Finance highlighted the important role of the Africa and India in emerging world order for immense opportunities of business, especially, for small and medium enterprises between India and Africa.¹² In the session on 'Diaspora: Heritage in the Context of Globalization', it was focused on the cooperation in research and studies of the diaspora of both Indian and Africa across the world.

On Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat, International and cooperation Minister of South Africa, Maite Nkoana Mashabane spoke, "both countries will draw their long standing ties as well as increased cooperation in the new forums like BRICS for achieving all economic and social development goals set by them". "Working on maritime trade and work together to grow "Ocean economy"¹³ in the Indian Ocean, may a new area of cooperation between the two nations. When Modi's visited to South Africa, where he addressed the Indian diaspora in Johannesburg and spoke about India's success story, "today India's success story can be defined with just four letters "HOPE" - Where 'H' stands for 'harmony', 'O' stands for 'optimism', 'P' stands for

'potential' and 'E' stands for 'energy'.¹⁴ Through these initiatives the government of India trying to join itself with diaspora community and offering that India now has the immense potential of economic benefits. India is on the path of the fastest growing economy in the world and its investment and expertise are needed to become India as a superpower. He added that “India registered a healthy growth rate of 7.4 % in this year (2016), we are a bright spot on the global economy. This is a transformation that aims to uplift India's 1.25 billion people, its 500 cities, and its 5.94 lakhs villages.” South Africa is a sacred homeland. It is a land of Mandela and “Karmabhumi” of Mahatma Gandhi.¹⁵

Conclusion

The Indian Government has initiated so many welfare schemes for better facilities and benefiting Indian diaspora, such as Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY), National Pension Scheme for NRIs, Overseas Citizenship of India Scheme, Know India Programme, Scholarship Programme for Diaspora children and India Community Welfare Fund.¹⁶ In addition, the Government of India has promoted PIO (People of Indian Origin) card holders to convert it to OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) and announced to launch skill development 'Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojna' for the Indian youth who seek employment outside India.¹⁷ The card PIO (People of Indian Origin) launched in 2002 to benefit the foreign nations who could establish at least third generations relation with the Indian Origin. It was benefiting for travel, work and residing in India for a period of 15 years. In 2005 OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) card implemented. It provides more benefits on more flexible levels than PIO card holders and valid till holder's life time.¹⁸ From the above discussion, it is clear that diaspora emerged as a tool to strengthen the relations between the countries. Diaspora not only develop the single nation, but also it has influence on the other countries.

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