Conceptualising Indian Diaspora
Diversities within a Common Identity

AMBA PANDE

This article attempts to provide a framework for understanding the Indian diaspora, which encompasses a diverse set of people living outside India. This diversity is not only a representation of the plurality of Indian society and heterogeneity in the phases and patterns of migration, but also emerges out of the host country variations. However, regardless of this diverse framework, the Indians in the diaspora derive a commonality from their Indian origin, thus making their identity a play between the divergences and the unifying Indian stamp.

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Diasporas – the transnational communities wedded to host lands and profoundly connected to homelands – have added a new dimension to the contemporary debates on economic and political systems, national cultures and international relations. Encouraged and abetted by globalisation, diasporas experience national belongingness towards both home and the host country simultaneously and initiate heuristic ideas for research and a constant interest among the policymakers to explore avenues for engagement. This article is an attempt to provide a framework to understand the Indian diaspora and engage with it as a condition/category of "peoplehood" possessing a specific consciousness and identity. However, a major challenge is to find a paradigm or template for understanding the Indian diaspora that subsumes such a diverse set of people and migration patterns that challenges the very application of the term Indian diaspora in the context of overseas Indians. The mosaic of Indian identities abroad presents a complex picture which makes it difficult for policymakers and researchers to approach the diaspora as a single entity. This article, therefore, tries to shed light on how "Indianness" continues to exist in different forms among various groups of the Indians abroad and binds them together, irrespective of differences in regions, languages, religions, causes, consequences and period of migration, and host country variations.

Debating the Diaspora

The term diaspora, owing to its growing usage, has proliferated and "dispersed" so much from its core meaning that Roger Brubaker (2005) has gone to the extent of calling it "diaspora". It has become more or less a "generic" term, sharing meaning with words like "immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community" (Tololian 1991: 3-7). The inclusion of every act of migration or all kinds of ethnic minorities in the domain of diaspora can surely be contested. But, attempts to formulate a definitional framework or paradigm (Safran 1991; Cohen 1996) have also been equally problematic as every case appears to be markedly different. However, the terminological or explanatory confusion has, to some extent, led to a loss of distinctiveness and disregard for the diaspora as an entity, which gets in the way of policymaking and research. Therefore, in this article, an attempt has been made to sketch a concept for the term diaspora and situate Indian diaspora within that concept. The core elements that can be treated as the starting point for the description of diaspora can be underlined as the following:

(1) Cross-border Migration/Dispersion and Settlement: It implies a dispersion in which the territorial boundaries of the state are crossed, followed by settlement in the "new land". This cross-border movement can be either voluntary or involuntary, but that leads to a permanent or, at least, long-term settlement in the host country or in a third country, if remigration takes place. In such a case, several categories like short-term migrants, all kinds of ethnic communities, and even segments of the remaining population of a partitioned country (for example, India and Pakistan) would fall outside the purview of diaspora.

(2) Host Land Participation: Settlement in the new land signifies not only residence, but participation in the economic and political processes of the host land. The immigrants create a niche for themselves and affect the host nation's social, economic and political domains. They also negotiate and compete with other communities through, what Stanley Tambiah (2006: 170) calls, "vertical networks" to secure their existence in the host countries. As the idea goes, "the more successful and well-integrated they are

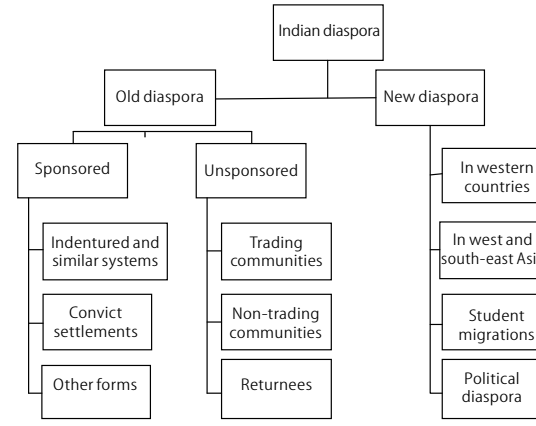
in the host land, 'in terms of attitudes, know-how, and financial capacity' the better capable they can be to participate in the development in their countries of origin" (De Haas 2005: 1276). Most of the Indian diaspora groups have achieved astounding success in their respective countries, which has also given a new aura to India and its people abroad.

(3) Homeland Consciousness: It implies a sense of awareness about the existence of a motherland (sometimes a non-existent one) beyond the borders of the country of settlement. The manifestation of homeland consciousness can be varied. For example, it can be retained in memory (like the Parsi community in India),[1] can be recreated as a version of the homeland (similar to creation of "little India" by early south Asian migrants), or can exist in the form of social, political and economic involvement through networks (as in the present world). In case of re-migration from the host country to a third country, the homeland consciousness is entrenched in two locations rather than one. An interesting case in point is the Sri Lankan Tamils' diaspora, who have re-migrated to western countries and possess strong homeland (which is imaginary) consciousness, that manifests through their support for the separatist movement.

(4) Construction of a Multi-locational 'Self': It involves recreation of an identity, drawing from both home and host lands and is not marked by strict boundaries. Such an identity is distinct, yet has points of merger at both ends, and undergoes changes as generations pass by. Both host land/homeland dynamics play a crucial role in the formation of such identities. It is clearly evident in inter-country variations in the diaspora groups arising out of the same home country. It is also the reason why "diasporic homecoming is often fraught with problems of reintegration...as (they) land up being strangers or minority groups in the home land which becomes like earlier host land" (Tsuda 2009: 329). Instead of regrouping, the returnees undergo, what has been termed as, the "Double Diasporisation" (Sinha-Kerkhoff 2005: 93).

As far as the Indian diaspora/overseas Indians (the two terms are interchangeably used) is concerned, it has taken the widest possible outline to include the wide variety of people living outside India. According to the High Level Committee on Indian diaspora, set up by the Government of India in 2001, "Indian Diaspora is a generic term used for addressing people who have migrated from the territories that are currently within the borders of the Republic of India" (High Level Committee 2001). On deconstruction, the term comes out with specific groupings, i e, persons of Indian origin (PIOs), who are no longer Indian citizens and the ones who continue to be full-fledged citizens of India holding Indian passport, non-resident Indians (NRIs).

Figure 1: A Breakup of the Indian Diaspora



Classification: The Diversities

Indian diaspora has its roots in diverse sociocultural settings of India and includes all the major forms of human migration in its domain. Nonetheless, this diversity is not only a representation of the diverse Indian social set-up and heterogeneity in the phases, and patterns of migration, but also emerges out of the host country variations. The diverse set of people moving out of the Indian borders, go through a wide variety of experiences, depending on the dynamics of the host society and patterns of their involvement like artificial pluralism (as in Fiji); integration (as in Caribbeans); exclusion (as in Gulf countries); and multiculturalism (as in western countries). According to N Jayaram (2011: 3-4),

> It is a heterogeneous and complex phenomenon subsuming under it many diverse phases, patterns and processes. There is a long way to go before we could confidently theorise the Indian Diaspora, what is important is that to unravel as many aspects of diversity as we can, from as many perspectives as we can, so that in due course we will have sufficient building blocks of data and conclusions to build a theory upon.

Notwithstanding the official classification of the Government of India, that of NRIs, PIOs and the overseas Indian citizens (OICs),[2] this article takes into account the major patterns of migration, the question of Indian identity among various diaspora groups, and the way they fare in the policy priorities of the Government of India. The jumbled-up migration processes/streams are presented in Figure 1.

Classical Wave of Migration

Ever since the civilisational growth of the Indian subcontinent began, Indians have been moving as preachers, traders, sailors, labourers, gypsies and in several other forms. Trade with other civilisations of the world provided a major incentive for Indian merchants who dared the high seas and the unknown lands, with no fewer escapades than the European sailors and adventurers. Although these largely unknown Indian sojourners are yet to find their due in the Indian historical works, they have always been a part of the Indian imaginary. Several Indian folklores and folksongs are replete with the "adventures of" and "longing for" the one who has gone beyond seven seas.

Indian trading activities and settlements throughout west Asia, central Asia, Africa and south-east Asia are mentioned in foreign historical sources like the records of Alexander the Great, Periplus of Arithrian Sea, and that of the Greeks and Arabs. The merchants from Gujarat, Bengal and Tamil Nadu established important trading centres in several of these regions and influenced the eastern part of the world to the extent of Indianising it socially, culturally and religiously. However, most of these movements were rotational and, as it appears, "did not result into any significant permanent

settlements" (Narayan 2008: 5). Consequently, the early phases of migrations from India could not result in the formation of the diaspora.

1830s to World War II

The colonial economic patterns and growth of plantations resulted in various forms of state-sponsored mass labour migrations (indentured, *kangani, maistry,* convict, and so forth). This consequently led to permanent settlements and formation of a diaspora, also known as the "old diaspora". For several of these groups, "Indian" is still a generic term, which includes other south Asians like Pakistani, Bangladeshis and even Sri Lankans.

Government-Sponsored Migrations

Indentured and similar migration systems were the largest group among government-sponsored migration. The abolition of slavery and the growth of plantation economy steered the need for a cheap supply of labour, for which India became the prime source. The long British rule in India had already created strong "push factors" for the outflow of labour. Around 1.5 million labourers were exported to different colonies around the world like Mauritius, Uganda and Nigeria, Guyana, New Zealand, Trinidad and Tobago, Natal, Surinam, Jamaica, Fiji, and Burma. The kangani and maistry systems developed in southern India along with indentured system. They were based on a network of headmen or middlemen, who recruited and supervised the labourers. These labourers were not bound by a contract, but were brought under a debt net through advance payment. Under this system, 1.7 million labourers were sent to Malaya, 1.6 million to Burma, and one million to Ceylon. One positive aspect in kangani and maistry was that it included family recruitments.

The discussion on indentured and similar migration systems would be incomplete without touching upon three issues regarding their nature and consequences that preoccupy the enduring debates on the subject. The first is drawing parallels between slavery, and indentured system. Although equating indentured system with slavery (Tinker 1974) has been questioned time and again (Engerman 1983: 645), the dissimilarities between the two systems appear to be mainly technical. While slavery was a permanent status akin to private property, the indentured system was a paid labour under a temporary contract, which worked like "an instrument of production" (Mangru 1986). In reality, life as an indenture was as appalling and dehumanising as that of slavery (Mishra 2009). As most of the indentured labourers were Hindus and some Muslims, religious persecution became an added instrument for exploitation (Desai and Vahed 2010: 239-82; Sharma 2011). The system was said to be "expedient", which "prevented (personal) freedom from degenerating into vagrancy and idleness" (Mangru 1986).

The second point of debate relates to the successes and achievements attained by indentured labourers in their diverse destinies, which often gets shadowed by allegations and counter allegations of revisionist deception (Mishra 2009; Carter 1995). The story of indentured would be incomplete without the celebration of human triumph against extreme adversities. From the humble beginnings as indentured labourers, the Indians progressed to a point where they were playing a leading role in the social, political and economic life of the countries of their settlement. Scholars like Robin Cohen find it inherent to "paradigmic catastrophical experiences". As he infers, "though the word 'Babylon' became synonym of the state of suffering of the Jews", it also reveals the development and rise of a "new creative energy in a challenging pluralistic context outside the homeland" (Cohen 1996: 509).

The third issue is the question of identity among these labourers who, in the initial years, were referred to as coolie, a term that remained close to their identity for a very long time. They also carried a sense of "exile" and "loss", which is reflected in various ways in their literary writings (Mishra 2005). Although the sense of belonging with India was strong, long isolation, complete breakdown of networks and institution like caste (in most cases), association with new cultures and local conditions, led to the evolution of subcultures and distinct hyphenated identities in these groups. "Little Indias" were created with their own sociocultural distinctiveness. Even in the new age of connectivity, they continue to follow and retain the Indian practices of the times of their original migration, which have undergone significant change in India itself (Jain 2001).

Another form of colonial migration was the convict labour or penal settlements. The British started penal settlements in the late 18th century as a response to the demand for labour for carrying out developmental works in the colonial settlements and not because of the prevailing conditions in India as it is argued sometimes (Lal et al 2007: 45). Some of the important settlements that received Indian Convict Labour were Bencoolen (South West Sumatra), Penang, Maleka, Singapore, Arakan and Tenassarim (Burma) and Mauritius. However, most of these migrants settled in the respective colonies, either mixing with the other migrants from India or marrying local women.[3] This system was abolished in the mid-20th century.

Apart from the unfree labour, other forms of government-sponsored migrations during the colonial period were semi-skilled and skilled labour force, recruited directly by the government as service providers and junior officers. This category also included a number of Pathans and Sikhs recruited as security personnel and guards. British colonies in south-east Asia received large number of such Indians who later got into business and moneylending. An alarming difference in the sex ratio shows that such migration was mostly transitory, with the families staying back in India (Lal et al 2007: 179). It is also indicative of the fact that money was being sent back to India in the form of remittances, probably through personalised channels.

Free Migration or Passage Indians

Apart from the government-sponsored migrations, there were also self-sponsored migrants called "free-passage Indians". Majority of them belonged to the trading communities from all over India. As discussed, though such migrations were

already taking place from the Indian subcontinent, but the global economic transitions after the 18th century further propelled this process. Indian traders and entrepreneurs established highly successful businesses across Asian and African countries. Among the non-trading communities there were unskilled/semi-skilled workers (cobblers, barbers, goldsmiths, etc) and skilled professionals (teachers, lawyers, and so on) who were "pulled" for migration by options of better livelihood. Caste and regional networks played extremely important roles in such migrations and kept them connected to the motherland. There was also a small number of "returnees", who having completed their indentured contracts returned to India. But unable to reintegrate into the traditional Indian society, they went back to resettle in the countries to which they had originally migrated.

Such migrations were largely rotational but permanent settlements followed after second world war, especially in colonies where the indentured, kangani or maistry labourers were present. Although smaller in number than the labour diaspora and largely maintaining distance from them, the free migrants made a significant contribution towards providing stability to the social order of the indentured community by providing education, legal services and, at times, leadership to several of the indentured communities. They presented tough challenge to European businesses and were often subjected to various stereotypes and public criticism in India (Chand 1995; Lal et al 2007: 58-65).

Post-Second World War Migrations

By mid-20th century (largely after second world war), there emerged a new trend in the migration and settlement of the skilled and highly skilled professionals to the developed world. In the initial years such migrations were United Kingdom (UK)-centric. However, as the United States (US) immigration regime became more liberal during the mid-1960s, the wave got diverted towards the US (Gottschlich 2008: 156). At present, Australia and other Asia-Pacific countries attract a large number of migrants, making South-South migration larger than South-North migration (World Bank 2011: 12). Marked by what has been termed as the "brain drain", this process came under severe scrutiny and prejudiced the Indian public opinion against the highly affluent diaspora who mostly got their degrees from the publicly subsidised institutions in India.

However, with the opening of India's economy in the early 1990s, the so-called brain drain started yielding unexpected positive results in terms of brain-regain, investments, remittances, philanthropy, and transfer of technology and skill. While the motherland connections always existed in this section of diaspora in some form or the other, but after the 1990s, it became more pronounced. Divergent views may exist about the pros and cons of their economic role but they have, to a large extent, become the part and parcel of Indian economy. One of the best examples of diaspora-induced growth models is India's information technology (IT) sector. The presence of large number of IT professionals in advanced countries became the turbine to kick-start the so-called "IT revolution" in Bangalore and Hyderabad, followed by the rest of India. The industry is fed with new ideas, new technologies and new markets by diaspora professionals/organisations (Naujoks 2009). Annual National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) figures show that out of the top 20 Indian software businesses, 19 were founded by or are managed by professionals from the Indian diaspora.

Another group in the new diaspora is the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour migration to the Gulf and the south-east Asian countries. The oil boom in west Asia during the 1980s saw an upsurge in infrastructure building activities, which attracted a large number of migrant workers from India. It was followed by an influx of remittances hugely benefiting India's foreign exchange reserves and initiating a shift in India's policy perspective towards the diaspora (Pande 2011: 30-31). Although such migrations did not result in permanent settlements, they form a significant section under the category of NRIs. However, as the first phase of development was completed and industrialisation began, there has been a change in the nature of labour demand in these countries (Safran et al 2009: xxiv) which are now attracting large number of skilled/highly skilled professionals. But the class divide appears to be prominent and two groups (i e, the labours and the skilled/highly skilled) largely keep away from each other.

Twice Migrants

"Twice migrants", a term coined perhaps by Parminder Bachu (1985), refer to those people of Indian descent who have re-migrated from their original host countries to developed countries. Such movements are also termed as secondary migrations (Naujoks 2009). The Indo-Guyanese in North America, the Sarnami Hindustanis in the Netherlands, the Indo-Ugandans in UK, and the Indo-Fijians in New Zealand, Australia and Canada fall within this category. In most cases, they have been forced to leave due to government policies or sociopolitical discrimination. Despite retaining Indian religious and cultural practices, they develop a strong connectedness with the country of their first migration where they stayed for generations and maintain close familial ties. Referring to the Indo-Fijians in Sydney (Australia), D Ghosh (2000: 85) writes,

> The rupture between collective and individual subjectivities created by their double migration force them to recreate different ways of being Indian, Fijian and Australian.

In case of the Caribbean Indians in Canada, Omme-Salma Rahemtullah (2009) writes,

> their relationships to India exist mainly through oral history, in the legacies of indenture ship, and through recreations of India in the Caribbean.

The twice migrants, further, problematise the homogeneous representation of the Indian diaspora by adding yet another facet of diversity to it. They also challenge the idea of "roots", often attached to homelands, and are a good representation of the "homeland consciousness", mentioned in the discussion earlier.

Indian Student Migration

In the recent years, Indian students' migration has emerged as one of the major trends seeking attention from researchers and policymakers. The concerns revolve

not only around brain drain, but also the capital outflow in the form of education fees and related expenditures. India is the second largest importer of overseas education and with a fourfold increase in the numbers in the last 14 years and (as per the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates) it is costing India a foreign exchange outflow of $10 billion annually.[4] Termed as the "Cash Cows" (Baas 2006), the Indian students make up for the revenue and the skilled labour force in the advanced countries. The benefits have led to several policy changes in the destination countries for attracting foreign students to their universities and further allowing them to stay on and work. Student migration from India also acts as the gateway for permanent residency for the Indian middle-class desiring to live overseas (Duttagupta 2011). This, however, is only one side of the story as several factors at the domestic level in India are also responsible to push the outflow of students. There appears to be a major demand and supply gap; shortage of quality educational institutions and faculty; availability of educational loans; and so forth. Private participation in the education sector has addressed these problems to some extent. But as India's gross enrolment ratio (GNR) in higher education is improving, India would require huge investments and an outward looking policy to handle the problem. Nevertheless, student migration is one of the major doorways for permanent or long-term settlement leading to the formation of diaspora.

Political Diaspora

Although migration from India has largely been economically induced, political diaspora emerging out of conflict is also not unknown to India. As Lyons (2004: 1) explains, political diasporas mostly possess a specific set of traumatic memories, which make them less willing to compromise, thereby, reinforcing and exacerbating the conflicts. Such participation is described by Anderson (1998) in terms of long-distance nationalism or ethno-nationalisms and is often influenced by the host country dynamics.

In India, the Sikhs, the Kashmiris and the Naxalites are some of the commonly known examples of political diaspora. The Sikh diaspora emerged out of Punjab unrest and it is a well-known fact that they financed and participated in the separatist movement in Punjab. Although operation "Blue Star" is said to have created huge resentment and anger among the Sikhs around the world, according to Judge (2011: 45), "the racial and cultural differences and the difficulties of integration or assimilation in the host society pave the way for the longing or excessive concern for the mother land". However, as the Sikhs in the diaspora belong to all typologies and form a very diverse group, a considerable number of them did not support the separatist movement and were even "hostile towards the idea of Khalistan" (ibid: 41).

Women in the Diaspora

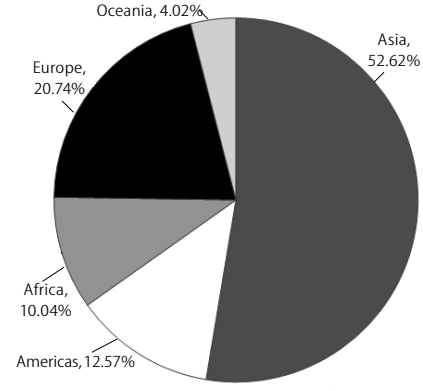
The idea behind treating women's migration as a separate category is not aimed at segregating them from other groups but to highlight the need for a deeper understanding of their experiences and perspectives. Women have shared space with men in most of the migration streams and diasporic formations. However, for a very long time their presence and experiences largely remained subsumed in the homogenised perceptions. In reality, the experiences of women during the process of migration and settlement have always been different and very specific to them. As indentured labourers, they were not only faced with the tyranny of the plantation life, but were also oppressed by their own men (Lal 1985). As migrant wives, they recreate aspects of home and culture in a foreign setting, often ridden with politics of race and culture. As semi-skilled and skilled migrants, such as nurses and students, they risk the hostilities of a new environment single-handedly, aiming either to improve the life conditions of their families back home or to enhance their own career prospects. As highly skilled women professionals, they successfully balance the Indian home life and a global professional life, often becoming the face of iconised "global Indians" (Radhakrishnan 2009).

Nevertheless, as it appears to be the case, women largely migrate within the framework of patriarchy and cultural considerations and preserve them as the "bearers of Indian tradition". While migration and economic independence has given them an opportunity to assert independence, redefine their roles and perceptions of self, it is still questionable whether it enables them to break away from the binding traditional patriarchal norms (Thapan 2005: 23-38). No wonder, some of the most pertinent problems faced by the women in the Indian diaspora arises out of issues of gender discrimination and patriarchy.

Distribution

In 2001, when the first database on Indian diaspora was created under the L M Singhvi Committee, the number of Indians living abroad was estimated at approximately 21 million. According to the latest figures of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, their number has increased up to 2,16,34,119, of which 1,00,37,761 are NRIs and 1,18,72,114 are POIs. They are spread in about 105 countries around the world, a fact which hugely adds to the diversity of the Indian diaspora. The largest number of Indian

Figure 2: Region-wise Distribution of Indian Diaspora/Overseas Indians



Source: Based on data provided by Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.

Top Ten Countries (Other Than South Asia) in Terms of Concentration of Indians

US	22,45,239
Malaysia	20,50,000
Saudi Arabia	17,89,000
UAE	17,02,911
UK	15,00,000
South Africa	12,18,000
Canada	10,00,000
Mauritius	8,82,220
Singapore	5,90,000
Kuwait	5,79,390

Source: See Figure 2.

diaspora, i e, 52.62%, resides in Asia as shown in Figure 2 (p 63).

Unity in Diversity

The above-discussed diversities in migration trends are further marked by differences in caste, religion, region, language and economic status, resulting in a plurality that has led to the idea of "many diasporas within the overarching Indian diaspora" (Singh 2003: 5). As the common perception goes, the Indian migrants refer to themselves so much as Bengalis, Gujaratis, Telugus, or in terms of their specific sub-castes, that the idea of homeland creates a myth of a region, locality or community rather than of India as a whole (Oonk 2013: 4). These diversities, at times, have also had divvying effects on the Indian diasporic communities in particular countries. One of the most prominent divides can be witnessed between the old and the new diasporas, considered by some scholars as a "caste like social distance" (Motwani 1993: 4), while others call it a "class and culture divide" (Jain 2001: 1308-01). But these differences relate more to the cultural heritage inherited by the two groups from India and the question of Indian identity. The segregation is so clearly evident in the countries where both these groups are present that there is very little, if any, interaction between them.

In reality, the idea of "identity" marked by strict boundaries, often, pitch groups against each other by emphasising too much on the differences. However, if more emphasis is given on the points of merger and commonalities between the diverse groups, then the diversity can not only be less confrontational, but also emerge as a unified consciousness. This idea has remained at the core of the Indian civilisation for centuries and also gets reflected in the imaginary of India among the Indian diaspora. Sahoo (2008: ix) explains this in the following way, "above this diverse framework what has given Indians in the diaspora their common identity is their Indian origin, the consciousness of their cultural heritage and their profound attachment with India". The growing connectivity with India and New Delhi's efforts to engage the diaspora with the idea of united yet diverse India has further boosted the process. It has led to a kind "cultural renaissance" (Jayaram 2004) or reinvention and reassertion of Indian identity among the diasporic Indians. Although such a phenomenon carries the fears of their involvement in the divisive Indian politics and manifestation of irresponsible nationalism, it also opens them to the idea of the modern, secular Indian state.

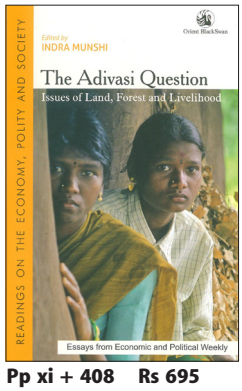
Conclusions

This article has provided a systematic representation of Indian diaspora in terms of its definitional framework, composition, and distribution within the context of diversity within a common identity. This idea forms the core of India's civilisational consciousness and belonging, of which the Indian diaspora is a part. It looks at the diversity in the diaspora from the point of view of the phases and patterns of migration. Starting from the colonial period to the present, the Indian diaspora can be roughly categorised into colonial/old and the postcolonial/new. Among the old diaspora, there are government-sponsored and self-sponsored groups, which further breaks into various other groups, such as indentured and similar migration systems, convict migrations, traders, small time professionals and returnees. The new diaspora can also be divided into highly skilled/skilled, semi-skilled/unskilled, student migrants and political migrants.

The Adivasi Question

Edited By

Indra Munshi



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Depletion and destruction of forests have eroded the already fragile survival base of adivasis across the country, displacing an alarmingly large number of adivasis to make way for development projects. Many have been forced to migrate to other rural areas or cities in search of work, leading to systematic alienation.

This volume situates the issues concerning the adivasis in a historical context while discussing the challenges they face today.

The introduction examines how the loss of land and livelihood began under the British administration, making the adivasis dependent on the landlord-moneylender-trader nexus for their survival.

The articles, drawn from writings of almost four decades in EPW, discuss questions of community rights and ownership, management of forests, the state's rehabilitation policies, and the Forest Rights Act and its implications. It presents diverse perspectives in the form of case studies specific to different regions and provides valuable analytical insights.

Authors: Ramachandra Guha • Sanjeeva Kumar • Ashok K Upadhyaya • E Selvarajan • Nitya Rao • B B Mohanty • Brian Lobo • K Balagopal • Sohel Firdos • Pankaj Sekhsaria • DN • Judy Whitehead • Sagari R Ramdas • Neela Mukherjee • Mathew Areeparampil • Asmita Kabra • Renu Modi • M Gopinath Reddy, K Anil Kumar, P Trinadha Rao, Oliver Springate-Baginski • Indra Munshi • Jyothis Sathyapalan • Mahesh Rangarajan • Madhav Gadgil • Dev Nathan, Govind Kelkar • Emmanuel D'Silva, B Nagnath • Amita Baviskar

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These categories are further marked by differences in caste, religion, region, language and economic status. Moreover, the mosaic of the Indian identities abroad does not only mirror the diversities of the Indian society, but is further compounded by host country dynamics, which plays a significant role in identity formation among the diasporas.

An understanding of the theoretical perspective on diversities in the Indian diaspora is of immense significance for the researchers and the policymakers. It exposes them to the fact that although Indians in the diaspora are glued to "Indianess" (albeit of different forms), the heterogeneous categories and sections are to be treated and dealt with separately when it comes to policymaking and opening avenues for engagement.

NOTES

1 The Parsi community in India, which has no practical connectedness with Iran and is fully integrated with the idea of Indian nationhood. Yet, they have maintained a distinct identity, with a strong consciousness of the homeland.

2 The Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) scheme was introduced by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955 in August 2005. The scheme was launched during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention, 2006, at Hyderabad. The scheme provides for registration as OCI of all PIOs who were citizens of India on 26 January 1950 or thereafter, or were eligible to become citizens of India on 26 January 1950, except who is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country. OCI is not to be misconstrued as "dual citizenship". OCI does not confer political rights. OCI is granted multiple entry, multipurpose, lifelong visa for visiting India, is exempted from registration with Foreign Regional Registration Officer or Foreign Registration Officer for any length of stay in India, and is entitled to general "parity with non-resident Indians in respect of all facilities available to them in economic, financial and educational fields, except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties". Till 2012 the Government of India has issued 12,03,613 OCI cards.

3 Large numbers of Indian Muslims marry Malay women. Their offsprings are known as *Javi Pekan*.

4 "Students' exodus costs India forex outflow of $10 bn: Assocham" (2009), *Thaindian News*, 26 January, URL: http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/business/students-exodus-costs-india-forex-outflow-of-10-bn-assocham_100147339.html, accessed on 30 November 2011.

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