

INDIA'S STRATEGIC DIASPORA DIPLOMACY IN A GLOBALIZED ERA

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Abstract:

Hom sapiens who came from Africa to Asia thousands of years ago, or many civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Sumerian, Mayan, Indus Valley Civilization, Egypt, China and Greek Civilization, there are many examples where people can be seen migrating from one region to another and after the development of modern industrialization in the world. As new nations were created and all created their own borders, certain laws were created to move from one country to another and the person who sought or desired new opportunities. Moreover, such migration and living in another country is called diaspora. During the colonial period, India seems to have more or less diaspora in various countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Burma) Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago. Now after globalization, India's diaspora is mainly found in various countries like United States, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Malaysia, South Africa, Singapore.

Indian diaspora lives outside India, even though they do not live in India, they feel proud of India and Indianness from where they live and contribute to a positive image of India at the international level. India's economic development is also increasing in this new era of globalization. India is promoting development along various lines like education, health, infrastructure, science and technology, military strength. And in this development, diaspora diplomacy is a very important link through which India is creating an independent and positive image of itself globally. "Viksit Bharat ki Sankalpna Mein Pravasi Bhartiyaon Ka Yogdan" was the main theme of recent Pravasi Bharatiya Day, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar commented on the importance of this topic for India. Soft power diplomacy can be used by using the media to maintain India's international image as well as shaping policy making abroad through Transnational Advocacy Networks. diaspora act as foreign policy actors and bring about conflict resolution, peace building through track 2 diplomacy as well as multilateral diplomacy. Diaspora is important for Humanitarian, Academic, Educational and Social Media Diplomacy Remittances from diaspora or trade and investment as well as advocacy and lobbying from the host country for your country of origin, as well as cultural diplomacy, knowledge and technology transfer, as well as building bilateral relations between your country of origin and the host country. Such important social, political, economic and various kinds of changes and development are seen through diaspora. Diaspora is considered very important for people to people contact diplomacy. Whether it is the issue of Jammu and Kashmir or India's relationship with neighbouring countries, India's import and export relations with European countries, and the ongoing wars around the world, India's role and the support it receives from the diaspora, Diaspora is a very important component of Diplomacy in International Relations. It is necessary to study it in depth.

Key Words: India, Diaspora, Diplomacy, Soft Power, International Relations, foreign Policy.

INTRODUCTION:

Diaspora is a group of people who migrate from their ancestral homeland for any reason to another country, be it migrants, refugees, laborers, professionals, entrepreneurs or anyone else (Schapendonk & Leung, 2024). Basically, they remain connected to their identity, culture, language, race, beliefs even after leaving their home country and living in the host country. This word diaspora derived from Greek means "dispersion, or scattering" that is to get separated from one's land, one's people (Ballantyne et al., 2024). Basically, this term was first used for Jewish exiles when the Jewish people were expelled from Israel. In India, Before the establishment of colonies in British India, Indians migrated from India to other countries by sea as traders. Later, during the British rule, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Indians migrated to many countries like Thailand, Canada, East Africa, Jamaica, Suriname, Fiji, Burma, Malaya, Trinidad, Mauritius, etc. in large numbers. In 1833, when the British banned slavery (Yoon, 2023), there was a need for cheap laborers, and these laborers were forcibly migrated by the British from their various colonies to other countries.

When the Second World War ended in 1945, the number of refugees and immigrants increased significantly around the world (Banerjee & von Lingen, 2022). After the Second World War, new nations emerged and some

nations were partitioned, so the population of a single country was divided into two countries, which was also the reason for the growth of the diaspora. Later, till around 1960, since India was an unrestricted part of the Commonwealth, it was possible to live, travel, work and hold various positions in government offices in the UK, so some intellectual migration seems to have taken place even then, and many Indians migrated to Western countries during that period.

In the 1970s, the oil industry in the Gulf countries started growing at a large scale (Alkuwari, 2009), and various countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain started needing workers, so many Indians migrated to the Gulf countries during this period. And then in the 1990s, the IT service industry in America grew at a large scale and the concept of globalization started developing rapidly. Therefore, many Indians migrated to America to get economic opportunities and employment. Not only this, many people have migrated twice or thrice, for example, Indians working in Suriname later migrated to the Netherlands or Indians who were deported from East Africa migrated to the UK and Canada over time.

The Indian government does not have a clear definition of diaspora, but generally speaking, the Indian diaspora refers to overseas Indians whose descendants are from India or Indians who live temporarily or permanently in other countries. It generally includes Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who are Indian citizens, Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) who are citizens of other countries but whose descendants are Indians (Verma, 2013), but now PIO and OCI card holders have been merged into a single category in 2015.

Today in the current scenario Indian diaspora is the largest diaspora in the world with a population of around 18 million as per World Migration Report, 2022 and According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), there are around 32.2 million Overseas Indians. The ministry of external affairs given the list of countries and total overseas Indians on its official website, here is the extracted list of top prominent, highest Indian diaspora countries list, categorized by Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), and Total Overseas Indians:

Rank	Country	Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)	Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)	Total Overseas Indians
1	USA	2,077,158	3,331,904	5,409,062
2	UAE	3,554,274	14,574	3,568,848
3	Malaysia	163,127	2,751,000	2,914,127
4	Saudi Arabia	2,460,603	2,906	2,463,509
5	Canada	1,016,274	1,859,680	2,875,954

(Source: Ministry of External Affairs. Population of overseas Indians. Retrieved from <https://www.mea.gov.in/population-of-overseas-indians.htm>)

When an individual or group of people migrate from one country to another and live there temporarily or permanently, there are push and pull factors that cause this (Ramos, 2017). Push factors are when they are forced to leave their country, whether it is due to economic poverty, lack of employment opportunities, or social discrimination that can be based on religion, race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. Push factors also include conflict and persecution, in which many people flee to other countries due to war-like situations, terrorism, religious riots, political pressure. And recently, environmental factors have also been added to the push factor, which includes various things like floods, earthquakes, droughts. The second factor is the pull factor, in which people migrate from their own country to other countries in order to have a better life, various employment opportunities, people migrate to countries like America, UK, Canada, Australia to improve their living standards. Political and religious freedom can also be among the reasons for the pull factor. Also, important social services and facilities are also included in the pull factors, which include good education, healthcare facilities, open environment, and sometimes other family members also go abroad to live with the family. This is how the Diaspora is being created due to various reasons.

Importance of diplomacy in foreign Policy:

Diplomacy is the backbone of foreign policy, which makes any country strong and respected on the global stage (Chitadze, 2024). It successfully deals with international relations through conflict resolution, trade agreements, security alliances, and cultural exchange. Similarly, Soft power, economic growth, and strategic partnerships are key aspects of diplomacy that increase a country's global image. Examples such as India-China border talks, India-US trade deals, QUAD alliance, and Vaccine Maitri initiative show that the role of diplomacy is not limited to just politics but also extends to peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts (Sayamov, 2022). In today's interconnected world, global politics without diplomatic strategies can become unstable, so smart diplomacy is essential for the long-term national interests of any country.

Significance of Diaspora:

The social and cultural significance of diaspora is that they protect and promote various things like Indian languages, regional folk dances, and traditional music abroad. They are seen developing Indian society and culture abroad through various things like speaking different languages, cultural events, or religious practices. Festivals like Diwali show cosmopolitanism and cultural pluralism. In countries like Fiji, Hindi has been accepted as the official language, and traditional events and festivals like Ramlila are celebrated in South-eastern countries. Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian food, and cultural events are organized all over the world (Deka, 2024), not only this, but through their writings, a new identity of India is created worldwide through the diaspora, including Raja Rao,

Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, and many other examples. Through blogging, social media engagement, storytelling, Indians living abroad promote Indian culture, folk traditions, dance, art, singing and Indian society, due to which people to people diplomacy develops. In this way (John, 2024), India's identity is kept alive abroad, which boosts India's diplomacy.

According to the World Bank, India is one of the major countries receiving the highest remittances. This increases India's economic development; the economic importance of Diaspora is also equally important. The Indian diaspora is also very important in commerce and trade. Also, the Indian diaspora is playing a role in entrepreneurship and investment. Through this, India is seen to have benefited directly and indirectly. The political importance of Diaspora is very high, the diaspora acts as an informal ambassador to bridge the gap between the two countries (Slobodchikoff & Davis, 2024). The Indian diaspora also faces various challenges many times, the most important of which are loss of sense of identity and belonging, family description, parents and children separation, prejudice and cultural clashes, security concerns, activism and political pressure, economic competition, social integration in host country. Not only this, but at times their lives have also been threatened, so the Indian government has taken the initiative to launch various missions to save them, some of the major missions are given below:

Operation Kaveri (2023) in which Indian people were safely evacuated and rescued from Sudan. Operation Ganga (2022), when this successful mission was launched to rescue Indian students during the war in Russia and Ukraine. Operation Devi Shakti (2021), this mission was launched by the Government of India to rescue Indian people from war-torn Afghanistan. Vande Bharat Mission (2020), this mission was launched to bring back to India and protect Indians who were stranded in various countries around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. Operation Sankat Mochan (2016), South Sudan was a mission to rescue Indians and bring them safely to India. Operation Raahat (2015), To evacuate the Indians from Yemen. In this way, the Indian government has always been vigilant and has provided protection to Indians abroad wherever they need protection. This shows that Indians spread across the world are a very important element for India's foreign policy and diplomacy. To connect with Indian diaspora in the globalized world, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs has taken multiple innovative initiative some of them given below:



(Diaspora Engagement initiatives by Indian Ministry of External Affairs-MEA)

Hence by understanding the huge benefits gained through diaspora communities the government brought the concept of “Diaspora Diplomacy”. The purpose behind this was to use diaspora communities as a unified force across the world to achieve a country’s national interest.

Role of Indian Diaspora in Various Diplomacies:

In multicultural era the correlation of Diaspora diplomacy has become very significant. Various diplomacies are used to effectively utilize diaspora diplomacy in foreign policy (Adamson & Han, 2024). These diplomacies are used to encourage the contributions of the diaspora community, this involves economic, cultural, political, and strategic factors. It is used to strengthen the relation between the country and the diaspora communities. This diplomacy works to maximize the potential of the diaspora and promote the country (from where they originally come) image and interests on a global level. However, this diplomacy is of different types, like the public diplomacy helps in promoting cultural events, educational programs, and media platforms, values, their foreign policy principles in the host countries. As it is seen that Indian festivals, Yoga, Ayurveda are accepted worldwide. Similarly, the diaspora helps in generating the remittances, investments, and business partnerships which contribute to trade relations, market access, and invites foreign direct investment (FDI) to the country. This in terms contributes to the economic growth of the country. In the recent evident the Indian American diaspora has strengthened India-US trade relations that helped Indian businesses to establish themselves in the US market which also helped attracting FDI. In multipolar world the diaspora helps in strengthening the soft power that further helps in achieving economic benefits through entrepreneurship, business collaborations, bringing and attracting FDI to both countries. However, the business network of Indian diaspora in Silicon Valley (Basu & Virick, 2015), or middle east nations are evidence to such networks. One of the core elements of diaspora are

social integration and foreign policy advocacy. Here the diaspora helps in promoting harmony and plays an active role in policy formations. Just like USINPAC the lobbying group help in strengthening India-US relation. Moreover, in the case of cultural diplomacy Diaspora promotes its cultural identity, its arts, traditions, languages and practices in other countries which represents India's cultural identity. As it is seen that Bollywood, music and traditional, Indian cuisine reached to the global audience with the help of Indian diaspora (Thampi Preetha & Lazarus, 2024). Festivals like Diwali and Holi are now actively celebrated in the host countries. This helps in promoting India's cultural diplomacy. In Track II diplomacy the diaspora acts as a bridge for informal dialogues and confidence-building measures. Civil society, academics, and think tanks play vital roles in officially facilitating state-level negotiations, such cases were seen in India Pakistan relation. The diaspora communities play an active role in evacuating citizens of their country, giving humanitarian aid, and providing emergency assistance in crisis diplomacy. As during Russia-Ukraine war, the India's diaspora helped to safely evacuate its students from Ukraine during Operation Ganga. In same manner, in digital diplomacy the countries by using social media platform, raises awareness, several #hashtag campaigns to highlight issue and raise voices to gain international support. While in science diplomacy the country benefits its mother land with the expertise in technologies and join collaborative projects like Silicon Valley, such as ISRO's collaborations and IT innovations grow with its expertise. This is visible through India-America strategic partnership agreement (Leonova & Khatri, 2023). And in legal diplomacy, the diaspora strengthens international law and human rights issues, which improves the country's global position.

Diaspora the hope of Last Cord in Emergency to Communicate

When all the doors of formal diplomatic channels are closed, then the diaspora remains the only hope and acts as a last cord of communication, helping to maintain dialogue between the two countries and resolve conflicts. A recent example is the India-Canada dispute over Khalistani extremism, in which Canadian PM Justin Trudeau accused India of killing Hardeep Singh Nijjar (Thomas & Agney, 2024). Hence the diplomatic talks were frozen, but the Indian diaspora remained the last hope in Canada. They maintained informal communication so that trade, student exchange, and community relations are not fully affected. This shows that the diaspora acts as a bridge, keeping engagement alive even during geopolitical tensions.

Significance and scope of study:

Based on various reports, India's diaspora is around 30 to 35 million. India is one of the countries with the largest diaspora in the world. Also, the Indian diaspora is very influential (Sahoo & Shome, 2022). The Indian government is economically, politically and culturally linked to the diaspora. It helps India to increase its bilateral relations with the host countries. Not only that, but India also gets economic development, global influence and diplomatic benefits. This related research analyses the relationship of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, NRIs, Overseas Citizens of India and the Government of India. Also, India is on the way to become a superpower and this diaspora community is considered very important in increasing India's soft power worldwide (Pradhan & Mohapatra, 2020). This research reviews how India's foreign policy and diplomacy can be used in India's interest through the diaspora, and the various challenges faced by the diaspora as well as the opportunities created through them to enhance India's image on the international platform.

Objectives of research:

- 1) To study the role of the Indian diaspora in India's foreign policy and diplomatic engagements.
- 2) To discuss in detail the policies and institutional mechanisms that India is using to enhance relations between India and the diaspora and the impact this will have on diplomacy.
- 3) To understand the economic contributions of the Indian diaspora i.e., remittances, trade relations and investments and to analyse them in comparison with diplomacy.
- 4) To examine the cultural and strategic influence of the diaspora in host countries to understand informal diplomatic possibilities.
- 5) To explore and evaluate the role of the diaspora in India's contemporary global image, crisis management, and public diplomacy.
- 6) To identify the prominent challenges and opportunities in India's diaspora diplomacy worldwide.

Research Questions:

- a. To examine how the Government of India works with the diaspora for economic, diplomatic, and cultural purposes.
 - b. What institutional frameworks and policies are used to shape India's diaspora diplomacy and how are they used?
 - c. How do remittances and investments from the diaspora contribute to India's economic development?
 - d. How does the powerful Indian diaspora influence bilateral and multilateral relations between India and host countries?
 - e. How does India create its own role and position in the world through diaspora diplomacy and soft power?
 - f. How does India use the diaspora positively in foreign policy? Also, what are the challenges facing the diaspora?
- To study this.

Hypothesis:

The India's diaspora diplomacy plays a crucial role in shaping India's bilateral and multilateral relations.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

When we think of diaspora, we think of Indians living in other countries. Various writings have been done on diaspora so far, many books have been written and research papers have also been published. Also, a large amount of literature is available on diplomacy in the context of international politics. But the important objective of studying this topic is to bring both diaspora and diplomacy together and discuss in detail how India's foreign policy and soft power can be utilized through them. An important gap while reviewing the literature is that not much writing has been done combining these two terms. We see India's diplomatic relations with other countries in an official way, but India is connected to other countries in informal way, that is, through diaspora, and a large amount of study is needed on this so that even if tensions arise between two nations in a war situation, the diaspora in those nations can indirectly play an important role in creating peace and harmony. Especially in the 21st century, where various conflicts and war-like situations have arisen around the world, track-2 diplomacy using diaspora can be used to successfully build trust. The Indian government should develop soft diplomacy in coordination with NRIs and OCIs.

Cohen describes that role of diaspora is very significantly active in home as well as host countries. He has also emphasized the importance of the diaspora in international relations, cultural diplomacy, and economic networks (Cohen, 2022). As the diaspora expanded from time to time and technological advancement made it easier for the diaspora communities to stay connected with their cultural values, traditions, family and with their ancestral land.

With the advancement in technology the diaspora from various parts of the world actively involves in social, political, strategies, economic and cultural activities. This helped in economic boost (Safran 1991). Furthermore, (Vertovec 1999) defines diaspora as the idea of "diaspora as a social form, diaspora as a type of consciousness, and diaspora as a mode of cultural production." Moreover, the history of 'Indian diaspora' is comprehensively explained in the book of (Lal B.V 2006) how the people were forcefully migrated to different countries like, Fiji, the Caribbean, Africa, Trivago, Suriname and Southeast Asia by the British and even after facing challenges like racial discrimination, identity crisis, political marginalization's these diaspora communities made continuous efforts in the host countries in maintaining transnational ties.

However, maintaining ties are not static but their evolving nature and involvement in socio, economic, political, cultural, traditional activities has been helpful in gaining tangible and intangible benefits in both host and home nations (Kapur 2010). one of the most prominent political thinkers of international relation "Diplomacy is the art of bringing the different elements of national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in the international situation that concern the national interest most directly." (Morgenthau, 1948). To further understand, (Murti aur R.S. Zaharna 2014) has wrote about the expansion of "Indian diaspora" in the digital age. He highlighted that social media strengthened public diplomacy.

Furthermore (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008) have given a three-layer model of public diplomacy, where they have highlighted how the state has used diaspora for national branding and foreign policy and transnational engagement. Media became a powerful tool for the diasporic communities to stay connected with their culture. However, the expansions of the diaspora have also changed from static nature to at present what we see is their involvement in humanitarian diplomacy too. In the words of (Jindal et al., 2023) the nature of diaspora has shifted from the ancient times. The diaspora communities in covid-19 pandemic helped in facilitating humanitarian aids, medical supplies, financial assistance, and digital engagement, which helped in strengthening India's diplomatic response to crisis management.

When we study realism in international politics, especially according to Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz (Williams, 2024), the interest of the nation is very important at the global level. Many times, it is said that India is indirectly seen protecting India's international interest, it is said that the India-U.S. Civil Nuclear Deal was successful due to Indian diaspora lobbying. Not only this, in 2022, the Indian government succeeded in evacuating Indian students with the help of diaspora through Operation Ganga. The Indian diaspora helped a lot in stopping the Khalistani ideology in the UK and Canada. In this way, the diaspora can be seen as a component of the theory of realism to achieve India's national interest.

According to the Libertarian theory of Immanuel Kant, John Locke or Robert Keohane, India's diaspora plays a very important role. Every year, more than 100 billion remittances come to India through the diaspora. India attracts investment through Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD).

The theory of Constructivism of Alexander Wendt and Nicholas Onuf also applies to the diaspora. This increases India's soft power worldwide. India's soft power is promoted through Bollywood, yoga, and Indian cuisine. Therefore, the United Nations started the International Day of Yoga (2015), (Lakshmi, 2020). Also, political positions in various countries around the world are also seen being led by the diaspora, especially Rishi Sunak (UK), Kamala Harris (US), Leo Varadkar (Ireland). Therefore, this theory of international relations needs to be taken forward positively in the matter of diaspora.

Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Szanton Blanc have discussed in detail how an individual determines his or her nationality in the theory of Transnationalism (Nowicka, 2024). How Indian-American lobby groups are seen supporting India in policy making in the United States in a positive way. Not only that, even if

they are citizens of other countries, India keeps the diaspora connected through various types of PIO and OCI Schemes. When a major disaster or crisis occurs in India, Indian-origin communities abroad come forward to help, that is, this feeling of transnationalism is seen in the diaspora.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

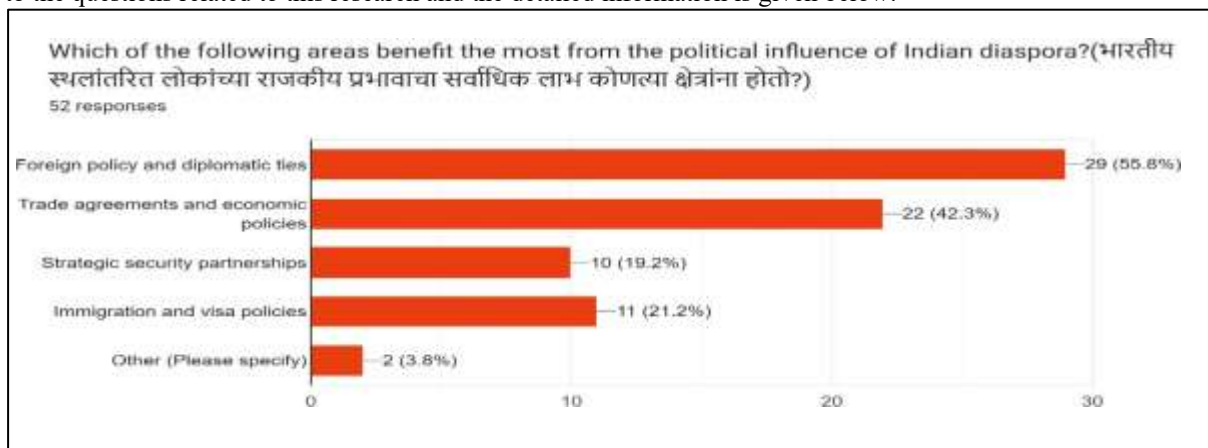
Mixed method has been used in this research. In order to shed deep light on this topic taken for research, both qualitative method and quantitative method have been used. Various reports, surveys, interviews have been used in primary data, while secondary data has been collected in various ways such as various articles, news, portals, books.

Primary data:

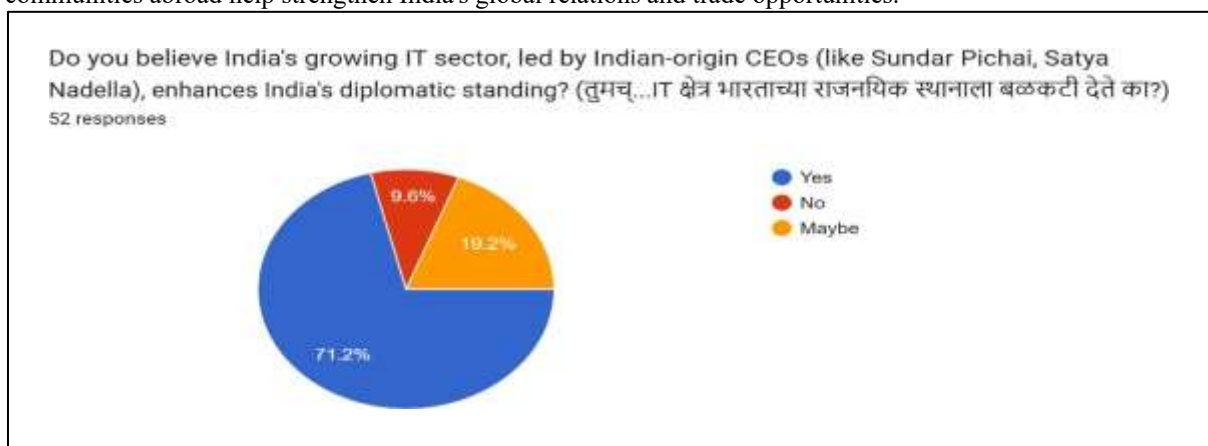
Primary data has been used in this research, especially in it, using the survey method, a small sample size i.e., 50 to 100 respondents, the opinions of the participants regarding Indian diaspora and diplomacy have been known through various structured questionnaires.

Analytics of primary data:

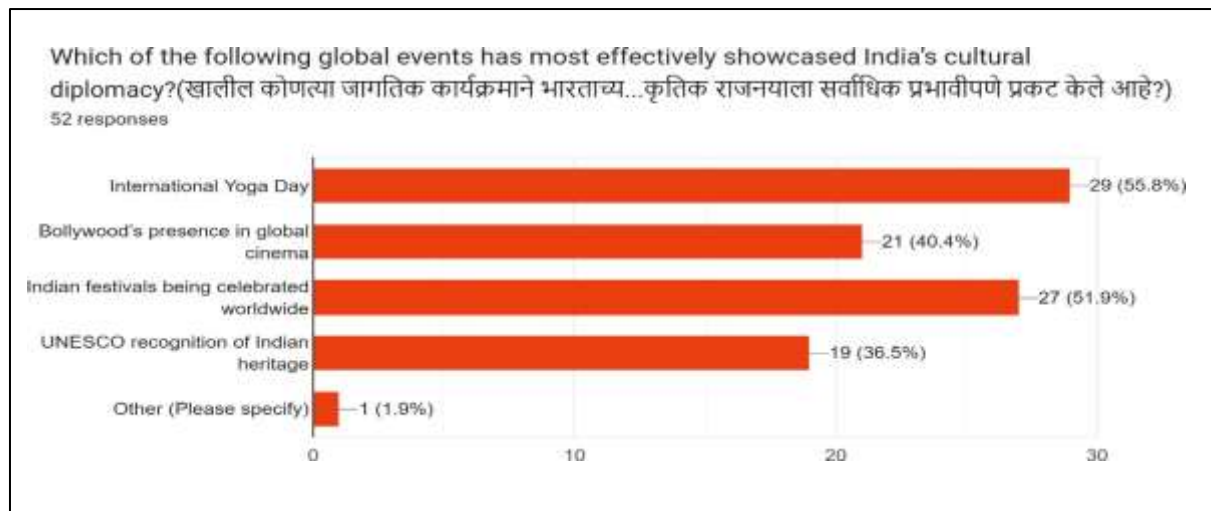
Primary data has been collected while studying this research topic. This data has been obtained through survey questionnaires. People aged between 18 and nearly above 50 years participated in the survey, both male and female. It seems that all the people who participated in this survey are highly educated, out of which about 25% of the participants have completed PhD studies and 56% of the participants have completed Master's degrees. While 15% of the participants have completed Bachelor's degrees. The participants in this survey include students as well as private and government employees. Various questions related to Indian diaspora diplomacy were asked in the survey and the respondents who participated in the survey have presented their opinions or answers related to the questions related to this research and the detailed information is given below:



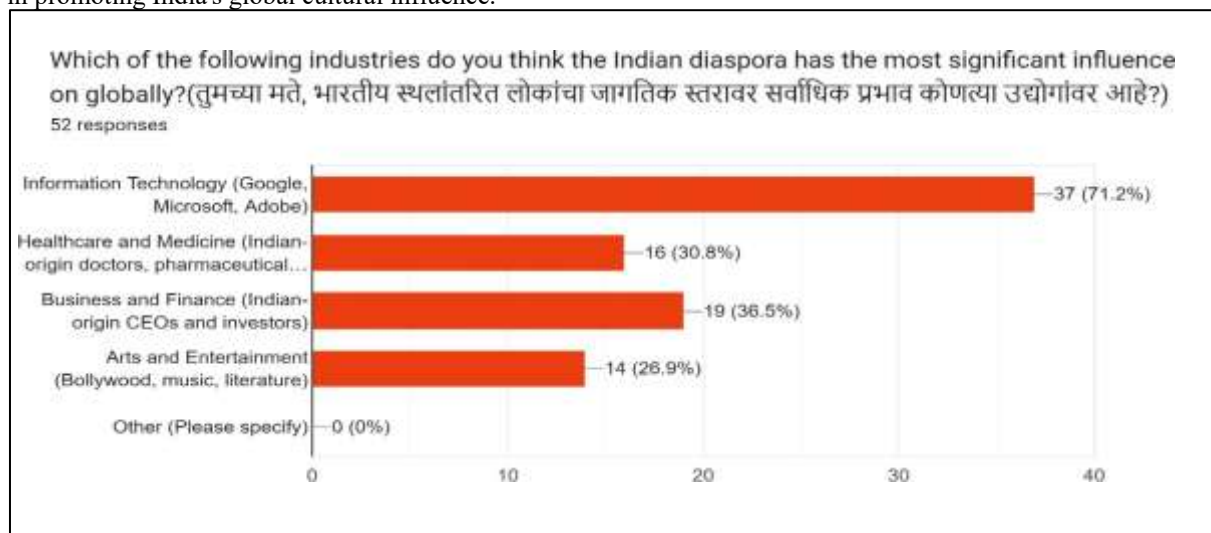
The survey shows that the Indian diaspora has the most political influence on foreign policy and diplomatic ties (55.8%), followed by trade agreements and economic policies (42.3%). This means that Indian-origin communities abroad help strengthen India's global relations and trade opportunities.



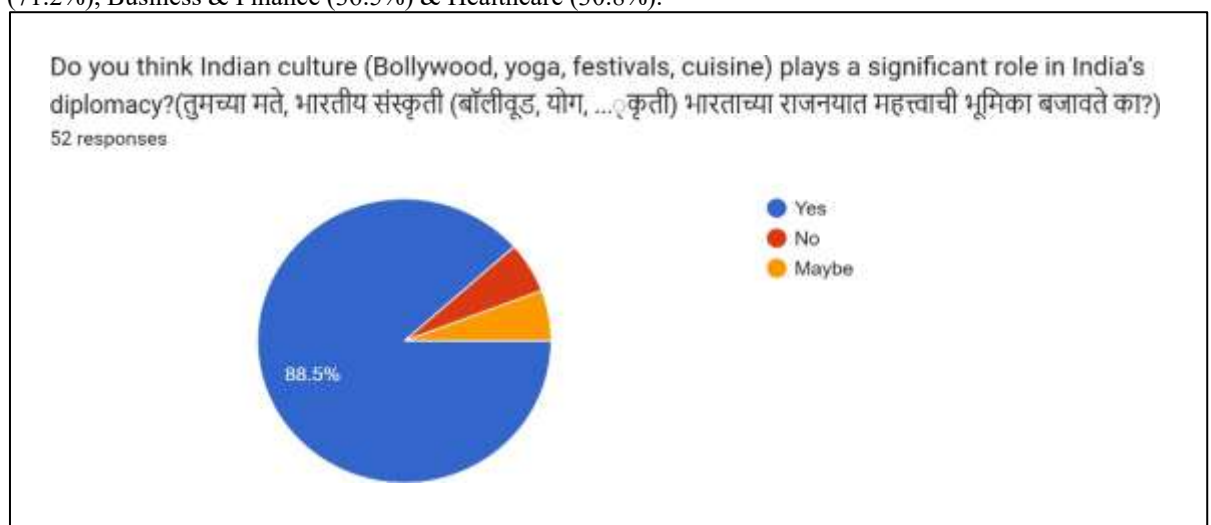
The majority (71.2%) believe that India's growing IT sector, led by Indian-origin CEOs, strengthens its diplomatic standing. The survey also shows 48.1% support dual citizenship for Indian-origin people, while 34.6% oppose it, and 17.3% remain uncertain.



This highlights International Yoga Day (55.8%) as the most effective event showcasing India's cultural diplomacy, followed by Indian festivals worldwide (51.9%). Bollywood and UNESCO recognition also play significant roles in promoting India's global cultural influence.



The survey shows that the Indian diaspora has the most significant global influence in Information Technology (71.2%), Business & Finance (36.5%) & Healthcare (30.8%).



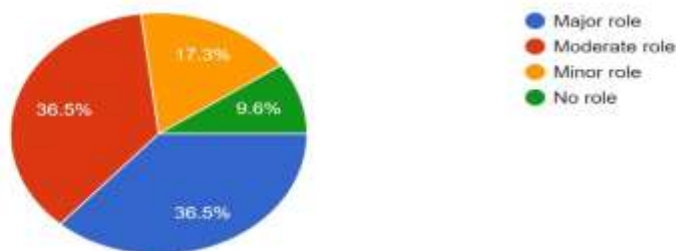
A vast majority (88.5%) believe that Indian culture, including Bollywood, yoga, festivals, and cuisine, plays a significant role in India's diplomacy.

How do you perceive the effectiveness of government initiatives like Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI), and Make in India... करण्याच्या दृष्टीने परिणामकारकता तुम्ही कशी पाहता?
52 responses



It shows that 50% find government initiatives like Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, OCI, and Make in India effective, while 36.5% remain neutral. A smaller section (13.5%) views them as not very effective.

What role do you think Indian-origin leaders in foreign countries (like Rishi Sunak, Kamala Harris) play in India's diplomacy?(तुमच्या मते, परदेशातील भार... यांसारखे) भारताच्या राजनयत कोणती भूमिका बजावतात?
52 responses



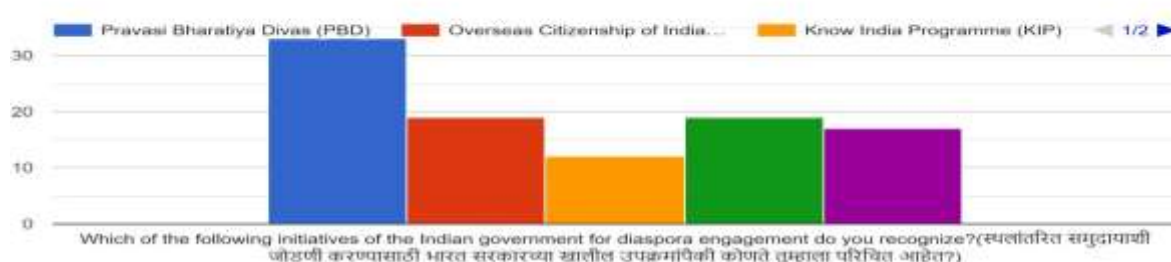
It indicates that 73% believe Indian-origin leaders abroad play a major or moderate role in India's diplomacy.

Should India create a dedicated "Global Indian Council" with diaspora representatives to advise on global affairs?(जागतिक घडामोडींवर सल्ला देण्यासाठी भार... सह स्वतंत्र "ग्लोबल इंडियन कौन्सिल" स्थापन करावी का?)
52 responses

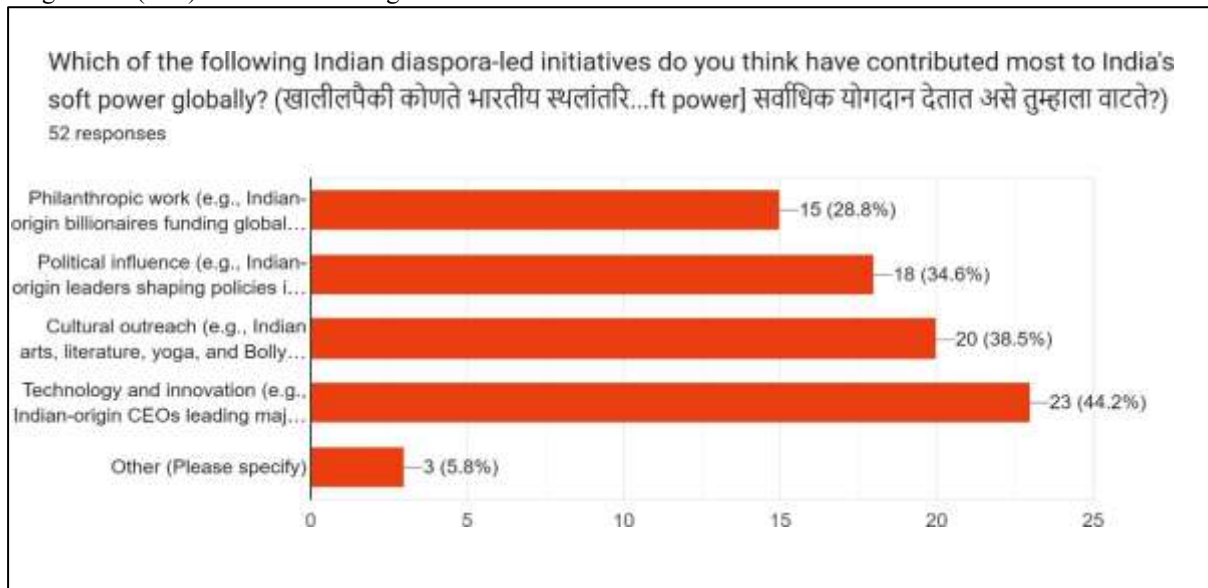


It shows a strong majority (78.8%) support creating a "Global Indian Council" to strengthen India's global network,

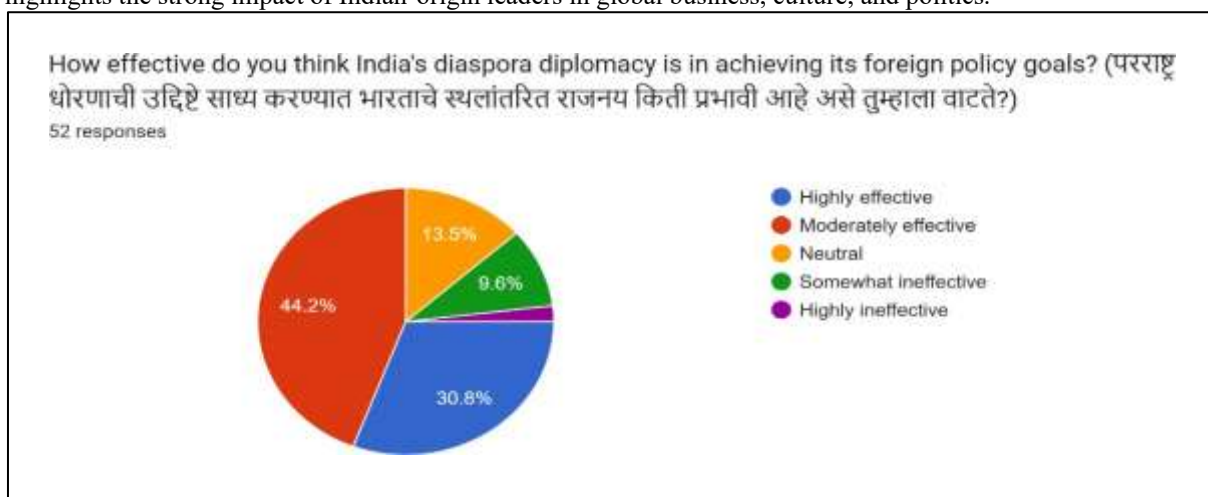
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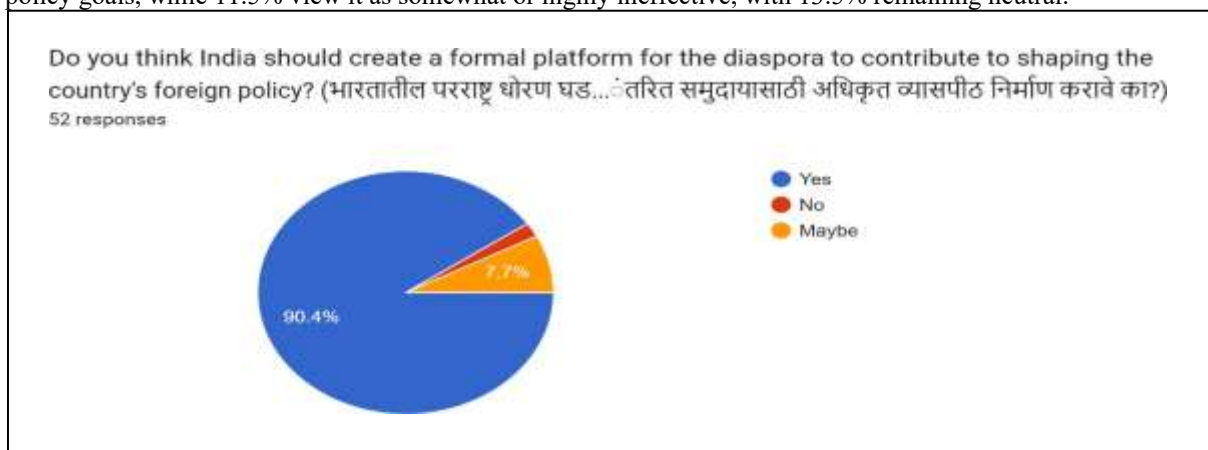
The survey shows that 63.5% recognize Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), making it the most known initiative. Awareness of OCI and SPDC stands at 36.5% each, while IDF-OI is recognized by 32.7%. The Know India Programme (KIP) has the least recognition at 23.1%.



The survey indicates that technology and innovation (44.2%) contribute the most to India's soft power, followed by cultural outreach (38.5%) and political influence (34.6%). Philanthropic work (28.8%) also plays a role. This highlights the strong impact of Indian-origin leaders in global business, culture, and politics.



The survey shows that 57.7% find India's diaspora diplomacy highly or moderately effective in achieving foreign policy goals, while 11.5% view it as somewhat or highly ineffective, with 13.5% remaining neutral.



An overwhelming 90.4% support creating a formal platform for the diaspora to contribute to India's foreign policy, while only 7.7% are unsure, and only one respondent opposes the idea.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

- Through this research, it becomes clear that the diaspora plays a very important role as a tool in India's foreign policy.
- The Indian diaspora is seen to have political influence on foreign policy and diplomatic ties as well as economic policies and trade agreements.
- Diaspora diplomacy is seen to increase through Ayurveda, yoga, Bollywood, Indian cuisine, festivals, spiritual and religious culture.
- Through various initiatives like Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, India increases the strength of the Indian diaspora worldwide, thus developing India's soft power and diplomacy.
- The IT industry around the world as well as people of Indian origin holding high political positions in various countries elevates the image of India and this can be used to increase a positive diplomacy.
- India needs to create a formal platform urgently for the diaspora to shape India's foreign policy.
- India's bilateral and multilateral relations can be shaped through the diaspora diplomacy

In today's multi-polar world, the importance of India's diaspora is not just limited to the remittance-sending community, but has become a strategic asset in shaping foreign policy, which is also playing an influential role in economic, political and cultural diplomacy. Just as China uses its diaspora for political and economic outreach, just as Israel uses its diaspora for strategic lobbying and security purposes, India too has a great opportunity to make full use of its soft power, cultural, economic, diplomatic and democratic potential through its diaspora. To achieve its vision 2047, India should coordinate between MEA, Commerce Ministry, Overseas Indian Affairs and State Governments to strategically engage its diaspora. Similarly, aggressively promote economic initiatives such as NRI Investment Zones, Tax Benefits and Diaspora Bonds and launch a Global Pravasi Portal to ensure real-time data & digital connectivity of the diaspora and bring government-diaspora relations into the main stream.

Apart from this, create India-focused investment funds and startup incubators for NRI and OCI investors to provide capital support to startups and ventures, as well as create special economic zones (SEZs) that provide tax incentives, easy business and FDI support. Additionally, to increase the strength of India's digital economy, India should expand UPI and RuPay in global markets through diaspora. Meanwhile, strategically utilize Indian-origin leaders and influencers, make bilateral agreements to secure diaspora rights, make diaspora-driven diplomacy more structured, globalize its culture and spiritual tourism, increase diaspora engagement by hosting national or international level diaspora events, diaspora-led media outreach. Apart from this, a global digital helpline should also be created for real-time coordination for crisis management, legal aid & consular support, emergency response, financial aid, and to deal with various diaspora issues. Make India a proactive, tech-driven country and focus on engaging both the countries, the home country and the host country, where there is great and active participation of the government and the private sector and both the host and the home country get the benefit; only then can India become a global leader.

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