



Tapping Overseas Indians

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on 22nd January, inaugurated the 2019 edition of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), the Indian Diaspora conclave, in his parliamentary constituency of Varanasi. The PBD was postponed to January 21 this year, instead of Jan 9, to allow participants to visit the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj and attend the Republic Day parade in the national capital. The theme of this year's convention is 'Role of Indian Diaspora in building new India'.

Indian Diaspora Stats

- **India today has about 31 million Diaspora in more than 100 countries.** All those countries are very different. The opportunities and the challenges that these people have to face are very different.
 - For Instance, Indian Diaspora in Gulf Region generally asks India for support of Labor Rights in that region to avoid exploitation.
- **Presence of Indian Diaspora in many public offices** across the world e.g. Leo Varadkar in Ireland, Kamala Harris in U.S., MPs in U.K. etc.
- **There is also presence of Indian Diaspora from lower to higher positions in Corporate Sector.** In fact, in Top Fortune 500 Corporate leaders, more than 12% are Indian Origin people.

How OIs Benefit India?

- **Economic Benefits to India:**
 - India received more than 70 billion US Dollars through remittances in 2018.
 - NRIs have driven 10-15% of the entire property boom that we are seeing in urban areas. More than 10 billion U.S. Dollars have come from NRIs and OIs.
- **Political Lobbying on behalf of Indian Interest (Indirect Diplomacy):** Indian communities in a particular country, unite for furthering India's interest in specific area. India-U.S. Nuclear Deal is an example of this.
- **Help in spreading Indian Culture,** thus increasing India's soft power impact across the world.

Recent Steps Taken To Connect OIs To India

- The government has made it easy for OCIs to invest in India.
- Single windows and other such schemes have been initiated by the government to attract resources to the country. Due to these initiatives only, India has been able to continuously improve its ranking in Ease of Doing Business Ranking. **India has secured 77th rank in 2018, made a jump of 23 positions, as compared to 100th in 2018.**
- **Merger of Overseas Indian Ministry into MEA.** Now, Overseas Indians are part of India's Foreign Policy.
- **Our commissions and embassies in different countries are now much more sensitive to the concerns and needs of our Diaspora.**
- Making efforts to unify our different Diaspora Organization so that they can collectively work for the welfare of Indians.
- Prime Minister Modi's effort **to inculcate a sense of unity among Indian Diaspora** belonging to different states of India and having citizenship of different countries.
- **Connecting Indian Diaspora to their cultural roots in India** by inviting them to different

cultural activities in India again and again. E.g. providing opportunity to OIs to attend Kumbh Mela.

Way Forward

- **Still more needs to be done to ease entry of foreign funds** to country through NRI and OCI channel.
- With the help of OIs, India can **improve its Start up Ecosystem and Tourism Industry**. There is a high possibility of OIs bringing huge investment and non- Indians, with them to India.
- NRI having expertise in specific fields like technological, entrepreneurial can mentor young Indians with ideas.
- India needs to **identify new markets** for its goods and services through linkages with the Indians working in Corporate Sector across the world.
- Identification of such Indian- Origin People, whose influence can be leveraged for India's better economic growth story.
- Domestically, India needs to improve its physical infrastructure like roads, railways etc. and social infrastructure like Health, Education etc.
- **India should go for Inclusive Diplomacy** and ensure linkage with each and every overseas Indian across the world.
- India needs to ensure that any Indian- Origin, holding citizenship of any country, is proud of being having a 'link' to India.

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