

GS Paper 2

International Relations

Indian Diaspora

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13th July 2023---PM of India during his 2-day visit to France, in his address to Indian diaspora, described India as a “model of diversity” and also announced an agreement for the use of UPI in France (new market for Indian innovation in cashless instant payment)

Jan 8-10 2023---The 17th edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD), or the day for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) that is commemorated annually on January 9, was held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

This year's theme is “Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal”. Over 3,500 diaspora members from nearly 70 different countries have registered for the PBD Convention, according to its press release. The Special Guest of Honour is Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi and the Chief Guest is Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of Guyana.

Speaking at the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Indore, PM Modi said, **“India not only has the capability of becoming a knowledge center but also a skilled capital. Our youth has skills, values & honesty & determination toward work. Our skilled capital can become the world's growth engine.”**

He further added that the present India is looked at with hope and curiosity. **“Today India is being looked at with hope and curiosity. India’s voice is being heard on the global stage... India is also the host for this year's G20. We do not want to make it only a diplomatic event, but an event of people’s participation.”**

The Indian diaspora around the world now stands at 31.2 million, of which PIOs were 17 million and NRIs were 13 million, spread across 146 countries in the world.

According to a World Bank Report, India received approximately 87 billion dollars in remittances in 2021 with USA being the biggest source accounting for over 20% of these funds.

To mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated on 9th January every year.

- The rise of Indian diaspora was the result of **Indian indenture system** or a system of indentured servitude , under which more than 1.6 million Indians were transported as labour in European colonies. This system of British Indian indentureship continued till the 1920s.As a result there was development of a large Indian diaspora in the Caribbean, South Africa, East Africa, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Myanmar to Fiji.
- In India, diaspora is a wide category to include Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI), out of which PIO and OCI card holders were merged under one category as OCI in 2015.

NRI

- An Indian citizen who is ordinarily residing outside India and holds an Indian Passport.
- An Individual is considered an NRI who stays in India for less than a period of 182 days during the period of the preceding financial year.

PIO

PIO is an identification status given to whom or whose any of the ancestors was a permanent Indian resident/citizen and who is currently holding valid citizenship and passport of another country.

What is OCI?

- **Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)** is a form of permanent residency available to PIOs and their spouses which allows them to live and work in India indefinitely.
- OCI status is not citizenship.
- It not grant the right to vote in Indian elections or hold public office.
- The OCI Card is only valid with valid international passport.
- The OCI scheme was introduced by the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. 2005 in response to demands for dual citizenship by the Indian diaspora.
- OCI status is not available to anyone who has ever been a Pakistani or Bangladeshi citizen, or who is a child, grandchild, or great-grandchild of such a person.

PIO and OCI card holders were merged under OCI category in 2015.

Significance of Indian Diaspora for India

Ques/- The significant presence of India's diverse diaspora in various parts of the globe plays a crucial role in advancing its interests. Discuss with examples. (Answer in 150 words)

1)Economic Significance

•**Source of Remittances:** According to the World Bank Migration and Development Brief, 2022, “In 2022, for the first time a single country, India, is on track to receive more than USD 100 billion in yearly remittances.”

Remittances to India were enhanced by wage hikes and a strong labour market in the United States and other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, it adds.

As per the report, India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt are (in descending order) among the top five remittance recipient countries.

For example, the inward remittances to India increased from \$111.22 billion in 2022 to \$125 billion in 2023, accounting for 3.4% of its GDP, according to estimates released by the World Bank.

- Helps in **lowering down disguised unemployment** in India.
- Helps in **bridging the wider trade deficit**.

2) Political Significance

- The Indian diaspora has emerged as an important political constituency of support and influence for India in recent years.
- Holding of top political positions in many countries. For Example: PM of UK Rishi Sunak and positive developments between India and UK. This helps in enhancing India's clout in multilateral forums.

3)Strategic Significance

- **Enables exchange of ideas, technology.**
- **Advocacy and Lobbying:** The Indian diaspora plays a significant role in building relationships with policymakers and presenting a compelling case for the policies aligned with India's interests. For example, the campaign by Indian Americans played a role in the India-USA civil nuclear deal. Helps in facilitating importance agreements serving India's interest.

4) Soft Power:

- **Spread of Indian culture, values & knowledge system:** e.g. Yoga, and other alternative therapies.
- **Diaspora acts as cultural ambassadors promoting Indian culture, cuisine, and values in their host countries.** Their cultural engagement fosters cross-cultural understanding and helps showcase India's rich heritage on the global stage. For example, Diwali festival celebrations in Singapore and Malaysia showcase Indian traditions, generating goodwill and interest.
- **Knowledge Transfer and Innovation:** Many Indian diaspora members are highly skilled professionals who can act as bridges between India and their host countries in facilitating knowledge transfer and collaboration in various fields like science, technology, and business. For example, Indian Professional Without Borders is a global network of Indian-origin professionals dedicated to fostering innovation, collaboration, and social impact, in sync with India's stride towards technological innovation.

5) Role in R&D/ S&T

- Can play an important role for promotion of science and technology in India.
- Are holding high positions in S&T organizations eg NASA.

Previous Year Question

1) Indian diaspora has scaled new heights in the West. Describe its economic and political benefits for India. (2023)

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Significance of Indian Diaspora for world

Previous Year Question

Q/-Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries'. Comment with examples. **(2020, 150 words)**

Q/- Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian Diaspora in South- East Asia in this context (2017, 250 words)

Challenges Faced by Indian Diaspora

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Way Forward

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