

DIASPORA STUDIES

COURSE CODE: M21S004DE

Postgraduate Programme in Sociology

Discipline Specific Elective Course

SELF LEARNING MATERIAL



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Diaspora Studies

Course Code: M21SO04DE
Semester - III

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Postgraduate Programme in Sociology
Self Learning Material
(With Model Question Paper Sets)



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MA Sociology



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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear learner,

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The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the widely acclaimed "blended format," a practical framework that harmoniously integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

The university aims to offer you an engaging and thought-provoking educational journey. The Postgraduate Programme in Sociology naturally follows from the undergraduate programme. It mainly focuses on theories and practical applications. The programme uses vivid examples to make the subject interesting and relevant to learners. By combining academic content with empirical evidence, the programme becomes both unique and practical. The Self-Learning Material has been meticulously crafted, incorporating relevant examples to facilitate better comprehension.

Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your disposal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.



Regards,
Dr. Jagathy Raj V. P.

01-09-2024

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Diaspora Studies as an Academic Discipline

BLOCK-01



Diaspora: Basic Concepts

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ comprehend the concept of diaspora, transnational and migrant communities
- ◆ analyse the emergence of diasporic studies as an academic discipline
- ◆ acquaint with concepts and terminology related to diaspora studies
- ◆ examine the scope and significance of diaspora studies

Background

The term “Diaspora” has been used in sociology to denote migrated communities within a specific framework, rather than in a broad sense, with distinct characteristics. Various contextual meanings of the term have been explored and analysed. The emergence of transnationalism and globalisation as products of global processes has intensified connections, both real and virtual, making them more immediate and widespread. This has notably led to a situation where immigrants are reintegrated into their home countries, becoming active members of their societies. Consequently, older Diasporas, previously somewhat detached from their homelands, are now in constant contact with their roots, facilitated by advancements in information technology such as the internet, telephone, and social media.

This unit provides an overview of how transnationalism and globalisation contribute to an understanding of Diaspora. It primarily examines the globalisation process and assesses how the concept of Diaspora fits into this framework. It also explores various nuances and perspectives used by scholars to analyse the diaspora all over the world.



Keywords

Diaspora, Transnationalism, Immigration, Indentured labour, Displacement.

Discussion

1.1.1 Meaning of Diaspora

◆ Meaning of Diaspora

The term diaspora etymologically belongs to the Greek language, derived out of two words: *speiro* meaning to sow and *dia* - meaning ,over referring to the scattering of the seeds over a wider area as they sowed. It is believed that the word appeared for the first time in the Greek translation of the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament and was used by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Since the 1993 edition, the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defined the term “Diaspora” as “the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentile nations” and added as “the situation of people living outside their traditional homeland”. According to Sheffer, the term had been applied since the early ages to two of the oldest ethno-national diaspora -the Jewish and the Greek who left their homelands due to voluntary and forced migrations.

◆ Definition of diaspora

Until the 1980s, the concept of diaspora was not developed. In later years the term started appearing in social science for something with scattering and dispersal. Nowadays, the term is used not only for the oldest communities but for segments of people who are engaged in extensive movement as part of political vulnerabilities, voluntary migration, global communication and transport. The term inextricably covered various groups such as overseas communities, ethnic and racial minorities, immigrants, guest workers, political refugees, alien residents and expellees. According to Tololyan, the term diaspora is used to reflect the meaning of expatriate, immigrant, refugee, guest-worker, and exile, overseas and ethnic communities. When we look at various meanings and reflections of the word, the term diaspora is seen defined as the scattered population across more than one territory having a durable and salient relationship to a common origin, identity and homeland. Relationship may be reckoned as a set of claims, practices, loyalties or

something which binds the community with the homeland. It must be noted that recently the term diaspora is widely used for immigrants or ethnic communities. For example, scholars have used 'Indian diaspora' synonymous with 'Indian immigrants'. However, different nuances have been produced by various scholars with references to the term diaspora.

◆ *Diaspora and allied terms*

Robin Cohen has extended the term diaspora to discuss the varieties emerging in the arena such as victim diaspora, labour diaspora, trade diaspora and de-territorialised diaspora. In addition to the term 'diaspora', multiple terms are used in the literature. Transnationalism, borderlands, exile and migration are sometimes interchangeably used.

◆ *Diaspora and Exile*

The term 'exile' is used to refer the people in exile who are living outside of their homeland due to forced expulsion. In diasporic literature, 'exile' is limited to particular situations and it has not gained the popularity that 'Diaspora' has done. Both terms are used in connection with Jewish experience. However, 'exile' is always attached with banishment or forced migration. Baumann underlines the difference between the two terms: "Exile, in contrast to Diaspora, is seldom associated with religious connotations and semantics. It appears that its user relates more explicitly to political persecution and forced flight caused by a nation-state than does 'diaspora'."

◆ *Diaspora and migration*

Compared with Diaspora, the term 'migration' exerts meanings of dispersion and community formation. Even though all diaspora results from migration, all migrations do not lead to the formation of diaspora. It takes time to form a diaspora. Unless the migrants possess a 'diasporic consciousness' or collective identity constituted of cultural elements of their homeland, they cannot be called a diaspora. Apart from the collective identity, a diaspora always reflects their constant efforts to rebuild their connections with the ethnic community or their homeland. Since the diaspora never return to their homeland, their affiliation towards the native community is renewed through travel, remittance and cultural exchanges.

Another term which overlaps with diaspora is transnationalism. Transnational community differs from diaspora in the sense that it refers to economic and cultural activities spread over more than one country. However, it does not reflect the emotional feelings as diaspora does. A

diaspora, in turn being a migrant community, is located in the host land and carries the memories of homeland and a desire to return.

◆ *Diaspora and Transnationalism*

Borderlands is a term viewed to the same way as diaspora in terms of both exerting something related with migration. While migration across multiple national borders takes place in diaspora, in borderlands, migration is characterised with a single border between neighbouring countries. Border between the U. S. A. and Mexico and that between India and Nepal are examples for borderland migrations.

◆ *Borderland and Diaspora*

The study of diaspora encompasses all these varieties and delves into the different perspectives binding the process. Factors responsible for the formation of diaspora, push - pull elements, characteristics of a diasporic community, significant classifications and major theories which explain the migration process will be discussed in the following units.

◆ *Diasporas are socio-spatial networks*

1.1.2 Features and Implications of Diaspora

Diaspora, the term used initially to refer the Jewish community in Europe, was applied later to indicate communities all over the world in exile living separated from their home country and in touch with the home. The bond among the diasporic community and the home country may be cultivated in various forms such as family, community, religious, socio-political, ethnical and economic ties and sometimes the shared memory of a catastrophe or trauma among the members of the community or their forefathers. A diasporic community intersects with multiple places where their settlement takes place and their memory belongs to. Each of these places acts as a centre in a territory where social proximities suppress spatial and temporal distances. Hence, all diasporas are considered as socio-spatial networks, for they interconnect with the places of memory and the places of presence.

◆ *Criteria of Diaspora formation*

How is a diaspora formed? Several factors play important roles in the formation of a community in exile. Socio-political and economic circumstances are very significant. Scholars have identified six criteria behind the formation of a diaspora. They are dispersion under pressure, choice of destination, awareness of identity, networked space, duration of transnational ties and relative autonomy from host and origin societies. A diaspora maintains its relations

with the host and origin societies and takes efforts to uphold its unique identity. Hence, more than doing an instrumental role in the social relationships, diaspora has remained in the minds metamorphically.

A diaspora is different from a migrant community. All migrants do not constitute a diaspora unless they are characterised by the necessary elements. According to William Safran, the followings are the necessary elements of a migrant community to be called a diaspora.

1. A collective memory, vision or a myth about their homeland is possessed by the migrant community and they celebrate its festivals and cultural events and uphold its history and geographical significance.
2. A home land or a 'centre' is considered the place of origin of their or their forefathers where their dispersal to two or more 'peripheries' of host lands had taken place.
3. They always carry a feeling of partial alienation from their host society for their belief that they cannot be integrated into the host system.
4. A respect is kept towards their ancestral land and the society for their desire and hope once they or their descendants would be able to return to their home land.
5. For them maintenance or restoration of their home land is important and hence, they believe that they are committed for its safety, prosperity and development.
6. Since their identity or ethno-communal consciousness is defined by their relationship with the home land, a special bond is maintained between the two personally or at the level of the community.

1.1.2.1 Current Meanings of Diaspora

Looking at the recent intellectual discourses, the term diaspora has connoted three different meanings. They extend from "diaspora as a social form," "diaspora as types of consciousness" and "diaspora as mode of cultural production". Regarding various ethno-religious and political overseas communities, these meanings have been conceptualised. Each of these meanings has implications in

◆ *Connotations of diaspora*

relation with diaspora belonging to various communities.

Diaspora as a Social Form

◆ *Diaspora
as a social
aggregation*

Contemporary literature is sufficient to explain the meaning of diaspora as a form of social aggregation. The experiences of Jews have often given the term diaspora a predominantly negative connotation, linked to themes of forced displacement, victimisation, alienation and loss. Initially, the concept of the diaspora' was closely tied to the traumatic exile of Jews from their historical homeland, leading to their dispersal across various lands. This association with the Jewish experience included a collective aspiration for a return to their homeland. Over the years, these characteristics have expanded the application of the term to other populations, such as Armenians and Africans, who share similar historical narratives of dispersion and a longing for a homeland.

Discussing the Jewish experiences, Martin Baumann identifies three components essential for every diasporic community: a) the process of becoming scattered b) the community living in foreign parts and c) the place or geographic space in which the dispersed groups live. The social concept of diaspora, extending beyond the traditional Jewish model, is delineated through various descriptive and theoretical sources. These encompass:

- 1) Distinct social connections forged through historical and geographical affiliations. Diasporas are generally seen as:
 - a. Purposefully upholding a collective identity, often rooted in an ethnic myth of shared origin, historical narratives and ties to a specific geographic locale.
 - b. Facing challenges in gaining full acceptance by the host society,' thus fostering sentiments of alienation, exclusion, inferiority or other forms of difference.
 - c. Establishing networks of exchange and communication that surpass national boundaries and establishing new communal structures in places of settlement.
 - d. Arising from either voluntary or forced migration from an original homeland to at least two other countries.
 - e. Maintaining various explicit and implicit connec-

tions with their homelands, while also fostering solidarity with co-ethnic members residing in other countries.

2) A dynamic of conflicting political allegiances, where diasporic individuals grapple with divided loyalties towards their homelands and host nations. Both individual immigrants and collective associations may wield significant influence, serving as potent pressure groups in both domestic and international politics. This involvement often stems from their concern for the political circumstances of their country of origin. For instance, organizations like Armenian groups spanning the U. S. A., France, and the Middle East exemplify how transnational communities have emerged as adept political lobbyists, as recognized by Western political analysts and diplomats.

3) The third aspect pertains to the economic dynamics of migrant communities, where these societies are structured around specialized networks aimed at fostering robust trade and commerce. The economic tactics employed by transnational groups constitute a significant and influential force in global finance and business. The economic successes of specific diasporic communities are attributed to the collaborative pooling of resources, credit transfers, capital investments and service provision among relatives, extended kin or individuals sharing the same ethnic background.

Arjun Appadurai suggests that the process of deterritorialisation among diasporic groups can lead to heightened senses of criticism or attachment to politics in their home states. He further asserts that deterritorialisation, whether experienced by Hindus, Sikhs, Palestinians or Ukrainians, is a central aspect of various global fundamentalist movements, including Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism. The political orientations of South Asian religious groups towards their homelands are continuously evolving and in some cases, becoming more intense. A significant example Appadurai highlights is the movement advocating the establishment of Khalistan as a homeland for the deterritorialised Sikh population residing in England, Canada and the United States. This sentiment has been particularly strong among overseas Sikhs since the events surrounding the storming of the Golden Temple in 1984.

◆ *Process of deterritorialisation*

Diaspora as a Type of Consciousness

The secondary interpretation of Diaspora refers to a sense of identity and belonging. A more recent perspective on Diaspora focuses on portraying a range of experiences, a state of mind and a sense of identity. James Clifford suggests that Diaspora consciousness embodies both loss and hope, creating a defining tension. Paul Gilroy similarly discusses a dual consciousness, drawing on W. E. B. Du Bois's concept of "double consciousness," wherein Diasporic individuals are aware of decentralised attachments, feeling at once "at home away from home" or "here and there," British and something else. Clifford also proposes that Diaspora's empowering paradox lies in the solidarity and connection felt in one place being influenced by connections elsewhere. Diaspora consciousness is a distinct awareness believed to arise within contemporary transnational communities. Cohen's perspective is noteworthy for highlighting that identification with a Diaspora helps bridge the gap between the local and the global. Besides acknowledging multi-locality and imaginative connections, some writers describe Diaspora consciousness through other cognitive functions. Robin Cohen expands on Hall's idea by noting that transnational bonds are no longer solely established through migration or exclusive territorial claims.

- ◆ *Diaspora as a sense of identity and dual consciousness*

Diasporic communities pass down their shared memory of identity to successive generations, preserving it as a means of connecting with their homeland. Increasingly, these diasporic groups possess fragmented memories whose origins are unclear. These collective reminiscences, often shaped by the complex interplay of memory and longing over time, take various paths and reveal divisions that sometimes align with generational differences. Enhanced by an awareness of being connected to multiple places, the "fragmented memories" of diaspora consciousness result in a diversity of historical narratives, communities, and individual identities. Even among diasporic groups that appear to be well-established, broader political dynamics influences the smaller-scale dynamics of memory, influencing interactions among friends relatives and across generations.

- ◆ *Diaspora and fragmented memories*

Another form of diaspora consciousness specific to religious communities can be identified. This arises from a unique form of introspection prompted by the conditions of diaspora alongside religious diversity. Clifford Geertz

- ◆ *Diaspora as a form of introspection*

illustrates this phenomenon in Morocco and Indonesia, representing two edges of the Islamic world, where the central inquiry has transitioned from “What should I believe?” to “How should I believe it?” This transition involves a distinction between “religiousness” and “religious mindedness,” differentiating between being guided by religious convictions and actively maintaining them. Additionally, believers may find themselves in the position of needing to rationalise and justify aspects of their beliefs and practices to adherents of other faiths.

Diaspora as a Mode of Cultural Production

- ◆ *Diaspora and transnational social and cultural elements*

The third interpretation commonly associated with the concept of Diaspora is often discussed in the context of globalisation. Here, Diaspora is depicted as encompassing the creation and continuation of transnational social and cultural elements. The continuous and diverse exchanges of such goods and activities inherently contain interpersonal connections. These social ties acquire significance within the ongoing flow and structure of everyday existence, as connections between various societies are upheld, refreshed and reconstructed within the framework of families, institutions, economic ventures, commerce, finance and political entities, including nation-states.

- ◆ *Diaspora as a platform for the production and perpetuation of culture*

Appadurai & Breckenridge in their work “Moving targets” observe that Diasporic populations face significant challenges due to the intricate transnational flows of media images and messages. They suggest that especially within electronic media, the interplay between the politics of desire and imagination and the politics of heritage and nostalgia creates notable disconnections. Similarly, Gayatri Spivak draws attention to the discourse of cultural specificity and difference, tailored for global consumption through modern technologies, particularly highlighting “microelectronic transnationalism” facilitated by electronic bulletin boards and the Internet. Anthropological studies examining South Asian religions outside their place of origin have primarily focused on issues concerning the production and perpetuation of culture.

1.1.2.2 Diaspora and Transnationalism: Differences and Similarities

The term “transnationalism” shares similarities with “Diaspora” and is often used alongside it, but they are understood and employed in various contexts, each carrying

◆ *Differences between diaspora and transnationalism*

distinct connotations. The descriptions above illustrate both the similarities and differences between the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism. Both diaspora and transnationalism involve connections to one's homeland and the integration of individuals living outside their native regions into their new communities. A key similarity is that both terms are flexible and typically involve ongoing cross - border connections, encompassing regions of origin, destination and lateral ties to other areas where migrants may reside. Diaspora studies typically emphasize the connection between homelands and scattered populations, while also considering the roles of destination countries. For instance, Safran suggests that diasporas engage in a triangular socio-cultural dynamic involving the host society and the homeland. In postmodern interpretations, the relationships among dispersed individuals themselves hold particular importance.

◆ *Transnationalism is broader than diaspora*

Three noteworthy distinctions should be highlighted if they do not play a role in the theoretical realm: Firstly, "transnationalism" holds a broader scope than diaspora in two aspects. It encompasses a wider range of social formations, extending beyond those mentioned previously to include phenomena such as networks of businesspersons and social movements. "Transnational community" is an even narrower term, whereas diaspora typically pertains to religious, ethnic and national groups and communities. Putting aside postmodern conceptualisations, diaspora primarily refers to a transnational structure that extends across a particular country of origin and a series of host countries. Conversely, transnational community encompasses a wider array of occurrences, including cross-border village communities or borderland communities. Therefore, transnational communities may include diasporas, but not all transnational communities qualify as diasporas.

◆ *Diaspora is related to collective identity*

The second dimension revolves around identity and mobility. Diaspora approaches prioritise collective identity, whereas transnational approaches derive from cross-border mobility. Although both diaspora and transnational approaches incorporate both concepts, there are occasional differences in emphasis. Diaspora approaches typically begin with inquiries into identity and subsequently consider mobility, while transnational approaches juxtapose diasporic and circular transnationalism. Generally, diaspora concepts revolve around dispersal, whether traumatic or not and

the subsequent formation and perpetuation of some form of collective identity, which may vary in the strength of its connections to the country of emigration and the countries of immigration.

- ◆ *The temporal aspect is the third difference*

The third difference between the approaches of diaspora and transnationalism relates to the temporal aspect of usage. Academics employing the term diaspora frequently consider a multi-generational pattern, while recent migration flows are typically examined using transnational approaches. Diasporas have frequently been described as enduring across generations, if not spanning a generational timeframe. Examples like the Jewish and Armenian Diasporas, as well as more recent instances such as the Palestinian Diaspora, illustrate this notion.

1.1.3 Significance of Diaspora Studies

- ◆ *Scope of diaspora*

The importance of examining the “history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance” alongside highlighting a particular origin is emphasised by James Clifford. Migration studies concentrate on the motivations and contexts of people’s movement, whether economic, political or otherwise. In contrast, diaspora studies focus on analysing the gender roles and economic circumstances of individuals settled in a foreign country, as well as their management of loyalty to their homeland and integration into the new one. Diasporic literature and cinema offer valuable avenues for exploring these subjects.

- ◆ *Diversity and Diaspora*

The significance of the diaspora as a space for women is particularly notable because both society and the media have largely overlooked the issues faced by diasporic women. Diasporic literature and writing reflect an increasing need to comprehend this phenomenon, where women play pivotal roles in sites of cultural blending through various channels such as language, economy and cultural agencies. The assumed responsibility of women as guardians of culture becomes doubly challenging when they are removed from the familiar surroundings of their community. Nurturing children in a foreign land presents immense challenges for immigrant mothers, not only because they must impart the values of two worlds to their children, but also because they themselves must adapt to a new culture. Even in families several generations into immigration, there exists tension regarding clothing choices, ideologies and the struggle to maintain ties to one’s native culture while assimilating into

the new one.

The term “diaspora” often seems insufficient as it encompasses various concepts such as migration, displacement, partition, borders, globalisation, mass communication, transculturation and hybridity. It extends beyond Jewish or Armenian migration to include expatriates, travellers, ethnic communities, refugees, immigrants and exile-workers, as noted by Khachig Tololyan. Tololyan also highlights the overlapping nature of “border” and “diaspora” experiences for many migrants. James Clifford, in his article “Diasporas” (1994), illustrates the impossibility of establishing fixed paradigms for diaspora due to increasing globalisation and divergent ideas among diasporic communities. William Safran’s definition is challenged not only by Clifford but also by Safran himself, who acknowledges the limitations of his definition and the reluctance to categorise communities rigidly. Safran expresses scepticism about the authenticity and feasibility of the conditions he imposes on the original Jewish Diaspora. The notion of returning appears utopian in current contexts, such as for the Tibetan diaspora. A significant portion of the South Asian diaspora, it can be argued, is more concerned with establishing its own identity abroad rather than returning. Similarly, the Caribbean diaspora, influenced by colonial discourse, does not align closely with Safran’s criterion of return.

- ◆ *Limitations of the concept of diaspora*

Significance of Indian Diaspora

The Indian Diaspora has a rich history of migration, ranking second only to the Chinese Diaspora globally, making it a subject worthy of academic inquiry. In recent times, it has emerged as a potent force both domestically and internationally, with economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions playing crucial roles in nation-building. Beyond its significance on a national scale, it also garners attention in academic circles, encompassing anthropological, demographic and cultural studies. The preceding historical overview underscores the intricate and diverse nature of the phenomenon of the Indian Diaspora. Consequently, the scope of academic inquiry into the Indian Diaspora spans a wide range of topics. In essence, the academic exploration of the Indian Diaspora is inherently interdisciplinary. As part of academic research, the study of the Indian Diaspora encompasses various dimensions, from demographics to the political influence wielded by the robust Diaspora.

- ◆ *Nature and relevance of the Indian diaspora*

Summarised Overview

Diaspora studies as an academic discipline had a recent origin; however the diasporic community dates back to the Jewish displacement from the Holy Land. The identity and social mobility of each migrant community is the important part to be discussed and traced historically. This unit has focused on explaining the meanings and nuances related to diaspora. The etymological origin and various associated definitions of the term are discussed in the unit. Robin Cohen has highlighted the meaning of diaspora and identified multiple types of diaspora. Terms similar to diaspora such as exile, borderland and transnationalism are explained with their contextual importance.

Diaspora is viewed and understood in various ways. Context is an important factor. Contemporary meanings attached to the diaspora have a transcultural basis. Diaspora as a social form, type of consciousness and mode of cultural production explicitly indicate the various underpinnings of the connotations of the term. Patterns of migration, the volume of migrants and their interconnectedness with the homeland are vehemently influenced by socio-political and cultural factors such as colonialism, war and displacement.

Self Assessment Questions

1. What is transnationalism?
2. What is 'exile'?
3. Distinguish between diaspora and migrant community.
4. What are the necessary elements of a migrant community to be called as diaspora?
5. Examine the current meanings of diaspora. Among the three which one would you think that most appropriate to the Indian context?
6. Compare diaspora and transnationalism and identify the differences and similarities.
7. Do you think that diaspora studies is significant? Substantiate.
8. Assess the criteria of diaspora formation.

Assignments

1. What do you mean by the term diaspora? Examine various terms allied with Diaspora and substantiate their connotations.
2. Discuss the features and implications of diaspora. Identify the necessary elements for a migrant community to be called a diaspora.
3. Examine the significance of diaspora studies along with assessing the scope of the Indian diaspora.
4. Check the current meanings of diaspora. Which one do you think is more rational and appropriate according to your perspective? Write down your answers.
5. Diaspora and transnationalism are viewed as similar concepts. Assess both concepts and identify their similarities and differences.

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Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



UNIT 2

Types of Diaspora

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ comprehend significant types and classifications of diaspora
- ◆ analyse methods and strategies adopted by diasporic communities for their existence and survival
- ◆ compare distinguished diasporic conglomerations and examine their diversities

Background

Migration is the cornerstone of diasporic studies. Considering its nature and type, it may vary and occur in different forms. Cultural differentiations make the diasporic community distinct and unique in terms of race, religion and ethnicity. Bruneau discusses a diaspora as a social unit that possesses a symbolic and 'iconographic' capital, which allows it to maintain connections and overcome the challenges of distance between its dispersed communities. Within their current settlement, Diaspora members unite around various micro-locations, such as city neighborhoods or villages, inhabited or traversed by those they identify with. Each of these locales serves as a focal point within a territory where social bonds curtail spatial and temporal separations. All diasporas form socio-spatial networks that naturally expand territorially as they incorporate both sites of memory and present-day presence.

Diasporic communities are classified into various types based on their history, traditional belongingness, nature of migration and demography of the migrants. Colonialism worked and structured migration patterns and managed the post-industrial diasporic narratives. The indentured labour system during the colonial period contributed to the emergence and evolution of modern diasporas and the formation of various communities. Currently, they are religious diaspora, political diaspora, racial or cultural diaspora and depending upon the inherent attributes they have been divided into complex, double and incipient diasporas.

Keywords

Indentured labourers, Iconography, Incipient diasporas, Cultural diaspora, Victim diaspora

Discussion

You may have learned the concept of diaspora and related terminologies in the previous unit. Now, we will look into the various diversities within the diaspora and typologies of diasporic communities based on their homeland, traditional belongingness, nature of migration and other cultural distinctiveness.

1.2.1 Diversities within Diaspora

Diversity within the Indian diaspora manifests in various ways. These distinctions, according to Jayaram, arise from the historical context and circumstances of migration, whether it occurred during pre-colonial, colonial or post-colonial periods. Differences emerge based on whether individuals migrated as convicts, indentured laborers or voluntary migrants. Additionally, diversity reflects socio-cultural variations within the diaspora, particularly regarding language, occupation, class, caste and religion. The idea of a singular diaspora representing one nation is challenged by these diversities.

- ◆ *Diversities in a diaspora*

Complex diasporas exhibit both diversities and shared characteristics among certain groups. For instance, Werbner notes that in such complex diasporas, people from specific regions often share a rich material culture and a dominant religion, fostering public arenas and economic cooperation across national and religious boundaries. The South Indian diaspora serves as an example, encompassing individuals from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

- ◆ *Complex diaspora*

Some diasporic journeys involve multiple relocations, forming what are known as “double” and “triple” diasporas. This occurs due to various factors, including unfavourable conditions in the host country, better opportunities elsewhere, geopolitical shifts and the passage of time. An illustrative example is the journey of Gujarati migrants engaged in business and trade, who initially migrated to East Africa during colonial times, then resettled in the U. K.

- ◆ *Double and triple diaspora*



following Idi Amin's policies in the 1960s and later moved to the U. S. in the 1980s and 90s for improved business prospects. Similarly, recent indentured labour migrants from India to the Caribbean have relocated to the U. S. A., Canada and the Netherlands due to volatile political conditions.

◆ *Incipient diaspora*

Sheffer describes "Incipient Diasporas" as emerging ethno-national groups that are either on the brink of evolving into fully established, enduring diasporas or are still in the early stages of formation. This term refers to newer migrations, particularly labour migrations to North America, Europe and the Gulf States, which carry an appearance of transience. These groups exhibit similar characteristics to diasporas, stemming from voluntary migration rather than coercion. Examples include the Turkish community in Germany, Pakistanis in Britain, Denmark and other European countries, as well as in the Persian Gulf, along with the Roma and other groups beginning to organize themselves into diasporic communities.

1.2.2 Types of Diaspora

◆ *Cultural elements in diaspora formation*

There are four primary diasporas globally, although their distribution across continents at the turn of the twenty-first century is uneven. Culture, encompassing aspects like folklore, cuisine, language, literature, cinema, music, press, community life and family ties, holds significant importance within each diaspora. What sets them apart is the varying density of their organizational structures and the influence, to a greater or lesser extent, of their homeland nations, if they still exist. Family bonds are crucial within diasporas, particularly evident in those originating from Asia and the eastern Mediterranean, known for their extended family structures. Community ties are similarly integral across all types of diasporas. The main factors shaping diaspora dynamics include religion, entrepreneurship, politics and a blend of race and culture. By considering these criteria, a typology of diasporas can be outlined, with examples.

◆ *Religious and entrepreneurship diaspora*

The first category comprises religiously oriented diasporas centered around entrepreneurship, with other factors subordinated or playing secondary roles. Prime examples include the Chinese, Indian and Lebanese diasporas. The influence of the homeland nation-state is not decisive for various reasons: there may be multiple states instead of a clearly defined homeland (e.g., Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China and South-East Asia for the Chinese); the homeland may choose to remain disengaged, intervening

only in extreme circumstances (as seen with India); or the homeland may be weak and divided (as with Lebanon). Religion's role here is not central, largely due to its diversity, encompassing Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. Entrepreneurship is pivotal in the reproduction strategy of these diasporas, many of which emerged from colonial contexts where rulers assigned various commercial and entrepreneurial activities (such as the Indians and Lebanese in Africa and the Chinese in South-East Asia).

◆ *Language and diaspora*

The second category of diasporas may revolve around monotheistic religions, where the language of religious texts or liturgy holds significant importance. Here, religion, often intertwined with a specific language, serves as the primary organizing element. This is evident in diasporas like the Jewish, Greek, Armenian, and Assyro-Chaldean communities. Greek and Armenian languages are typically taught alongside religious studies in diaspora schools. Synagogues and churches, each with distinct ethnic characteristics, serve as foundational institutions for these diaspora groups. While nation-states may exert increasing influence over these diasporas, as seen in the case of the Greek diaspora, where cohesion is bolstered by the Orthodox Church, the diaspora communities have managed to maintain relative autonomy. This was demonstrated when the Holy Synod of the Athens Church attempted to assert control over the Greek Orthodox Church in the United States; strong resistance ultimately led to the restoration of the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

◆ *Political diaspora*

The third category of diasporas inherently incorporates a political dimension, particularly when the homeland is under foreign domination and the diaspora's primary goal is the establishment of a nation-state. The Palestinian diaspora serves as a prominent example, with the successful establishment of a *de facto* state-in-exile, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the partial realization of their objective through the creation of the Palestinian Authority in 1994. The core event shaping their collective identity is the Nakba or catastrophe, of 1948, which marks their displacement and occupation.

The fourth category of diasporas revolves around racial and cultural factors, exemplified by the Black Diaspora, which has undergone various attempts to define a shared identity. Centered on the concept of the "negro race," this diaspora stands apart from others in several aspects. Firstly,

◆ *Diaspora and shared identity*

it lacks direct references to specific societies or territories of origin. Defined primarily by a socially constructed racial identity, it is subsequently shaped by culture. The definition of race within this diaspora is contested, often debated and is subject to interpretation, as is the conception of African Americans as a diaspora. Collective memories within this diaspora are rooted in traumatic experiences such as the slave trade and plantation economies. A decentralized community structure characterises the Black Diaspora, lacking a unified transmission of codified traditions or political organization. Instead, it consists of non-hierarchical community segments, often unstructured societies. Few contemporary African Americans identify their identity in relation to ancestral African homelands. European Roma can also be included in this category, sharing similar characteristics. Cultural hybridisation, involving borrowing from host societies, is prevalent in both cases within highly diverse host societies. Racial discrimination and a tendency toward ghettoization, along with limited upward social mobility, are common features, contributing to the challenge of escaping poverty.

◆ *Difference between diaspora and migrant community*

The notion of Diaspora does not encompass every kind of dispersed population resulting from migration. In the post-colonial era, other social formations emerged within migration contexts. Terms like transnational communities and movements of territories, distinct from the concept of Diaspora, can be used to describe these phenomena. While they share certain characteristics with Diasporas, they also possess their own unique features.

◆ *Bruneau's classification of diaspora*

In the 1990s, various typologies emerged to comprehend and describe diasporas. Alain Medam proposed a typology centered on the level of cohesion and dynamism within diasporic organizations. In this framework, Medam distinguishes between "crystallized diasporas" and "fluid diasporas." The former encompasses dynamic diasporas marked by the effectiveness of their transnational networks, such as the Chinese diaspora, while Medam provides limited description of fluid diasporas. Subsequently, Gabriel Sheffer introduced three types of diasporas, including fluid diasporas, in his classification. He defines fluid diasporas as those associated with a homeland state. Another expert on the topic, Michel Bruneau, suggests that typologies should be based on the organizational structure of diasporas. He defined three major types of diasporas:

1. The entrepreneurial diasporas (Chinese or Libanese)
2. The religious diasporas (Jews or Greeks)
3. 3. The political diasporas (Palestinians, Tibetans)

◆ *Cohen's classification of diaspora*

Gabriel Sheffer introduced a differentiation among diasporas: those lacking a homeland state, termed stateless diasporas (e.g., Palestinians), and those associated with a homeland state, termed state-based diasporas. This classification enables the examination of the evolving organizational structures within ethnic groups over time. For instance, the Jewish diaspora has transitioned from being state-based to stateless and, since 1948, back to being state-based. Robin Cohen proposed four typologies of diaspora:

1. Labour diasporas (Indians);
2. Imperial diasporas (British);
3. The trade diasporas (Chinese & Lebanese);
4. The Cultural diasporas, with the Caribbean case.
5. Victim diaspora.

◆ *Cultural diaspora and social dynamics*

This fourth category of diaspora, known as cultural diaspora, particularly exemplified by the Caribbean case, has emerged as one of the most dynamic and productive types. This is largely due to the predominant role of intellectuals and writers within this group, who have been highly active in the public sphere. The discourse of the cultural diaspora emphasises the concept of hybridity, as articulated by postmodernist authors, to describe the blending of cultures and the emergence of new social dynamics. The French Caribbean serves as a notable example where the notion of hybridity has gained prominence.

◆ *Diasporas as nation-state and traveling cultures*

Robin Cohen has classified various types of diasporas. Firstly, victim diasporas encompass classic examples of forced exile, such as the Jewish, African and Armenian diasporas. Secondly, labour diasporas involve mass migrations driven by the search for employment and economic opportunities, such as the Indian and Turkish diasporas. Thirdly, trade diasporas consist of migrations aimed at establishing trade routes and connections, exemplified by the Chinese and Lebanese diasporas. Fourthly, imperial diasporas refer to migrations facilitated by individuals seeking to serve and maintain colonial empires, including the British and French diasporas. Lastly, cultural diasporas involve movements

driven by chain migration processes, such as the Caribbean peoples, the Sindhi, and the Parsi diasporas. In the Indian context, examples of cultural diasporas include the Jews of Kochi, Arabs of Calicut and Portuguese of Goa and Kochi. Additionally, Paul Gilroy introduced the concept of the Black Diaspora. Cohen summarizes this perspective by noting that diasporas are positioned between “nation-states” and “traveling cultures,” residing physically within a nation-state but spiritually traversing beyond its spatial and temporal confines.

1.2.3. Diasporas: New Classifications

◆ *Diaspora and new trends*

As the number of diasporas grows, there is a necessity to grasp the criteria and newly emerging trends. Cohen has endeavored to classify them based on the underlying forces behind their original dispersal. Gabriel Shaffer, in his work *Diaspora Politics*, delineates diasporas based on their fundamental identity and their connection or lack thereof with the nation-state. He makes a further distinction between large groups bound by regional or affiliational ties and those united by primordial affiliations such as ethnicity and even nation. These he terms ethnonational diasporas.

◆ *State linked and stateless diaspora*

Shaffer characterises state-linked diasporas as those residing in host countries but retaining strong ties to societies of their ethnic origin, which constitute a majority in established states. Stateless diasporas, on the other hand, consist of dispersed groups unable to establish their own independent state. This category includes Palestinians, Kurds, Basques, Sikhs, Tibetans and other similar groups. It also encompasses groups with complex identities, lacking distinct ties to a specific geographic location, such as the Romani people, the black diaspora in Europe, South America and Latin America, and to some extent, African Americans. Shaffer notes that these are borderline cases, as it is challenging for the majority of each diaspora to definitively define their homeland and currently, they lack both the desire and the means to establish a nation-state.

Shaffer introduces another distinction based on the relative age of diasporas. Historical diasporas like Jews, Greeks, Armenians and Chinese emerged in antiquity or the Middle Ages but have since become linked to nation-states formed much later. Modern diasporas originated in the 17th century and evolved into fully-fledged, state-linked communities, such as the Italian, Polish and Irish

◆ *Sheffer's classification of diaspora*

diasporas. The third category comprises incipient diasporas, which were previously dormant but have experienced a resurgence. These groups have organized themselves in their host countries and in their ancestral homelands. Notable examples include segments of Polish, Croatian, Slovenian, Ukrainian and some Scandinavian communities in the U.S.A. and Australia.

Summarised Overview

Several scholars have presented various typologies of diaspora including Sheffer, Cohen and Bruneau. Sheffer has indicated the diversified nature of the migrant communities and classified into complex, double or triple, and incipient diasporas. Bruneau focused on the organizational structure of the diaspora and divided it into entrepreneurial, religious and political diasporas. On the other hand, Cohen discussed multiple types of diasporas such as labour, imperial, trade, cultural and victim diasporas. Victims or political diasporas such as Palestinians spread all over the world are worth studying since they have been by products of the Jewish diaspora.

The study about migrant communities exposes different religious, political, racial or cultural typologies and divisions based on specificities such as language and trade. Here, the first category is identified with its significance given to entrepreneurship. Religiously oriented diasporas centered around entrepreneurship such as the Indians, Chinese and Lebanese are the best examples. The second category links to the diasporas around where the language of religious texts or liturgy holds significant importance. Here, religion, often intertwined with a specific language, serves as the primary organizing element. A good example is the Greek diaspora. The third category is constituted after political dimensions, particularly when the homeland is under foreign domination and the diaspora's primary goal is the establishment of a nation-state. Such as in the case of the Palestinian diaspora whose primary objective is to establish a homeland in the occupied Palestinian territories. Finally, the Black diaspora represents racial and cultural factors, exemplified by the Black Diaspora, which has undergone various attempts to define a shared identity. Beyond the afore mentioned classifications, the unit discusses more contemporary migration patterns and types of diasporic communities around the world.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Define complex diaspora.
2. What is incipient diaspora?
3. Differentiate between labour diaspora and the trade diaspora.
4. What are the four primary diasporas found at the global level? Explain.
5. What is fluid diaspora?
6. Elaborate on the entrepreneurial diaspora.
7. Examine Cohen's classifications of diaspora and discuss who are the victim diaspora.
8. Distinguish between state-linked and stateless diaspora.

Assignments

1. Diversities within a diasporic community are a reality. Assess Sheffer's classifications of diaspora and distinguish between complex and incipient diasporas.
2. Looking at various causes of the migrant community, Robin Cohen has proposed four typologies of diaspora. Elaborate Cohen's classifications along with identifying the specificities of each community.
3. Based on the organizational structure, Michel Bruneau has divided the diasporas into three categories. Examine the three categories with examples.
4. Diaspora is a heterogeneous community. Justify the statement.
5. What are the main factors shaping diaspora dynamics? Discuss diasporic communities based on religion and entrepreneurship along with examples.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

Theories of Migration and Diaspora

BLOCK-02





UNIT 1

Theories of Migration

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learners will be able to:

- ◆ acquaint themselves with the concepts and theories of migration
- ◆ comprehend trends and patterns of migration among the international community
- ◆ assess socio-cultural and economic impact of diasporas upon the homelands

Background

Migration is an ancient phenomenon, predating the existence of nation-states. Historically, people migrated from one place or continent to another long before the birth of modern nations. International migration involves the movement of people across national borders. In the contemporary world, this phenomenon has gained momentum and become more stable due to transnational connectivity. The transnationalisation of connections, networks and identities fosters the formation of diasporas. While it is challenging to define diasporas precisely, they are generally long-term settlers who maintain socio-cultural, economic and sometimes political ties with their homeland, while also integrating into the socio-cultural, economic and political life of their host country. In this unit, we provide an overview of international migration, exploring various theories to understand its concept and dynamics and examine its relationship to the formation of diasporas. This unit not only delves into migration but also discusses the connections between migration and diaspora, along with the concept of diaspora itself.

Keywords

Push-pull, Settlement, Emigrants, Out-migrant, Transnationalism, Remittance

Discussion

◆ *Meaning of migration*

Migration can be simply understood as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence by an individual, family or group. It is a broad concept that can be traced throughout human history. People migrate for various reasons, including better economic opportunities, improved lifestyle, educational prospects, demographic imbalances, family reunification, natural disasters, climate change, epidemics, wars, changes in national boundaries, genocide and religious or social ostracisation. Essentially, migration occurs due to diverse reasons and circumstances.

◆ *Types of migration*

There are different types of migration. Voluntary or involuntary / forced, internal or international, temporary or permanent and regular or irregular. Demko, Ross and Schnell describe migration as a complex component of population change that facilitates the diffusion of ideas and information, indicates social and economic changes and serves as a human adjustment to various problems.

◆ *Age of migration*

Although migration has always been a part of human history, the modern times are referred to as the “Age of Migration” due to the significant increase in international migration. According to the United Nations Population Division, international migrants increased from 105 million in 1985 to 214 million in 2010, constituting just over 3 percent of the world’s population. However, this figure may not be entirely accurate as many migrants are undocumented and definitions of migrants vary by country. In some places, migrants can become citizens, while in others, even second-generation migrants may remain non-citizens.

◆ *Migration studies as a discipline*

Migration is an interdisciplinary subject, with each discipline providing its own analysis based on its academic needs. There has been a shift from quantitative population geography to qualitative anthropological interpretations, focusing on understanding migrant experiences rather than just the causes or effects of migration. Castles states that migration is part of the transformation of social structures and institutions and the global political economy. He emphasizes that migration studies should be embedded in broader social theory, utilizing the full range of social science disciplines, as migration encompasses all dimensions of human experience, necessitating an interdisciplinary approach.

◆ *Major theories on migration*

Sociologist Everett Lee noted that factors influencing an emigrant's decision can be divided into push factors (operating in the area of origin) and pull factors (at the destination). At the micro level, migration results from decisions made by individuals, referred to as 'rational actors.' There are several theories on migration, including Everett Lee's Push-pull theory, Standing's Materialism theory, Duncan's theory, Ravenstein's Laws of migration, the World System theory, Network theory, Institutional theory and the theory of Cumulative Causation, among others. This discussion will focus on two of the most significant migration theories: Everett Lee's and Ravenstein's, examining their contemporary relevance.

2.1.1. International Migration

◆ *IOM & Migration movement*

International migration occurs when individuals cross state boundaries and reside in the host country for a minimum period. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) defines international migration as the movement of individuals who leave their country of origin or habitual residence to establish themselves either permanently or temporarily in another country, thereby crossing an international frontier. Scholars like Fabio Baggio (2016) have provided a descriptive classification of migrants. These classifications include:

- **Geographical classification:** Includes transoceanic, transcontinental, border, neighbor and regional migrations.
- **Chronological classification:** Categorizes migrants based on the period, such as short-term and long-term /temporary or permanent migrations.
- **Demographic / Economic classification:** Includes categories like individual, family, male-female, highly skilled and skilled migrants.
- **Political and Legal classification:** Includes migrants under regular or illegal migrations.
- **Casual classification:** Includes free or forced migrations.

◆ *Features of international migration*

The United Nations (UN) identifies two basic features of international migration: "international migrant stock" and "international migration flow." The migrant stock measures the number of international migrants at a given point in time, while migration flow refers to the number of individuals arriving in (inflows) or departing from (outflows) a country

or region over a specified period, usually a calendar year. The UN emphasizes that both measures are essential for assessing migration trends and providing complementary insights for policy purposes.

2.1.2 Everett Lee's Push and Pull Theory

In his work *A Theory of Migration* Everett Lee categorizes the factors influencing the decision to migrate and the migration process into four groups. The first category is:

- a. Factors associated with the area of origin - These include various motivations that prompt individuals to leave their original location; these are known as push factors.
- b. Factors associated with the area of destination - These are the attractive forces that draw or pull people to a particular area. According to Lee, these factors are typically found in a country's metropolitan areas.
- c. Intervening Obstacles - Lee identifies distance and transportation as significant barriers to migration. He notes that technological advancements have reduced these obstacles in modern times. Additionally, Lee mentions other challenges such as the cost of moving, ethnic barriers and personal factors.
- d. Personal factors - Lee asserts that numerous personal factors influence an individual's decision to migrate from their place of origin to a destination. An individual's perception of 'push and pull forces' significantly impacts the actual decision of migration. Lee classifies these forces into 'pluses' and 'minuses,' representing pull and push factors, respectively. Additionally, "zeros" act as neutral elements that balance these competing forces. The following migration model clearly illustrates this concept.



Figure 2.1.1 Intervening Obstacles in the Migration (Source: Lee (1966, p.50))

◆ Factors determining migration

In the figure above, the first circle represents the area of origin, and the second circle represents the area of destination. The plus signs indicate the forces that attract people to a place (pull factors), while the minus signs indicate the forces that push people away. The zeros represent people's indifference toward migration. Intervening obstacles are situated between these forces. According to Lee, personal factors such as age, sex and education, along with push-pull factors and intervening obstacles, determine migration. Everett Lee has formulated three hypotheses – Characteristics of Migrants, Volume of Migration and Streams of Migration – that explain why some people migrate while others do not. These hypotheses are discussed in the following section.



Everett Lee was born in South Carolina in 1917 and grew up in North Carolina. He did undergraduate work at Armstrong Junior College in Savannah, Georgia (from which he obtained an A.A. degree), Emory University in Atlanta, and simultaneously with his graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania, from which he obtained the Ph.D. in sociology in 1952. His career as a faculty member and researcher has been spent at the University of Pennsylvania (1954-66), the University of Massachusetts

at Amherst (1966-70), and Professor of Sociology at the University of Georgia at Athens (from 1970 until 2005, including his emeritus time spent at the university gerontology center). He has served as consultant to the Census Bureau, a member of the U.S. National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics, and on several committees of the National Academy of Sciences. His publications, focused particularly on population distribution and migration within the U.S., include the seminal article, "A Theory of Migration" (Demography, 1966), and the monographs (with others), Population Redistribution and Economic Growth, United States, 1870-1950 (1957), The Development of the United States Census (1975), Net Migration of the Population, 1960-70, by Age, Sex, and Color, Parts 1-7 (1975-77), and Population Estimates: Methods for Small Area Analysis (1982). Dr. Lee died in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2007.

2.1.2.1. Characteristics of Migrants

According to Lee, the characteristics of migrants are spread under seven categories as listed below:

1. Migration is selective - Differences in personal factors cause individuals to respond differently to the conditions at the places of origin and destination, as well as to intervening obstacles. This selectivity can be positive or negative. It is positive when migrants of high quality are selected and negative when migrants of low quality are selected.
2. Migrants who respond mainly to the plus factors at the destination tend to be positively selected. These individuals are not compelled to migrate but do so because they see opportunities elsewhere. They carefully weigh the pros and cons of staying versus moving. For instance, professionals, managers and educated individuals who are well-established in their current location might migrate if they receive better offers elsewhere, viewing migration as a step forward.
3. Migrants who respond mainly to the minus factors at the origin tend to be negatively selected. If the negative factors are overwhelming for the entire population, they might not be chosen for migration. In other words, those who migrate primarily due to negative factors at the origin are often negatively selected.

4. Considering all migrants together, selection for migration tends to be bimodal. Some migrants leave an origin primarily due to plus factors at the destination, leading to positive selection, while others leave due to minus factors, leading to negative selection. As a result, if we plot the characteristics of all migrants on a continuum from poor to excellent, we often see a J-shaped or U-shaped curve. This pattern is evident in characteristics such as occupational class or education.
5. The degree of positive selection increases with the difficulty posed by intervening obstacles. Even if selection at the origin is negative or random, intervening obstacles tend to filter out the weak or incapable. For example, the challenging journey to America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries eliminated many weak individuals, as in the selection observed among German refugees from Eastern Europe during and after the World War II. Generally, as the distance of migration increases, migrants tend to be a superior group. Conversely, individuals who are less capable often engage in short-distance movements within restricted areas, such as uneducated slum dwellers moving within a radius of a few-blocks or sharecroppers moving short distances in the pre-World War II United States.
6. The increased likelihood of migration during specific stages of the life cycle plays a crucial role in selecting migrants. Migration is somewhat a part of the rites of passage. For instance, individuals entering the workforce or getting married often move away from their parental homes, while those who experience divorce or widowhood also tend to relocate. Since these life events often occur at well-defined ages, they significantly influence the age distribution of migrants. They also affect other types of selection, such as marital status or family size.
7. The characteristics of migrants typically fall between those of the population at the origin and those at the destination. Individuals with different characteristics react differently to the balance of positive and negative factors at both origin and destination. Even before migrating, migrants tend to adopt some characteristics of the population at the destination, although they never completely lose some traits they share with the population at origin. This partial similarity

to the destination population enables them to find certain positive factors there, while their dissimilarity to the origin population prompts them to migrate due to negative factors. Many studies have illustrated this intermediate relationship. For example, migrant fertility often falls between that of the origin and destination populations and the education level of rural migrants tends to be higher than that of non-migrants at the origin but lower than that of the destination population. Thus, migration presents a paradox in that it can potentially impact the quality of the population, as measured by specific characteristics, at both the origin and the destination.

2.1.2.2. Volume of Migration

Regarding the volume of migration, Lee has discussed six points which are listed below.

- a. The volume of migration within a specific region varies according to the diversity among the areas within that region. If migration is influenced by weighing positive and negative factors at both the origin and the destination, regions with high diversity typically experience higher levels of migration. This phenomenon is evident in countries undergoing expansion of settlements, such as the United States in the 19th century, Eastern Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries and Siberia in the 20th century. In such contexts, new opportunities arise that attract individuals whose dissatisfaction with their current location is minimal. Significant attractions, like the discovery of gold in California, silver in Colorado or the opening of the Red Indian Territory for settlement, can rapidly emerge. Supporting such movements involves providing transportation, protection, supplies and various amenities, which create specialised and often lucrative opportunities. Therefore, pioneers, settlers, soldiers, merchants and adventurous individuals often precede the main wave of settlement to establish outposts and key points of development. The end of a settlement period does not necessarily lead to a reduction in regional diversity. Instead, industrialisation, which typically follows settlement, further diversifies these areas. In dynamic economies, new opportunities contin-

- ually arise in locations requiring workers, while older enterprises are abandoned if they no longer prove profitable.
- b. The volume of migration varies according to the diversity among the people in a given territory. When there is considerable similarity among people – whether in terms of race, ethnic background, education, income or tradition – we generally expect a lower rate of migration compared to regions with greater diversity.
 - c. The volume of migration is influenced by the difficulty of overcoming intervening barriers. Put simply, the greater the obstacles, the lower the volume of migration. A critical factor in migration decisions is the challenge posed by intervening obstacles. For instance, tunneling under the Berlin Wall was a perilous task not to be undertaken lightly and sea voyages to the Americas in the 17th and 18th centuries were similarly daunting. The relaxation of immigration restrictions among the Common Market countries has led to significant movements of workers from one member state to another.
 - d. The volume of migration is influenced by economic conditions. Business cycles impact migration in various ways, but a key factor is how they affect the comparison of positive and negative factors between the origin and the destination. During periods of economic growth, new businesses and industries emerge rapidly, attracting workers from distant places. However, these opportunities are unevenly distributed, leaving some regions relatively stagnant. This disparity heightens the contrast between the positive factors at the destination and the negative factors at the origin, making the latter seem more burdensome. In contrast, during economic downturns, some businesses fail and expansion slows down. Opportunities level off, and familiarity with one's current location – a source of stability in itself – discourages moving to places where positive factors no longer clearly outweigh those at home.
 - e. Unless strict limitations are enforced, both the volume and rate of migration tend to increase over time. Several factors contribute to this trend,

including the growing diversity among regions and populations, as well as the reduction of barriers that once hindered migration.

- f. The volume and pace of migration are influenced by the level of advancement within a country or region. In economically progressive countries, industrial development accentuates differences among regions, while educational disparities distinguish the population. Simultaneously, advancements in technology and political policies reduce barriers to migration within the country. Consequently, we typically observe significant immigration into developed countries when policies allow, along with a high rate of internal migration within these nations. Conversely, the least developed countries often have predominantly immobile populations who relocate only under duress and typically in large groups rather than individually. For example, the United States, the most economically advanced nation, experiences remarkably high migration rates, with one in five individuals changing residence annually. Similarly, economically advanced countries like Sweden, Canada and West Germany exhibit similar migration patterns, albeit at slightly lower levels.

2.1.2.3. Streams and Counter-streams of Migration

Lee discussed the movement of migrants from one area to another through six main points.

1. Migration typically occurs within distinct streams – It is widely observed that migrants often travel along clearly defined paths leading to specific destinations. This phenomenon occurs because opportunities are often concentrated in specific locations and because migrants generally need to use established transportation routes.
2. Every major stream of migration tends to have a corresponding counter-stream. A counter-stream develops for several reasons. Positive factors at the origin may diminish or become less attractive, particularly during economic downturns. There may also be a reassessment of the balance between positive and negative factors at both the origin and the destination. The existence of a migration stream itself fosters

connections between the origin and the destination. Those who acquire new skills or wealth at the destination sometimes find advantageous opportunities to return to the origin. Returning migrants often bring back knowledge of previously overlooked opportunities or use their connections in the destination area to establish businesses back home. Children born at the destination often accompany returning migrants, as do local residents who have learned about opportunities or amenities at the origin through those who migrated in the stream. Additionally, not all migrants intend to stay permanently at their destination.

3. The efficiency of the migration stream (the ratio of migrants in the stream compared to those in the counter-stream or the net population redistribution affected by the opposite flow) is high when the primary drivers of the migration stream are negative factors at the origin. This point is self-evident and requires little further explanation. For instance, very few Irish migrants who fled famine conditions returned to Ireland and similarly, very few African Americans who migrated from the South to the North in the United States have returned to their Southern origins.
4. The effectiveness of migration streams and counter-streams tends to be limited when the origin and destination areas are similar. In such cases, individuals moving in opposite directions typically do so for similar reasons, effectively offsetting each other.
5. The efficiency of migration streams is heightened when there are significant intervening obstacles. Migrants who overcome substantial obstacles do so for compelling reasons as such migrations are not undertaken lightly. There is often a similar set of obstacles for both those in the stream and counter-stream and returning migrants face the challenge of navigating these obstacles again. For instance, the cost of returning from California to Pennsylvania deters many from making the journey back.
6. The effectiveness of migration streams fluctuates with economic conditions, being more pronounced during prosperous periods and subdued during depressions. During economic booms, typical destination areas like major centres of commerce and industry

expand rapidly and few individuals, whether returning migrants or others, tend to move in the opposite direction. In contrast, during economic downturns, many migrants return to their origin areas, while others move towards perceived safer, non-industrialised regions. In extreme cases, streams and counter-streams may reverse entirely, as seen during the movement to and from rural areas during the height of the Great Depression. Everett Lee concludes that migration is always selective and influenced by push-pull factors. Areas with attractive pull factors are typically the initial choice for migration, with pull factors generally exerting more influence on migration to urban areas than push factors, despite the impact of intervening obstacles.

2.1.3. Ravenstein's Laws of Migration

Ravenstein formulated his migration laws in 1885, focusing on international migration. These generalisations, known as the "laws of migration," remain relevant today. Here are Ravenstein's key insights.

- a. There is a negative correlation between distance and the volume of migration. Most migrants tend to relocate over short distances. Those who migrate longer distances typically prefer larger centres of commerce and industry.
- b. Migration occurs gradually. Rural residents move to nearby rapidly developing towns, creating vacancies that are filled by migrants from more remote rural areas. Meanwhile, town residents often relocate to larger urban centers higher in the hierarchy.
- c. Each migration flow generates a corresponding counter-flow.
- d. Rural inhabitants tend to be more mobile compared to urban dwellers, with migration primarily flowing from agricultural regions to centres of industry and commerce.
- e. Females exhibit greater mobility within their country of birth, while males more frequently venture beyond national borders.
- f. Migration shows significant age selectivity, with adults in the working-age brackets displaying a higher tendency to migrate.
- g. The volume of migration rises in tandem with eco-

conomic diversification and improvements in transportation infrastructure.

◆ *Changing trends in migration*

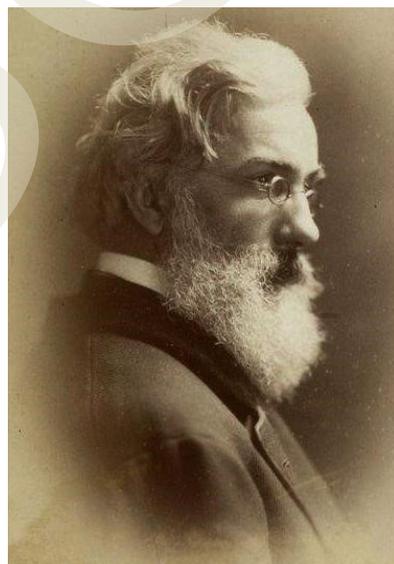
The current discourse on migration theory acknowledges that migration decreases with greater distances, a longstanding universal truth. However, this principle has become less significant in the modern era of advanced transportation. Internal migration rates have increased due to modernisation and uneven development. Studies consistently show that migration tends to favour certain age groups, with younger demographics often displaying higher rates of migration.

◆ *New Patterns of migration*

For example, the departure of emigrants from Kerala creates vacancies filled by migrants from states like Bihar and West Bengal within India. Similarly, migration to the Gulf from Kerala created employment gaps initially filled by Tamil migrants, followed by people from the northern and northeastern regions. Present migration patterns in India highlight a movement from rural agricultural areas to urban centers in search of better wages and job opportunities.

◆ *Example for Ravenstein's theory*

Recent studies underscore that migrants are increasingly selective in choosing their destinations, often preferring wealthier countries. This trend is evident in the high migration rates to European nations. Ravenstein's theory, formulated in 1885, remains relevant today, emphasising the ongoing migration trends from specific origins to destinations. For instance, the migration flow from West Bengal to Kerala mirrors Ravenstein's observations.



Ernst Georg Ravenstein (also known as Ernest George) FRSGS (30 December 1834 – 13 March 1913) was a German-English geographer and cartographer. Rather than focusing on travel, his work centered more on research, particularly in the areas of cartography and the history of geography. Born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, into a family of cartographers, Ravenstein spent the majority of his adult life living in England at Lorn

Road, Lambeth. He passed away in Germany, his birthplace, on 13 March 1913. After relocating to England, Ravenstein became a naturalized British subject and worked for the Topographical Department of the British War Office for 20 years, from 1855 to 1875. He served on the councils of both the Royal Statistical and Royal Geographical Societies for many years and held a position as Professor of Geography at Bedford College in 1882–83. In 1902, he became the first recipient of the Victoria Gold Medal from the Royal Geographical Society, in recognition of his 40 years of work to introduce scientific methods into UK cartography. His geographical statistics and projections were highly regarded and formed the foundation for official planning at the time. Ravenstein's *Systematic Atlas* (1884) implemented many of his innovative ideas for teaching cartography. His work also contributed to the *Philips's World Atlas*, which featured his maps and statistics for many decades. In the 1880s, he developed a theory of human migration that remains foundational to modern migration studies. In his book *Laws of Migration*, Ravenstein introduced the concept of step migration, explaining that migration often happens gradually, with people moving in stages from one place to another.

Criticism

The laws of migration are flawed and have limited relevance in today's world. Technological advancements in transportation, for instance, have made some of these laws outdated. Initially, the notion that migrants are consistently replaced by subsequent waves of migrants is no longer universally true. A case in point is the migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa in 2008, where many migrants did not see replacements arriving in Zimbabwe. Instead, a significant number dispersed from Zimbabwe. Similarly, with Mexican migrants to the U. S. A., many are dispersing rather than being replaced by new arrivals. This concept may still apply to isolated tribes that historically moved to different areas in search of fertile lands.

- ◆ Limitations of laws of migration

The traditional notion that females are more migratory locally while males undertake longer journeys is becoming less relevant today. Although females still migrate more within their local areas, they also increasingly undertake longer distances, facilitated by improved transportation systems and greater gender emancipation. Similarly, the idea that migration occurs in sequential steps has become obsolete. Many recent migrants, particularly rural residents

- ◆ Limitations of migration theories



seeking employment, do not follow sequential steps but instead migrate directly to metropolitan areas where employment opportunities are known to exist. Ravenstein's theory, originally based on observations in England and Europe, has proven inadequate when applied to other regions.

Summarised Overview

Migration refers to the movement of individuals, families or groups from one location to another, either permanently or temporarily, motivated by various factors. Historically, migration has been driven by economic opportunities, educational prospects, demographic shifts, family reunification, natural disasters, wars and other social and political forces. It can be categorized into different types, such as voluntary or forced, internal or international and regular or irregular. Migration plays a significant role in social and population changes, spreading ideas and information and influencing social and economic dynamics. The increase in international migration in recent decades has earned the present era the title of the "Age of Migration," with millions of people moving across borders.

Migration is a complex phenomenon studied from different disciplinary perspectives, each offering unique insights. Sociologist Everett Lee's Push-Pull theory highlights how factors at the place of origin (push) and the destination (pull) influence migration decisions, alongside intervening obstacles and personal factors. Migration theories, like Lee's and Ravenstein's Laws of Migration, offer frameworks for understanding migration patterns, emphasizing factors like economic conditions, intervening barriers and the characteristics of migrants. Despite the universality of these theories, advancements in technology and changing social norms, such as gender equality and improved transportation, have challenged some of their earlier conclusions, illustrating the evolving nature of migration dynamics.

Self Assessment Questions

1. What is international migration?
2. Fabio Baggio has classified migrants into five categories. What are they?
3. Who authored the work *A Theory of Migration*?
4. Examine Lee's categorization of factors influencing the migration

process

5. Analyse the seven categories pointed out by Lee in association to the characteristics of migrants.
6. What is the volume of migration? Discuss the six points raised by Lee.
7. What are the laws of migration? Discuss
8. Observe the migration patterns that are taking place around you. Do you think that laws of migration are outdated? Prepare a critical commentary.

Assignments

1. Define international migration and discuss Fabio Baggio's classifications of migrants.
2. Lee has presented six points related to the volume of migration. What are they? Elaborate.
3. Do you think that Ravenstein's laws of migration are relevant today? Analyse them in the light of contemporary migration processes.

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Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

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UNIT 2

Theories of Migration and Formation of Diaspora

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ analyse the migratory trends from a theoretical perspective
- ◆ comprehend theoretical factors and elements that contribute to the formation of diaspora all over the world
- ◆ assess the prominent diasporas of the world using the existing theoretical framework

Background

Diaspora theory, as a research methodology, encourages us to examine the interactions between three main actors: the homeland, the host country and the diaspora community. By analysing the socio economic, cultural and political aspects of both the homeland and the host, we can gain insights into how a community develops when it is dispersed away from its original location. At this stage, it is crucial to distinguish diaspora theory from transnationalism. While transnationalism is often discussed in conjunction with diaspora theory, the latter specifically focuses on the experiences of individuals 'exiled' from their homelands, rather than the broader phenomenon of migration.

In this unit, we will explore various theories such as Migration system theory, Transnational theory, Neoclassical theory, Segmented labour theory, Historical-structural theory and World systems theory, Social capital theory and Cumulative causation theory. These theories look at the various factors and socio-political-cultural and economic elements that played significant roles in stimulating migration or the process of the formation of diasporas.

Keywords

Diaspora, Transnationalism, Multipolar system, Trans-migrants, System theory, Social capital

Discussion

- ◆ *Evolution of migration studies*

International migration studies have developed over the years, with no single theory able to fully explain the rise and spread of international migration. Various social scientists, including sociologists, social anthropologists, demographers, economists and geographers, have contributed to understanding this phenomenon by developing and applying their own analytical tools and methods.

- ◆ *Ways of diaspora studies*

Studies on migration have undergone an academic evolution, transitioning from focusing on migrants to diasporas and finally to transnational social movements. The greatest overlap between diaspora studies (originating from cultural studies) and sociology of migration theories is found in the area of transnational migration. According to Nadja Johnson, diaspora studies go beyond transnational migration theories in two main ways: (1) they focus on how diaspora members self-identify and form new movements based on this identity, and (2) they explore how diaspora members connect with their host country, home country and each other. These points pose challenges for categorizing and defining people who move across borders.

- ◆ *Diaspora studies in the academics*

Academics have widely utilised the concept of diaspora and made significant contributions to the field. Diaspora studies distinguish themselves from migration studies by emphasising that diaspora members are self-identified and do not fit neatly into theoretical typologies or defining characteristics – they define themselves and operate accordingly. In essence, diaspora is not just a concept for grouping and categorising people; it is also a social process. This process involves some migrants actively engaging in activities that share qualities of a movement. The terms Diaspora, Migration and Transnationalism have distinct meanings and require different theoretical and methodological approaches for understanding and researching these topics. Academic contributions have enriched these concepts through various studies.

2.2.1. Migration System Theory

World system theory, network theory, institutional theory and the theory of cumulative causation all suggest that migration flows develop stability and structure over space and time, allowing the identification of stable international

◆ *Migration systems*

migration systems. These systems are characterised by relatively intense exchanges of goods, capital and people between certain countries, and less intense exchanges between others. An international migration system typically includes a core receiving region, which can be a country or group of countries and a set of specific sending countries linked by significant flows of immigrants.

◆ *Migration and forms of exchange*

Migration systems theory examines how migration is closely connected to other forms of exchange, such as the flow of goods, ideas and money, and how these exchanges influence the conditions under which migration occurs in both the origin and destination societies. Nigerian geographer Mabogunje (1970), who pioneered this theory, highlighted the role of information and new ideas (such as perceptions of the good life and consumption patterns) in shaping migration systems within and across borders. A migration system is defined as a network of places connected by flows and counter-flows of people, goods, services and information, which promote further exchanges, including migration, between these places.

◆ *Feedback mechanism*

Mabogunje emphasised feedback mechanisms, where information about migrants' experiences and progress in their destination are shared with those in the place of origin. Migration systems link people, families and communities across geographic spaces, encouraging migration along specific pathways or corridors while discouraging it among others. These exchanges form a stable structure that persists over time and space.

◆ *Rural to Urban migration in Africa*

While Mabogunje's focus was on rural-to-urban migration within Africa, Kritiz and others (1992) extended this framework to international migration. International migration systems involve countries or regions within them, that exchange large numbers of migrants alongside goods, capital (such as remittances), ideas and information. Migration systems can be analysed at various levels, such as regional systems in the South Pacific, West Africa or the Southern Cone of Latin America. Some systems also connect distant regions, such as migration networks between the Caribbean, Western Europe and North America or between Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Yemen and Gulf countries.

The key insight of migration systems theory is that one form of exchange, such as trade, often leads to other exchanges, like the movement of people. Migration typically

◆ *Trade and commerce as factors of migration*

stems from historical links between countries, whether through colonization, political influence, trade, investment or cultural ties. For example, migration from Mexico to the U. S. traces back to the south-westward expansion and the recruitment of Mexican workers by the U. S. Similarly, Korean and Vietnamese migration to the U. S. followed the U. S. military involvement, while migration from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to Britain is rooted in British colonial history in the Indian subcontinent. Additionally, large-scale migration between countries often stimulates trade, capital flows, investment, travel and tourism between them. Major hypotheses presented by migration systems theory can be listed as follows:

1) Countries within a system do not need to be geographically close, as migration flows reflect political and economic relationships rather than physical proximity. While proximity can facilitate exchange relationships, it is neither a guarantee nor a requirement for such relationships to form.

2) Multipolar systems can exist in which a group of dispersed core countries receive immigrants from a set of overlapping sending nations.

3) Nations can belong to more than one migration system, with multiple memberships being more common among both the sending and receiving nations.

4) As political and economic conditions change, migration systems evolve, meaning that stability does not imply a fixed structure. Countries may join or leave a system in response to social changes, economic fluctuations or political upheavals.

2.2.2. Transnational Theory

Transnational migration refers to the process where individuals move and settle across international borders while maintaining or establishing multiple networks connecting them to their country of origin. This involves immigrants building diverse social, economic and cultural relationships that span geographical and political boundaries. Immigrants often possess multiple identities through their global connections. They forge and maintain multi-stranded social ties linking their societies of origin and settlement, making them trans-immigrants with subjectivities and identities bridging two or more nation-states.

◆ *Transnational migration*

◆ *Evolution of transnational studies*

The field of transnationalism has evolved significantly since its inception, initially focusing on the economic and political ties migrants maintained with their home countries. Historically, immigrants like the Russians, Poles, and Italians in the early 20th century maintained links by sending money, investing in businesses and visiting relatives back home. Rather than undermining transnationalism, these activities underscore the need for a robust theoretical framework to understand such phenomena.

◆ *Transnationalism and Network society*

Portes proposed delimiting transnationalism to activities requiring sustained social contacts across national borders over time, providing a solid conceptual basis for transnational theory. This definition emphasises the regular physical presence of migrants in both their home and host countries, somewhat overlooking the impact of modern communication technologies. Some theorists argue that advancements in technology have contributed to a networked society, reshaping social relations and reinforcing existing tendencies rather than creating entirely new patterns.

◆ *Integration of migrant community*

It is evident that imposing strict limitations on fields of transnational activity is impractical and unwise. Literature suggests various ways in which individuals can engage in transnational activities without needing to be physically present in their country of origin. An important consideration regarding identity and marginality is that a migrant's degree of integration is constrained by the acceptance of the host culture. For well-integrated migrants or groups with strong language skills and opportunities, their transnational priorities differ significantly from those of marginalized immigrants. For well-integrated migrants, transnationalism primarily manifests culturally. This involves creating and disseminating cultural products and mindsets that generate transnational images capable of fostering new transnational publics. The concepts of 'here' and 'there' no longer need to be fixed to physical presence in the country of origin; they can be fluid and mediated through cultural connections and imagination.

◆ *Migration and labour supply*

Neoclassical economics theory explains international migration by examining geographic disparities in labour supply and demand on a macro-level. Regions with an abundance of labour relative to capital experience an oversupply of labour and consequently lower wages.

2.2.3. Neoclassical Theory

Conversely, regions with a surplus of capital relative to labour face labour shortages and higher wages. This wage differential prompts individuals from labour-surplus, low-wage countries to migrate to labour-scarce, high-wage countries.

◆ *Primary drivers of migration*

According to neoclassical theory, labour market forces are the primary drivers influencing individual migration decisions, with other factors playing a minimal role. Sjaastad views international migration as an investment in human capital, where individuals move to locations offering better future prospects. However, migration incurs costs, including travel expenses, living costs during the search for jobs, language acquisition, cultural adjustment and emotional costs associated with leaving the loved ones behind and forging new connections.

◆ *Incentives for migration*

The theory assumes that wage and employment differentials across countries are the fundamental incentives for migration and migration will cease if these disparities are eliminated. Individuals make migration decisions based on rational cost-benefit analyses of potential destinations. Critics argue that this approach reduces migrants to mere labourers and overlooks factors such as gender, ethnicity and social class. Additionally, the theory does not account for mobility barriers such as political or structural obstacles.

◆ *Pull factors of migration*

2.2.4. Segmented Labour Market Theory

The fundamental premise of this economic theory is that international migration results from the labour demands inherent in modern industrial societies. Piore argues that migration is primarily driven by pull factors in the destination country rather than push factors in the country of origin. He asserts that the economic structures of industrialised countries create a persistent demand for foreign workers. According to this hypothesis, the primary driver of international migration is the labour market of the receiving country, along with all the employers and governments acting on its behalf. Piore contends that international migration is fueled by this demand, while wage differentials and inadequate social protections have minimal influence on migration patterns.

Labour market theory helps explain how the demand for skilled immigrant labour is deeply rooted in modern capitalist economies while also clarifying why migrants are motivated to take jobs that local workers avoid. Piore argued that international migration is driven by a structural and ongoing

◆ *Structure of International migration*

need in advanced economies for lower-skilled workers to perform production tasks (like assembly line work or garment manufacturing) and to fill roles in service industries (such as catering, cleaning and caregiving). This challenges the common belief that wealthy nations primarily need high-skilled migrant workers. Changes in the economic and labour market structures of receiving countries create a demand for specific types of labour. In Europe and North America, for example, manual labour was supplied by migrant workers until the early 1970s, but the rising significance of the service sector has led to demand for both highly qualified and low-skilled workers in recent decades, despite the decline of the industrial sector.

◆ *Automation and migration*

While international corporations can outsource production to cheaper labour markets or replace workers with machines and automation, this is not always possible in sectors like services, construction and intensive agriculture. Domestic availability of low-skilled labour has decreased sharply as more women enter the formal labour market and young people stay in education longer. The labour market theory highlights the role of institutional factors, race and gender in creating labour market divisions. A split into primary and secondary labour markets emerges, with a growing divide between well-paid core workers in finance, management and research and poorly paid, precarious workers in unstable jobs, often in informal sectors, who cater to their needs. The expansion of the secondary sector and informal employment have been reinforced by neoliberal reforms and the deregulation of labour markets, which have put pressure on the middle class and increased income and inequality in wealth.

◆ *International migration and capitalism*

2.2.5. Historical-Structural Theory and World Systems Theory

According to the theory, international migration is a predictable outcome of capitalist market expansion in developing nations, where integration into the global economy stimulates movement across borders. Historical structuralism and world-system theory proposes that international migration is driven not so much by income or employment gaps between countries, but rather by the processes of market growth and the political framework of the global economy.

Historical-structural theories emphasise the constraints

◆ *Migrants as victims of capitalism*

imposed by structural factors on migration, suggesting that migrants have limited freedom in making choices. This has led to the criticism that some of these views overly reduce human agency, portraying migrants as helpless victims of global capitalism who have no option but to migrate for survival. Such deterministic perspectives fail to account for the diversity in migration experiences and overlook the fact that many migrants actively choose to migrate and improve their lives. Depicting all migrants as passive victims of capitalism is just as unrealistic as portraying them as entirely rational, independent actors who constantly make calculated decisions based on personal cost-benefit analyses, as functionalist theories suggest.

◆ *Capitalism and peasant society*

As discussed by Skeldon, Historical-structural perspectives often assume that capitalism disrupted stable peasant societies, relying on the myth of the immobile peasant, which implies that pre-modern societies were isolated, stable and egalitarian and that migration was rare. However, as argued by De Haan, Moch and Skeldon, historical research has shown that peasant societies were more mobile than previously thought and the idea that the Industrial Revolution uprooted peasants from their stable communities was rooted in a romanticized, elitist view of peasantry. Claims that capitalism uprooted peasants by destroying egalitarian, self-sufficient communities often rely on idealized visions of the past, ignoring the fact that pre-modern societies were frequently marked by high mortality, conflict, famine, epidemics and extreme inequalities, with entire classes, castes, ethnic groups and women, serfs or slaves often being denied basic human rights.

◆ *Core and Peripheries*

During the 1970s and 1980s, a more comprehensive world-systems theory emerged focusing on how peripheral regions were integrated into a global economy dominated by core capitalist nations. Samir Amin (1974) and Immanuel Wallerstein (1974; 1980; 1984) were the main proponents. This integration, along with the rise of multinational corporations, accelerated changes in rural areas, leading to widespread poverty, rural-to-urban migration, rapid urbanization and the growth of informal economies, as peasants and rural workers lost their livelihoods.

As discussed by Massey, initially, dependency and world-systems theory primarily focused on internal migration. However, from the mid-1970s, as the significant role of migrant workers in wealthy economies became clearer,

◆ *World system theory and internal migration*

world-systems theorists began analysing international labour migration. They saw this migration as a key mechanism through which relations of domination between core capitalist economies and underdeveloped peripheral regions were established. From this viewpoint, migration policies that strip migrant workers of rights and protections reinforce the hegemony and control of world trade and investment, maintaining the dependence of the Third World on the First World.

◆ *Migrant networks*

2.2.6. Social Capital Theory

According to this theory, migrant networks play a crucial role in perpetuating international migration by acting as a form of social capital that facilitates migration for individuals. These networks, as described by Palloni, consist of interpersonal connections linking migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in both the origin and destination locations through family ties, kinship, friendships and a shared community of origin.

◆ *Migrant network as social capital*

Social capital is created when relationships change in ways that facilitate action. This limits the benefits of migration due to strong ties to family and community. However, when one member of a personal network migrates, these connections become a resource that potential migrants can utilise to access overseas employment and reduce the overall costs of relocation. Each instance of migration generates social capital, increasing the likelihood that others within the network will migrate as well. Thus, social networks in the country of origin can evolve into migrant networks connecting the home country with the host country, thereby reducing migration costs for individuals within those networks. Initially, migration is costly for the first migrant without social ties in a new country. However, as chain migration develops, migrant networks lower the costs of movement.

◆ *Economic considerations of migration*

According to this concept, international migration expands over time until network connections become widespread enough in the sending region to facilitate migration for all interested individuals. Subsequently, migration rates slow down. The theory also suggests that a country's migratory patterns are not directly correlated with wage differentials or employment rates. The decreasing costs and risks associated with travel due to the growth of migrant networks outweigh these economic considerations over time.

Furthermore, as international migration becomes more

- ◆ *Institutionalization of migration* institutionalized through the establishment and expansion of networks, it becomes less reliant on the initial conditions that triggered it. However, as networks expand, they may become more selective and competitive, meaning that joining a migrant network does not guarantee successful migration.

2.2.7. Cumulative Causation

- ◆ *Feedback mechanisms of cumulative causation* According to this theory, international migration tends to sustain itself over time, gradually increasing the likelihood of additional movement. Causation is cumulative in that each instance of migration alters the social environment in which subsequent migration decisions are made, often in ways that promote further movement. As the feedback mechanisms of cumulative causation operate largely beyond governmental control, the social, economic and cultural changes induced by international migration in both the sending and receiving countries provide a strong impetus for continued movement, which is resistant to easy regulation or control. The underlying premise of this theory is that the cumulative impact of individual decisions can reshape the conditions under which choices of migration are made over time.

- ◆ *Contextual feedback mechanisms* In a key paper, Massey revisited Myrdal's (1957) concept of cumulative causation to describe the idea that migration causes social and economic changes that, in turn, make further migration more likely. These broader changes in communities and societies affected by migration can be understood as contextual feedback mechanisms, which often stimulate more migration. A prime example of this is remittances, the money sent back by migrants. Remittances can increase income inequality in origin communities, which may heighten feelings of relative deprivation, thereby raising migration aspirations among non-migrants, as explained by the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory. The effects of relative deprivation and migration-supporting networks often reinforce one another and remittances may even fund new migration journeys.

- ◆ *Social remittances* While initial migrants (pioneers) tend to be relatively better off, these feedback mechanisms can make migration more accessible to poorer groups, spreading migration within and across communities. Information from migrants not only facilitates migration by enhancing people's capabilities but also introduces new ideas and lifestyles that can shift cultural preferences and aspirations. Levitt coined the term social remittances to describe the flow of ideas, behaviors,

identities and social capital from migrant destinations back to origin communities. These cultural exchanges can foster transnational and diasporic identities, which in turn encourage migration along established corridors connecting specific communities.

◆ *Culture of migration*

When migration becomes linked with success, it can create a culture of migration in which moving abroad is seen as the norm and staying home is associated with failure. This migration-driven cultural shift, along with social remittances, can further intensify aspirations for migration. Another form of contextual feedback includes the development of ethnic-specific economic niches in countries of destination, which generate a specialized demand for co-ethnic workers, such as Chinese cooks or Kosher and Halal butchers. These feedback mechanisms illustrate how social, economic and cultural changes in both the origin and destination societies are interconnected, emphasizing the need to study these processes together.

Summarised Overview

International migration studies have evolved significantly, with no single theory able to comprehensively explain migration patterns. Various social sciences, including sociology, anthropology, economics and geography, have contributed to the understanding of migration through different approaches. Migration studies have shifted from focusing on individuals to broader concepts like diasporas and transnational social movements. Diaspora studies, as emphasized by Nadja Johnson, extend beyond transnational migration theories by exploring how diaspora members self-identify and form movements, as well as their connections to both their host and home countries. This makes categorizing migrants more complex, as diasporas are not defined by rigid theoretical labels but through self-identification and social processes.

Several migration theories have shaped the field. Migration systems theory, pioneered by Mabogunje, highlights how migration is intertwined with exchanges of goods, capital and information between countries, leading to stable migration patterns. The theory stresses the role of feedback mechanisms, where migrants' experiences influence future migration decisions. Transnational theory examines how migrants maintain multiple networks across borders, fostering relationships that span geographic and political boundaries. Other key theories include neoclassical economics, which explains migration through labour - supply - demand dynamics, segmented labour market theory, which focuses on the labour needs of industrialised countries, and social capital theory, which emphasises the role of migrant networks in perpetuating migration. These diverse theories provide nuanced insights into the causes and effects of international migration.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Who is the proponent of the migration system theory?
2. What are the two ways discussed by Nadja Johnson concerning transnational migration?
3. Explain migration system theory.
4. What is culture of migration?
5. Discuss cumulative causation theory.
6. What is transnationalism? How is it differentiated from other migration theories?
7. Compare neoclassical and segmented labour market theories in terms of influencing migration patterns.
8. Elaborate social capital theory and examine the importance of social networks in the migration process.

Assignments

1. Analyse the current migration process using the migration system theory and elaborate its major hypotheses.
2. How does transnational theory differ from other theoretical perspectives? Substantiate.
3. The labour market has a vital role in the migration process. Justify the statement in the light of neo-classical theory.
4. Social networks are significant in forming diaspora networks. Analyse any diaspora community in the light of social capital theory.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Theories of Diaspora and Identity

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ examine the major theories which attempt to interpret the formation of diaspora and its identity.
- ◆ analyse various theories which contribute to the consolidation of diasporic identity.
- ◆ assess and evaluate the impact and the role played by significant diasporic communities all over the world.

Background

Every diasporic movement claims historical significance, carrying within it the essence of a nation's history. Diaspora represents a journey towards self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition. In postcolonial societies, the rediscovery of identity is often a passionate pursuit. According to Joss Elson, identity helps "preserve the continuity of the self, linking the past and the present." Identity formation, or individuation, is the development of a person's distinct personality, seen as a persistent entity (known as personal continuity) at a particular life stage, where individual characteristics are possessed and by which a person is recognised (such as establishing a reputation). This process defines individuals both to others and to themselves. The key aspects of a person's identity include a sense of continuity, a sense of uniqueness and a sense of affiliation. Identity formation involves understanding oneself as a distinct and separate entity, achieved through individuation, where an undifferentiated individual becomes unique or through stages where different facets of a person's life tend to integrate into a more indivisible whole. Identity is often seen as finite and consisting of separate and distinct parts (family, cultural, personal, professional etc.). However, Parker J. Palmer describes it as an ever-evolving core, shaped by our genetics (biology), culture, loved ones, those we have cared for, people who have harmed us, people we have harmed, deeds done (both good and ill) to ourselves and others, lived experiences and choices made, all coming together to form who we are at this moment.



Keywords

Diasporic identity, Post-colonial society, Cultural identity, Self-realisation

Discussion

2.3.1. Identity Formation

- ◆ *Socio-cultural baggage*

A person's identity is shaped by their perception of the surrounding world and is influenced by factors such as religion, race, class, economic and social status and the cultural and religious beliefs shared by their society. When an individual migrates from their native society, they often carry these beliefs with them to their new country, which sociologist N. Jayaram referred to as the 'socio-cultural baggage' of the migrant.

- ◆ *Migration and feelings of alienation*

For the first generation of immigrants, migration often leads to feelings of alienation, nostalgia for the past and rootlessness, as they continue to hold onto the cultural beliefs, practices and norms of their homeland. There is resistance to making a transition. This generation clings to food, clothing and language as clear markers of their cultural identity, setting them apart and highlighting their differences. This displacement creates a situation of living in between or on the border, giving rise to the concept of double consciousness and unhomeliness. Lois Tyson analyses these concepts as key features of the postcolonial diaspora. Double consciousness, an unstable sense of self, results from forced migration, leading to a feeling of being caught between two cultures and belonging to neither. Homi Bhabha and others describe this feeling as unhomeliness, where one feels not at home even in their own home and not at home within themselves, making the individual a psychological refugee due to their cultural identity.

For the second generation, children born to immigrants, the country of their birth differs from their parents' country of origin. They are caught between two cultures and societies: the host culture and the home culture. This situation fosters a sense of in-betweenness, which can lead to either a loss of identity and feelings of alienation or the development of a hybrid identity. This creates tension between the desire for affiliation with the host culture and the need for ethnic

- ◆ Host culture and home culture

identity. Consequently, conflicts arise between parents who cling to their cultural ethnicity and children who aspire to assimilate with their peers in the host country. In postcolonial discussions of the diaspora, hybridity is viewed as a natural phenomenon, encapsulated by the idea of “think globally and live locally.” Diasporic identity can be defined as the identity of an immigrant living in a diasporic condition. Many diasporic writers, such as Sunetra Gupta, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Raja Rao and Anurag Mathur, explore the theme of diasporic identity in their works.

Manuel Castells: A Short Biographical Sketch



Manuel Castells, a Sociologist known for his work on information society and communications research, developed the theory of “the network society.” By examining

Castells’ background and influences, we can understand his interest in the network society theory. Raised in Barcelona, Castells was politically active in the student anti-Franco movement, which forced him to flee Spain for France. He completed his studies in Paris, earning a doctorate in Sociology and worked at both the University of Paris and the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*. Later, Castells moved to California to accept two professorships at Berkeley, a significant move as it placed him near Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley, a hub for electronic innovation, was crucial in the development of key technologies such as the integrated circuit, microprocessor and microcomputer during the 1980s and it employed about a quarter of a million workers in information technology. Influenced by Alain Touraine, Castells initially contributed to Marxist Urban Sociology, which emphasised social movements in urban transformation. However, in the early 1980s, he shifted his focus to the role of new technologies in economic restructuring. His theory of the network society is highly relevant as we all participate in numerous networks – such as schools, universities, nationalities or occupations – each requiring some form of coordination.

2.3.2. Castell’s Theory of Network Society

The term network society was coined in 1991 and refers to the social, political, economic and cultural transformations

◆ *Network society and cultural transformations*

brought about by the proliferation of networked, digital information and communication technologies. The concept has its intellectual roots in the work of early social theorists like Georg Simmel, who examined the impact of modernisation and industrial capitalism on complex patterns of affiliation, organization, production and experience. Jan van Dijk first introduced the term in his 1991 Dutch book *De Netwerkmatschappij* (The Network Society), and Manuel Castells popularised it in *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), the first part of his trilogy *The Information Age*. In 1978, James Martin used the related term *The Wired Society* to describe a society interconnected by mass and telecommunication networks.

◆ *Social and media networks*

Van Dijk defines the network society as one where a combination of social and media networks forms the primary mode of organization and the most crucial structures at all levels – individual, organizational and social. He contrasts this type of society with a mass society, which is shaped by groups, organizations and communities organised through physical co-presence.

◆ *Networks and radical disconnectedness*

According to Manuel Castells, networks form the new social structure of our societies. He argues that contemporary society experiences a radical disconnectedness, leading to greater autonomy due to technology. Castells asserts that we are transitioning from the industrial age to the information age, a shift driven by the emergence of new information technologies, particularly in communication and biology. He observed that space and time are being transcended in social practices, allowing people to do everything from anywhere thanks to the constant connectivity provided by communication technologies. Castells stated, "A number of major social, technological, economic and cultural transformations came together to give rise to a new form of society."

◆ *Social morphology*

Castells first introduced the term network society in his book *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (1996), the first part of his Information Age trilogy. He defined a network society as one where key social structures and activities are organised around electronically processed information networks. Unlike traditional social networks, these networks manage and process information using micro-electronic technologies. Simply put, a network society is structured around networks powered by information and communication technologies.

While networks are not new forms of social organisation, they have become central to social morphology due to communication technologies like the internet and mobile phones, which increase decentralisation and control, enhancing the efficiency of networks over hierarchical structures.

◆ *Global economy and exchange of information*

Castells explained that communication networks, which are created by flows of messages among communicators through time and space, have become crucial to the organization of society. *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* explores the economic and social dynamics of the information age through research conducted in the U. S. A., Asia, Latin America and Europe. Castells describes how the global economy is now characterized by the instantaneous flow and exchange of information, capital and cultural communication. These flows influence both consumption and production, reflecting and creating unique cultures. The information carried by these networks is largely beyond national regulation, granting significant power to those who control these networks. Castells concluded: "Networks have become the predominant organizational form of every domain of human activity."

◆ *Space of flows and network society*

To better grasp Castells' theory of a network society, it is useful to revisit his 1989 work, *The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban Regional Process*. In this book, he introduces the concept of the space of flows, which is crucial to his vision of a network society. As an urban geographer, Castells places significant emphasis on the examination of space in his work. He describes the space of flows as a "high-level cultural abstraction of space and time with dynamic interactions to the digital age society." He aimed to "reconceptualize new forms of spatial arrangements under the new technological paradigm." This concept represents a new type of space that enables distant, simultaneous, real-time interaction, unprecedented in previous eras.

The space of flows is central to Castells' network society, representing a network of communications defined by hubs where these networks intersect. Societies are no longer tied to specific locations but instead to the space of flows. Castells argues: "while organizations are located in places, the organizational logic is placeless, being fundamentally dependent on the space of flows that characterizes

◆ *Space of flows and information networks*

information networks.” This space of flows challenges what Castells refers to as the space of places, which includes regional communities and nation-states. While the space of flows can be abstract in social, cultural and historical terms, places are condensations of human history, culture, and matter. Thus, opposition to the space of flows manifests in the form of communities based around places.

◆ *Notion of timeless time*

In contrast to the global circuits of information like the internet that define the space of flows, the space of places is characterized by decisions and bounded territories or seemingly fixed localities. Barry Wellman builds on Castells’ ideas, noting that technologies have shrunk distances, turning communities global rather than local and connecting them through technological rather than geographical links. Wellman suggests that Castells’ observations significantly impact our understanding of community in contemporary society. Through these definitions, Castells developed the notion of timeless time, viewing it as an index of social change. He believes that time has become more complex and life sequences are increasingly scrambled. Space and time, fundamental aspects of social life, are being transcended in practice. For example, Skype users can communicate instantly from different countries, demonstrating the instantaneity of modern communication.

◆ *Networks have become the fundamental units of modern society*

For Castells, networks have become the fundamental units of modern society, making the network society more than just an information society. He argues that it is not merely technology that defines contemporary societies, but also cultural, economic and political factors. These aspects combine to form the network society, influenced by elements such as religion, cultural upbringing, political organizations and social status. Societies are shaped by these aspects in various ways, with power now residing in different networks. Castells notes: “the logic of the network is more powerful than the powers of the network.” Today, many networks, like financial capital, operate on a global scale. Networks play a crucial role in businesses, allowing resources like staff, consultants, and other businesses to collaborate on projects and then move on to new tasks, connecting to new networks.

Although Castells focuses more on macro-level society, he acknowledges the importance of assessing the abilities of actors within the network, whether they are companies, individuals, governments or other organisations. Participation in the network depends on the actor’s ability to contribute to

- ◆ *Organisation man and the flexible woman*

the network's goals. The new environment demands skilled, flexible workers, shifting from the organisation man to the flexible woman. This creates a binary process of inclusion and exclusion, where those with little or nothing to offer are excluded. Connections between networks are vital, as isolated networks are weak, and being connected confers power. While inclusion now offers more power due to the binary nature of exclusion, electronic communication also makes it easier to join networks, which can devalue inclusion.

- ◆ *Link between capitalism and informational labour*

Criticism

Castells' theory of the network society has faced various points of criticism. Some challenge his analysis of information, production and the link between capitalism and informational labour, arguing that the current economic and social situation is an extension of industrial capitalism rather than a new age. Critics like Dan Schiller assert that private capital accumulation, market competition and commodification still dominate, widening social and economic inequalities. Others, like Mitchell Kapor and Professor Martin Kenney, find Castells' work dense and lacking synthesis, making his conclusions appear opaque.

- ◆ *Technological determinism*

Both Webster and Garnham accuse Castells of technological determinism. Webster questions the relative autonomy of the mode of development, suggesting that it continues on its technological logic, making it beyond political reach. Garnham focuses on productivity, disputing Castells' claim that the network society relies on productivity increases due to information technology, noting little evidence of such increases and highlighting the historical difficulties in commodifying information. They emphasise the importance of the mode of production over the mode of development, arguing that the informational mode of development serves property relations and accumulation goals, not *vice versa*. Overall, Webster and Garnham present compelling critiques, suggesting that the network society is a development of industrial society rather than a completely new construct, with capitalism remaining the economic foundation.

- ◆ *Criticism of network society*

In an article by Jack Fischer, Castells expresses frustration over the lack of substantial criticism of his work on the network society. He mentions that the primary critiques focus on the difficulty of reading his work and his refusal to offer specific solutions. Castells remarks: "As stunning as it sounds, I am not aware of any major criticism in published reviews and I am aware of dozens of reviews in many

countries. In fact, it is a little bit disappointing, since I am sure there are many weaknesses in the work, and I would like to debate it more.”

◆ *Dilemma in the network society*

Manuel Castells’ theory of the network society is crucial for understanding modern social interactions. He asserts: “It permeates most societies in the world, in various cultural and institutional manifestations, as the industrial society characterized the social structure of both capitalism and statism for most of the twentieth century.” His analysis of the technological, cultural and institutional transformations shaping global societies into network societies offers valuable insights into the evolving landscape of communication. Castells hypothesises that significant social change within any given network is unlikely, noting that the core dilemma in the network society is that “political institutions are not the site of power any longer. The real power is the power of cultural codes, embedded in networks.” The concept of network society underscores our dependence on technology, allowing seamless communication and information exchange with remote people and machines, often unnoticed.

◆ *Importance of Castell’s theory*

Castells’ theory is both engaging and innovative, contributing to its widespread attention. In an era of significant and rapid social transformations, potentially moving beyond the industrial age, Castells’ work documenting and analysing this transition is invaluable. His observations on the social and economic dynamics of the information age not only enhance our understanding of contemporary society but will also serve as a key reference in the ever-evolving future.

Stuart Hall: A Short Biographical Sketch



Stuart Hall was a Jamaican-British scholar, writer and cultural studies pioneer, born in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1932 and he passed away in London at 82 in February 2014. Hall was a Rhodes Scholar at Merton College, Oxford, served as the Director of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and was a Professor of Sociology at the Open University. He presented several television programs, including the BBC series *Redemption Songs* and contributed to many Open University broadcasts.

He held the position of President of the British Sociological Association and was a member of the Runnymede Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. Additionally, he chaired the arts organizations Iniva and Autograph ABP. Hall was the first editor of the *New Left Review*, a founding editor of the journal *Soundings* and the author of numerous articles and books on politics and culture, including *Policing the Crisis* and the influential essay "The Great Moving Right Show" for *Marxism Today*, where he coined the term "Thatcherism." In 2017, Hall's memoir, *Familiar Stranger: A Life between Two Islands* (published by Allen Lane / Duke University Press and Penguin), and a collection of his political essays, *Selected Political Writings: The Great Moving Right Show and Other Essays* (published by Lawrence and Wishart), were released.

2.3.3. Stuart Hall's Theory of Cultural Identity

◆ Cultural identity

Globally, the issue of cultural identity has a long history, particularly linked to past colonial activities. In the 1950s, globalisation intensified exchanges between countries, prompting scholars to pay more attention to cultural identity. By the late 1990s, the homogenising impact of globalisation on Third World cultures led scholars to focus increasingly on national culture and identity.

◆ Cultural Identity and Film Identity

In Britain, the issue of cultural identity emerged in the 19th century. As a colonial power, Britain emphasised its native culture while downplaying foreign cultures. Education across the empire instilled British national pride, differentiating between internal and external cultures. This acceptance of mainstream culture and rejection of foreign culture brought "cultural identity" into British cultural research. Stuart Hall highlighted "cultural identity" in his 1989 article "Cultural Identity and Film Identity," and formally introduced the concept in his 1990 work "Cultural Identity and Ethnic Dispersion." Hall was the first to address both "identity" and race. However, from the 1990s to today, scholars have not reached a clear consensus on the definition of "cultural identity." Some define it through national identity, others view it as social and cultural identity and some see it as self-cultural identity.

As research has deepened, the importance of defining "cultural identity" has become more apparent. Hall's focus on cultural identity encompasses social, political and

- ◆ *Identity as a reflection of cultural issues*

economic identities, and cultural inclusion, such as ideology and theoretical practice. He also includes rights relationships within cultural identity, which can influence the formation of other identities. Hall's approach to defining cultural identity is significant in two ways. First, he uses identity to explore cultural issues, focusing on the subject's position, composition, and power relationships within culture. Second, he views identity as a reflection of cultural issues, emphasizing the necessity of understanding culture to analyse identity and power dynamics effectively.

- ◆ *Cultural Identity and the Ethnic Dispersion*

Hall's concept of cultural identity centers on "decentration," similar to the cultural embodiment later explored by Gilroy. Hall believes that cultural identity reflects original ethnic culture, including linguistic and religious aspects. Western scholars often define cultural identity through a few cultures, aiming to create a cultural community rather than objectively distinguishing cultural identities. Hall considers race and nationality to be the two most crucial aspects of cultural identity. In *Cultural Identity and the Ethnic Dispersion*, he analyses the two positions on cultural identity and constructs a third, integrated and conversational position that goes beyond the initial two.

2.3.3.1. Meaning and Definition of Cultural Identity

- ◆ *identity and continuity of cultural identity*

Hall identifies the first approach to cultural identity as defining it through the lens of shared culture, which embodies a collective identity rooted in a common, authentic self, hidden beneath superficial or false identities. According to this perspective, individuals with shared history or ancestry also share this core self. Cultural identity, therefore, reflects common historical traces and shared cultural experiences, providing a stable and continuous definition for a group amidst changing historical contexts. Hall emphasises the 'identity' and 'continuity' of cultural identity, asserting that it stems from a shared culture with a common origin, historical ancestors and cultural experiences. This shared culture gives a nation collective characteristics, which Hall refers to as the true self, representing the nation's essential experiences.

In his influential 1996 essay 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', Hall presents two distinct definitions of cultural identity. In the first definition, cultural identity is characterised as "a collective one true self" shared among people with a common history and ancestry. This perspective views cultural identity as providing a stable and unchanging framework of reference amidst historical changes. It emphasises the ability to trace

◆ *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*

back to ancestral origins and to reflect on shared historical experiences as a fundamental truth. Hall acknowledges the positive impact this view has had in postcolonial contexts, particularly in helping individuals in the diaspora reconnect with their African heritage to uncover their true cultural identity.

◆ *what we really are or what we have become*

However, Hall proposes a second, more nuanced definition of cultural identity that he considers superior. In this second view, cultural identity recognizes that alongside similarities, there exist significant points of deep difference that define “what we really are” or more accurately, “what we have become” due to historical influences. Here, cultural identities are not static essences rooted in the past but they undergo continual transformation over time, shaped by the dynamic interplay of history, culture and power dynamics. Hall describes cultural identities as “the ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within narratives of the past.” This definition challenges the notion of cultural identity as fixed and singular and instead, portrays it as multifaceted and evolving.

◆ *Cultural identity is not an inherent essence*

In short, Hall argues that cultural identity is not an inherent essence but rather a complex product of historical and social positioning. This perspective delves deeper into the complexities of the African diaspora, emphasising cultural identity as a result of ongoing historical and cultural processes rather than a static essence.

◆ *Collective cultural identity*

Furthermore, Hall highlights that culture itself is ‘continuous’ due to its inherent transmission. Thus, this perspective views cultural identity as a means to distinguish between different identities through stable, continuous boundaries. Within a cultural group, shared cultural meanings facilitate understanding, communication and exchange with the world, thereby expressing ‘cultural identity’. Through repeated use, cultural identity becomes defined, accepted and recognized, leading to the formation of a ‘collective’ cultural identity. Some view cultural identity as reflecting a group’s collective self-awareness or as a national or social enrichment of values and worldviews. This identity is linked to the past, embodying each individual’s history and mapping the personal traditions and values of a culture.

However, Hall also argues that the source of cultural identity in this first position is a reflection of the past.

- ◆ *Cultural identity is a reflection of the past.*

Cultural identity is not static but evolves with changing environments, historical influences and cultural shifts. He critiques the West for using a fixed historical narrative to construct a singular cultural identity, often portraying itself as more 'advanced' and 'civilised' while ignoring the continuity of cultural identity. Under the influence of post-colonialism and globalisation, scholars should focus on what their culture is becoming rather than solely on their cultural origins. This shift helps challenge essentialist views of cultural identity. The continuity of culture gives room for common historical roots, but it also adapts with historical changes. Although historical culture shapes different cultural patterns for various groups, these patterns are not fixed and can change.

- ◆ *Shaping of cultural identity*

Hall's second position on cultural identity recognises the significant differences that exist beyond commonalities and acknowledges that these differences contribute to shaping how people are today. Cultural identity, according to this view, is a blend of the past influenced by history and the present shaped by change. This position asserts that cultural identity is both historical and dynamic, constantly evolving rather than being fixed in a static past. To fully understand cultural identity, one must consider the future and the evolving nature of identity, which allows richer, more diverse identities.

- ◆ *Differences in cultural identity*

In this perspective, Hall emphasizes the differences within cultural identity, contrasting it with Western notions of cultural identity that often involve hierarchical distinctions and superiority. Postcolonial scholars use these differences to critique Western views of cultural identity, highlighting their false and colonial nature. Western constructions of cultural identity often reflect a self-serving superiority, distinguishing themselves from others perceived as politically and economically inferior. Recognising these differences helps dismantle the so-called cultural superiority of the colonizers and reveals the inherent biases of Western centralism, showing that past cultural identities are often misrepresentations by the West.

Hall combines these insights with a third position on cultural identity, integrating both commonalities and differences. He argues that cultural identity is marked by both similarities and differences, formed under the dual influence of shared history and distinct experiences. The similarities in cultural identity arise from a common

◆ *Similarities and differences of cultural identity*

culture and history, producing a collective identity that can be leveraged to resist Western colonial dominance. This historical perspective uncovers the shared cultural identity that can be used to challenge nationalist and racist ideologies and to construct new cultural identities and power relations.

◆ *Cultural identity is a blend of instability, shared history, and differences*

The significance of cultural identity lies in its differences, which Hall categorises as the difference between “other” and the difference of “continuing.” These differences create spaces for political power and agency, revealing the true intentions behind Western unity and exclusivity. Cultural identity is not only about political power but it also reflects the complex interaction of similarity and difference under Western influence. This dynamic exchange shows that cultural identity is a blend of instability, shared history and differences, indicating that it is ever-changing and cannot serve as a fixed standard for hierarchical groups.

◆ *Cultural patterns and cultural trends of identity*

Hall suggests that people should determine their current cultural patterns and new cultural trends to construct a new cultural identity. Rediscovering cultural identity can counter the West’s essentialist perspectives, helping people achieve a conscious victory in the post-colonial struggle. This redefinition leaves room for the creation of cultural identities distinct from Western narratives, using the same methods the West employs to obscure cultural identities. Hall believes that this reconstruction is crucial for the African-American community to rediscover its cultural identity in the post-colonial context.

◆ *The three lens of Caribbean identity*

Hall discusses Caribbean identity through the lens of three distinct ‘presences’: African, European and American. Drawing on Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor, he categorises these as “*Présence Africaine*”, “*Présence Européenne*”, and “*Présence Américaine*.” The “*Présence Africaine*” represents an ineffable influence deeply embedded in the Caribbean culture despite the repression of slavery and colonialism. Hall highlights how African elements permeate Caribbean society, including language, religion, arts and music, forming an “imagined community” for diasporic black people who feel connected to Africa.

◆ *European presence shapes Caribbean identities*

Hall clarifies that returning to pre-slavery Africa is impossible as Africa itself has evolved. He then examines the “*Présence Européenne*” as a legacy of colonialism marked by racism, power dynamics and exclusion. Unlike the unspoken African presence, the European influence is acknowledged,

though many seek to separate themselves from the history of oppression. Hall argues for acknowledging how the European presence shapes Caribbean identities.

Lastly, Hall explores the “*Présence Americaine*” as the stage where diverse cultures collided, symbolising the encounter between Africa and the West and the displacement of native peoples. This intersection underscores the complex formation of Caribbean identity. In “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” Hall addresses the unity and diversity within black identity. He recognizes the unity of the black diaspora, pivotal in movements like Negritude and Pan-Africanism, yet also acknowledges the deep-seated differences resulting from the destructive legacy of slavery. These differences, according to Hall, define the true nature of the diaspora and provoke questions about identity.

◆ *Cultural identity and Diaspora*

2.3.3.2. Characteristics of Cultural Identity

To fully grasp Hall’s theory of cultural identity, it is crucial to understand its defining characteristics. Firstly, cultural identity represents a specific collective identity that provides individuals with a sense of belonging and embodies the essence of who they are. According to Hall, cultural identity pertains to groups sharing a common racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious background, fostering a community-based identity. However, this classification, primarily quantitative, conceals deception. The West employs this collectivisation to dichotomise cultural identity through binary oppositions like mainstream vs. non-mainstream, civilised vs. non-civilised, advanced vs. backward, among others, masking their irrationality.

◆ *Cultural identity as collective identity*

Hall critiques the collectivist nature imposed by the West, emphasising that collective cultural identity forms part of a cultural structure transmitted across generations. These shared experiences and historical traces transcend time and space, influencing contemporary identities within the collective. This framework establishes norms, power dynamics and identities unique to each cultural group. Nonetheless, Hall argues against excluding existing differences within this collective concept, challenging the implied homogeneity in singular cultural identities perpetuated by Western constructs. By dismantling fixed collective viewpoints, a new, accurate understanding of cultural identity can emerge, fostering resistance in postcolonial contexts.

◆ *Components of cultural identity*

- ◆ *Cultural identity as collective consciousness*

Secondly, Hall questions the definition of cultural identity by Western colonialism as an imagined sense of identity and belonging. Traditional views suggest that shared histories and experiences within a group lead to a unified cultural identity, fostering collective consciousness. Hall attributes this perception to an imagined construct resulting from the essentialist cultural narratives of Western colonialism. These constructs utilise symbolism to construct imagined communities, reinforcing a sense of belonging and security while excluding other identities, thus perpetuating the power dynamics. Hall contends that constructing an imagined identity is rooted in specific cultural narratives, perpetuated by Western colonialism to dominate colonial territories and assert cultural superiority. He advocates breaking away from this essentialism by encouraging public clarity and identity formation through the construction of narratives, enabling individuals to redefine their cultural identities authentically.

- ◆ *Cultural identity as dynamic*

Finally, Hall views cultural identity as dynamic, critiquing the static definitions of Western centralism. Although he does not explicitly state the dynamism of cultural identity in his writings, Hall believes it undergoes continuous change influenced by historical contexts and shifting temporal-spatial dynamics. Cultural identity, therefore, is not solely defined by stability and continuity but it also incorporates temporal and spatial dimensions, forming a multidimensional structure. Any alteration in these factors – historical context, time, space – can redefine cultural identity, challenging Western constructs that seek complete and stable definitions.

- ◆ *Dynamic nature of identity*

In summary, Hall's exploration of cultural identity reveals its dynamic nature, contrasting sharply with Western constructions that impose static definitions based on notions of superiority and backwardness. This perspective underscores the fluidity and complexity of cultural identities, emphasising their ongoing evolution shaped by historical narratives and contemporary contexts.

- ◆ *The Problem of Cultural Identity*

2.3.3.3. Methods of Cultural Identity Construction

By the late 20th century, sociology began delving into the construction of cultural identity. Initially, discussions revolved around constructing cultural identity by delineating social boundaries through three main approaches: first, by grounding it in cultural sources and history; second, by subordinating social norms; and third, by narrowly defining cultural boundaries. Each approach essentially

aimed to establish a relatively stable collective identity by distinguishing 'us' from 'others'. In "The Problem of Cultural Identity," Hall focuses on the dynamic nature of cultural identity, portraying it as an ongoing construction rather than a pre-existing entity to be discovered. He argues that cultural identity is fictive, imagined and constructed and he advocated its deconstruction.

◆ *Relativity of identities*

Although Hall does not explicitly outline how cultural identity is constructed, he suggests that historical narratives play a crucial role in shaping identity. Shared cultures and traditions unite groups into an imagined collective identity rooted in historical experience and narrative. History, as a form of storytelling that explains the origins of events, is central to constructing cultural identity. However, Hall questions the authenticity of historical narratives and their role in shaping collective identities, emphasising how different subjective histories shape cultural perceptions of societies. Western cultures often use history to justify hierarchical identities, labelling themselves as civilised while depicting others as backward, thus reinforcing cultural superiority.

◆ *Identity through discourses*

Hall contends that history, while integral to the formation of cultural identity, can also reveal obscured truths and guide the efforts in identity re-consecration. He argues that identity is primarily constructed through discourse – specific languages and knowledge systems that frame and reproduce cultural meanings. Different discourse systems construct varying cultural identities, challenging essentialist notions and highlighting the positional relationships of identity. Hall critiques how discourse controlled by powerful classes shapes racial and cultural identities according to their agendas, often distorting truths to maintain dominance.

◆ *Identity reflects intellectual and developmental hierarchies*

Hall's critique systematically addresses the construction and definition of cultural identities by Western societies, through historical and discursive frameworks, asserting intellectual and developmental hierarchies. He suggests that non-Western cultures can reclaim and reconstruct their identities by critiquing Western constructions of cultural identity. In the late 1990s, Hall introduced the concept of the "politics of difference," arguing for reconsidering identity amidst global political shifts. He viewed globalisation as a double-edged sword – simultaneously fostering diverse interactions while exacerbating confrontations. Hall believed that globalisation, by promoting cultural exchange and dialogue, could resolve cultural tensions through mutual

understanding rather than conflict, thus acknowledging and celebrating diverse identities in a globalized world.

2.3.3.4. Reflections on Theory of Cultural Identity

◆ *Cultural identity and diaspora*

Stuart Hall dedicated his career to exploring the future of cultural identity, seeking an end point, yet never offering a definitive answer. Nevertheless, he posited that the future of cultural identity lies in the concept of diaspora. Hall envisions diaspora as an ideal state for cultural identity theory, particularly in the context of globalisation and cosmopolitanism. He distinguishes globalisation, which he sees as a contradictory system creating new possibilities and spaces for cultural forms to evolve and interact globally.

◆ *Identity and downward cosmopolitanism*

Hall contrasts globalisation with cosmopolitanism, which he finds more complex and laden with hidden inequalities and power dynamics. He categorises cosmopolitanism into upward and downward forms: upward cosmopolitanism driven by multinational corporations and capital, consolidating power and resources in developed countries and downward cosmopolitanism involving people leaving their homes, crossing borders and integrating into new cultures. For Hall, downward cosmopolitanism mirrors ethnic diaspora, which he terms neo-diaspora. Traditional diasporas often cling to ancestral identities and cultures, resisting integration into new environments. In contrast, Hall views the new ethnic diaspora as embracing openness to change and integration while preserving their unique cultural identities. These communities, shaped by the dynamics of downward cosmopolitanism, represent Hall's vision of a dynamic and inclusive cultural identity for the future.

◆ *Identity embraces hybridity*

Hall's approach to cultural identity deconstructs existing definitions, advocating multiplicity and diversity over binary categorisations. He critiques essentialism and promotes a view of cultural identity that embraces transformation and hybridity. This perspective marks a departure from traditional ethnic models of diaspora towards a more fluid and inclusive understanding of cultural identity construction.

◆ *Complexities of cultural identity*

Hall's exploration into the complexities of cultural identity offers valuable insights not only for addressing real issues within British society but also provides a theoretical foundation for examining how China constructs its cultural identity abroad. His research serves as a catalyst for awakening self-awareness among diverse ethnic

groups, aiming to foster a nuanced understanding of social complexities and political agendas. Hall envisions his work empowering each ethnic group to navigate a changing world without compromising their distinct identities.

- ◆ *Evolution of inclusive and open cultural identities*

In practical terms, Hall speaks for embracing diversity as essential for global progress. He emphasises that cultural mixing involves not just the blending of ethnic populations but also the fusion of cultural and historical processes. This evolving global landscape, Hall argues, will give rise to new forms of inclusive and open cultural identities. In the era of globalisation, Hall contends that recognising and celebrating diverse identities is crucial to challenging Western hegemony. This acknowledgment of a new world of identities can also enrich cross-cultural education, enabling students to appreciate the significance of learning about Chinese culture in a global context.

Summarised Overview

Manuel Castells' theory of the 'network society', first articulated in 1996 in *The Rise of the Network Society*, examines the changes in social, political, economic, and cultural structures resulting from the proliferation of digital communication technologies. This theory is rooted in earlier sociological insights, particularly from Georg Simmel, and it builds on Jan van Dijk's earlier work, which defines the network society as a realm where social and media networks serve as the primary organisational framework. Castells argues that contemporary society is marked by a shift from industrial frameworks to networked structures, wherein communication networks, characterised by the flow of information across time and space, fundamentally redefine interactions and organisational forms. He introduces the concept of the 'space of flows', which emphasises the importance of communication hubs over geographical locations, thereby challenging traditional notions of community and organisation based on physical presence.

While Castells highlights the transformative potential of networks in modern society, his theory has faced critiques regarding its perceived technological determinism and the continuity of industrial capitalist structures. Critics argue that rather than signifying a new era, the network society may merely be an extension of industrial capitalism, where power dynamics remain entrenched in traditional economic relations. They contend that inequalities persist and are exacerbated by the networked structures, as not all actors have equal access or ability to leverage these networks.

Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity explores the complex dynamics of identity formation in a global context, particularly as it relates to historical

colonialism and the effects of globalisation. Emerging in the 19th century in Britain, where colonial practices emphasised a singular national culture while marginalising foreign influences, Hall's work emphasises the multifaceted nature of cultural identity, which he articulated in various essays throughout the late 20th century. In his analysis, Hall identifies two primary definitions of cultural identity: one that perceives it as a stable and unified essence rooted in shared history and ancestry and a second that recognises cultural identity as fluid and shaped by ongoing historical processes and power dynamics. This latter view allows a richer understanding of identity as constantly evolving, rather than fixed in the past.

Hall's framework critiques Western-centric definitions of cultural identity that often ignore the complexities of post-colonial contexts. He argues for the importance of recognising both the similarities and differences that inform cultural identity, asserting that identities are shaped by a combination of shared history and distinct experiences. This perspective enables the construction of new cultural identities that resist colonial narratives and reflect the dynamic interplay of various cultural influences. Hall also delves into Caribbean identity, illustrating how African, European and American presences coexist and contribute to a unique cultural landscape. By acknowledging these intersections, Hall advocates a redefinition of cultural identity that emphasises agency, continuity and the capacity for cultural rediscovery, especially within the African diaspora, in response to the legacies of colonialism and globalisation.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Who introduced the theory of network society?
2. Who used the term 'the Wired Society'?
3. Who wrote the essay of 'cultural identity and diaspora'?
4. Explain the characteristics of cultural identity.
5. Examine the role of communication networks in the formation of diaspora communities.
6. Differentiate between information society and network society.
7. Castell's theory has been criticised by many scholars. Do you agree with the theory of technological determinism? Substantiate.
8. Analyse the essential elements required for identity construction as presented by Stuart Hall.

Assignments

1. Network society is a result of technological advancement. Discuss the role of technology in the formation of diaspora communities.
2. Networks have become the fundamental units of modern society. Substantiate.
3. Examine the criticism towards Castell's theory of network society
4. Assess the definitions of cultural identity as discussed by Stuart Hall. Specify the elements essential for an identity construction along with examples.
5. Elucidate the characteristics and the methods of cultural identity.

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Suggested Reading

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6. Barker, C. (2003). *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

Indian Diaspora

BLOCK-03





Indian Diaspora: A Historical Overview

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ examine the historical turns of the Indian diaspora and the various stages it has passed
- ◆ analyse the push-pull factors before the Indian diaspora all over the world
- ◆ evaluate the migration patterns during the pre, colonial and post-colonial periods

Background

The term diaspora generally refers to communities of migrants permanently settled abroad who maintain awareness of their origins and identity, while varying in their levels of contact with their native land. The Indian Diaspora encompasses individuals originating from India who have settled abroad for various reasons. Despite residing in foreign countries, their presence and influence are evident in numerous ways. They contribute to the economies where they reside and also impact the Indian economy. While economic remittances are often highlighted, their social impact in terms of ideas, values, beliefs and practices is equally significant.

As one of the largest diasporas globally, the Indian Diaspora serves as a crucial soft power tool, playing a vital role in India's development narrative. Beyond being the highest contributor of foreign currency remittances to India, the Indian Diaspora has made substantial contributions across various fields, benefiting both their country of origin and their adopted countries. This diaspora has gained recognition not only among Indian policymakers but also on the international stage, underscoring its importance and deserving sincere attention for further enhancement.



Keywords

Pre-colonial migration, Post-colonial migration, Indian diaspora, Indentured labour, Colonisation

Discussion

◆ *Main phases of Indian diaspora*

The Indian diaspora is renowned for its cultural diversity, encompassing a wide array of languages, regions, religions and social stratifications. Emigration from India has been equally diverse, influenced by historical contexts, causes and outcomes, as well as social factors such as education, caste, gender, class, place of origin and religious and linguistic affiliations of the migrants. A historical overview of Indian emigration reveals how the diaspora evolved under varying socio-economic and political conditions over time. Landy and other scholars have categorised Indian emigration across different periods into six main phases: a) early migration of merchants to regions like East Africa and Southeast Asia before the 16th century b) migration of diverse groups including traders and farmers to neighboring countries such as Sri Lanka and Nepal c) indentured labour migration to colonial empires like the Caribbean, Fiji, Mauritius, and Natal, facilitated by middlemen (kangani, maistry) in Southeast Asia d) post-World War II migration of skilled workers to developed countries such as the U. K.) migration of contract workers to the Gulf countries f) recent migration of knowledge workers to developed nations like the U. S. A.

◆ *Six categories of Indian migration*

Each phase represents distinct socio-economic dynamics and reasons for migration, contributing to the rich tapestry of the Indian diaspora worldwide. Drawing from the six categories of Indian emigration history outlined above, we can categorise them into four main patterns: 1) Pre-colonial emigration 2) Colonial emigration starting from the 1830s to the British, French and Dutch colonies. 3) Post-colonial emigration to industrially developed countries 4) Recent emigration to West Asia.

3.1.1. Pre-colonial Emigration

In the context of India, emigration has been an ongoing phenomenon dating back to ancient times, primarily driven

- ◆ *Trade and religious propagation*

by trade and religious propagation. Historical records indicate that Indian emigration started as early as the first century A. D., with migrations of Indian princes, priests, poets and artisans to Southeast Asian countries. Initially, this movement was influenced by Buddhist missionaries, attracting labourers and craftsmen from Hindu kingdoms in medieval Southeast Asia during the sixteenth century. According to Vinay Lal, even before the establishment of Mediterranean trade routes in the early modern period, the Indian Ocean trading system facilitated Indian migration to East Africa's east coast, Southeast Asia and what is now termed the Middle East. These trade connections gradually led to the establishment of small Indian colonies in East Africa and Southeast Asia.

- ◆ *Indian merchants dominate global trading networks*

During this period, merchants from regions like Gujarat, Bengal and Tamil Nadu settled in major Southeast Asian port cities such as Malacca, Acheh, Ternate and Tidor, integrating over time with local populations. Claude Markovits extensively analysed diasporic trading networks of Indian merchants from towns like Shikarpur and Hyderabad in the Sind province, detailing how they came to dominate global trading networks. For example, Jha highlighted the significant commercial activities of Gujarati merchants, which thrived on overseas trade and international connections during the pre-modern era. The Indian Ocean networks were well-established over centuries, with Gujarati merchants playing a pivotal role. However, large-scale migration from the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia intensified with the expansion of Western colonialism and capitalism in the last two centuries.

- ◆ *Indian emigration and European imperialism*

3.1.2. Emigration during the Colonial Period

From the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, the conditions for significant Indian emigration were largely shaped by the European imperial expansion. European colonies established new plantations and industrial ventures, creating a high demand for labourers. The abolition of slavery in British, French and Dutch colonies in 1834, 1846 and 1873 respectively, resulted in severe labour shortages for industries such as sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa and rubber plantations. In response, colonial governments sought alternative labour sources beyond African ex-slaves and European immigrants, turning to Indian workers under the system of "indentured labour."

During the 19th century, large numbers of Indian and

◆ *Indentured system*

Chinese labourers were recruited to work in plantations, mines and infrastructure projects worldwide. In India, these indentured labourers signed contracts promising return travel after five years of work on foreign plantations. The indenture system varied but generally involved contractual obligations with penalties, stipulating passage and employment terms in foreign countries for periods typically ranging from five to ten years.

◆ *Asian diaspora in Africa*

Indentured labour migration began in the late 18th century and continued into the early 20th century. Thousands of Indians migrated under this system to East and South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji and the Caribbean. The Indian presence in East Africa dates back to the first century A. D., initially through trade connections. According to Jones, the early Asian diaspora in East Africa featured merchants traversing the Indian Ocean for trade, contributing dynamically to the region's cosmopolitan commerce.

◆ *Indian diaspora in Uganda*

Most Indian indentured labourers hailed from Gujarati-speaking regions like Kathiawad and Cutch along India's north-western coast. They played crucial roles in the economic development of these areas both before and during European colonial rule. By the mid-20th century, the Indian community in East Africa expanded significantly due to various developments under British administration. For example, the influx of Indians increased notably with the construction of the Uganda Railway, starting in 1896. Initially brought in as railway labourers due to the lack of local workforce, many Indians were allowed to settle permanently after completing their work.

◆ *socio-cultural adaptation of Indians in East Africa*



Stephen Morris highlights the socio-cultural adaptation of Indians in East Africa, noting that those who migrated were a selected group based on their proximity to Indian ports and their social standing back home.

Figure 3.1.1 (Indian indentured labourers)
(Source: Wikipedia)

This migration necessitated adjustments in cultural practices and identities, as representatives from various Muslim and Hindu sects integrated into East African society, modifying their traditional caste and sectarian identities in the process.

◆ *Socio-cultural adaptation*

Stephen Morris highlights the socio-cultural adaptation of Indians in East Africa, noting that those who migrated were a selected group based on their proximity to Indian ports and their social standing back home. This migration necessitated adjustments in cultural practices and identities, as representatives from various Muslim and Hindu sects integrated into East African society, modifying their traditional caste and sectarian identities in the process.

◆ *Passenger Indians*

The history of Indian presence in South Africa dates back to the seventeenth century, but it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that large-scale emigration occurred under the indentured labour system. This system was first implemented in Mauritius in 1834, then in the West Indies and subsequently in Natal in 1860. A tripartite agreement between the Governments of India, Natal and Great Britain facilitated the arrival of Indian agricultural labourers for an initial period of five years. By the late 1870s, a new group of Indians, known as “passenger” Indians, predominantly traders, many of whom were Muslims incorrectly labelled as Arabs, began arriving. They traded Indian goods and found a market among the indentured migrants.

◆ *Indentured life in plantations*

Most of these indentured emigrants were Tamil and Telugu-speaking Hindus from the Madras Presidency, as well as from Mysore and surrounding areas. The remainder came from eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Although many were illiterate, they carried with them their rich traditions, customs and rituals, which they preserved even during the challenging conditions of indentured life on plantations. According to the 1996 census, nearly 1.1 million South Africans were identified as “Indians,” comprising less than 3 percent of the total population.

◆ *Composition of Indian migrants*

Indian indentured labourers were sent to the British West Indies immediately after the abolition of slavery in 1838. By 1917, when the indentured labour system was abolished, approximately 241,000 labourers had arrived in British Guiana and 145,000 in Trinidad. Peter Manuel notes that most immigrants to the Caribbean were lower-caste peasants from the Bhojpuri-speaking regions of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. While some returned to India, the majority remained in the Caribbean, where their descendants now form the largest ethnic groups in Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname, outnumbering Afro-Caribbean populations and accounting for about twenty percent of the English-speaking West Indian population as a whole.

◆ *Caribbean identity*

Despite harsh conditions on the plantations, Indians successfully preserved their cultural traditions and introduced new elements that shaped their unique identity in the Caribbean. Today, descendants of indentured workers are spread throughout the Caribbean, with significant populations in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname. The colonial emigration of Indians to various African and Caribbean countries shared common features among Indian Indentured labourers. During this period, Calcutta and Madras were key embarkation points, recruiting primarily from Tamil and Telugu populations, as well as from the Bhojpuri region of eastern Uttar Pradesh and northern Bihar. According to Tinker, approximately 1.5 million Indians crossed the Indian Ocean under indenture contracts, including 61,000 to Fiji from 1879 to 1916.

◆ *Impact of migration*

Several factors drove Indian migrants to seek employment under indenture. Firstly, the destruction of Indian villages and cottage industries led to widespread unemployment and extreme poverty. Secondly, Western countries sought Indian labour for their perceived skills, diligence and utility in developing plantations and agricultural economies across their territories. Upon arrival in the colonies, immigrants were bound to plantations for periods typically lasting five or more years, living in isolated and often insulated conditions.

◆ *Migration of Indians to Sri Lanka*

Although promised fair wages and a return voyage to India after completing a predetermined number of years working in the colonies, very few of these indentured labourers ever returned due to poverty and the aspiration to forge a new life. An illustrative instance from Kerala is the presence of Sri Lankan indentured labourers in Thenmala and Gavi. The migration of Indians to Sri Lanka, Burma, and Malaya during the British era differed from earlier migrations and notably from those to African and Caribbean countries.

◆ *Kangani*

Jayawardena noted that all emigrants to Sri Lanka and Malaya originated from southern India and were recruited by a headman known as a Kangani. Each Kangani typically recruited groups of men predominantly from his own caste and kinship group, often advancing them funds for travel and settlement on plantations. The preference for South Indian labourers stemmed from their perceived docility and reliability. Kaur's research contends that these Indians predominantly worked on tea, coffee and rubber plantations under this system.

◆ *Indian labour on migration*

The peak of Kangani-facilitated recruitment occurred in the 1910s, when approximately 50,000 to 80,000 Indian workers arrived annually. Jain estimates that between 1852 and 1937, around 1.5 million Indians migrated to Ceylon, 2 million to Malaya and 2.5 million to Burma. They constituted significant minority populations in Burma and Malaya, crucially fulfilling needs in urban manufacturing in Burma and the plantation sector in Malaya. After the 1920s, the Kangani-led emigration, totaling approximately 6 million, gradually gave way to individual or unassisted free migration due to declining demand for Indian labour.

◆ *Changing migration patterns*

The post-World War II era brought significant changes to international migration patterns, including those originating from India. During this period, migration shifted towards developed countries, attracting talented professionals, skilled labourers and entrepreneurs from former colonial and under developed nations, alongside Anglo-Indians. This wave of post-war migration marked a departure from earlier forms such as indentured labour and kangani recruitment.

◆ *Immigration reforms*

Large-scale Indian migration occurred towards developed nations like the United States (U. S.), the United Kingdom (U. K.), Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Indians from various parts of the world, particularly former colonies, also began entering these countries, often labelled as “twice migrants”. The initial phase of Indian settlement in the U. S. dates back to the nineteenth century, but restrictive immigration laws, displacements and voluntary returns to India led to a decline in the Indian community, until immigration reforms in the U. S. in 1965 revitalised Indian immigration.

◆ *Composition of Indian immigrants in the U. S. A.*

The new wave of immigrants since 1965 differed significantly from the earlier arrivals, comprising educated and professional elites such as engineers, scientists, doctors, accountants and businessmen. This migration pattern was driven by job opportunities in fields like engineering and medicine, the promise of a higher standard of living and shortages of skilled professionals in the U. S. until the mid-1970s. These immigrants challenged established American notions of race and ethnicity due to their diverse origins where ethnic categorisations differ markedly. In the U. K., the Indian presence has been historically significant for nearly three centuries. The Parsi community from Gujarat and Bengali professionals arrived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, contributing to British society as lawyers, doctors

and professionals.

◆ *Composition of Indian immigrants in the U. K.*

After World War II, large numbers of Indians, particularly from Punjab, migrated to the U. K. to support efforts of industrial reconstruction. Another significant group arrived from former East African colonies due to ethnic violence, bringing expertise in trade and business as “twice migrants”. Recent Indian migration to the U. K. primarily comprises highly skilled professionals in IT, healthcare, education and engineering.

◆ *Composition of Indian immigrants in Britain*

As of the 2001 census, Indians constitute the largest single ethnic minority group in Britain, comprising nearly a quarter of the total minority ethnic population. They are recognized for their industriousness and success, despite facing racial discrimination and socio-economic challenges, with the Indian community generally achieving higher levels of prosperity compared to other minority groups in British society.

◆ *Composition of Indian immigrants in Canada*

In Canada, Indian immigration saw a steady growth in the first decade of the twentieth century. However, after the Second World War, Canadian immigration policies gradually relaxed, and significant liberalisation occurred in 1962 and 1967. Before 1962, most immigrants were from Punjab and settled primarily in British Columbia. Subsequently, immigration became more diverse, encompassing people from various regional, linguisti and occupational backgrounds across India. This included Sikhs from Punjab, Hindus from Gujarat, Bombay, and Delhi, Christians from Kerala and Parsis from Bombay. In Canada’s multicultural society today, Indians constitute a substantial portion of immigrants and are recognized as one of the most prosperous and educated “visible minorities,” enjoying higher levels of acceptance compared to other immigrant groups.

The influence of globalisation and transnationalism on Indian communities in Canada is evident through the development of hybrid cultural forms that blend elements from both India and the Indian diaspora. Indian migration to Australia can be categorised into three main waves. The first wave began in the early twentieth century during British colonial rule, primarily involving Sikhs who migrated to work on banana plantations in Southern Queensland. The second wave started after India’s independence in 1947, attracting British and Anglo-Indians. The relaxation of Australia’s restrictive immigration policies in 1966 led to a

◆ *Composition of Indian immigrants in Northern America*

significant increase in Indian migration, marking the third wave. This wave intensified about 25 years ago with the abolition of the “White Australia” policy, attracting white-collar workers and professionals, especially from Punjab and Gujarat. The IT boom from 1976 onwards further accelerated Indian migration to Australia, predominantly consisting of professionals in computer software, engineers, doctors and students. Gujarati business families from Africa, Indo-Fijians from Fiji and second-generation descendants of Indians also contributed to this flow.

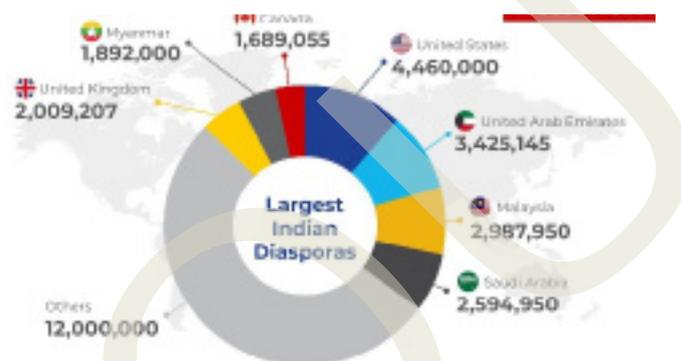


Figure 3.1.2-Destinations of Indian Migration-2020
(Source: Ministry of External Affairs, India)

◆ *Indians in New Zealand*

Indian emigration to New Zealand dates back to the nineteenth century, with Indians establishing an identity based on occupational activities and their regions of origin in India. The first Indian to enter New Zealand was Goan Edward Peters, whose gold prospecting played a crucial role in Otago’s early economic development during the mid-nineteenth-century gold rush. Historically, the contributions of Peters and other early Indian settlers have been overlooked in favor of European figures like Gabriel Read. Significant changes occurred after New Zealand implemented a new immigration policy in 1987, emphasizing education, skills and investment capital in migrant selection. This policy shift led to a substantial increase in the Indian community, making it the second largest ethnicity within the Asian community after the Chinese and the country’s third largest minority.

Before 1987, Indians migrating to New Zealand primarily traced their ancestry to Gujarat or Punjab. After 1987, Indo-Fijians, another branch of the Indian diaspora, began migrating to New Zealand following political unrest in Fiji, particularly after military coups in 1987 and 2000. Despite fluctuations, migration from Fiji continued steadily through the 1990s and into the early 2000s. Unlike the former indentured populations, Indian immigrants in developed industrial

◆ *Indians in New Zealand*

countries today have maintained strong connections with India due to their relative prosperity. Marriage arrangements, family networks and religious affiliations help immigrants maintain close ties with their places of origin, especially since many are still first-generation migrants. Additionally, the flow of remittances and investments has facilitated these connections between overseas Indians and their homeland.

◆ *Indian migration to West Asia*

Recent Indian migration to West Asian countries primarily focuses on labour and service occupations under contractual arrangements. The trend began in 1973 when there was a rapid rise in demand for expatriate labour in oil-exporting nations such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Libya. These countries pursued strategies for infrastructure development, particularly in construction, leading to a need for unskilled manual labour. As the initial phase of infrastructure projects concluded, there was a shift towards industrialisation in the Middle East, resulting in a demand for skilled workers. From 1975 to 1980, around 1 million skilled workers were imported to manage and operate this new infrastructure.

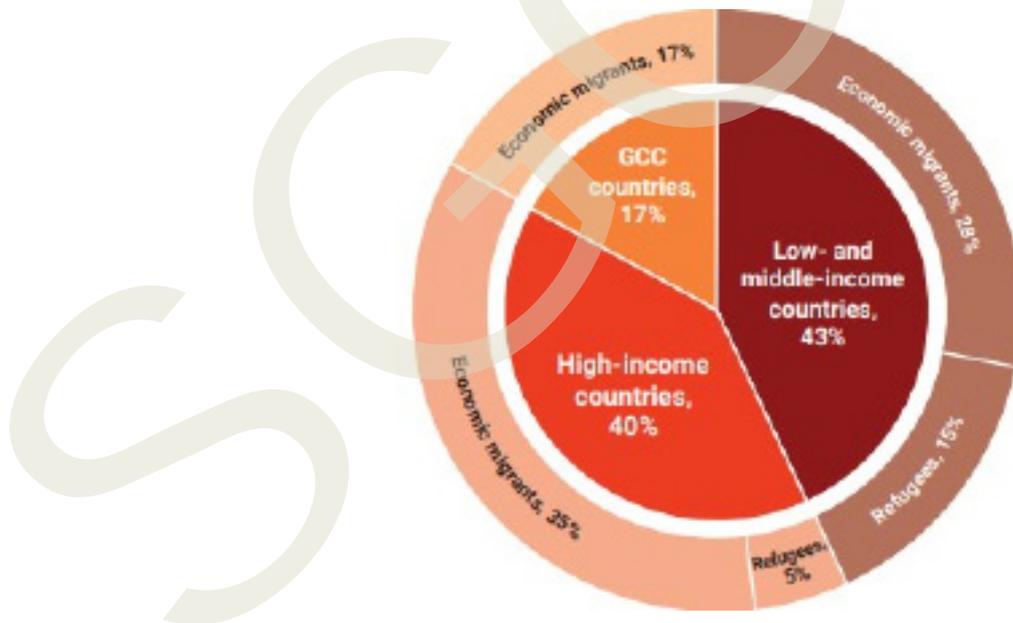


Figure 3.1.3-Composition and Pattern of Migration from India-2023

Additionally, the Indo-Pak partition created a religious diasporic community, shaping migration patterns. Recent legislative changes, like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019, have stirred controversy regarding citizenship criteria. The CAA proposes amendments favouring Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Buddhist and Christian immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh,

granting them expedited citizenship after living in India without documentation for six years, as opposed to the standard twelve years for naturalisation. Critics argue that the Act discriminates against Muslims, contravening India's constitutional right to equality. These developments prompt discussions about India's stance towards its Muslim diaspora.

Summarised Overview

Pre-colonial Indian emigration dates back to ancient times, largely driven by trade and religious missions. By the first century AD, Indian migrants, including princes, priests, and artisans, were moving to Southeast Asia, often influenced by Buddhist missionaries. This migration continued into the medieval period, particularly with Hindu labourers and craftsmen travelling to Southeast Asian kingdoms. Indian Ocean trade routes, long established before Mediterranean trade routes, also facilitated migration to East Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, leading to the creation of small Indian colonies. Indian merchants from regions such as Gujarat, Bengal, and Tamil Nadu played key roles in trading networks across Southeast Asia, establishing a strong Indian presence in major port cities like Malacca and Aceh. These trade connections eventually intensified with the onset of Western colonialism in the last two centuries, resulting in even more significant migration from India.

During the colonial period, from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries, large-scale Indian emigration was heavily shaped by European imperial expansion. The abolition of slavery in European colonies led to labour shortages on plantations and in industries, which prompted colonial governments to recruit Indian workers under indentured labour contracts. This system spread across the British West Indies, East and South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji and the Caribbean. Many Indian labourers, predominantly from Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar, worked on plantations, mines and infrastructure projects. Despite harsh conditions, these labourers preserved their cultural traditions and contributed to economic development in their new countries. Over time, some Indian communities, such as those in East Africa and South Africa, grew significantly, while others, particularly in the Caribbean, formed the largest ethnic groups in countries like Trinidad and Guyana. The indentured labour system persisted until the early 20th century, but it profoundly influenced migration patterns and the establishment of communities of Indian diaspora across the globe.

In the post-World War II era, Indian migration patterns shifted significantly, moving towards developed countries like the U. S., the U. K., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This marked a departure from earlier migrations, such as indentured labour, with a new wave of skilled professionals, entrepreneurs and educated elites. In the U. S., immigration reforms in 1965 led to a surge in highly skilled Indian immigrants, particularly in engineering, medicine and technology.

Similarly, the U. K. saw a rise in Indian migrants, particularly from Punjab and East African colonies, contributing to efforts of post-war reconstruction. By the 2001 census, Indians became the largest ethnic minority in Britain, achieving notable success despite facing socio-economic challenges.

In Canada, Indian immigration diversified post-1962, with Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and Parsis contributing to the country's multicultural fabric. Australia and New Zealand experienced similar waves, with Indian migrants arriving in greater numbers following policy changes in the mid-20th century. These immigrants, many from skilled backgrounds, have integrated into various sectors such as IT, engineering and healthcare. Meanwhile, in West Asia, Indian migration has primarily focused on the labour and service sectors, driven by the demand in oil-exporting nations. Strong connections to India, through family, marriage and remittances, remain central to these diasporic communities. Legislative changes like India's Citizenship Amendment Act have sparked discussions about India's treatment of its Muslim diaspora.

Self Assessment Questions

1. What are the six phases of Indian emigration categorised by Landy?
2. Who is a Kangani?
3. Who are the largest ethnic minority in Britain as per 2001 census?
4. Who were known as 'passenger Indians'?
5. Examine the arrival of Indians in South Africa? To which states did a majority of them belong?
6. What are the major destinations of Indian migrants in the post-colonial period?
7. Abolition of slavery in 1838 facilitated the beginning of indentured labour system. Prepare a commentary in the light of examples.
8. Observe Indian migration during the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods. Identify the major changes in the pattern, structure and the impact of the migration.



Assignments

1. Explain the six major divisions of the Indian diaspora.
2. Examine major destinations and migration patterns during the pre-colonial period.
3. During the colonial period, the Indian diaspora diversified. Substantiate the statement and identify the push-pull factors of migration during the period.
4. What are the major destinations of Indian migrants in the post-colonial period? Discuss the nature of migration and destinations.
5. Compare and contrast migration patterns during colonial and post-colonial periods. Do you think that migration is a voluntary process?

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SGOU



Perspectives of Studying Indian Diaspora

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to :

- ◆ comprehend various perspectives used to analyse the Indian diaspora
- ◆ identify features and distinguishing characteristics of each perspective
- ◆ assess the volume and impact of the Indian diaspora and the dynamics in migration trends

Background

Emigration from India has a long history. In precolonial times, Indian trading communities set up both temporary and permanent settlements in Southeast and Central Asia. During the colonial period, from the 1830s to the early 20th century, large numbers of Indians were sent as indentured labourers to British, French and Dutch colonies across Africa, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Alongside labourers, migrants also included businessmen, traders, soldiers, clerks, teachers and others who sought employment in the colonial administrations of these regions.

After independence, migration continued in several waves. One notable group consisted of students pursuing higher education in Western countries and professionals seeking better economic opportunities. From the 1970s, the oil boom in the Gulf region attracted a large volume of Indian workers, both skilled and unskilled, along with a smaller proportion of highly qualified professionals. Gulf migrants now represent the largest segment of the Indian diaspora. More recently, Indian migration to advanced industrialised nations has been dominated by IT professionals, ranging from data entry workers and software programmers to leaders in cutting-edge technology and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs.

The study of the Indian diaspora encompasses a wide range of perspectives that seek to understand the experiences, adaptations and contributions of Indian communities across the globe. As an emerging field, diaspora studies have drawn attention to the complex interplay between migration, identity



and cultural retention. This multifaceted approach aims to capture the diverse ways in which Indian diasporic communities navigate their social, economic and political environments. In this unit, we will discuss significant approaches employed to the study of Indian diaspora such as retentionist, adaptationist, plural society, ethnic and political economy.

Keywords

Retentionist perspective, Adaptationist perspective, Plural society, Ethnicity, Political economy

Discussion

◆ *Phases of Indian migration*

The development of Indian Diaspora Studies can be divided into two distinct phases: before and after the 1990s. Although there were earlier writings on overseas Indian communities, the field as a formal academic discipline emerged only after a significant shift in India's relationship with its diaspora. This transition occurred in the early 1990s due to three major phenomena – globalisation, liberalisation, and privatisation – which led to a “paradigmatic shift” in how India and scholars viewed the diaspora. Prior to this period, the focus was largely on issues like the poor conditions of indentured labourers abroad, which became part of the critique by the Indian independence movement of British colonial rule. After independence, however, both the Indian government and public attitudes shifted. Jawaharlal Nehru encouraged Indian emigrants to fully integrate into their adopted countries and India, as a leader of the non-aligned movement, refrained from intervening in the internal affairs of other nations.

◆ *Migration and Brain drain*

After independence, the Indian diaspora gradually faded from public consciousness. This was evident in the government's lack of response to crises like the expulsion of Indians from East Africa in the 1960s. During this period, the migration of students and professionals to the West in the 1960s and 1970s was often seen as a “brain drain,” with a sense of betrayal felt by those remaining in India. Migrants to the Gulf, largely working-class and temporarily employed, received little attention. As a result, the Indian diaspora had little presence in popular discourse and academic research reflected this lack of focus. It was not until the changes of the 1990s that the study of the diaspora gained prominence, with a shift in how India and scholars approached their relationship with Indians abroad.

3.2.1. Retentionist Perspective

- ◆ *Elements of retentionist perspective*

The retentionist perspective focuses on cultural persistence, emphasising how elements of belonging from the host country contribute to forming identity and self-awareness. This view examines how Indians abroad retain, reconstitute and revitalise various aspects of their culture in new settings. Major mechanisms for preserving Indian culture include rural isolation, ethnic identity and the resilience of Indian institutions. Shared bonds of race, language and community, along with racial prejudice, initially segregated Indians in barracks as indentured labourers and later in villages since the late nineteenth century.

- ◆ *East Indians in Trinidad*

A notable example of this perspective is Morton Klass's 1961 study *East Indians in Trinidad*. He observed that East Indians successfully transplanted the family institution from their homeland, maintaining characteristics such as the unequal status of women, parental mate selection, rarity of divorce, property sharing and caste system in relationships. Klass detailed the social organisation of Indian villages in Amity, noting that they mirrored a generalised North Indian culture. Villagers rebuilt a community resembling the socio-cultural system of a village in India. Studies of cultural persistence fall under the broader category of acculturation processes. This perspective tends to overemphasise the retention of cultural customs and traditions while giving only superficial attention to the disappearance of conventional patterns and the reasons behind their decline.

- ◆ *Indian communications and acculturation*

This framework also has issues regarding its approach to history and social change. Both society and culture in India and in the overseas settings have evolved since the initial emigration of Indians, but this perspective on cultural persistence does not account for these changes. In other words, it provides a static rather than dynamic view of the acculturation of Indian communities abroad.



Figure 3.2.1 - Migration Drivers
(Source: Czaika & Reinprecht- 2020)

3.2.2. Adaptationist Perspective

This perspective is found among diasporas that have successfully assimilated with their host countries culturally, socially and in all aspects of life. It is purely an adaptationist view. Studies in this category primarily focus on how social groups or immigrant communities adapt to the social environment of the host society.

◆ *Adaptationist perspective*

◆ *South Indian migration to Malaysia*

For instance, R. K. Jain's (1970) study of South Indian migrants in Malaysian rubber plantations examines how people of Indian origin adapted to life and work in this specific setting. The study highlights the interaction between the norms of traditional rural communities from Southern India and the ideology and procedures of an industrial bureaucracy.

Another example is Adrian Mayer's (1973) study of rural Indian society in Fiji, which reports on Indian settlement

- ◆ *Indian settlements in Fiji*

patterns, ritual activities, caste, culture and kinship, emphasising adaptation. Similarly, Burton Benedict's (1961) study of Indians in Mauritius follows the adaptationist perspective. His work provides a general overview of the physical, demographic, economic and political context in which Indians live and then narrows down to examine households, land tenure, domestic economy, kinship and marriage, religious beliefs and the political structure of villages. Benedict shows how communication and mobility within Mauritian society can unify it, while barriers to communication can create divisions. The adaptationist perspective has been criticised for failing to incorporate comparative aspects and for not systematically relating the microcosm to the macrocosm, resulting in studies that tend to be self-contained.

3.2.3. Plural Society Perspective

- ◆ *Furnivall's plural society*

The plural society perspective was first proposed by Furnivall in the context of colonial societies in Southeast Asia. According to him, such societies had three main characteristics: political, economic and cultural. Politically, they were held together by the domination of an external colonial power. Economically, the relationships between different cultural sections were market-based. Culturally, these societies consisted of incompatible cultural sections with limited communication between them.

- ◆ *Settlement societies*

M. G. Smith further developed this theory for Caribbean societies, limiting its application to modern colonial contexts and the era of European industrial expansion and *laissez-faire* capitalism. R. K. Jain argued that Furnivall's concept of a plural society applied only to "settlement societies" rather than civilisations and was primarily concerned with multi-racial communities. Pluralism was defined in terms of both structure and culture, indicating a social structure marked by significant discontinuities and divisions and a cultural complex based on systematic institutional diversity. Stability and unity in such structurally plural societies were maintained by a dominant cultural minority group.

3.2.4. Ethnicity Approach

This approach prioritises class, status and power relations as the primary explanatory factors, with ethnicity seen as emerging from this dynamics. Ethnicity is treated as an incidental factor, dependent on specific political and historical conditions. Jayawardena explored cultural diversity in

◆ *Ethnicity approach*

Guyana and Fiji through the lens of ethnicity. In Guyana, the Indian population had largely abandoned traditional Indian culture, leading them to create a mythical identity. Therefore, the Indo-Guyanese had both an ethnic identity and ethnicity. In contrast, the Indian population in Fiji maintained regular contact with their homeland and viewed their Indian identity as a routine aspect of life, resulting in an ethnic identity without ethnicity. The presence of ethnicity in Guyana but not in Fiji was attributed to historically determined differences in class, status and power.

◆ *Cultural continuum model*

Drummond criticized Jayawardena's approach for giving secondary importance to ethnicity in explanatory concepts. He argued that class and ethnicity are integral aspects of many social settings, questioning the priority given to class over ethnicity. Drummond offers an alternative approach to studying cultural transformation in poly-ethnic emigrant societies. He uses a linguistic / cultural model in an ethnographic study of symbolic processes associated with ethnic categories in Guyana. This model resulted in a society based on inter-systems or a cultural continuum, where elements from one culture blended into another. Drummond argues that just as the coexistence of multiple languages creates Creole languages, the coexistence of different cultures creates Creole cultures. This continuum allows individuals to combine and recombine cultural elements into a coherent whole because they understand the entire spectrum and the significance of variations and transformations.

◆ *Creole cultures*

However, Drummond's cultural continuum model has limitations. He suggests: "if variation and change are fundamental aspects of cultural systems, then we must consider the possibility that ethnographic studies of small, post-colonial ethnically fragmented societies such as Guyana illustrate the Creole process found in societies everywhere," but this is not universally applicable. For example, in Fiji, the Hindi spoken by Fiji Indians was not creolised, and there was no Creole language used by all ethnic groups.

◆ *Creolisation of culture*

If culture were self-explanatory, it would be challenging to explain the presence of creolisation in the Caribbean and its absence in Fiji. This difference can be understood by prioritising historical interpretations over cultural ones. The creolisation of culture in the Caribbean resulted from specific forms of economic and political domination, not merely a mixture of different historical cultures. Such patterns of subjection of ethnic groups under a dominant group were

absent in Fiji. Jayawardena contends that if Fijian history had been characterised by the domination of one group over all others, a “Creole” language and culture would have emerged in its society.

3.2.5. Political Economy Perspective

- ◆ *Political economy perspective*

Sociologists like John Rex suggest a continuity between the 19th-century emigration of Indians and the 20th-century migrations to industrially developed countries. Currently, racist barriers control the movement of labour from underdeveloped to metropolitan countries. Approaches based on cultural pluralism and cultural inter-systems, as previously discussed, highlight the macro framework necessary to theoretically understand Indian communities overseas.. Migrants from underdeveloped countries, even if they belong to the same economic class, do not receive the same status as the labour force of different races within metropolitan countries. This process is influenced by the historical phenomena of imperialism and colonialism, dating back to the 17th century, with effects that persist today.

- ◆ *Beckford's persistent poverty*

Theorists of the development of underdevelopment thesis, who adopt a global perspective on migration, settlement and the formation of Indian communities abroad, argue similarly. Beckford's “persistent poverty” thesis, which applies to plantation areas worldwide, is particularly relevant to the 19th-century Indian diaspora when indentured labourers were recruited for plantations. Beckford emphasised the economic structure of plantations in colonial tropical Asia and Latin America as a determining factor. Thus, there is continuity in the socio-economic and cultural systems of plantations and other areas of Indian immigration in the 19th century.

- ◆ *Core - periphery model of capitalism*

Within the core - periphery model of capitalism, the Indian diaspora is seen as marginalised in the global population. Theories by Gunder Frank (1967), Wallerstein (1974) and Amin (1976) argue that geopolitical constraints from the 19th century and earlier have shaped unequal regional economic development worldwide. This neo - Smithian Marxist framework has faced criticism. Studying overseas Indian communities within a framework that integrates macro and micro structures and considers both their past and potential future would be highly beneficial for scholarship in social sciences.

Summarised Overview

This unit extensively discussed the major perspectives that prevailed in the academia to discuss the Indian diaspora. The first perspective, retentionist, explores the type of Indian diaspora who retained the cultural peculiarities of the home land while they settled in the host country. The second perspective earnestly looked at the adaptationist process where the Indian diaspora assimilated to the cultural life of the host country. Plural society perspective emphasises the amalgamation of political, cultural and economic aspects of the migrant community. In the ethnicity approach, social structure constituted of status, power and class, is discussed in terms of ethnic attributes. Assimilation of Indian diaspora with the natives in the host country is inter dependent on their ethnic characteristics.

Finally, political and economic perspectives explore migration patterns during the post-colonial period. This migration pattern reflects the trend of migrating towards economically developed countries, especially in Europe and North America. Formation and evolution of the Indian diaspora has been interpreted and theorised using multiple approaches and these perspectives appear to be important and sufficient to cover the major trends that happened in the course of time.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Name the two phases of Indian diaspora.
2. What is brain drain?
3. Who worked on “persistent poverty”?
4. What is the retentionist perspective?
5. Who is the author of *East Indians in Trinidad*?
6. Define the adaptationist perspective.
7. Compare the ethnicity approach and plural society perspective and elucidate the major differences and similarities.
8. Assess the viewpoint of the political economy perspective. Do you think that the perspective is economically determinant? Comment.

Assignments

1. What are the major perspectives used to analyse the Indian diaspora?
2. Explain the features of the retentionist perspective with examples.
3. Distinguish between the ethnic perspective and plural society perspective and discuss their major characteristics and implications for the Indian diaspora.
4. What do you mean by political and economic perspective? How do they differ from other perspectives in terms of concept and destination?

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SGOU



Case Studies of Indian Diaspora

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ examine attributes and characteristics of prominent Indian diaspora all over the world
- ◆ unlock the potential features of Indian diaspora in the Caribbean region
- ◆ comprehend the peculiarities of the Indian diaspora in Europe, North America and Canada
- ◆ identify significant components of the Indian diaspora in West Asia and Sri Lanka and discuss their struggle for existence.

Background

Diasporas are categorised as non-state actors engaging with state actors, host countries and their countries of origin. They occupy a unique international role by bridging two nations, cultures and maintaining social and emotional ties with both. Diasporas represent a fusion of cultures, interests and identities from their original and adopted homelands. In essence, diasporas are dispersed national or ethnic groups across multiple countries. This broad term encompasses a diverse range of individuals such as students, religious leaders, asylum seekers, refugees, guest workers, expatriates, immigrants, exiles and victims of human trafficking and ethnic cleansing. Diasporas can form for various reasons including family reunification, labour migration, trade networks and population movements following the dissolution of empires such as the Soviet Union, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire.

The Indian diaspora represents one of the largest and most diverse global communities originating from a single country. Spread across every continent, Indians abroad maintain strong connections with their homeland while assimilating into their adopted countries. This diaspora includes a wide spectrum of individuals, from skilled professionals in information technology and medicine to entrepreneurs, students and cultural ambassadors. The migration of Indians began centuries ago, driven initially by colonial trade routes and later by economic opportunities and educational pursuits. Today, the Indian



diaspora not only contributes significantly to the economies of host nations through remittances and entrepreneurial ventures but also plays a crucial role in enhancing India's soft power on the global stage through cultural exchange, diplomacy and advocacy.

Understanding the Indian diaspora involves exploring its rich tapestry of experiences, challenges and achievements. From early migrations during British colonial rule to contemporary movements spurred by globalisation, the diaspora's journey reflects India's historical evolution and its dynamic engagement with the world. This unit aims to delve into how the Indian diaspora navigates issues of identity, belonging and integration in diverse cultural landscapes, while also examining its impact on both the socio-economic fabric of host countries and the developmental trajectory of India itself. By examining the roles of diasporic communities as bridges between nations, custodians of cultural heritage and catalysts for innovation and exchange, this unit seeks to illuminate the multifaceted dimensions of the global presence of the Indian diaspora.

Keywords

Ethnicity, Racism, Cultural revivalism, Transient diaspora, Enclavisation

Discussion

3.3.1. Cultural Revivalism: The Caribbean

The Caribbean region, located between North and South America, consists of both island and mainland countries. In the 19th century, numerous Indian labourers migrated to the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname are notable for having absorbed a significant number of these Indian migrants, forming multi-ethnic communities. These countries, which also welcomed migrants from Africa, will be the focus of further discussion. European-run plantations in the Caribbean initially brought many Africans as slaves and after the abolition of slavery, many Indians arrived as indentured labourers. Indians in the Caribbean have maintained a strong attachment to their religious cultures. The diaspora communities from various countries in the Caribbean region are discussed below.

- ◆ *Indian diaspora in the Caribbean*

a) Trinidad and Tobago

- ◆ *Cultural change of Indian diaspora*

This twin island nation is rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. Indians first migrated to Trinidad in 1845 as indentured labourers and soon became the largest single ethnic group, primarily working on sugar cane plantations. Eventually, they purchased land and began their own sugar cane farming, firmly establishing themselves in the region. The dominant Bhojpuri culture saw these migrants maintaining their religious practices even decades after their settlement. Vertovec notes that the Trinidadian society began to urbanise at the start of the 20th century due to the activities of Indian peasant immigrants. From the 1930s onwards, Indian migrants took advantage of educational opportunities provided by Christian missionaries, evolving into an urban, educated professional class within the host community. Harak Singh argued that the traditional Hindu patriarchal joint family structure among the migrants transformed into nuclear families over time. Bhojpuri was the primary language for communication until the 1970s, after which it was replaced by English. As their economic position improved rapidly, many Indian migrants began moving to Canada and the U. S., sending remittances back to their families in Trinidad.

- ◆ *Ethnic groups in Trinidad*

Ryan, in his studies from 1972 and 1973, discussed the social stratification among the East Indians and the Africans, the two major ethnic groups in Trinidad. Both groups were largely unaware of each other's history and culture, which led to racial stereotyping. Africans viewed Indians as a threat to their newly gained freedom from slavery, while Indians feared that contact with Africans would dilute the purity of their race.

- ◆ *Soca dance*

Indian migrants have integrated deeply into the Caribbean society. For example, the highly popular "Soca" dance form, a syncretic fusion of traditional Caribbean calypso and Indian dance forms, reflects this cultural merger. The name 'Soca' combines the last letter of 'calypso' (so) with the first consonant of the Hindi alphabet (ka), symbolizing this blend.

b) Guyana

- ◆ *Integration of Indian diaspora*

The integration issues of the Indian diaspora in Guyana cannot be fully understood without considering the contemporary social and political context, marked by severe ethnic hostilities between people of African descent and those of Indian descent, with a constant threat of violence.

According to a study by Shepherd, Indians currently form the majority group in Guyana. The Indian diaspora has significant representation in the army, police and institutions of public service.

◆ *Religious diversity among the Indian diaspora*

The roots of racial conflict in Guyana go back to the Dutch importation of African slave labour and the British importation of cheap indentured labour from Portuguese Madeira, China and eventually India, to work on white-owned sugar plantations. Between 1838 and 1917, many Indians, primarily from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Madras, migrated to Guyana. They brought with them Orthodox Sanatani Hinduism and a Bhojpuri linguistic and cultural ethos, although in a modified form that challenged Brahmanical dominance. Brahmin priests, facing the influence of Christianity, adapted by accepting inter-dining with other castes.

◆ *Middle class in Guyana*

By the 1920s, an Indian middle class emerged in Guyana, becoming pioneers in education, medicine and law. They acquired land, which created tensions with the African community in Guyana. The high level of adaptation of Indians in Guyana is exemplified by figures like J. I. Ramphal, an Indian educationist who promoted girls' education. His son, Shridath Ramphal, who became the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, is a testament to the educational and professional achievements of the new East Indian middle class in Guyana.

◆ *Social scenario of Indians in Guyana*

During the initial period of migration to Guyana, the numbers of Indians and Africans were nearly equal. However, a malaria outbreak resulted in the deaths of many people, including Indians. After malaria was eradicated, the Indian population increased significantly, intensifying political rivalries between the two groups. Secharan's study noted that initially, there were very few women among the Indian migrants. By the 1920s, the gender ratio balanced, reinforcing traditional values and the patriarchal joint family structure. Africans began to feel fear and resentment due to the rising numbers, education and economic advancement of the East Indians.

◆ *Problems of Indian communities*

The contemporary situation in Guyana, particularly after the 1960s, has been fraught with problems. A small, affluent group from both Indian and African communities has been involved in illegal financial activities. Today, Guyana faces widespread issues such as corruption, crime, drug trade,

violence and social upheavals.

c) Suriname

◆ *Indians in Suriname*

Suriname, the third major country in the Caribbean, is a multi-ethnic and pluralistic society. People of Indian descent, known as Hindustanis, immigrated as indentured labourers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. While some returned to India at the end of their contracts, most stayed and now constitute the largest ethnic group. The second largest group is the Creoles, followed by Javanese and Maroons. Additionally, a small number of Chinese and Amerindians are part of the Surinamese society. Suriname was first colonised by the Dutch in the 16th century and had a predominantly plantation-based economy. After the abolition of slavery in 1863, indentured labourers were initially brought from Portugal, Madeira, China and West Africa. However, these sources proved insufficient and the Dutch turned to India.

◆ *Composition of indentured labour*

During colonial rule, the Dutch negotiated with the British government, leading to an agreement in 1870 that allowed the appointment of a British-approved agent in every recruitment centre and adherence to British regulations. Most labourers came from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, representing a mix of castes. As late importers of indentured labour, Suriname was able to establish improved conditions, such as requiring at least 33 percent women in each shipment of emigrants and prohibiting the separation of married couples or parents from children under 15.

◆ *Settlements of Hindustanis*

From the late 19th century onwards, the government actively promoted permanent settlement of Hindustanis by offering land plots to those who fulfilled their contractual obligations and did not claim return passage. Many transitioned to becoming small holders, producing rice, vegetables, fruit, meat and milk. After World War II, Suriname's economy shifted from agriculture to bauxite production, leading to mechanisation, urbanisation, and Westernisation, which brought educational and economic improvements to society. Within the Hindustani community, an internal hierarchy existed. Uncontrolled birth rates led to a population increase among the Hindustanis, making them the largest group by the 1970s.

In the early decades, factors such as low living standards, displacement, social marginalization, geographical isolation

◆ *SIV & Bharat Uday*

on plantations and ethnic distinctiveness drove Hindustanis to recreate a semblance of India in the Caribbean. In the 20th century, immigrants began forming associations to promote their ethnic interests. The largest and most significant association, the Surinamese Immigrants' Association (*Dutch: Surinaamsche Immigranten Vereniging-SIV*), was founded in 1910. It encouraged immigration from India, persuaded Hindustanis to stay rather than return and changed its name to Bharat Uday (Rising India) in 1922. Rather than confronting the authorities, Hindustanis cooperated with them to establish their communal identity.

◆ *Surinamese freedom movements*

During the 20th century, ethnicity played a significant role in politics. Hindustanis did not support the Surinamese freedom movements because they sought protection from Dutch authorities against Afro-dominance. By the end of the century, the importance of ethnicity in politics had diminished.

◆ *Ethnic struggles in Suriname*

In conclusion, the experiences of the three Caribbean countries collectively illustrate the powerful influence of colonial policies in shaping inter-ethnic relations and diasporic consciousness, even centuries after the end of colonial rule. The contrasting legacies of Dutch and British colonialism are also evident.

3.3.2. Enclavisation and Racism: U. S. A., U.K. and Canada

◆ *American identity and Salad Bowl*

Although Canada and the United States share a long common border, their immigration policies differ significantly. Chand Masud argues that the United States is often seen as a melting pot where migrants' individual identities are absorbed into a new, singular "American Identity." In this process of becoming "Americanised," migrants lose their linguistic, cultural and social distinctiveness, as well as elements of the values of the host society. In contrast, Canada has adopted a multicultural approach, accepting all cultures without allowing the host culture to dominate, earning it the nickname "Salad Bowl."

a) Canada

A study conducted by Lal and others highlights that Canada's immigration policy, known for its multiculturalism, is a relatively recent development. The Indians in Canada were referred to as "East Indians," and their history traces

◆ *Multiculturalism in Canada*

back to Sikh groups from Punjab serving in British regiments stationed in Hong Kong, who later travelled through Vancouver. They shared stories of fertile soil, favourable climate in British Columbia similar to Punjab and lucrative opportunities in lumber yards. The Sikh leader Gurdit Singh played a crucial role in enabling Indians to stay in Canada, albeit initially for only 20 passengers with resident status; others were denied entry.

◆ *Nature of Indian immigration into Canada*

The influx of Asians in the early 20th century included Chinese, Japanese and Indians (Sikhs), subject to head taxes imposed by the government. A study by Lal and colleagues on Indian immigration to Canada reveals that the country later revised its policies to allow Indians to immigrate with their families and in 1947, restrictions on voting rights for East Indians were lifted. Favourable immigration criteria for professionals and educated individuals prompted a significant migration wave in the 1950s and 1960s. According to the 2001 census, Indo-Canadians are predominantly located in Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary in Alberta.

◆ *The white paper on immigration*

The “White paper on Immigration” in 1966 and the “Green paper on Immigration” in 1975 marked significant milestones, introducing categories such as “family reunification” and “refugee classes,” along with the “Employment Equity Act” of 1986. They aimed at promoting workplace equality and combating racism. According to the High Level Committee on the Indian diaspora (2004), Indian immigrants in Canada are notably represented in fields such as Mathematics, Engineering and Applied sciences more than other groups, and they perform exceptionally well in Canadian universities, especially in technical disciplines like Computer science, Engineering, Medicine and Basic sciences. Recognising their economic contributions, the Canadian government has streamlined immigration processes for qualified Indians.

◆ *Cultural life of Indo-Canadians*

Canada has provided a platform for expressing socio-cultural and religious identities among the Indians. Indo-Canadians have made significant contributions in fields such as film and literature. The study by Lal and colleagues illustrates that Canada embraces various Indian festivals like Holi, Ramadan and Guru Nanak’s birthday, while also respecting traditional medicines, dietary practices, customs and cultural norms.



Figure 3.3.1 - Komagata Maru Incident, Vancouver, 1914 (Source: Wikipedia)

b) United States of America

- ◆ *Phases of Indian settlements in the U. S. A.*

Today, the United States hosts one of the largest Indian populations globally. The immigration and settlement of Indians in the U. S. can be divided into two phases: pre-1965 and post-1965, each marked by distinct policies and laws governing Indian entry into the country. Indian immigrants constitute the fastest-growing group among Asian immigrants in America, surpassing Chinese and Filipino immigrants. Following Indian independence in 1947, a significant number of skilled labourers in IT, engineering, science and other academic fields migrated to the U. S.

- ◆ *Cultural and religious diversities of Indians in the U. S. A.*

The United States celebrates a diverse range of religious beliefs and practices within its secular legal framework. However, Indian immigrants encounter challenges in freely expressing their religious faith. The U. S. is home to Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Zoroastrians and adherents of many other faiths, contributing to its status as one of the world's most religiously diverse nations. Sikhs established the Stockton Gurudwara in California, the Vedanta Society was founded in 1894 in New York and later expanded

to San Francisco and Swami Bhaktivedanta established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), popularly known as “Hare Krishna,” which now has a presence in many American cities, along with vegetarian restaurants managed by its members. While there is freedom to practice one’s religion, instances of religious prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination persist in the U. S.

◆ *Second-generation Indian Americans*

The second-generation of Indian Americans often navigate dual identities as they assimilate into mainstream American culture while balancing pressure from their parents to maintain their Indian heritage. In the political arena, Indian Americans participate actively in elections. According to the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (2008), 69 percent of Indian Americans were affiliated with the Democratic Party, and 91 percent voted for Barack Obama. Bobby Jindal ran for governor of Louisiana in 2004 and in 2012, Dr. Ami Bera became the third Indian American elected to the Congress. The recent U. S. election exemplifies the growing political involvement of Indian Americans, with Kamala Devi Harris becoming the first woman Vice President of the U.S., marking a historic milestone as the first woman, the first African American and the first Asian American Vice President in American history.

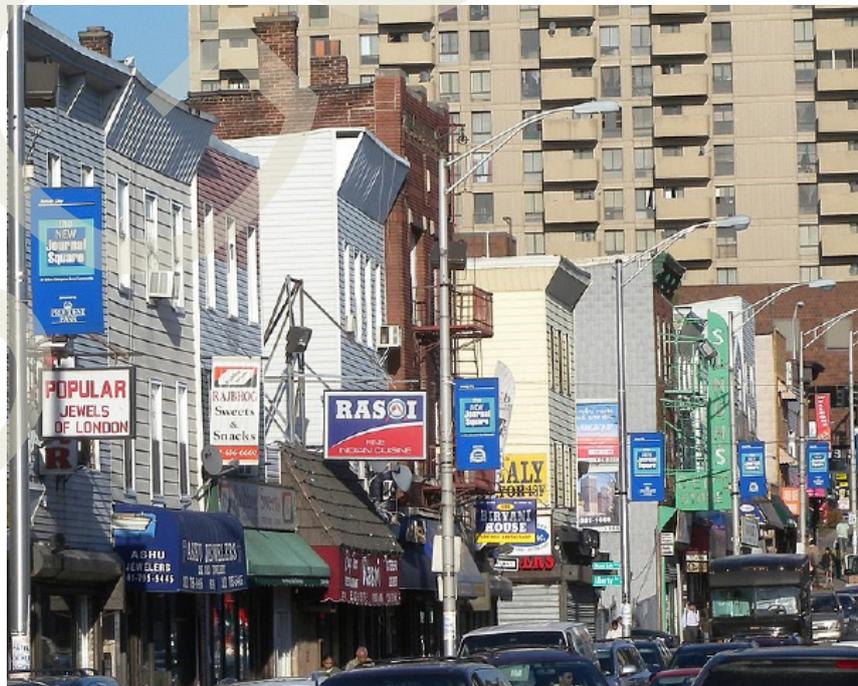


Figure 3.3.2 - India Square (Little Bombay) in Jersey City, New Jersey, United States, home to the highest concentration of Asian Indians (Source : Wikipedia)

◆ *Indian American writers*

According to Lal, prominent Indian writers in the United States include Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Chitra Divakaruni and Jhumpa Lahiri. Many works by Indian Americans explore themes of multiple identities, resistance and adaptation while integrating into mainstream society.

◆ *Socio-cultural integration*

In terms of socio-cultural integration, Indo-Americans are integrated into the host society, although there is a generation gap between the first-generation migrants and younger generations. The first-generation migrants strongly uphold values related to family, marriage and religion, whereas teenagers often adopt values influenced by the host society. Indian teenagers in America sometimes express frustration that their parents forbid dating before marriage and view pre-marital sex as taboo due to their adherence to Indian traditions and culture.



Figure 3.3.3 - Kalpana Chawla was the first Indian American astronaut. (Source : Wikipedia)

◆ *Integration of Indian Americans*

Lal suggests that Indian Americans are structurally integrated into mainstream society while maintaining strong ties with their traditional ethnic roots. Linguistically, Indian migrants predominantly use English, gradually abandoning their native languages and cultures in favour of integration into the mainstream. As new immigrants strive to preserve their cultural heritage initially taught by their parents, they eventually blend into American mainstream culture, resulting in a hybrid of traditions and values from both backgrounds.

c) United Kingdom

In the European Union (EU), which comprises fifteen

◆ *Indian community in the U. K.*

member countries and is the world's largest economic entity, two-thirds of the entire Indian community reside in the U. K. Although U.K. had exited from the E.U. through 'Brexit' U.K. still remains as the favorite destination of Indians. The Indian community has become one of the highest-earning and best-educated groups in the U. K., excelling in business, information technology, healthcare, media and entertainment industries. They have established numerous social, cultural and political organizations in the U. K., and many affluent People of Indian Origin (PIOs) have set up individual trusts or charities supporting health, education and infrastructure projects in their home states and villages in India. During national crises such as natural disasters in India, community organizations in the U. K. mobilise generous contributions for relief and rehabilitation efforts.

◆ *Indian community and British culture*

Today, the Indian community in the U. K. holds a distinctive position, enriching British culture, society and politics and contributing significantly to the country's multicultural fabric. Indians are often seen as a disciplined and exemplary community with the lowest crime rates among all the immigrant groups.



Figure 3.3.4 - The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in London is one of the largest Hindu temples in the world outside India (Source : Wikipedia)

◆ *Life of Indian immigrants in the U. K.*

Since the 1950s, Indians expelled from Uganda sought refuge in the U. K. as refugees. Currently, nearly 1.5 million Indians reside in the U. K., constituting one of the most prosperous immigrant groups. Indian immigrants are pivotal contributors to the U. K. economy, owning businesses and making substantial contributions in arts, education and various professions. In terms of political engagement, the

Indian diaspora has been actively involved for many years. The House of Commons currently includes 15 members of Indian origin, and there are 23 peers of Indian origin in the House of Lords. The first Member of Parliament of Indian origin was Dadabhai Naoroji, who served as a Liberal Democrat from 1892 to 1895.

3.3.3. Transient Diaspora: West Asia

◆ *Golden age of Indo-Arab trade*

India's diaspora in West Asia is primarily concentrated in the Persian Gulf countries. Historical and literary evidence indicates that India and West Asia had trade relations dating back to the Indus Valley Civilisation. Indians have been migrating to the Gulf region since ancient times, before the Islamic period, for trade and employment opportunities or to escape instability in their homeland. The period from the 7th to the 10th century is known as the "golden age" of Indo-Arab trade, with many merchants, artisans and professionals settling in places like Obulla in West Asia.

◆ *Indian migration to West Asia*

During the British administration, many Indians were facilitated to settle across the Gulf countries. However, large-scale Indian labour migration to these countries began in earnest after the oil boom started in 1973. Initially, there were relatively few Indians, but their numbers surged in the post-oil era. Since the late 1980s, there has been a decline in construction and migration of skilled labour, with many Indians seeking white-collar jobs. A significant number of Indians in the Gulf is involved in business activities.

◆ *Indian diaspora in UAE*

While most of the Indian diaspora in the U. A. E. are law-abiding residents contributing to the economy. Migration to the Gulf countries is predominantly male-dominated, reflecting the historical trends of labour migration from India to the region.



Figure 3.3.5 - Indian migrant workers in the construction sites. (Source : Wikipedia)

◆ *Indian diaspora in the Persian Gulf*

The Persian Gulf region offers significantly higher wages for the same jobs compared to India, along with the advantage of tax-free incomes and geographical closeness to India. A large proportion of the workforce in the countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) consists of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), estimated to be about 20 million. Approximately a quarter of this population resides in the U. A. E., where, in 2005, Indians made up 75% of the population, with many originating from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka and Goa. In Qatar, as of 2014, Indians comprised around 85% of the total population and they form significant portions of the populations in Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman.

◆ *NRIs and Remittance*

Since the early 2000s, many Indians have migrated to the Gulf, securing skilled jobs in business and industry. Major Indian companies have a strong presence in the region, with some even headquartered there. The N. R. I. population in West Asia is particularly large, with many originating from Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. They work in various professions such as engineering, medicine, law, labour and clerical roles. Unlike Europe and the U. S., most West Asian countries do not offer citizenship or permanent residency to Indians, regardless of how long they stay. In Saudi Arabia, the N. R. I s form a minority. Many N. R. I s in the region send significant amounts of money back to India, with remittances potentially exceeding \$10 billion annually (2007-2008). Due to the ease of travel, N. R. I s in the Gulf maintain strong connections to Indian culture, often traveling back to India multiple times a year. They also stay connected through satellite TV, which provides Indian media and entertainment, including TV shows specifically for N. R. I s in the Gulf. Cultural performances and events, like Onam for Malayalees and Tiarts for Goans in the U. A. E., are organized by community groups.



Figure 3.3.6- India vs Pakistan cricket charity match at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi in 2007. (Source:Wikipedia)

- ◆ *Integration of Indian migration into the Gulf region*

According to Weiner, migrants in the Gulf region are integrated into the economic structure but excluded from the social structure. The Gulf countries employ a strategy of separation rather than integration or assimilation. Indian migrants do not seek permanent resident status, naturalization or citizenship in these countries. There is a clear distinction between Arabs and non-Arabs and while racism is not prevalent, ethnic distinctions such as native and non-native, as well as Muslim and non-Muslim, are evident.

- ◆ *Holistic life of Indian migrants in the Gulf countries*

In the Gulf countries, organized community life is generally lacking among most social classes except for the middle class. The community life of the middle class revolves around traditional Indian social structures and institutions such as caste, family and kinship. Migrants in the Gulf tend to maintain similar identities and patterns of cultural consumption as they did in India. They often live segregated lives away from native Arab areas, making community integration with Arabs largely improbable. Weiner notes the presence of Indian migrant groups involved in activities like sports, schools and clubs where they gather and spend time together.

In 1974, the Sultan of Oman permitted the establishment of social centres for Indians, leading to the construction of temples, Gurudwaras and schools. Subsequently, various

- ◆ *Indians and their social centres in Oman*

events such as fashion shows, films and music concerts were organised, in which Arabs also took part. Indian cuisine, fashion and jewelry gained popularity in the Middle East during this time. Remittances from the Gulf regions became crucial for the Indian economy and further details about these remittances are provided in the subsequent chapter.

- ◆ *Indian diaspora in Israel*

According to Weil, the Indian Jewish community, which has resided in India comprises three distinct groups: the Bene Israel, Cochins and Baghdadis. The Bene Israel and Cochin Jews originated in the Konkan region and the Malabar Coast of India, respectively. In the 1960s, the Bene Israel encountered social discrimination, often being viewed as not “full Jews.” Their marriages were subject to scrutiny, sparking a socio-religious issue that evolved into a significant political controversy. In 1963, a bill was passed recognizing them as “full Jews,” marking a turning point that led to significant advancements in education and employment opportunities for Indian Jews. Over time, they adapted successfully to Israeli society, overcoming initial challenges through hard work and perseverance.

- ◆ *Jewish organization and Indian diaspora*

Recent years have seen the consolidation of the Indian Jewish diaspora in Israel, reflected in the establishment of organizations such as the Central Organization of Indian Jews and the Israel-India Cultural Association. These associations underscore the growing unity and identity of the Indian Jewish community in Israel.

- ◆ *Sri Lanka as destination of Indian migrants*

3.3.4. Ethnicity, Racism and Violence: Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is strategically situated in the Indian Ocean, southeast of India, with a distance of just under 27 km separating Dhanushkodi in Tamil Nadu from Talaimannar in Sri Lanka. This geographical proximity played a role in the migration of Indian Tamils to Sri Lanka, particularly during the colonial era, notably in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sri Lanka, historically colonised by Portugal, the Netherlands and Britain, gained independence from Britain in 1948. It is characterised by its diversity, comprising two main ethnic groups: the Sinhalese, constituting approximately 74% of the population and the Tamils, making up 18.2%. Sri Lankan Tamils account for 12.6% of the population, while Indian Tamils constitute 5.6% of the total Tamil population.

The Sri Lankan Tamils are predominantly concentrated in the Northern and Eastern provinces and historically enjoyed

◆ *Tamils in Sri Lanka*

better social and economic status compared to the Tamils of Indian origin, many of whom were plantation labourers. Understanding the socioeconomic history of Sri Lanka is crucial for comprehending migration patterns, inter-ethnic relations issues and the eventual statelessness experienced by Indian Tamils. Lodowyk (1967) documented that Indian migrants began moving seasonally to Sri Lanka as early as the 14th and 15th centuries, primarily employed in cinnamon plantations. The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed a shift in labour migration, initially for coffee plantations and later for tea and rubber estates as the British colonial administration transformed Sri Lanka's economy from agriculture to plantations.

◆ *Estate Tamils*

An article in the *Economic Review* highlighted the dire conditions faced by plantation labourers. Known as estate Tamils, these Indian Tamils were initially brought by the British in the 19th century to work on coffee plantations, later transitioning to tea and rubber estates. They were segregated from Sri Lankan Tamil communities, with the Kangani system (recruiters or overseers) exacerbating their hardships. The Indian Emigration Act of 1922 marked a significant change in the labourers' circumstances.

◆ *The Donoughmore Commission of 1928*

However, in Sri Lanka, Indian labourers employed on estates began encountering new challenges related to their political status and economic rights. The introduction of constitutional and electoral reforms in the 1920s raised concerns among Indian Tamil labourers that these changes could adversely affect their status. In response, the Donoughmore Commission, in its 1928 report, recommended universal adult suffrage and the abolition of separate communal representations. Several factors influenced Sri Lanka's perspective on this issue. Firstly, the economic depression of the 1930s led to high unemployment and Indian labour was viewed as a significant threat competing with local labour for jobs. Secondly, due to the transient nature of Indian labour between India and Sri Lanka, questions about domicile became crucial to ensure a long-term commitment to the country and a desire for permanent settlement.

Subsequent to the Nehru-Senanayake talks and their correspondence, two major questions arose: determining which Indian residents in Sri Lanka were eligible for Sri Lankan citizenship and establishing the procedure for granting citizenship. All tensions regarding Indian Tamil migrants intensified after Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 with

◆ *Nehru-Senanayake talks*

the passage of the Citizenship Act. This act stipulated that a person born in Sri Lanka before or after 1948 could not claim citizenship unless their father was born in or was a citizen of Sri Lanka. As a result of these citizenship regulations, nearly a million Tamils of Indian origin, who had been working and residing in the country (and for whom Sri Lanka was considered their permanent home), became stateless.



Figure 3.3.7- Jaffna- Cultural Town of Tamil People in Sri Lanka. (Source : Wikipedia)

◆ *Citizenship issues of Sri Lankan Tamils*

The post-independence future of Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka became significantly more intricate and challenging with the enactment of citizenship acts and associated regulations. Delays in determining citizenship eligibility and the uncertain status of nearly a million Sri Lankan Tamils necessitated India's involvement and intervention. This led to bilateral agreements between the countries. However, it took years, possibly decades, to resolve the uncertainty surrounding the political status of Indian Tamils in the country.

SI No	World Region/Country	Overseas Indian Population	Percentage
1	Sri Lanka	842,323	4.16%
2	United Arab Emirates	3,425,144	36.04%
3	Saudi Arabia	2,594,947	7.58%
4	Kuwait	1,152,175	25.81%
5	Qatar	702,013	24.67%
6	Bahrain	326,658	22.19%
7	Oman	1,375,667	30.77%
8	Israel	97,467	0.7%
9	United States	4,946,306	1.49%
10	Canada	1,858,755	5.12%
11	Trinidad and Tobago	468,524	31.02%
12	Guyana	299,382	38.88%
13	Suriname	237,205	39.37%
14	United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland)	1,451,862	2.3%

Summarised Overview

Case studies of Indian diaspora have been extensively elaborated in this unit. Cultural revivalism of the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean countries are retentionist as well as adaptationist. Case studies of Indian communities in Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname are explored. In the aftermath of post-colonisation, the destination of Indian emigrants turned towards developed countries in Europe and North America. Among these Canada, the U. K. and the U. S. A. emerged as the favorite destinations.

A significant development that took place in the aftermath of independence was the change in the migration patterns. Indians largely opted West Asia as the destination for its oil boom. Millions were attracted towards the Persian Gulf countries for both skilled and semi-skilled labour. Apart from West Asia, Sri Lanka stands as the pioneer destination of Indians and huge chunks of Indians are present in the southern part of Sri Lanka. The ethnic conflict and the related political struggles have been known for the last decades. Problems the Sri Lankan Indians had encountered at multiple levels, politically, economically and culturally had alarming ramifications for both countries.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Define diaspora.
2. When did Indians first migrate to Trinidad?
3. What is 'Soca'?
4. What is SIV?
5. Examine Indian's migration to Canada and analyse the emergence of socio-cultural and religious identities.
6. Discuss the ethnic and racial problems encountered by Indian diaspora in Sri Lanka.
7. Analyse recent migration patterns of Indians to the Gulf countries and assess their role in making India one of the world's largest remittent economies.
8. Evaluate the Indian migrants in North America and West Asia. Do you think that they are treated with equal consideration? Find out the problems and challenges faced by Indians in the West Asian region.

Assignments

1. Discuss the profile of the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean Islands and identify their major socio-cultural peculiarities.
2. Identify the major elements of Indian diaspora in Canada, the U. K. and the U. S. A. and discuss the factors which challenge their existence as a distinct community.
3. Explore the dimensions of migration to West Asia and examine profile of the Indian diaspora in Israel.
4. Diagnose the problems and challenges encountered by Indian diaspora in Sri Lanka.



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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

Representations and Issues of Indian Diaspora

BLOCK-04





Diaspora and Identity

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ analyse the evolution and process of identity formation among the diasporic communities.
- ◆ examine gender elements among the Indian diaspora and assess their presence in cyberspace.
- ◆ identify and assess the context and themes in major diasporic writings and films

Background

Diaspora Studies focuses on the intricate and multifaceted nature of diaspora identities. This unit delves into the historical and sociopolitical contexts that give rise to diasporic communities, examining how events such as colonisation, trade and forced migrations have contributed to the scattering of peoples across the globe. It also explores the formation of diasporic identities, emphasising the role of cultural hybridity and syncretism. Diasporic identities are shaped by the blending of cultures and traditions, resulting in unique, hybrid cultural forms that reflect both the heritage of the homeland and the influences of the host society.

Furthermore, this unit addresses the social and political dimensions of diasporic life, including the importance of social networks, community ties and political activism. It also highlights the challenges faced by individuals within diasporic communities, such as identity crises, assimilation pressures and intergenerational differences. The impact of globalisation and transnationalism on maintaining connections with the homeland and forming transnational networks are also areas of key focus. Through case studies of various diasporic communities, students gain insights into the diverse experiences and commonalities that characterise diasporic identities, preparing them to critically analyse and understand the complexities of identity in a globalised world.



Keywords

Diasporic identity, Acculturation, Hybridity, Gendered identity, Virtual world, Diasporic writing.

Discussion

4. 1.1 Diaspora and Identity

- ◆ *Collective relocation*

In a diaspora relationship, migrants navigate between two locations: they depart from their sending society (or point of departure) and arrive at the receiving society (or location of arrival). Migration involves not only individual movements but also the collective relocation of people from their homeland to a host society. A significant aspect of the diasporic experience is crossing ethno-cultural and geographical borders. Essentially, migration narratives often revolve around the complex relationship between “rooting” (the origin or starting place) and “routing” (the journey or path taken).

- ◆ *Diasporic Subjectivity*

Diasporic communities maintain strong connections with their mother culture, preserving bonds through various spatial connectors such as kinship networks, food, clothing, language, music and films. They endeavor to uphold a collective memory or myth of their original homeland. Nostalgia for the homeland tends to intensify, especially if the diaspora encounters racism in the host society. Throughout the lengthy migration process, individuals undergo complex cross-cultural negotiations, which significantly influence their sense of self. The concept of “diasporic subjectivity” is based on the idea that when a person is displaced from one geo-cultural environment (such as the Indian subcontinent) and relocated to another (such as Canada or the United Kingdom), it can cause changes in psychological state and identity formation. This often results in feelings of ambivalence and a sense of not fully belonging.

4.1.1.1 The Process of Acculturation

An essential aspect of migration is acculturation, which refers to the cultural modification of a group or individual due to contact with a different culture. Ngo describes acculturation as “the process of systematic cultural change that occurs due to direct contact between two cultures

◆ *Acculturation*

resulting from forced relocation, military invasion or migration.” This process challenges the cultural structures of both the host society and the immigrants. Ngo further explains “assimilation as the process where individuals reject their own cultural identity and adopt the host or dominant culture. In assimilation, individuals acquire the social, political, and economic standards of the host culture, thereby becoming part of the host society. This involves replacing the customs, behavior and collective identity of one’s country of origin with those of the host culture.

◆ *Double Consciousness*

Upon arrival, Indian migrants learn to adapt and navigate their new lifestyles, experiencing a range of new emotional vibes. This suggests that migration involves not only a physical relocation but also a shift in consciousness or worldview. As Vijay Agnew explains, individuals living in the diaspora daily face a dynamic tension between living in the present location and remembering their place of origin. This tension exists between memories of their homeland and their current place of residence, as well as between their metaphorical and physical homes. Understanding this double consciousness is essential for investigating diasporic subjectivity.

◆ *Diaspora and Hybridity*

4.1.1.2 Hybridity and Hyphenation

In an influential essay titled “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” Stuart Hall explores the themes of diaspora hybridity and difference, particularly in relation to Afro-Caribbean cultural identities. Hall asserts: “diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference.” His insightful analysis of the complexities and practices underlying cultural identities is also applicable to the Indian diaspora. Hall emphasises: “cultural identities are never fixed or complete.” They are not pre-existing entities simply represented or projected through new cultural practices but are productions that rely on the work of representation. These identities are problematic, highly contested sites and processes. Another key term used by cultural theorists is “hybridity,” which, in the context of diaspora, refers to a culturally mixed identity.

4.1.2 Gender and Diaspora

In analysing the history of migration, it was discovered that the expansion of colonial capitalism led to a significant movement of Indian men and women to colonies such as Fiji, Mauritius, the Caribbean Islands and South Africa, primarily

◆ *Gender elements in diaspora*

as indentured labourers. Additionally, many Indians, known as “passenger Indians,” migrated to East and South Africa. This migration was predominantly male, with few females included. After World War II, a new wave of the Indian diaspora emerged in the United Kingdom, as Indians were recruited to work in industries. Following the 1960s, the phenomenon of brain drain saw many professionals and students migrating to the United States, often involving whole families. The recent migration to Gulf regions represents the third wave, characterised mainly by male migrants, with some females. Migration for occupations such as nursing and domestic labour, however, was predominantly female.

◆ *Migration and heterogeneity*

The details of migration illustrate its heterogeneity, leading to the creation of complex diasporic gendered identities among various groups from India. Consequently, there is neither a “singular diaspora experience” nor a “singular diasporic gendered identity.” It is important to recognise that men and women do not share the same experiences of migration. For female migrants, key areas of negotiation involve balancing personal choice with community expectations and dealing with repressed sexuality.

◆ *Women and social alienation*

Studies focusing on female migration experiences are relatively scarce and have only gained attention in the past two to three decades. These studies address topics such as the productive and reproductive roles of women and their representation in diaspora studies. According to Herzig, gendered identities within the traditional, fundamentally patriarchal Indian diaspora are shaped by a binary system of male and female roles. Women’s identities are moulded through negotiation with patriarchal expectations. Female migrants often experience various forms of loss; for example, they may lose their natal family and the sense of security provided by familiar social ties. Gitanjali Singh Chanda adds that first-generation women migrants experience triple alienation: firstly, from their homeland; secondly, from the new host country; and finally, from their children.

◆ *Reconfiguration and identity crisis*

Pascale argues that over time, as women gain control over their lives, their identities undergo significant changes, leading to a reconfiguration of the self. It is crucial to recognise that women must navigate new cultural experiences, requiring accommodation with the receiving culture to varying degrees. These diverse processes of acculturation contribute to the development of complex and evolving identities. Consequently, the experience of migration can

evoke feelings of alienation and ambivalence. When identities are disrupted in this way, it can precipitate an identity crisis.

◆ *Indianness and Custodians of culture*

Chanda emphasises the significance of home address or the concept of Indianness in shaping the identities and constructs of Indian women. Agnew underscores women's pivotal role as "custodians of culture," where they often bear the responsibility of preserving core values, particularly as wives or mothers raising children in a foreign society. They face the challenging task of instilling cultural norms of their homeland within the domestic sphere to maintain emotional ties with their country of origin. However, they also navigate the complex negotiations beyond the home's confines, including their attire, language use and culinary choices.

◆ *Racism and Cultural encounters*

Clothing plays a crucial role in how women distinguish themselves from the mainstream culture and can subject them to experiences of racism when perceived as different. These judgments may stem from their attire, ethnicity or proficiency in English. Women often feel compelled by patriarchal social pressures to wear ethnic clothing, which serves as both a marker of class and religious identity. The banning of the burqa in France exemplifies how women migrants grapple with conflicts between their religious beliefs and the demands of the host nation-state.

◆ *Blend of tradition and modernity*

While many women view their dress as central to their cultural identity, some employ subversive strategies to carve out liberating spaces for themselves. An illustrative example is Ravindra Randhawa's protagonist in "Hari-jan," a young British Asian girl who joyfully combines her salwar kameez with Reebok shoes. This fusion represents an intriguing blend of tradition and modernity, as well as an assertion of multiple identities. The second generation of women in the diaspora faces a dual challenge, balancing the preservation of traditional values with adapting to the individualism and sexual freedom prevalent in the host culture. This conflict between generations is frequently manifested in mother-daughter relationships, a recurring theme in migrant narratives.

4.1.2.1. Sexuality

It is believed that the "pure" wife served as the foundation of the traditional Indian patriarchal family, where she had little autonomy, including in matters of sexuality. The history of Sita from the Ramayana illustrates this narrative. For migrant women, particularly during the era of indentured

◆ *Migration and female sexuality*

labourers, they were often labelled as “migrant wives.” In the Caribbean Islands, where the number of females was scarce, women who migrated included beggars, widows and prostitutes. They faced exploitation by fellow laborers and colonial overseers, with whom sexual relationships sometimes provided leverage for negotiating favours. However, later efforts to restore patriarchal family structures led to the prohibition of exogamous marriages and restrictions on expressions of female sexuality.

4.1.2.2 Queer Diaspora Identities

Since the mid-1980s, support groups have increasingly given voice to previously marginalised members of the gay, lesbian and transgender communities who are embracing their identities and beginning to challenge conventional patriarchal norms. These groups also address issues of racism encountered within white queer communities. In an article titled “Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Themes in Diaspora Literature,” Emmanuel Nelson (2002) discusses how diasporic writers born in the Indian subcontinent, but now residing in the West have started openly expressing their sexuality. Nelson suggests that their location in North America or Britain provides greater artistic freedom compared to culturally imposed constraints in their countries of origin. He explores the personal conflicts and political contradictions arising from their intersecting ethno-cultural, post-colonial and homosexual identities.

◆ *Migration and marginalized identities*

4.1.3 Indian Diaspora in Cyberspace

The rise of new technology and globalisation has given rise to online or virtual communities and identities. Digital technologies are transforming the traditional concept of “place” into virtual spaces filled with diverse practices. Historically, diasporas connected across the globe based on factors like religion, ethnicity, nationality and regions. However, the advent of information communication technology (ICT) has expanded the scope and intensity of these connections. While ICT can provide a platform for marginalized voices to express their ideas, it can also serve as a medium for dominant discourses. According to Alex, Brinkerhoff and Everett, a digital diaspora (or E-Diaspora) is a migrant community whose international interactions are facilitated by new communication technologies. Over the past decade, significant technological advancements have enabled a new form of diasporic connectivity.

◆ *Diaspora and virtual communities*

◆ *Mobilisation of E-diaspora*

Rheingold argued that the “virtual world” is well-suited for connecting diasporas both locally and globally. It provides a platform for sharing ideas, debating issues, mobilising opinions and forming friendships. According to Diminescu, Jacomy and Renault, diasporas frequently use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to create digital communities that support integration in host countries. Alonso and Oriarzal observed that specific online sites and blogs for associations serve as tools for community building, communication and disseminating information related to diasporic populations in both the host and home countries. There are grassroots organizations in cyberspace aimed at networking among globally dispersed diasporas. An E-diaspora is a migrant collective that organises itself on the internet, engaging in interactions enhanced by digital exchange.

◆ *Digital technology as pro-diaspora policy*

Numerous chat groups, blogs and websites cover a wide range of topics, including religion, religio-political issues, cookery and cuisine, tourism in India and matrimonial alliances. During the 1990s, the Government of India leveraged digital technology to promote its nationalist agenda through its pro-diaspora policy. Here are some examples.

◆ *Religious transnationalism*

1) Digital Networks of Religious & Spiritual Organizations

The presence of various forms of communication and technology has facilitated religious transnationalism, enabling the spread of ideologies, religious movements and access to information through online platforms. Many contemporary Hindu sects, for instance, have followers both in India and among the Indian diaspora, as well as non-Indians. These sects are typically headquartered in India but often have branches in major cities across Europe, North America and other regions with significant groups of devotees. Many of these organisations are well-funded and have skilled followers who efficiently manage their online presence. The internet is extensively used to maintain connections among dispersed devotees and uphold their commitment to the sect, as seen on the home pages of well-known ashrams such as The Art of Living by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Sri Amritanandamayi Devi and the International Sai Organization.

2) Digital Hindutva

Digital Hindu nationalism provides a relevant case study

◆ *Politicisation of Religion*

to explore the interplay between the politicisation of religion, migration, technology and transnationalism. It reveals the specific sociology of a mobile Hindu nationalist elite and illustrates how an existing offline network is transformed into an online presence. It aims at consolidating a rigid nationalism in and out the country and rejects socio-cultural and religious diversities. Examples of such groups include Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh U. S. A. (HSSUS), Vishva Hindu Parishad and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

3) Digital Initiatives of Government of India

◆ *Cyberspace and the diaspora community*

Since the 1990s, the Indian government has adopted a proactive approach towards its diaspora, leading to increased online activity within the diaspora community. Examples of such activities include the Prime Minister's "Startup India, Stand up India" initiative, announced from the Red Fort. In response, NASSCOM, TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs) and IIM Ahmedabad's CIIE (Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship) India organised the first India-U.S. Startup Konnect in Silicon Valley on September 27th, to highlight the strengths of India's startup ecosystem. Another cyberspace for the diaspora community is the Indian Diaspora Community Organisation.

◆ *Indian cinema and diaspora*

4.1.4 Indian Diaspora in Films

A defining characteristic of the diasporic community is that, despite moving away from their homeland, its members maintain a strong connection with their mother culture. They preserve these bonds through spatial connectors like kinship networks, food habits, clothing, language, music and films. Cinema was introduced to India during British colonialism and gradually incorporated folk traditions. The first indigenous feature film was produced in 1913, and by the 1930s, Indian cinema had become vibrant. Gokulsing and Dissanayake suggest that Indian filmmaking has a dual nature – drawing from Indian cultural traditions while also adopting techniques and influences from around the world.

◆ *Bollywood films and Indian diaspora*

During the same period, when Indians in the diaspora nostalgically looked back at their homeland, they turned to Indian cinema. Bollywood films like *Anarkali*, *Madhuri*, *Veer Abhimanyu*, *Maya Bazar*, *Mistress of Spices*, and *Zarina* were shown in Suva, Fiji's capital, around 1930. Bollywood cinema quickly established a unique cultural space among the Indian diaspora. Today, both Indian youths and those in the diaspora derive a sense of identity from Bollywood

films. Dasgupta refers to cinema as the “temple of modern India,” while Mishra describes it as the “temple of desire” for the Indian diaspora.

◆ *Satellite television and Doordarshan*

Technological advancements over the past century have greatly transformed the production and consumption of information in India and its diaspora, thanks to satellite television, transnational travel and tourism, internet communication and global consumerism. Platforms like Sky Entertainment in Fiji, Sahara TV in the United Emirates and ATN cable in Canada have played crucial roles in connecting the diaspora with their homeland. Notably, ATN cable in Canada broadcasts directly from Doordarshan in India.

◆ *Women experiences and films*

Many films, both mainstream and independent, have addressed issues of the diaspora and contested identities. A recent example from India is *English Vinglish*, which tackles women’s sexuality, their journey in adapting to a foreign culture and their experiences as expatriate mothers through a romantic lens. *Bend it Like Beckham* explores the contrasts between British and Indian cultures from a woman’s perspective. The protagonist, Jess, dreams of a career in football. Being both a woman and an Asian woman creates additional barriers to her goal. Unlike other British Asian films, this one focuses on the aspirations of Jess and her mother. The film effectively portrays a mother’s dilemma as Jess’s mother criticises her impractical ambitions. Chadha mentioned in an interview that much of the dialogue for the two mothers in the film was inspired by her own experiences, listening to her mother and the mothers of her white friends. The film also touches on the class struggles of migrants, as seen when Jess recalls getting burned as a child while heating food because her mother was working late nights at Heathrow Airport. Although the family has since risen to affluence, this is not always the case for all migrant families.

◆ *Gender relations and Indian films*

My Beautiful Laundrette, written by Hanif Kureishi, explores Anglo-Asian life in London, focusing on British politics and homosexuality. The film sheds light on gender relations and how the transition from Pakistan to London leads people from one form of alienation to another. *Bride and Prejudice* tells the story of an Indian woman whose desire to marry and settle down mirrors a Victorian ideal. However, the film does not delve into the internal struggles of a woman with other dreams.

The first Malayalam film on the theme of the diaspora

◆ *Films with Kerala themes*

was *Ezham Kadalinnakkare* in 1979. *Varavelp* (1989) addresses issues faced by return migrants. Films like *Pathemari* and *Khaddama* fully focus on migrants and their lives. *Pathemari* depicts the social and familial life of a migrant through the lens of financial responsibilities, while *Khaddama* portrays the challenges faced by a woman in a foreign land and her efforts to escape these problems, highlighting the lives of housemaids in Arab countries. Other films such as *Take Off*, *Arabikatha*, *Diamond Necklace*, *ABCD*, *English*, *Life of Josutty* and *Jacobinte Swargarajyam* also explore themes related to diasporic communities.

◆ *Expatriate experiences of a woman*

The film *Persepolis* (2006), written and directed by Marjane Satrapi, authentically portrays a young woman's identity crisis in a foreign land. It follows Marjane's journey as she leaves war-torn Iran to study in France, where she experiences ennui and a profound sense of disconnection from her new environment. Despite having many advantages, Marjane struggles to adapt and find stability. She leaves Iran during the turmoil of the Shah regime, witnessing her uncle Anoush's persecution for his communist beliefs. Marjane attempts various means to assimilate but faces repeated setbacks. Though she briefly finds solace in a love affair, it ends tragically. She eventually spends months homeless before returning to Iran, where she continues to struggle with readjustment, a common experience for many returning to their homeland. *Persepolis* vividly illustrates how a woman's sexuality, national identity and ideological beliefs shape her journey to adulthood. The film was also nominated for the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature in 2007.

◆ *Literature and Indian diaspora*

When examining the Indian diaspora, the first generation consisted largely of illiterate individuals who were either working class or from farming communities. They carried with them oral legends, myths and folk narratives to their new lands. Communication sent back to their families by these diasporic individuals laid the foundation for a literary tradition. Through songs, poems and stories that exaggerated or downplayed facts based on their experiences, they created a new form of literature. This marked the early stages of Indian diasporic writing, seen initially in places like East Africa, Trinidad, Fiji, Guyana, Jamaica, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and beyond.

As subsequent generations of the diaspora became literate and highly educated, they began writing instead

- ◆ *Examples for Indian diasporic writers*

of relying solely on oral traditions. Many composed and published works alongside their professional pursuits. Over time, their literary contributions gained recognition, readership, critical evaluation and awards. Some writers, such as Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Rohinton Mistry, M.G. Vassanji, Bharati Mukherji, Farida Karodia, Anita Desai and K.S. Maniam, among others, became household names. The following section will explore the writings of diasporic authors from various regions of India.

4.1.5.1 Diaspora Writing in Gujarati

- ◆ *Gujarati diaspora is one-third of total Indian diaspora population*

The Gujarati diaspora spans approximately 44 countries and constitutes about one-third of the total Indian diaspora population. According to Brennen, the early twentieth century witnessed the rise of Gujarati newspapers in East Africa and South Africa, primarily focusing on fostering nationalistic sentiments among the diaspora.

- ◆ *Gujarati Publications*

A prominent example is *Indian Opinion*, a newspaper founded by Mahatma Gandhi and others in 1903, which aimed to unite various Gujarati and Indian communities. This publication provided a platform for the diaspora to express their opposition to British imperialist rule in India. Other newspapers such as *Tanganyika Opinion*, *Tanganyika Herald* and others emerged in the 1920s and beyond, promoting nationalist ideals and the concept of a “Greater India.” Bhanushankar Oddhavji Vyas (1924-1987) is recognised as a pioneering figure among Gujarati diaspora writers in the U. K. His novel *Bharyu Bharyu Ekant* (The Overflowing Loneliness) was serialised in *Asmita*, a literary magazine published by the Gujarat Literary Academy, U. K. The novel depicts the psychological experiences of an elderly couple who seek refuge in the protagonist’s home. Balwant Nayak’s *Ne Dhartina Khole Narak Verayu* (And the Hell Was Let Loose Upon The Earth) explores the psychological turmoil of *Asmita*, the wife of a prosperous Gujarati businessman from Uganda, who relocates to the U. K. with her child and struggles to adapt to her new surroundings.

- ◆ *Feminist concerns in Gujarati publications*

In the United States, among Gujarati writers, Panna Naik addresses feminist concerns and diasporic themes in her writings. Her collections of lyrical poems include *Pravesh* (Entry, 1975), *Philadelphia* (1980), *Videshini* (A Female Foreigner, 2000), *Rang Jharukhe* (At the Balcony of Colours, 2004) and others.

4.1.5.2 Diaspora Writing in Hindi

- ◆ Hindi among Indian diaspora

In the 19th century, indentured labourers brought Hindi and its various dialects to Mauritius. On March 15, 1909, Manilal Doctor began publishing a Hindi magazine called "Hindustani." The founding of the Arya Samaj in 1910 further promoted Hindi education. Subsequently, over 150 branches of evening schools, middle schools, a college and an orphanage named Gaya Singh were established. In 1916, the "Hindi Pracharini Sabha" was founded to propagate Hindi language and culture in Mauritius.

4.1.5.3 Diaspora Writing in Telugu

- ◆ Telugu as language of diaspora

While Telugu is predominantly spoken in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, there are also Telugu-speaking communities in parts of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa and Jharkhand. This widespread presence both within and outside the nation underscores the significance of the language.

- ◆ Telugu culture as uniting factor

Telugu migration overseas began with pre-colonial indentured laborers and has continued with post-colonial professional workers, particularly in the IT sector. Over generations, Telugu-speaking populations have migrated to various countries including Burma, Malaysia, Fiji, Mauritius, South Africa, Indonesia, England and the U. S. A. Members of the Telugu diaspora frequently come together to organise events that promote their culture, language and provide a platform for the second generation to connect with their heritage.

- ◆ Diversities of Telugu Literature

Over the past two decades, the Foundation has published forty works, including 11 volumes of *America Telugu Kathanika*, a collection of Telugu short stories authored by writers from America and around the world, edited by Pemma Raju Venugopal Rao. Other notable works include *America Illalu* by Chimmata Kamala, *Amerikaalakshyepam* by Vanguri Chitten Raj and *Metamorphosis* by Veluri Venkateswara Rao, among others. Telugu writers in the diaspora distinguish themselves from English-language diaspora writers by developing a unique style that allows them to freely express their emotions and ideas. Writers such as Vanguri Chitten Raj, Kalasapudi Vasundhara, Chimmata Kamala and Pemma Raju Venugopal Rao have emphasised their fearless approach to writing, unaffected by comparisons or awards from India. They see themselves both as writers and poets, as well as the audience, readers and critics of

their own work. Their focus remains on addressing fellow immigrants and Telugu readers in the diaspora. Telugu diaspora literature often explores conventional themes such as nostalgia, alienation and the quest for identity, along with the added concern of preserving the language within their hybrid cultural communities.

4.1.5.4 Diaspora Writing in Bengali

- ◆ Bengali language as a uniting force

Since the early eighteenth century, affluent Bengali men have been travelling abroad, spurred by the Bengal Renaissance which motivated elite Bengalis to embark on challenging journeys across oceans. Figures like Raja Rammohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Debendranath Tagore, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Sayyed Ameer Ali, Satyendranath Tagore, Satyendraprasanna Sinha, Rabindranath Tagore and many others were sent by their families to England for education in law, medicine or preparation for the Civil Services Examination. These individuals chronicled their experiences abroad and documented their lives as probashi (those living away from home), marking the earliest diasporic accounts in Bengali.

- ◆ Diversities of Bengali literature

Rabindranath Tagore's *Europe Prabashir Patra* (Letters from Europe), initially serialised in the magazine *Bharati* and later published as a book in 1881, offers a vivid portrayal of English social life in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first diasporic Bengali text authored by a woman was a travelogue published in 1885 by Krishnabhabini Das. Accompanying her husband Debendranath Das to England in 1882, she spent eight years meticulously observing Victorian society and compiled her experiences in the volume *Inglonde Bangamahila* (translated as *A Bengali Lady in England*). In today's diverse society, the diaspora encompasses a variety of classes, castes and cultures. Some noteworthy contemporary Bengali diasporic writers, widely read in both West Bengal and Bangladesh, hail from the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Among them are notable figures such as Ghulam Murshid and Abdul Gaffar Choudhury from the U. K., and Dilara Hashem and Alolika Mukhopadhyay from the U. S. A.

Summarised Overview

Identity formation among the diaspora communities is a multifaceted process. Moreover, it is a cultural process where the migrant communities keep their cultural elements distinct from the host countries mostly through the acculturation process. Respect towards the homeland traditions, religious practices, cultural elements and customs gradually turns the migrants into a unique group with separate identity. Diasporic identity has been reflected in numerous spheres such as films, writings etc. The cyber world is another space where diasporic identity is consolidated, propagated and worked out.

Gender elements and women experiences are the parts that are discussed the very least along with diaspora. Women have been victims of the migration and their life often perished in the host land. Their alienation from their family, society and the neighborhood has been discussed by various scholars. Indian diaspora has been presented in the films especially in the Bollywood cinemas. Migrant stories, their history and life events have been turned into epic themes of the regional and Hindi cinema where the Indian diaspora celebrated each episode as it was accepted within the country. Diasporic writings are another important carrier. The second or third generation of the Indian migrants emerged as influential writers and some of them rose to international fame. Among them, writings in Hindi, Gujarati, Telugu and Bengali are prominent.

Self Assessment Questions

1. What is acculturation?
2. Define hybridity.
3. Do you think that migration is a gendered process? Analyse the changed realms of migration and assess the impact of the women diaspora.
4. What is meant by digital diaspora? Assess the role of ICT in connecting the various diasporas at the global level.
5. Indian films are popular across the globe, especially Bollywood films. Evaluate the role of Indian cinema in interconnecting the people of origin with their homeland. Cite some examples too.
6. How do you see the diaspora writings? Find out the major works in regional languages and check whether they have any important say in enhancing the homeland with its diasporas. Substantiate your answer.
7. Discuss the elements and the process that contributed to forming a diasporic identity.
8. Elucidate the life, experience and role of women in the diaspora communities.



Assignments

1. How do you think diasporic identity is formed? Discuss the elements and the process which contributed to the formation of diasporic identity.
2. Elaborate on gender and diaspora. Discuss the life, experience and role of women in the diaspora communities.
3. Indian diaspora is well presented in the cyber world. Substantiate the statement.
4. Examine the characters and themes in the diasporic films. Do you think that the Indian diaspora is well represented in the films?
5. What do you mean by diasporic writings? List out the major diasporic writings and prominent writers in Hindi and other regional languages.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU



Diaspora and the Government of India

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ comprehend policies and initiatives undertaken by the government of India for Indian diaspora
- ◆ identify major historical events and political trajectories that the Indian diaspora underwent over time
- ◆ examine the significance and scope of Pravasi organisations operational abroad and assess their impact on migrants' welfare.

Background

India has a long history of migration and currently has the largest emigrant population in the world. The country has also developed a robust institutional framework and multifaceted infrastructure to support its diverse diaspora. Over the past 40 years, many institutions have been created, modified, merged or discontinued. Some of these institutions were temporary, while others were established in collaboration with the private sector. Approximately 17.5 million people born in India now reside abroad. The vast and diverse diaspora, along with emigrant workers, has resulted in numerous policy initiatives. Due to the political will to implement proactive policies and the limited resources typical of a developing nation, many policies exist only on paper or are implemented on a small scale.

Two terms commonly used to describe migrants and the diaspora from India are N. R. I.s and P. I. O.s. N. R. I.s are Non-Resident Indians, while P. I. O.s are Persons of Indian Origin. The term N. R. I., originating from a tax category, is often used to describe diasporic Indians. It refers to Indian citizens living outside India for more than 182 days per year. In contrast, P. I. O.s are those who have acquired citizenship in another country. To encompass both N. R. I.s and P. I. O.s, government documents and policies use terms like the Indian diaspora, Overseas Indians, or Pravasi Bharatiya (the Hindi equivalent). According to Naujoks, the Indian political system categorizes overseas Indians into three broad groups: N. R. I. temporary workers, primarily in the Gulf Cooperation



Council (GCC) countries; N. R. I. s and P. I. O.s in the U. S., Canada, Australia and Europe; and PIOs in countries with large-scale emigration about 150 years ago, such as Mauritius, South Africa, Fiji, Malaysia and Singapore, often called the “old diaspora.”

The diaspora is composed of three main groups. The first group includes those who left India during colonial times and now reside in distant regions such as the Caribbean, Africa and Fiji, where they often face social challenges from the local populations. India should not focus on engaging with this group. The second group consists of highly skilled migrants in industrialized Western countries. The third group comprises labourers who temporarily move to the Gulf countries, whose remittances are vital for their home communities.

Keywords

Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, N. R. I. & P. I. O., Pravasi Organisations, Remittance

Discussion

◆ *Government of India and the diaspora*

India's government institutions are tailored to address the needs of the three distinct categories of overseas Indians discussed earlier. In 2004, India established the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), which included various joint secretaries and divisions to serve different segments of the diaspora. According to Gamlen, there were initially few government offices related to the diaspora, but many such institutions have been established worldwide over the past decade. By 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government merged the MOIA with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), where most diaspora and N. R. I. issues are now managed at the ministerial level. Within the MEA, the Overseas Indian Affairs division oversees diaspora-related matters and includes the Protector of Emigrants, which primarily deals with (mostly temporary and low-skilled) labour emigration. Before 2004, the Protector of Emigrants was part of the Ministry of Labour. It then became a key component of the newly formed MOIA, before transferring to the MEA along with the entire overseas Indian portfolio in 2015. The Protector of Emigrants focuses on safeguarding the less-skilled labour emigrants to the Gulf region and other areas. Other sections of the MEA's Overseas Indian Affairs

division address the needs of the remaining two segments of India's diaspora population. The MEA also operates embassies and consulates in 160 countries and honorary consuls in an additional 36 countries, to cater to the needs of India's overseas population.

◆ *ICM & ICCR*

The work of the MEA is complemented by several independent or semi-independent bodies, notably the India Centre for Migration (ICM) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The ICM functions as a government-controlled think tank that conducts research on the migration of Indian workers for overseas employment and aids in informed policy-making. The ICCR, under the Ministry of External Affairs, is the primary agency for developing and implementing policies related to India's external cultural relations.

◆ *IWRC & MRCs*

The MEA also operates Indian Workers Resource Centres (IWRC) in the U. A. E., Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. These centers provide 24/7 helpdesks for both prospective migrants and overseas Indians and offer support in 11 Indian languages via an electronic platform. These overseas centers are connected to five domestic Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) located in Kochi, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, Lucknow and Chennai.

◆ *State governments and diaspora affairs*

In India, states like Kerala, Punjab and Gujarat actively engage with their expatriate populations. Since 1998, the Gujarat government has maintained a separate Department for Non-Resident Gujaratis. The autonomous Gujarat State Non-Resident Gujaratis (NRGs) Foundation under this department aims to promote social, cultural and linguistic ties within the global Gujarati community. It also explores ways in which NRIs and NRGs can contribute to the state's development and identifies areas where NRIs and NRGs may need assistance.

◆ *Norka and N. R. I. Sabha*

In Kerala, NORKA (Non-Resident Keralites' Affairs) was established in 1996, followed by the creation of its field agency, Norka-Roots, in 2002. Similarly, in 1996, the N. R. I. Sabha in Punjab was formed as an NGO, chaired by the government's Commissioner for N. R. I. Affairs. The Chief Minister of Punjab served as the ex-officio chief patron, and the elected president had to be a former N. R. I., including foreign citizens of Indian origin. In 2007, the Punjab government established the Department of N. R. I. Affairs. Since then, many states have created N. R. I. centers

and cells to strengthen relationships with overseas Indians and address their issues.

4.2.1. Evolution of Restrictive Immigration Policies

◆ *World War II & Indian diaspora*

The Second World War represents a significant turning point in the history of the Indian Diaspora, particularly in developed countries. This era marked the shift from a small, temporary and marginal Indian presence to one that was more substantial, permanent and central. During this period, the largest number of Indian migrants moved to the U. K., driven by the combined experiences of war, partition and independence. This migration was further bolstered by networks of kinship and friendship, which helped others to seize economic opportunities abroad.

◆ *Immigration during British Period*

Despite Britain's "liberal" facade, it was far from being a multi-racial society after the Second World War. In 1946, Canada and in 1947, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka introduced their own citizenship laws, prompting Britain to define its policy with the British Nationality Act of 1948. Although all British subjects from the Empire and the Commonwealth were officially allowed to enter the U. K. during the first post-war decade (1945-1955), the immigration of Indians and other nationals from the sub-continent, as well as from the Caribbean and Africa, was effectively restricted by this legislation until the late 1950s and early 1960s.

◆ *Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 and the Skilled migration*

As immigration became more structured, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 was enacted and implemented in 1965. This act formally legitimized British restrictions on the settlement of "coloured" people from the colonies, particularly South Asians, including Indians. It limited immigration to "primary immigrants" who had job vouchers in one of three priority categories: those with a job offer in Britain, those with special skills scarce in Britain and those eligible under an undifferentiated numerical quota based on the labour needs of the British economy. Later, the government endorsed a White Paper that established a restrictive bipartisan immigration policy based on skills. This policy restricted the entry of semi-skilled and unskilled Indians, though a loophole for family reunification favoured the immigration of Indian Sikhs over other South Asian communities like the Mirpuris and Kashmiris from West Pakistan or the Sylhetis from East Pakistan. From 1965 onwards, the priority job-voucher category of immigrants

entering Britain, along with their families, were mostly professionals such as doctors, dentists and research scientists, hailing from all over India rather than just the traditional areas of Punjab and Gujarat.

◆ *The second Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 and immigration controls*

Furthermore, highly skilled and professional Indians displaced from East Africa in the late 1960s and early 1970s, often referred to as the “twice banished,” significantly contributed to the highly qualified Indian Diaspora in the U. K.. With the intensification of nationalisation and Africanisation in newly independent East African countries – Tanganyika in 1961, Uganda in 1962, and Kenya in 1963 – these Indians were forced to choose between local or British citizenship. The influx of East African Asians into the U. K. in 1968 alarmed the British government, leading to the enactment of the second Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968. Rushed through Parliament in just three days, this act imposed immigration controls on all British passport holders unless they, a parent or a grandparent had been born, adopted or naturalised in the U. K. This Act is often viewed as a particularly dishonorable episode in British immigration policy, as it effectively denied civil rights to East African Indians and others while not disenfranchising numerous British people of white origin settled outside Britain in older dominions and regions like Southern Rhodesia, Kenya and Argentina.

◆ *Ugandan Crisis and Indian exodus*

The British policy on East African Asian immigration was both indefensible and irrational from a practical standpoint. The East African Indians, collectively, were a well-educated and materially successful diaspora group, with a high proportion of entrepreneurs and professionally qualified individuals. By signalling that they were unwelcome in Britain, the British government not only risked disputes with India but also displayed international naivety by diverting many of the richest and best-educated individuals to Canada. Domestically, the 1968 Act aimed to strengthen the bipartisan British approach to immigration based on skills but was criticised by Enoch Powell’s “rivers of blood” speech for being too generous to coloured immigrants, including Indians. As the Ugandan Asian Crisis unfolded in 1972, the exodus of Indians from Uganda followed a similar pattern to the movements from Kenya and Tanganyika in the decade after their independence.

In 1972, the situation affected Ugandan residents of Asian descent who were either citizens of the U. K. or one

- ◆ *British voucher scheme and New migrant policy*

of the countries in the Indian sub-continent. The Edward Heath government, in collaboration with other prosperous countries, facilitated the migration of about 23,000 Ugandan Asians, the majority of whom were Indians and highly qualified, to other nations, particularly Canada. Only about 29,000 Ugandan Asians arrived in the U. K.. Over time, the British voucher scheme became more restrictive, and the number of vouchers issued was gradually reduced by new nationality and immigration rules and Acts. During this period, other developed countries in the North began lifting discriminatory restrictions and relaxing numerical quotas for migrants from developing countries in the South, which became a trend. This trend undermined Britain's policy of maintaining a predominantly white population and affected similar policies in the West.

4.2.2 New World Order and Diaspora Issues

- ◆ *New Immigration Policies*

Before the Second World War, North American immigration policy was marked by anti-Asian sentiment. In Canada, a 1947 Order allowed non-immigrants who had served in the Armed Forces to land, provided they were not of Asiatic origin. However, the changing composition of the Commonwealth influenced the Canadian government. After Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Canada, Indo-Canadians were granted the right to vote. To maintain Canada's image as a humane and peace-loving country, the explicitly racist provisions in the Immigration Act were changed. In 1962, new regulations prohibited the use of race, colour, and national origin as criteria for immigrant selection, and the points system that followed facilitated the increasing immigration of skilled, educated and qualified Indians. Similarly, Australia abandoned its "White Australia policy" in the 1960s, following Canada's example in attracting talented non-white Indians, with New Zealand liberalising its immigration policies even further.

In the United States, before the Second World War, Indian immigrants were mostly illiterate labourers working in Pacific coast lumber mills and docks, though there were also a few educated Indians who were political refugees or students. Notable figures included the son of the Maharaja of Baroda at Harvard and the son of Rabindranath Tagore at Illinois, both organising Indians against British rule. Tagore himself visited the U. S. but later denounced its Asian exclusion policies. After the war, President Roosevelt supported removing barriers against Indian immigrants,

◆ *Indians in the United States*

leading to the 1946 amendments to the U. S. Immigration Act, which ended nearly 30 years of exclusion by setting an annual quota of 100 Indians. This shift was partly influenced by the lifting of barriers against Chinese immigrants in 1943 and aimed to reduce antagonism towards American troops in India. Nehru's visit to the U. S. in 1949 further hastened change, culminating in the 1965 amendments that opened the doors for highly skilled and professional Indians. Over the next three decades, Indians became one of the highest-educated, highly professional and highest-earning minority ethnic groups in the U. S. This shift marked a break from the colonial legacy with Britain, as Canada and the U. S. became the primary destinations for migrating Indian professionals in the 1960s and 1970s. Meanwhile, unskilled and semi-skilled migrants found new opportunities in the oil-rich countries of the Gulf in West Asia as temporary construction workers, followed by some professionals.

4.2.3 Diaspora Policies during 1970s and 80s

◆ *Nationalisation policies and Indian diaspora*

In 1967, the Kenyan government initiated the Kenyanisation of its economy, requiring all non-citizens, mainly Indians, to obtain work and residence permits. This policy restricted their trade to specific areas and items. Although this was a domestic policy, India advised these individuals to surrender their British passports and acquire local citizenship. Indian diplomats also encouraged People of Indian Origin (PIOs) to support this move, but few did. For PIOs, assimilating with Africans implied intermarriage, which they resisted. They were also reluctant to move to England due to fears of social insecurity and cultural degradation for their children. Returning to India, with its poverty, filth and unemployment, was not a viable option. Furthermore, Indian policies kept them connected to their roots, as India appealed to them for financial support for defense against China and Pakistan. Frequent visits from Indian religious leaders, charity fundraisers and politicians reinforced these ties. During this crisis, however, India did not respond as it had in the past. The issue was extensively debated in the Indian parliament, with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi assuring members that the government was closely monitoring the situation.

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, B. R. Bhagat, was sent to Nairobi with a personal message from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to President Kenyatta. Upon his return to India, Bhagat admitted in parliament that there

◆ *Kenyan crisis and Indian diaspora*

were widespread rumours in Kenya suggesting that India intended to interfere in Kenya's internal affairs by asking them to slow down their policy. Although Bhagat had a scheduled meeting with President Kenyatta, the appointment was cancelled upon Bhagat's arrival in Nairobi. Bhagat met with the vice president and other officials but returned without delivering Mrs. Gandhi's letter to Kenyatta. The Indian parliament viewed the cancellation of Bhagat's appointment as a snub to India. There was suspicion that Britain was behind the rumour that India wanted to interfere in Kenya's internal affairs, causing public outrage in both India and Nairobi. The Times of India remarked that if Kenyatta had fallen into a trap set by a third party, it did not reflect well on his political acumen (*Times of India*, 1963). *The Daily Nation* (Nairobi) criticised Bhagat for not handing over the message to someone else and described his conduct as bad-tempered. The incident was later recounted by the then Indian High Commissioner, Prem Bhatia, in his book, where he stated that despite his opposition, the move was based on a political decision and he had to prepare himself to make the best of a bad situation. Nonetheless, the Kenyan government extended the permits for non-citizens for one to two years with the possibility of renewal.

◆ *Ugandan crisis and Indian diaspora*

The Indian government had initiated economic measures at a bilateral level to integrate Indian settlers in Kenya within India's policy framework. It proposed the establishment of the Africa-India Development Corporation with Kenyan PIOs and Indian capital, aiming to integrate the Indian community into Kenya's economic life, thereby promoting a multi-racial society. Although this initiative did not materialise for reasons other than India's disinterest, it indicated a shift in Indian policy towards PIOs in Africa. A similar shift was observed in Uganda when Idi Amin came to power in January 1971. He aimed to transfer the Ugandan economy to Ugandans of African origin, accusing the 80,000 Asians in Uganda of sabotaging the economy and fostering corruption. Amin declared that all PIOs, whether Kenyan citizens, British or Indian passport holders, had to leave within 90 days by November 8, 1972, calling the expulsion part of a "war of liberation." In response, the Indian Deputy Minister of External Affairs assured the parliament that they were in contact with Ugandan authorities and would do everything possible to protect the interests of Indians in Uganda. The Indian president, while in Lusaka, condemned the expulsion, expressing concern that such racial policies cast a shadow of

doubt and uncertainty over many people of Indian origin in Africa and warning that the pernicious doctrine of racialism might spread even in free Africa.

◆ *Government interference for the Indian diaspora in Africa*

Despite strong public opinion in India, the country firmly denied and ridiculed Idi Amin's claim that India planned to invade Uganda alongside Tanzania and Zambia. Nevertheless, India expressed its support for any international effort to persuade Amin to extend the expulsion deadline. India refrained from taking a tougher stance because such a move against a purely racial issue could be interpreted as Indian interference in Africa. Another constraint was India's commitment to Afro-Asian solidarity. The primary reason for India's restraint seemed to be that strong words without meaningful action in Uganda could trigger an anti-Asian wave. Years later, India faced similar constraints when the Bavadra government was dismissed in Fiji and anti-P. I. O. actions began there.

◆ *Rethinking India's African Policy*

The Ugandan crisis made India realise the diversity in leadership and political systems across African states, emphasising that Indian support for Afro-Asian solidarity had to be balanced with broader national interests. The expulsions highlighted another point for India: despite its consistent support for African decolonisation and Afro-Asian solidarity, none of the African countries, even those friendly to India and opposed to Idi Amin's actions, offered to accommodate expelled Indians as a gesture of sympathy. As for India, its policy never barred PIOs from resettling in India with their savings and assets. The Indian government made special provisions and offered incentives for Asians to resettle in India, yet almost none chose to return. India's restrained approach succeeded in securing compensation from Amin for the businesses and properties of Indian passport holders, which was not extended to Indians of other nationalities.

◆ *India's interference in Fiji*

In Fiji, following the East African experience, India's changing attitude became evident during the 1987 military coup. The press and media aggressively covered the overthrow of the pro-Indian Fijian government. While India lacked the capacity to forcibly change the situation, it decided to mobilise regional powers like Australia to support its efforts to address the situation in Fiji. India utilised forums like the NAM Summit, the Commonwealth group, the U. N., and others to highlight the discrimination and injustice faced by the Indian diaspora. This approach

marked a clear contrast to India's previous handling issues of P. I. O. discrimination.

South Africa:

◆ *Fight against racism in South Africa*

Indian settlers in South Africa had always held a unique position in India's foreign policy. Long before Mahatma Gandhi employed his strategies of non-cooperation, civil disobedience, satyagraha and peaceful protests in India's freedom struggle in 1920, he first used many of these methods in South Africa in the late 19th century. The personal insults Gandhi endured in South Africa and his strong opposition to the racial discrimination against Indians there became a deeply sentimental issue for his followers in the Indian freedom movement. Indian leaders consistently condemned the racial discrimination faced by Indians in South Africa, making their cause a significant aspect of India's foreign policy.

◆ *Ghetto Act and India's concerns*

The Asiatic Land Tenure Act, also known as the Ghetto Act, became law in June 1946. This act targeted Indians, confining them to specific areas. On September 3, during the United Nations General Assembly session, Indian representative M. C. Chagla expressed India's concerns in a U. N. Sub-Committee, condemning South Africa's discriminatory treatment of Asians as a violation of human rights. The Franco-Mexican resolution, supported by India, called for the treatment of Indians in South Africa to align with international obligations and the U. N. charter, and it was passed.

◆ *Indian support against racial discrimination*

India's special support for Indian settlers in South Africa continued until the late 1950s. During this period, resolutions by the Indian National Congress articulated and strongly supported the cause of Indian settlers in South Africa, although they also expressed general support for other South African non-Indian sufferers. Once India raised the issue of South African Indian settlers exclusively at the U. N. on the grounds of human rights, it soon realised the necessity of extending support to all groups and communities subjected to racial discrimination in South Africa, due to the principle of non-racial treatment.

Additionally, Nehru's policy of advising Indian settlers in other parts of Africa to prioritise the African cause and integrate with African aspirations, without seeking special privileges, contrasted with India's initial exclusive support for Indian settlers in South Africa. The Group Areas Act of

◆ *Fight against apartheid*

1950 formally institutionalised apartheid, affecting both Indians and Black Africans in South Africa. This led to the appointment of a U. N. commission to study the racial situation in South Africa. From that point on, the issue of Indians in South Africa was merged with the broader issue of apartheid, involving both Indians and Black Africans. Indian policy then focused on establishing majority rule in South Africa and aligning the cause of Indian settlers with that of Black Africans.

◆ *Terminating trade agreements*

During his interim Prime Ministership in March 1946, Nehru recommended terminating trade agreements and severing diplomatic ties with South Africa. Lord Wavell, the Indian viceroy, implemented this immediately. This strong action was taken when India had autonomy in foreign relations but was not yet independent internally. The stakes were high, as India, on the brink of independence, needed economic support from all quarters. However, this decision deprived India of 5% of its trade.

4.2.4 Indian Policy towards People of Indian Origin (P. I. O.) and the Gulf Diaspora

◆ *India's bilateral relations with Africa*

Until the late 1950s, PIOs remained a primary concern for India. However, the defeat in the Indo-Chinese war of 1962 and subsequent isolation in Africa shifted India's priorities. Diplomatic support against China and Pakistan became crucial. By the time India overcame its inferiority complex through achievements such as self-sufficiency in food, the creation of Bangladesh, atomic bomb testing and satellite launches, it had also emerged as the country with the third-largest pool of skilled and trained manpower. Economic considerations became paramount, particularly in Third World countries like Africa, where India could offer its technology and skills at competitive prices. The South-South cooperation framework suited India's interest in selling manufactured and value-added goods in Africa. The issue of PIOs faded into the background, as it no longer aligned with India's contemporary concerns. India's current enthusiasm over the end of apartheid is not solely because Indian settlers and Blacks are now free from racialism. It is also driven by a desire to convert its goodwill for South Africa into economic opportunities, seeking favourable access to its large and strong economy. Whether this expectation will be met is uncertain, but India does not expect preferential treatment for South African Indian settlers as a return for its contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle.

◆ *India and anti-apartheid struggle*

Both domestic and international changes have shifted India's policy priorities towards PIOs. During the colonial period in Africa, India's major concern was ensuring equal privileges for PIOs compared to European settlers. India advised PIOs to join Black Africans in the freedom struggle and integrate without seeking special privileges. With the end of colonialism, such imperatives ceased to exist. In the post-colonial phase, India realised that expecting "dual loyalty" from PIOs and including them in its policy framework neither secured Indian investments nor pleased African governments, who had to address their domestic pressures. PIOs themselves, after experiencing crises in places like Zanzibar, Uganda and Zambia, recognized that Indian support for their protection was limited. Even during crises, PIOs did not respond to India's offer to invest in India and obtain Indian citizenship. Over time, PIOs have become integrated into African states, making the issue of PIOs less significant. It would be counterproductive to expect special treatment for South African Indian settlers from the South African government as a reciprocal gesture for India's contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle. The real test of this policy will come when Indian settlers may need to participate in South Africa's economic and social restructuring programmes, a demand already emerging from black groups. Unlike East African Indians, South African Indians will not have a dependency attitude towards India due to South Africa's long isolation from India. Therefore, India does not have to respond to non-existent expectations from PIOs, though this does not mean PIOs have no place in Indian policy.

◆ *Oil boom and Indian influx to the Gulf*

The oil boom of the 1970s prompted a large influx of Indians to the Gulf region. Many of them remained employed for extended periods, though they had no chance of settling or acquiring local citizenship. Consequently, they had to repatriate all their earnings and savings to India, which benefited India's foreign exchange reserves, a scarce resource in the early 1990s. The Indian government responded by improving banking and other facilities for foreign exchange repatriation, raising interest rates on foreign exchange deposits and addressing the welfare of migrant workers in West Asian countries. It implemented policies for the compulsory registration of labour recruiting agents to prevent exploitation and deportation. Recently, under its revised Diaspora policies, the Indian government announced a special insurance scheme for the Indian Diaspora in the

Gulf region.

4.2.5 India's Diaspora Policies

- ◆ *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas*

Over the past 20 years, Indian state institutions have created diaspora centers, policies and programmes for labour migrants. In 2003, the Indian government organised the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, a diaspora conference aimed at consulting with the diaspora and migrant labourers. The N. R. I. Sabha in Punjab established a consultative body that includes government officials and elected NRIs.

- ◆ *The Representation of People Act Amendment Bill 2017*

An amendment in 2010 to the Representation of the People Act allowed NRIs to be included in voter rolls. However, NRIs needed to return to India on Election Day to vote, as they could not use postal ballots or other remote voting methods, resulting in low voter turnout. At the end of 2017, the government introduced the Representation of People Act Amendment Bill 2017, which would have allowed NRIs to vote by proxy. However, the bill lapsed with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha and has not been reintroduced since.

- ◆ *India and the issue of brain drain*

Restrictive Policies

India generally does not impose restrictive policies on the emigration of highly educated, trained and experienced personnel. Although various measures to address the issue of brain drain have been proposed over time, there has never been a consensus, except in the medical sector, where India has implemented specific restrictions. For three decades, India has had restrictive policies regarding medical education abroad. Initially, these policies aimed to control foreign exchange outflow and ensure the optimal use of facilities within India. Later, the focus shifted to regulating the out-migration of doctors to retain the benefits of the highly subsidised medical education provided to them for serving the country's poor.

- ◆ *Regulations for worker emigration*

These policies were largely a *quid pro quo* response to the highly restrictive U. S. regulations on the entry of medical personnel. India's restrictive emigration policy primarily aimed to protect uneducated and unskilled emigrants. To this end, the Protectorate of Emigrants has been responsible for regulating worker emigration and safeguarding the interests of this segment of the Indian Diaspora abroad.

Compensatory Policies

One notable proposal is the Bhagwati-proposal of

◆ *Methods to tackle brain drain*

1976, which suggested taxing the brain drain to create a development fund benefiting developing countries losing skilled labour to the developed world. However, this proposal could not be implemented due to issues of multilateral jurisdiction across countries. In India, there is no formal compensatory mechanism to address the losses incurred due to migration. Instead, there are policies offering incentives to NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) to send funds to India through official channels. These include remittances, investments in bank deposits, development bonds like the Millennium Development Bond, securities of Indian companies and joint ventures.

◆ *Financial incentives for NRIs*

Most of these incentives come in the form of higher interest rates and lower tax rates for NRIs compared to residents in India. The term “non-resident” was coined to extend tax concessions to temporary visitors abroad, ensuring they were not subjected to double taxation both in the host country and in India. While these schemes have attracted financial transfers to India, they have also incurred significant social costs. Recently, India reduced these interest rate differentials to curb the rampant use of arbitrage and money laundering by some members of the Diaspora.

Restorative Policies

◆ *TOKTEN Program*

Restorative policies aim to encourage return migration to the home country, either permanently or temporarily for specific assignments. The best-known international scheme in this category is TOKTEN, launched by the UNDP in many countries. However, in India, the scheme has been largely ineffective due to poor implementation. Private industrial establishments were encouraged to offer placements to returning or visiting NRIs in their R&D units under the scheme, but private firms became frustrated and disillusioned with the TOKTEN-INRIST (Transfer of Knowledge and Technology through Expatriate Nationals - Interface for Non-Resident Indian Scientists & Technologists) programme in India.

Similarly, the “Pool Officers Scheme,” launched by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of the Government of India for permanent returnees, faced similar issues. The University Grants Commission (UGC) started a Research Scientist scheme in the early 1980s to attract Indian scientists from abroad with offers of placement in Indian universities at levels equivalent to lecturer, reader and professor, along with substantial research grants in

- ◆ *Pool Officers' Scheme and Research Scientist program*

addition to their salaries. While the scheme initially took off well, it encountered problems due to the dilution of standards by accommodating unemployed scholars from within India across all disciplines. This led to dichotomies within universities, and the UGC faced budget constraints, ultimately leading to the withdrawal of the scheme in the mid-1990s.

Developmental Policies

- ◆ *Methods for reducing development gap*

Developmental policies are not specifically aimed at addressing brain drain or labour exodus directly, but rather at tackling the root causes of mass emigration by reducing the development gap between the developing home country and the developed destination country. However, these policies often end up as mere promises in election manifestos, with no follow-up action if the party comes to power. Recently, the Indian judiciary has started holding the government accountable for failing to deliver on such promises, such as the commitment to universal primary education until the age of 14. Examples of these policies include proposals to establish science parks with wages comparable to international standards and non-repressive working conditions, and Export Processing Zones (EPZs) where tariff barriers are removed for specific production activities.

4.2.5.1 Economic, Cultural and Educational Policies

- ◆ *Know India Programme*

NRIs significantly contribute to the country's economy, prompting the government to actively engage in economic policies for NRIs over the past 20 years. According to Naujoks, India introduced special savings policies for NRIs, offering comparatively higher interest rates on deposits and providing tax exemptions. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is the primary institution for promoting Indian culture abroad, regularly providing cultural support to NRIs. ICCR operates 30 cultural centers worldwide, focusing on teaching Indian dance, music, yoga and language and organising festivals on national days. Since 2006, ICCR has offered scholarships of up to USD 4,000 per annum to 100-150 N. R. I. or P. I. O. students for undergraduate courses. The government, in collaboration with private institutions, conducted the Tracing Roots Programme. To raise awareness about Indian society, culture, economy and other aspects of India, a three-week orientation programme called the Know India Programme (KIP) was organised.

Details of Government Policies towards Indian Diaspora

SL No	Nature of Policy	Details of Policy
1	Flexible Citizenship Laws and Residency and Visa Requirements	India does not allow dual citizenship, but its OCI Card scheme offers lifetime visa-free travel, full residency, and employment rights for Persons of Indian Origin who are citizens of other countries.
2	Political Rights	Persons of Indian origin who are citizens of other countries do not have voting rights. However, recently, Non-Resident Indians (NRIs - Indian passport holders residing overseas) have regained their voting rights through amendments to the rules governing voter registration for overseas residents.
3	Special Property Rights	Indian Diaspora holding P. I. O. or OCI cards have the right to purchase property in India (except farm and plantation).
4	Tax Incentives	Overseas Indians returning to India can benefit from a reduced customs duty regime under the transfer of residence rules, along with the option to retain N. R. I. status for up to three years after their return. There are also provisions allowing the transfer of funds for philanthropic purposes with corresponding tax exemptions.
5	Portable Benefits	Through the provision of SSAs (Social Security Agreements) pensionary benefits of Indian workers and professionals working overseas are both portable and can be totalised in countries where SSAs have been executed
6	General Laws	To encourage investments from the Indian Diaspora, various measures have been implemented, including special incentives for bank deposits and investments in the stock market, along with specific provisions for OCIs and NRIs regarding Foreign Direct Investment. Additionally, amendments are being made or are in progress to facilitate the employment of overseas Indians in professions such as doctors, scientists, academics, and accountants.



4.2.6 Diaspora Policies and Protection in India

- ◆ *MGPSY, PBBY & ICWF*

As one of the leading countries sending labour migrants abroad, many of whom reside in nations with limited access to social protection from their host countries, India has implemented numerous policies and programmes to ensure transnational protection for its citizens overseas. These initiatives are often tailored to Indian nationals in specific regions, particularly the Gulf Cooperation Countries. Welfare and social protection measures for overseas Indians include initiatives such as the now discontinued Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY) pension scheme for NRIs, legal and financial assistance programmes, the Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) and the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

- ◆ *Indian Community Welfare Fund*

Since 2009, the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has provided assistance to Indian nationals abroad facing distress or emergencies, prioritising those deemed most deserving based on means testing. The support covers a range of needs without requiring repayment, including legal and financial aid for Indian women abandoned, deceived or abused by their N. R. I./P. I. O. or foreign spouses. It also extends to emergency medical care for severe accidents, payment of minor fines or penalties for Indian nationals involved in minor offenses like illegal stay (where the worker is not primarily at fault) and assistance for the repatriation of nationals stranded abroad. The ICWF primarily targets overseas Indian workers deceived by unscrupulous agents in host countries, runaway domestic workers, accident victims, abandoned spouses of overseas Indians, undocumented workers needing emergency aid and any other overseas Indian citizen in distress. Additionally, ICWF rules authorise consulates to cover transportation costs for repatriating the remains of deceased Indian nationals to India or managing local cremation / burial arrangements.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is a compulsory insurance scheme designed to protect the interests of Indian emigrant workers categorised under Emigration Check Required (ECR) who travel for overseas employment in ECR countries. This applies to 18 official ECR countries: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, the U. A. E., and Yemen. Currently, departures to Libya, Sudan, Syria and Yemen are

- ◆ *Compulsory Insurance Scheme for migrants*

suspended due to security concerns. Initially launched in 2003, the scheme has been revised in 2006, 2008 and 2017 to enhance coverage for emigrant workers. At the regional level, the Kerala Pravasi Welfare Board, under the Non-Resident Keralites' Welfare Fund Act 2008, has introduced various welfare schemes, including multiple pension plans, for the benefit of Non-Resident Keralites. Subsequent sections will explore policies and programmes addressing issues such as unemployment, healthcare, pensions, family-related benefits and resources for economic hardships.

4. 2.7 Pensions and Unemployment

- ◆ *PKVY and PDO*

The Indian government does not provide direct assistance to unemployed migrants, but it has taken steps to enhance the employability of Indian nationals in areas where migration is common. The Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) aims to improve the skills of potential migrant workers and facilitate employment opportunities overseas. Launched during the 14th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas convention in 2017, this programme is managed by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). It includes mandatory pre-departure orientation (PDO) sessions to prepare migrants for their journey to ECR countries. In Kerala, Norka-Roots conducts one-day pre-departure training courses for aspiring overseas workers. These courses educate participants about job prospects abroad and provide essential information on visas, emigration regulations, employment contracts, customs procedures and travel formalities.

- ◆ *National Pension Scheme (NPS)*

India's National Pension Scheme (NPS) is a government-sponsored retirement savings system. Initially limited to government employees, it has been open to all Indian employees since 2009. In 2015, NRIs were permitted to obtain a unique Permanent Retirement Account Number (PRAN) to participate in the scheme. NRIs contribute to the NPS either through inward remittance via standard banking channels or from funds in their designated diaspora savings accounts. If NRIs acquire citizenship in another country, their NPS account will be closed, resulting in forfeiture of their Indian citizenship.

- ◆ *Mahatma Gandhi Suraksha Pravasi Yojana (MGPSY)*

In 2012, the government launched the Mahatma Gandhi Suraksha Pravasi Yojana (MGPSY) as a voluntary scheme to provide social security coverage to Indians in Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries. However, due to insufficient subscribers, the scheme was discontinued in early 2017. In

Kerala, Non-Resident Keralites who consistently contribute to the Welfare Fund until age 60 are eligible for a monthly pension of INR 2,000 (approximately USD 30) upon reaching age 60.

4.2.8 Health Care & Welfare Assistance

In India, there are both government and private health insurance schemes available. The public insurance system includes government-owned companies such as New India Assurance Co., Oriental Insurance Co., National Insurance Co., and United India Insurance. NRIs can purchase health insurance policies from these insurers for treatment in India, although there is no specific provision or communication strategy from the government or these companies aimed at NRIs.

- ◆ *NRIs and Health Insurance Schemes*

The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana insurance scheme for emigrant workers in the ECR category covers birth-related hospital costs up to USD 350 in India. To access these maternity benefits abroad, all necessary documents must be certified by the Indian Mission, which can be a significant barrier to obtaining these benefits. The Kerala Pravasi Welfare Board offers financial support through its medical treatment and accident-cum-death insurance scheme. Under this initiative, a member of Non-Resident Keralite (NRK) suffering from a critical illness can receive a maximum financial assistance of INR 50,000 (approximately USD 730) throughout their membership period. Additionally, financial aid is provided to returned NRKs or their dependent family members for medical expenses, assistance in case of death or for acquiring items like artificial limbs, crutches, wheelchairs or other aids to address physical disabilities.

- ◆ *Financial aid schemes for migrants*

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is designed to aid Indian nationals abroad during times of distress and emergencies. Through the ICWF, consulates can offer distressed nationals boarding and lodging in budget accommodations or shelters operated by the Indian mission or an NGO partnered with the mission. The fund can also cover airfare to India for stranded overseas Indians and provide legal assistance to those facing minor charges or falsely implicated by their employers, leading to imprisonment. Consulates can additionally assist Indian women who have been abandoned, deceived or abused by their N. R. I./P. I. O. or foreign spouses, offering legal and financial support. They may also cover fines for minor offenses, such as overstaying in the host country without the worker being

- ◆ *ICWF and its financial support*



at fault and facilitate the release of Indian nationals from jail or detention centres. These initiatives are implemented by the Government of India and state governments and address policies related to NRIs and PIOs.

4.2.9 Policy Changes in India and the World

Although there is a 1983 law regulating the emigration of unskilled workers from India, the country does not have a well-defined immigration rule or law for either skilled or unskilled workers. Entry, regulation and prevention of “foreigners” into India, as well as Indian citizenship, are governed by the Constitution, the Citizenship Act of 1955, the Foreigners Act of 1946, the Passport Act of 1967, the Criminal Procedure Code and other regulations. However, the introduction of the Overseas Indian Citizenship (OIC) in 2006, which was promised in 2005, marked a significant step in redefining India’s immigration policy for the new millennium, reflecting an interconnected world. For the Indian Diaspora in the Gulf, who send large remittances but cannot become naturalised citizens due to restrictive regimes, the Indian government announced at the fourth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2006 that their demand for voting rights from abroad was under serious consideration. The dual citizenship policy and the consideration of granting overseas voting rights are particularly important in light of the Global Commission on International Migration’s report submitted to the UN Secretary-General in October 2005, titled “Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action.” The report highlights that international migration is now a top global policy issue; but the international community has not effectively leveraged the opportunities or addressed the challenges associated with it, calling for new approaches. It emphasises that migration policies should be based on shared objectives and a common vision to maximise the benefits and minimise the adverse consequences of international migration. The report challenges the traditional distinction between skilled and unskilled workers, noting that all migrants, regardless of their educational achievement, can be considered essential workers.

◆ *Global Commission on International Migration*

The vulnerability faced by migrants extends beyond just unskilled individuals. The system perpetuates exposure to various forms of vulnerability, serving as a safety valve for the continuity and flexibility of the labour market. Therefore, addressing policy protection should not merely rectify specific instances but must also challenge the systemic factors that

- ◆ *Feminisation, privatisation, and regionalisation*

perpetuate exploitative situations. Despite ample discourse, policy discussions often stop at recommending legislation. When it comes to implementation, the focus is primarily on preventing exploitation of migrants, especially irregular and illegal migrants, by vested interest groups in the migration sector. The International Labour Organization (ILO) identifies “feminization, privatization, and regionalization” as contemporary features of labour migration that current ILO conventions and national immigration laws inadequately address, challenging traditional regulatory efforts.

- ◆ *Systemic vulnerabilities of migrants*

Systemic vulnerability begins even before legal migrants leave their developing home countries, notably at the practical implementation stage of policies at foreign consulates issuing visas or entry permits. Migrants from the so-called “third-world” often endure humiliating experiences at these consulates, managed by officials who may exhibit discriminatory behaviours rooted in historical hierarchies. Queuing up in hostile environments outside these consulates in South Asia can be degrading, making migrants vulnerable to mistreatment, insults, threats and exploitation both during their journey and upon arrival. The instability of policies, legislation, quotas and practices in destination countries further compounds this uncertainty. Establishing policy stability and ensuring dignified implementation are crucial steps toward creating more user-friendly migration policies, not only in developing countries like India but universally.

4.2.10 Pravasi Organisations

1) India Centre for Migration (ICM)

- ◆ *ICM and International migration*

In an increasingly globalised world where people move across borders frequently for employment opportunities, there is a recognized need to strategically manage the emigration process of Indians seeking work abroad. To address this, the Ministry established the India Centre for Migration (ICM), formerly known as the Indian Council of Overseas Employment, as a nonprofit society under the Societies Registration Act 1860 in July 2008. The ICM functions as a research think-tank for the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, focusing on all aspects of international migration. It conducts empirical, analytical and policy-oriented research and initiates pilot projects to document best practices in migration management.

Main Objectives:

- Act as a “think tank” to devise and implement medium to long-term strategies for promoting overseas employment opportunities for Indians.
- Continuously monitor, study, and analyse trends in international labour markets, as well as strategies employed by various countries involved in sending and receiving labour.
- Develop and maintain a national strategy to enhance global competitiveness as a labour provider.
- Commission studies on international labour markets to identify emerging overseas employment prospects for Indian youth.
- Position potential Indian workers abroad as recipients of employment services offered by the private recruitment industry.
- Promote India as a source of skilled, trained and qualified workers for global markets.
- Customise training materials originally created by the International Labour Organization and International Organization for Migration to suit specific states or countries and cater to different genders.
- Implement welfare schemes tailored to the specific needs of overseas Indian workers based on identified requirements.

Main Functions

- Establish and manage a database focused on emerging employment opportunities specific to countries and sectors abroad.
- Identify gaps in labour supply within international markets and determine the skill sets necessary for Indian workers to fill those gaps.
- Launch programmes aimed at developing and enhancing skills in collaboration with professional organisations and the private sector, with a focus on promoting employment opportunities overseas.
- Organise orientation programmes before departure for various categories of workers.
- Collaborate with other agencies involved in employment promotion, including state manpower development corporations, project manpower suppliers and foreign employers.
- Support the study, monitoring and analysis of international labour market trends and dynamics, including challenges faced by Indian

migrant workers both abroad and in India. .
Benchmark best practices from other countries that send labour and recommend policy initiatives and strategies based on these insights.

- Provide targeted welfare support to overseas Indian workers based on identified needs, facilitated through institutional arrangements such as a dedicated welfare fund.

◆ *Structure and
functionaries of
ICM*

The Centre operates with a dual-tier structure consisting of a Governing Body and an Executive Directorate. The Governing Body is chaired by the Secretary (CPV & OIA) of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Other members include representatives from the Department of Economic Affairs (Ministry of Finance), Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and representatives from three state governments on a rotational basis. Additionally, four external experts nominated by the government are also part of the Governing Body. The Chief Executive Officer serves as the Member Secretary of the Governing Body. This body establishes the overarching policy framework for the programmes and operations of the ICM.

Initiatives at ICM

◆ *IOM & IVQs*

The Skill Development Initiative for Potential Migrants from the North-Eastern States of India was a pilot project implemented across eight states in the region in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). As part of this initiative, seven International Vocational Qualifications (IVQs) were developed specifically for the hospitality sector in India. Additionally, a Skills Training Certification Resource Centre was established in Guwahati, Assam, in 2012. The project aimed to create a knowledge base for policy-making on India - E. U. migration in partnership with the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence. This initiative facilitated constructive dialogues between the E. U. and India on various migration-related issues. As a result, ten research papers focusing on migration in the India - E. U. corridor were published, four workshops were conducted, an awareness campaign on safe and legal migration was carried out in Punjab and a conference was convened in Delhi.

ICM organized a workshop in collaboration with UN Women and the Government of Andhra Pradesh in

- ◆ *Awareness programmes under ICM*

November 2014 in Hyderabad, focusing on empowering women migrant workers from India to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. In partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), ICM conducted a Labour Market Assessment (LMA) of six European countries during 2011-2012. The assessment aimed to provide an overview of market conditions and sectoral opportunities in the labour market in these countries. It also offered comprehensive and short-term recommendations to enhance labour mobility from India.

- ◆ *ICM and research projects*

ICM served as the knowledge partner for the Ministry's Employers Conference held in Dubai in 2013, emphasising its role in facilitating dialogue and insights into employment-related issues. Under ICM's Senior Fellowship programme, three Senior Fellows have completed research projects on various topics including "The Future of Migration from India: Policy, Strategy & Modes of Engagement," "Indian Migrants in Myanmar: Emerging Trends & Challenges," and "Gulf Migration, Social Remittances and Religion: The Changing Dynamics of Kerala Christians." Additionally, since 2015, ICM has been actively contributing inputs and data to support the Ministry in drafting the Emigration Management Bill (EMB), developing standard employment contracts, renewing Emigration Rules, enhancing the functioning of Indian Missions related to the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) and documenting the best practices from countries in the Colombo Process.

- ◆ *Prevention and Assistance to Survivors of Trafficking" (PAST)*

2) International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

IOM addresses human trafficking with the project "Prevention and Assistance to Survivors of Trafficking" (PAST). It has also developed two additional projects: "Greater Implementation of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act for Anti-Trafficking in Persons" and "Prevention, Protection, and Assistance to Survivors of Trafficking/Vulnerable Populations." The PAST project aims to economically rehabilitate 300 (potential) trafficking survivors by providing micro-credit assistance to establish viable businesses or employment opportunities. It includes capacity building and various trainings in entrepreneurial and marketing skills, as well as psycho-social counselling for overall well-being. Additionally, the project will develop a local language module to promote peer education among survivors on legal issues to raise awareness.

◆ *Initiatives to combat human trafficking*

The second project, “Technical Cooperation with Ministry of Women and Child Development for Assistance to Survivors of Trafficking and Vulnerable Population” (TCPA), builds on the foundation created by the PAST project in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD). It aims to advance public-private partnerships in preventing and combating human trafficking in India. This involves capacity building of NGOs on entrepreneurial development skills and sensitising the corporate sector on trafficking issues, recognising and replicating IOM’s successful approach.

Main Projects:

- Prevention and Assistance to Survivors of Trafficking (PAST)
- Technical Cooperation with Ministry of Women and Child Development on Prevention and Assistance to Survivors of Trafficking (TCPA)

◆ *Overseas Workers Resource Centre*

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Government of India have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This agreement will facilitate the joint implementation of programmes and activities aimed at improving the management and facilitation of overseas employment for Indian workers worldwide. It includes the immediate joint implementation in India of an IOM program funded by the European Commission, which promotes regional dialogue and initiatives to enhance managed labour mobility between Asia and the European Union. As part of this program, IOM and the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) will collaboratively create labour mobility management projects, such as establishing an Overseas Workers Resource Centre to provide information on legal opportunities for potential overseas workers and launching mass information campaigns. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is conducting a grassroots information campaign in the District of Jalandhar, Punjab, to raise awareness about the risks of irregular migration to Europe, with a particular focus on Belgium.

1) SHRAMIC

◆ *SHRAMIC and migrants’ welfare*

The “Strengthen and Harmonize Research and Action on Migration in the Indian Context” (SHRAMIC) initiative, supported by the Tata Trusts, focuses on migration issues. This initiative is led by IGIDR in partnership with CPR, IRIS-KF, NIUA and the Migration Program Partners of the Tata Trusts.

Goals:

- Foster a supportive environment for migrants and acknowledge their contributions in poverty reduction and employment strategies.
- Recommend evidence-based policy measures to safeguard migrants' rights.

Distinctive Elements of SHRAMIC

- Survey instruments are developed through a collaborative process to create a body of knowledge accepted by academia and NGOs.
- Academic partners collaborate with NGOs to integrate their insights and jointly design survey instruments that address key questions.
- This collaboration helps academic partners gain a deeper understanding of migrants' experiences, while NGO partners gain a better appreciation of academic research methods.

Summarised Overview

The Government of India has vast institutional mechanism to cater to the needs of its diaspora population overseas. Under the Ministry of External Affairs, Overseas Indian Affairs oversees diaspora-related matters and includes the Protector of Emigrants, which primarily deals with (mostly temporary and low-skilled) labour emigration. The MEA also operates embassies and consulates in 160 countries and honorary consuls in an additional 36 countries, to cater to the needs of India's overseas population. The work of the MEA is complemented by several independent or semi-independent bodies, notably the India Centre for Migration (ICM) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The MEA also operates Indian Workers Resource Centres (IWRC) in the U. A. E., Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, immigration rules were drastically changed. Restrictive rules replaced the liberal rules and immigration of Indians, Caribbean and Africa were restricted. Similarly, North American immigration policy got changed. Anti-Asian sentiments in the North America and "White Australia policy" were evoked. Nationalisation attempts and anti-colonial struggle started in the African countries such as Kenya and Uganda put the overseas Indians at stake and this dragged the Indian government into proper policy formation. Anti-apartheid struggle which Indians carried out in South Africa was able to gain the support all over the world. After the 1960s and 70s, Indian government began to rethink emigration policies as per the human resource requirements and its adopted stringent measures to tackle human trafficking.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a remarkable step in the history of Indian diaspora. NRIs have been represented and accommodated in the various bodies and institutions formed under the Government of India. Numerous policies have been framed for the protection and welfare of the overseas Indians. Restrictive policies, developmental, restoratives, compensatory and economic, cultural and educational policies. The Government have planned insurance schemes, pensions and unemployment incentives and initiatives for health care and other welfare measures. Apart from that, Pravasi Organisations such as ICM and International Organisations for Migration and many others are functional overseas.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Who is known as P. I. O.?
2. What are the three main groups that diaspora is composed of?
3. Examine the bureaucratic mechanism constituted by the government of India for the welfare of Indian overseas.
4. Expand IWRC.
5. Discuss NORKA and N. R. I. Sabha
6. Compare the immigration policies during the colonial and post-colonial periods and analyse their impact upon migration from India.
7. Evaluate the consequences of nationalisation policies on migration from India. Analyse the limitations faced by the government of India in the light of the Kenyanisation episode.
8. Explain any three of the following:
9. The Asiatic Land Tenure Act (the Ghetto Act)
10. The Representation of People Act
11. The Commonwealth Immigration Act
12. The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY)
13. ICM & IOM



Assignments

1. Identify the major trajectories of the Indian diaspora abroad and examine policy shifts since the post-independent period.
2. Elucidate the Kenyan and Ugandan crisis and elaborate on the Indian government's approaches towards the People of Indian Origin (P. I. O.).
3. Explain typologies of India's diaspora policies.
4. Assess and evaluate major initiatives of the Government of India for the welfare of the Indian diaspora overseas.
5. Discuss any two Pravasi Organisations in terms of their goals and initiatives for the welfare of the Indian diaspora overseas.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Remittance Economy and Socio-Economic Impact

Learning Outcomes

Upon reading this unit, the learner will be able to :

- ◆ explain concepts related to migration, the remittance economy and migrant returns
- ◆ assess the role of the remittance economy in the national economic system and infrastructure development
- ◆ evaluate the impact of the remittance economy on the socio-economic growth of the country and diagnose the problems related to migration.

Background

Diasporic communities play a crucial economic role for the nation, with their remittances serving as a significant boost to the economy and supporting national development. These remittances come in two forms: direct investments such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and earnings sent back by labourers primarily from the Middle East. Remittances represent a key benefit of external migration, providing much-needed foreign exchange and opportunities for higher levels of savings and investments. Over the past three decades, remittances have played a pivotal role in financing a substantial portion of India's trade deficit, thereby reducing the overall current account deficit. Regionally, their impact has been profound, notably in Kerala, where remittances accounted for 21% of the state's income during the 1990s. This influx of funds has contributed to increased prosperity: despite Kerala's average per capita consumption being below the national average until 1978-79, by 1999-2000, consumer spending in Kerala exceeded the national average by approximately 41%. The relationships among Diaspora, Diaspora finance and development are intricate and have only recently started to be explored seriously by scholars focusing on diaspora and development. In the context of India, there remains a notable absence of thorough research aimed at assessing the present importance and potential impact of various forms of diaspora finance in the country.



Keywords

Remittance, Foreign Direct Investment, Philanthropy, Nitaquat, NORKA ROOTS

Discussion

4.3.1 Indian Diaspora and Remittance Economy

◆ *Remittance as a development strategy*

The diaspora significantly contributes to the development of its homeland through various means such as remittances, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), entrepreneurship and philanthropy. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) reports that India, with approximately 25 million people residing in about 110 countries across all the six continents, has the second-largest diaspora globally, following China. India is the largest recipient of remittances worldwide, predominantly from the Gulf countries.

◆ *Remittance as part of GDP*

Afram's study estimates that overseas Indians send an annual income of US \$400 billion, accounting for 30 percent of India's GDP. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has documented that workers' remittances to India amounted to US\$ 46.4 billion for the fiscal year 2008-2009, a significant rise from US\$ 2.1 billion in 1990-1991. This data highlights the consistent increase in remittance flows to India, with the highest remittances coming from the U. S, followed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

◆ *State wise remittance share*

The Reserve Bank of India reported that migrants send money back home to their families, with 61 percent of these remittances used for family maintenance, including expenses for food, education, health, marriages, and house construction. Funds are typically sent between parents and children. Afram's study indicates that, on an average, about 20 percent of received funds are deposited in bank accounts, while approximately 7 percent are invested in land, property or securities. Tumbé's research revealed that international remittances in 2007-2008 were primarily received by states such as Kerala (Rs. 51,211 crores), followed by Maharashtra (Rs. 26,481 crores), Tamil Nadu (Rs. 17,277 crores), Punjab (Rs. 16,505 crores), Andhra Pradesh (Rs. 9,512 crores), Delhi (Rs. 8,392 crores), Gujarat (Rs. 8,305 crores), Karnataka (Rs. 7,564 crores) and Uttar Pradesh (Rs. 6,553 crores). Kerala topped



the remittance list, reflecting the significant proportion of remittances from the Middle East. In 2007-2008, Kerala received 34 percent of India's total remittances, followed by Maharashtra with 17 percent, Tamil Nadu with 11 percent, and Punjab with 11 percent, while Andhra Pradesh, Delhi and Gujarat each received 6 percent. North America and Europe are the next largest regions for remittance inflows into India. According to an RBI estimate, Indians living abroad sent US \$53.9 billion in remittances to India in 2009-2010, excluding funds sent through other channels. These remittances have significantly contributed to India's rapid economic growth. Kathleen Newland notes that remittances are not the only form of diaspora contribution; they can also be a major source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), market development (outsourcing), technology transfer, philanthropy, tourism, political contributions and the exchange of knowledge, attitudes and cultural influence. Additionally, the diaspora plays a significant role in poverty reduction in their homeland.

4.3.1.1 Remittance

Diaspora finance, notably through remittance money sent back home by migrants, represents one of the largest and most significant economic impacts of migration on economies in many developing regions. In 2005, official remittances to the developing world amounted to \$167 billion, with South Asia receiving \$32 billion (19%) and India alone receiving \$22 billion, a substantial increase from \$13 billion in 2001. However, these figures likely underestimate the actual inflows due to substantial amounts flowing through informal channels like family and kinship networks.

Official remittances constitute the most substantial and stable component of Diaspora finance. Debates often revolve around whether these funds merely sustain livelihoods or contribute to rural inequalities and dependencies. There's also discussion about how remittances are used at the household level, distinguishing between "productive" and "unproductive" uses. Yet, such analyses offer simplistic views of the total impact of remittances and fail to fully capture the broader contributions of Diaspora finance. Social remittances, which include the transfer of ideas, values, social capital and skills, also play a crucial role, but it is challenging to quantify them and therefore receive less attention than financial flows.

Extensive evidence indicates that remittances, both

◆ *Remittance Statistics*

◆ *Diaspora finance*



◆ *Remittance for community development*

financial and social, play a complex yet vital role at the household, community and regional levels. They influence family dynamics, gender roles, social stratification and political and religious participation among those left behind. Overall, remittances have the potential to significantly improve rural livelihoods by enhancing standards of living, providing access to healthcare and education and empowering communities, particularly where local state support is lacking. In many Indian states facing fiscal constraints, the strong and prosperous diasporas present a promising alternative income source through Diaspora finance.

◆ *Drivers of remittance*

Understanding why migrants remit money is crucial for analysing the broader economic impacts of remittances, for several reasons. Firstly, the amount a migrant sends back home depends on their reasons for migrating and their motivation to send money back. The size and timing of these remittances affect economic activity in the receiving country. Secondly, the intended use of remittances influences how recipients utilise these funds, which significantly impacts the recipient economy.

◆ *Factors of remittance*

Literature explores various motivations behind remittances, highlighting both exchange-driven and altruistic reasons, often coexisting simultaneously. Recent increases in remittances are attributed to several factors. Experts cite reduced reliance on informal remittance channels, a shift towards more skilled emigration patterns, heightened competition in the money transfer market, the economic vigour of the source country and India's resilient economy amidst global financial challenges. A pivotal factor driving remittance growth is NRIs' perception of the Indian economy. While India's economic liberalisation in 1991 set a foundational milestone, its true impact has become more evident over time. India has experienced remarkable economic growth over the past decade and has maintained stability amid global financial uncertainties. With ongoing incentives, tax benefits and relaxed foreign exchange regulations, the Diaspora continues to show confidence in India, even during turbulent global economic conditions.

4.3.1.3 Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in flows into India have shown steady growth since the post-reform period, although they have not met the lofty expectations set by politicians,

◆ *Foreign Direct Investment*

particularly in terms of FDI from Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). Comparisons often highlight China's success in mobilising its Diaspora for FDI; NRIs have contributed less than 5% of India's cumulative FDI in flows post-reform, contrasting sharply with China's approximately 50% from its Diaspora. Several factors explain this disparity. The Indian Diaspora, predominantly professional rather than entrepreneurial like the Chinese, lacks a significant number of individuals with high net worth, who could serve as potential investors. Moreover, India historically maintained a hostile stance towards foreign investment until the early 1990s, whereas China had opened up a decade earlier. China also lacked a strong capitalist class initially, which reduced domestic opposition to incentives for Diasporic investors, a contrast to India's situation. Additionally, local governments in China have been more proactive in facilitating Diasporic investments compared to India, though this dynamics is evolving in India's favour.

◆ *Overseas Indian contribution*

Further nuances highlighted by Kapur include the larger and more entrepreneurial nature of the overseas Chinese community, benefiting from strong family and business networks in Southeast Asia and China and favorable relations with Chinese political leadership. In contrast, the overseas Indian community (NRIs/PIOs) is smaller, more diverse, lacks cohesive family business networks and historically received less attention from Indian governments until recently. While measurements may exaggerate the overseas Chinese contribution to Diaspora finance due to methodological differences, the significant contrast with India's Diaspora remains evident.

◆ *Correlation of remittance and diaspora*

Another significant aspect is the regional distribution of FDI by NRIs and its correlation with the size of the Diaspora and their inclination towards investing back in India. States like Karnataka, with a robust IT sector and established business networks, have been leading recipients of such investments, followed by Gujarat with its strong trading and merchant classes. In contrast, states like Punjab, despite having a large Diaspora, have not featured prominently in terms of FDI inflows, underscoring the importance of an entrepreneurial culture and a sizable entrepreneurial class with close-knit business networks in driving Diaspora investments.

Portfolio investment flows into India take various forms: NRIs deposit funds in Indian banks to capitalise on

◆ *Diaspora and Indian economy*

preferential terms and interest rates, which soared to a record US\$3.6 billion in 2003-2004. They also participate in Indian stock markets directly or through mutual funds, and invest through government-issued special bonds. The net in flows and out flows of these investments fluctuate based on interest rates, return expectations and risk evaluations. Since the economic reforms of 1992, substantial sums have flowed into India, significantly bolstering its foreign exchange reserves.

◆ *Remittance during sanctions*

For instance, during a critical period in 1998 following international sanctions due to nuclear tests, the Indian government, anticipating a foreign exchange shortfall, launched Resurgent India Bonds. These 5-year bonds, guaranteed by the State Bank of India and exclusively available to NRIs, aimed to attract funds amidst a patriotic sentiment. To enhance their appeal, the bonds offered a 2% higher interest rate in US dollars compared to the US bond market, the option for redemption in US dollars and exemption from Indian income and wealth taxes. A vigorous marketing campaign targeted the prosperous Indian Diaspora globally, resulting in overwhelming success: NRIs purchased £2.3 billion worth of bonds in just over two weeks. Over 50% of these purchases originated from the Middle East and Southeast Asia, with 20% from Europe and North America. This success story repeated in 2000 with the issuance of India Millennium Deposits, which raised over £3 billion.

Other than remittance, migration had impacts on the following sectors too:

◆ *Remittance and housing*

Migration and housing

There is a notable difference in the types of houses constructed by migrants and non-migrants. A study conducted by the Centre for Development Studies found that migrants tend to build more luxurious houses compared to non-migrants. This is a significant social impact of migration, reflecting how migration contributes to maintaining social status.

◆ *Remittance and household activities*

Household Amenities

Research studies by Irudaya Rajan, Zachariah, Mathew and Fried have demonstrated that the early phase of Gulf migration from India led to significant grass roots development, driven by remittances. Migrant households, in contrast to non-migrant ones, tend to be electrified and use LPG for cooking, indicating an improved standard of

living. These families also purchase and use a wide range of household amenities and have a higher purchasing capacity compared to non-migrant families (Irudaya Rajan, 1994).

Possession of Consumer Durables

◆ *Remittance and consumerism*

Conspicuous consumption is a defining characteristic of migrants, particularly in Kerala. Migrants frequently buy consumer durable goods in their homeland. According to a study by Irudaya Rajan, the increase in purchasing power among migrant families is primarily due to remittances, which have boosted their household income and consequently, their purchasing power.

Education and Occupation

◆ *Remittance and education*

Studies have shown that migrants allocate a significant portion of their remittances to their children's education. This investment in higher education has resulted in the rise of professionals who secure high-paying jobs, thereby contributing to social and economic improvements. Thus, remittances have played a crucial role in enhancing Indian society.

Changes in the village economy

◆ *Remittance and village development*

The emigration to the Middle East has transformed village communities, giving them a more urban appearance. Extensive construction projects have spurred the growth of these villages. The substantial influx of social and economic remittances has greatly contributed to the country's overall improvement. These remittances have driven India's development, positioning it as a new power in the globalised world. Therefore, the diaspora's contribution to the modern Indian society and economy is significant.

Socio-Economic Impact of Remittance

◆ *Remittance as a means for innovation*

The Indian Diaspora plays a crucial role in India's economic growth and development. Numbering over 30 million, this diverse and varied community represents a wide array of regions, languages, cultures and religions. Their contributions to India's economy and society are widely celebrated among Indians worldwide. Non-Resident Indians (N. R. I.) and People of Indian Origin (P. I. O.) are a rich source of knowledge, skills, resources and entrepreneurial spirit, serving as global ambassadors for India and significantly contributing to knowledge and

◆ *Investment schemes*

innovation. One of their most significant contributions is through remittances, which help offset trade deficits and bolster India's reserves of foreign exchange.

Remittances refer to private, unrequited money transfers from migrants earning abroad back to their home country. They have gained prominence on global development agendas, particularly benefiting developing nations like India as a crucial component of the balance of payments. Remittances from overseas Indians include funds for family support and withdrawals from Non-Resident Indian (N. R. I.) rupee deposits (NRERA and NRO schemes). These transfers are categorised as private unrequited transfers, impacting the country's current account balance and contributing to national disposable income. Over the past decade, the total value of remittances has steadily increased, underlining their growing significance.

The period before India's economic liberalisation saw fluctuations in private transfer receipts. During the 1970s, these transfers increased steadily, remained relatively stable in the 1980s and experienced a sharp rise in the 1990s.

- a. Since the onset of liberalisation, these transfers have become a significant component of India's balance of payments. According to IMF estimates, remittances to India surged more than four fold between 1991 and 2003, totaling around USD 18 billion in 2003, positioning India among the world's top recipients of remittances. In terms of GDP percentage, remittances constituted approximately 3 percent in 2003, with the most rapid increase occurring from 1991 to 1997.
- b. Recent years have seen a continuation of this stable trend, with private transfer receipts – mainly comprising remittances from Indians abroad – increasing from USD 21.1 billion in 2004-05 to USD 46.4 billion during 2008-09. Essentially, private transfers have remained a reliable source of funds over the past decade.
- c. A notable surge of nearly 50% was observed between 2006-07 and 2007-08, largely due to an in-

creased share of remittances sent back by workers in the Gulf region for family support.

- d. Continuing its traditional role as a major source of invisible account surplus, private transfer receipts saw an average annual growth rate of 27% from 2005 to 2008, constituting approximately 3% of GDP during the same period.
- e. A detailed breakdown of private transfer receipts into its primary components – funds for family maintenance and withdrawals from N. R. I. deposits.
- f. The proportion of remittances sent by overseas Indians for family maintenance, categorised as lower-value transfers from NRIs and PIOs to their families, decreased to nearly 48% in 2006-07 from 60% in 1999-2000. However, in the first half of 2007-08, this share stabilised at around 50% of total remittances flowing into India and has remained consistent since then.
- g. Conversely, withdrawals from non-resident rupee deposit schemes for local purposes have functioned as a channel for remittance in flows into India. While their average contribution to total private transfers dropped from 50% in the early 1990s to just 29% later on, a reversal of this trend has been observed recently. The phenomenon of local withdrawals from these schemes surpassing direct remittances for family support and savings was particularly evident in 2005-06 and 2006-07 and has been increasing since then.
- h. The robustness of remittances has significantly contributed to reducing the current account deficit and bolstering India's external reserves.
- i. Although remittances have risen in line with those in other developing and emerging economies, the increase has been more pronounced in India. According to the latest World Bank report



on “Migration and Remittances,” India maintains its position as the leading recipient of migrant remittances among developing nations, followed by China and Mexico.

- j. A comparative analysis across countries reveals that the Middle East accounts for the largest share of total remittances flowing into India, owing to the substantial presence of Indian workers in the Gulf region and the prevalence of blue-collar employment. North America and Europe constitute the next major regions for substantial inflows of remittances into the country.
- k. Net inflows from non-resident Indians have surged dramatically, increasing more than twenty-fold to \$4 billion in fiscal year 2009, as these individuals significantly expanded their participation in various N. R. I. deposit schemes within India.

4.3.2. Return Migrants: Socio-Cultural and Economic Problems

According to Zachariah and Irudaya Rajan, Kerala accounts for nearly 50 percent of return migrants in India. This high return rate is attributed to a consistent pattern since the 1990s, driven by factors such as declining oil prices, economic down turns in the Gulf and stricter immigration policies by the Gulf countries. The peak period for return migration to Kerala was 1996-97. Statistical data highlight the significance of these return migrants in Kerala’s social and economic landscape. Currently, one in every 29 people in Kerala is a return migrant, including one in every 22 adults, one in every 19 working-age individuals and one in every 9 working-age males. For every 100 households in Kerala, there are 16 return migrants, with 12 households having at least one and about 1.3 percent of households having more than one return migrant. At present, there are approximately 1.3 million return migrants in Kerala, with the Kerala Migration Survey reporting about 1.6 million in 2015. This rate has further increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Return migration involves migrants returning to their homeland to resettle. Conde suggests that while the primary

◆ *Return migration*

◆ *Motives behind return migration*

motive for emigration is usually economic, the reasons for returning are varied, complex and sometimes contradictory. These reasons include the cancellation or expiration of job contracts, discrimination against foreign labour in the host country, job insecurity non-payment or significant reduction in salaries, difficult working and living conditions, verbal and physical abuse, poor health, family problems and achieving the goals of their emigration. Additionally, policies like *Nitaquat* and movements like “Son of the Soil,” as well as economic recessions in host countries, can prompt large-scale returns. Both individual and social factors influence the decision to return.

◆ *NORKA*

A significant challenge faced by return migrants, according to Conde, is reintegrating into their own society due to their changing aspirations. Returnees often struggle to accept their previous occupations, leading to internal conflict. Studies by Rhoades and Gmelch have shown that returnees may be perceived by their home society as successful and upwardly mobile, which can sometimes result in tensions. The reintegration process can be difficult as return migrants navigate these new dynamics and reconcile their past experiences with their present realities.

◆ *Challenges of Return migrants*

4.3.2.1 Policy Initiatives for Return Migrants

National-level policies and programmes for return migrants are quite rare. However, Kerala stands out at the state level with its comprehensive policies and initiatives for both returnees and emigrants. Kerala is the only state in India with systematic programmes dedicated to return migrants. The Department of NORKA and its field agency, NORKA ROOTS, play a significant role in the reintegration process of returnees. Analysing these policies reveals that most of them are focused on economic incentives.

◆ *Three types of policies*

The policies aimed at reintegrating returnees can be categorised into three types: information-based policies, economic incentive-based policies and institution-based policies. Information-based policies provide returning workers with essential information to help them successfully reintegrate into their communities. Economic incentive-based policies offer material benefits to encourage workers to return to their home country. Institution-based policies involve changes in laws and practices that directly facilitate the reintegration of workers. The following table outlines the specific policies for return migrants.

4.3.2.2 Policies for Indian Diaspora

Some important policies brought in by the government and related agencies for the welfare of the return migrants are listed below. These are divided into three main categories. a) Information Policies b) Economic incentive policies c) Institutional policies.

I- Information Policies:

- 1) NORKA Returnee Registration
- 2) NORKA Call Centres
- 3) NORKA's Annual Meets

II- Economic Incentive based Policies

- 1) Swanthwana Financial Scheme
- 2) Chairman Fund
- 3) Paravasi Welfare Fund
- 4) Initiative for Entrepreneurship development
- 5) Karunya Scheme
- 6) Skill Upgradation Trainings
- 7) My Village My Dream Project

III-Institution based Policies

- 1) NORKA (Non-Resident Keralites Affairs Department)
- 2) Norka Roots
- 3) Recognition of Organisations and NGOs
- 4) The Non-Resident Keralites Welfare Act,2008

4.3.2.3 Return Migrants: Re-Integration Problems

While Kerala has developed numerous policies and programmes, it still faces significant challenges in reintegrating returnees. These challenges can be personal or situational in nature, influenced by both structural factors and individual circumstances of the returnees. Issues such as personal difficulties in readjusting to family or community life are relatively minor. However, more substantial challenges arise from the large scale of labour migration and the absence of alternative systems, which pose significant obstacles to the government and related departments.

◆ *Re-integration of return migrants*

4.3.2.4 Indebtedness and Financial Challenges

The financial difficulties and indebtedness faced by return migrants pose a significant challenge in their reintegration process. The financial situation upon returning, along with

◆ *Financial challenges of return migrants*

debt issues and access to funds, are critically important for rebuilding or starting a new life in India. Financial resources also enhance opportunities in the job market, such as investing in personal businesses, thereby contributing to both economic and social integration efforts.

◆ *Problems of return migrants*

Having access to sufficient economic resources is crucial for achieving personal and social success. However, the lack of adequate financial stability and the burden of debt upon returning pose significant challenges to reintegrating into their home society. Many return migrants borrowed substantial sums during their time abroad, and their sudden return has left them grappling with large debts. Even after finding employment upon their return, they remain obliged to repay these loans. The unemployment rate in the state of Kerala is rising rapidly, and in this context, returning migrants are seen as an additional burden, especially since their remittances decrease upon their return. Kerala, as a state, is not equipped to absorb a large influx of returning migrants into its economy.

◆ *Problems of return migrants*

Generally, return migrants face several major challenges, including financial difficulties and debt, labour migration issues in Kerala, lack of information and effective use of reintegration programmes, various adjustment problems and absence of alternative systems, unhealthy perceptions and high levels of unemployment in the state. Beyond these issues, return migrants have encountered additional challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, spanning socio-economic, cultural, health and political dimensions, as the pandemic has affected the entire world.

◆ *Volume of return migrants*

During the pandemic, a significant number of Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs), totaling 413,000 individuals living abroad, have registered to return to Kerala. Among these, approximately 150,000 Indians have registered with the Indian Embassy in the United Arab Emirates alone, half of whom are NRKs. This surge in registrations is driven by blue-collar workers facing job losses and reduced wages, particularly affecting NRKs, the largest migrant community in the Gulf region.

◆ *Covid-19 and Return migrants*

Workers are not only concerned about the health risks posed by the virus but also about the economic repercussions of the Gulf economy's slowdown, heavily dependent on oil and related industries. Job opportunities are dwindling, and migrants who returned to Kerala temporarily are now

stranded, facing the potential loss of their livelihoods. The sharp decline in remittances, alongside the return of migrants and the ongoing pandemic conditions, has significantly impacted the Kerala economy.

◆ *Limitations of policies*

Improving the skills of returning migrants could potentially facilitate their re-entry into international migration, either to new destinations or back to the Gulf. However, this theory necessitates thorough research to determine the most effective strategies for integrating returning NRKs into the economy. In Kerala, policies related to return migration and integration have been less effective in recent times. This period presents an opportunity to realign these policies to better meet the current needs.

Summarised Overview

Diaspora finance, remittance, is considered one of the largest and most significant impacts of migration in many of developing countries. In India, remittance economy has been significant part of economic system. States like Kerala topped the remittance list, reflecting the significant proportion of remittances from the Middle East. Remittance has extensive impact upon household, community and regional development. Overall, remittances have the potential to significantly improve rural livelihoods by enhancing standards of living, providing access to healthcare and education and empowering communities, particularly where local state support is lacking.

Since the economic reforms of 1990s, India has turned into one of largest recipients of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Portfolio investment flows into India take various forms: NRIs deposit funds in Indian banks to capitalise on preferential terms and interest rates, which soared to a record US\$3.6 billion in 2003-2004. This foreign investment had altered and updated the existing patterns of migration and housing, household amenities, consumerism, education and occupation. Overall, this has tremendously altered the village economy into a global interconnectedness.

Another significant aspect discussed in this unit is related to the return migrants. Return migration is emerging as a sociocultural and economic problem of the state. Return migration involves migrants returning to their homeland to resettle. Conde suggests that while the primary motive for emigration is usually economic, the reasons for returning are varied, complex and sometimes contradictory. Governments including state entities had envisioned numerous policies and schemes for the restoration and welfare of the return migrants. Among their problems, reintegration and financial challenges are known for their popularity.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Which state received the highest share in overseas Indian remittance?
2. Analyse the factors driving remittance into India.
3. From which country does India receive the highest share of remittance?
4. Which state in India has the highest number of return migrants?
5. What is FDI? Discuss the role of FDI in leveraging India's steps towards a developed country.
6. Migration has affected the way of life of the countrymen. Assess the affected life sectors other than remittance.
7. Who are the return migrants? Elucidate the socio-cultural and economic problems encountered by the return migrants.
8. What is NORKA? Examine its initiatives for the welfare of migrant communities.

Assignments

1. Assess the contributions of the Indian diaspora in terms of remittance.
2. What is remittance? Discuss the factors driving remittance into India.
3. Explain the socio-economic impact of remittance. How do you think that the remittance economy changed the village economy?
4. Who are return migrants? Evaluate their socio-cultural and economic problems.
5. Governments have stepped up for the welfare of the return migrants. Discuss the schemes and policy initiatives undertaken by the state governments.

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Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

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QP CODE:

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THIRD SEMESTER MA SOCIOLOGY EXAMINATION
M21SO04DE: DIASPORA STUDIES
(CBCS - PG)
SET-1

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section-A- Objective Type Questions
Attempt any ten, Each Question Carries 1 Mark

1. Who authored the book *History of the Peloponnesian War*?
2. What is international migration?
3. Who authored the work 'A Theory of Migration'?
4. What is acculturation?
5. Who is the proponent of the migration system theory?
6. What is 'exile'?
7. Who is Kangani?
8. Expand IWRC
9. Who are the largest ethnic minority in Britain as per 2001 census?
10. Which state received the highest share in overseas Indian remittance?
11. Who were known as 'passenger Indians'?
12. What is O.I.C?
13. Who worked on "persistent poverty"?
14. What is meant by digital diaspora?
15. Who is known as P. I. O.?

Section-B- Very Short Answers
Attempt any Five, Each Question Carries 2 Mark

16. Distinguish between diaspora and migrant community
17. What are the necessary elements of a migrant community to be called a diaspora?
18. Define complex diaspora.
19. Baggio has classified migrants into five categories. What are they?



20. What are the laws of migration?
21. What is brain drain?
22. What is the retentionist perspective?
23. Discuss Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
24. Discuss NORKA ROOTS
25. What is remittance?

Section-C- Short Answers

Attempt any Five, Each Question Carries 4 Marks

26. Explain the criteria of diaspora formation.
27. Differentiate between labour diaspora and the trade diaspora.
28. Elaborate on the entrepreneurial diaspora.
29. What is the volume of migration? Discuss the six points raised by Lee.
30. Explain migration system theory.
31. Assess the viewpoint of the political economy perspective. Do you think that the perspective is economically determinant? Comment.
32. What are the major perspectives used to analyse the Indian diaspora?
33. Explain typologies of India's diaspora policies

Section- D- Long Answers/Essay

Attempt any Three, Each Question carries 10 Marks

34. What do you mean by the term diaspora? Examine various terms allied with Diaspora and substantiate their connotations.
35. 'The labour market has a vital role in the migration process'. Justify the statement in the light of neo-classical theory.
36. Compare and contrast migration patterns during colonial and post-colonial periods. Do you think that migration is a voluntary process?
37. Indian films are popular across the globe, especially Bollywood films. Evaluate the role of Indian cinema in interconnecting the people of origin with their homeland. Cite some examples too.
38. Assess the definitions of cultural identity as discussed by Stuart Hall. Specify the elements essential for an identity construction along with examples.
39. Evaluate the Indian migrants in North America and West Asia. Do you think that they are treated with equal consideration? Find out the problems and challenges faced by Indians in the West Asian region.





SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE:

Reg. No :

Name :

THIRD SEMESTER MA SOCIOLOGY EXAMINATION

M21SO04DE: DIASPORA STUDIES

(CBCS - PG)

SET-2

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section-A- Objective Type Questions

Attempt any ten, Each Question Carries 1 Mark

1. What is transnationalism?
2. What is incipient diaspora?
3. What is culture of migration?
4. Who introduced the theory of network society?
5. Who used the term 'the Wired Society'?
6. Who wrote the essay of 'cultural identity and diaspora'?
7. Who is the author of *East Indians in Trinidad*?
8. When did Indians first migrate to Trinidad?
9. What is 'Soca'?
10. What is SIV?
11. Name the country from which India receives the highest share of remittance.
12. Which state in India has the highest number of return migrants?
13. What is FDI?
14. Who are the return migrants?
15. Expand PAST

Section-B- Very Short Answers

Attempt any Five, Each Question Carries 2 Mark

16. What are the four primary diasporas found at the global level?
17. What are the main factors shaping diaspora dynamics?
18. What are the six phases Landy categorised the Indian emigration across different periods?



19. What are the major destinations of Indian migrants in the post-colonial period?
20. Fluid diaspora?
21. Commonwealth Immigration Act
22. Adaptationist perspective.
23. N.R.I. Sabha
24. Hybridity.
25. Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY)

Section-C- Short Answers

Attempt any Five, Each Question Carries 4 Marks

26. Compare diaspora and transnationalism and identify the differences and similarities.
27. Examine the significance of diaspora studies along with assessing the scope of the Indian diaspora.
28. Explain Cohen's classifications of diaspora and discuss who the victim of diaspora is.
29. Distinguish between state-linked and stateless diaspora.
30. Differentiate between information society and network society.
31. Compare neoclassical and segmented labour market theories in terms of influencing migration patterns.
32. Assess Sheffer's classifications of diaspora and distinguish between complex and incipient diasporas.
33. Analyse the seven categories pointed out by Lee in association to the characteristics of migrants.

Section- D- Long Answers/Essay

Attempt any Three, Each Question carries 10 Marks

34. Do you think that Ravenstein's laws of migration are relevant today? Analyse them in the light of contemporary migration processes.
35. Castell's theory has been criticised by many scholars. Do you agree with the theory of technological determinism? Substantiate.



36. Looking at various causes of the migrant community, Robin Cohen has proposed four typologies of diaspora. Elaborate Cohen's classifications along with identifying the specificities of each community.
37. Compare the immigration policies during the colonial and post-colonial periods and analyse their impact upon migration from India.
38. Evaluate the consequences of nationalisation policies on migration from India. Analyse the limitations faced by the government of India in the light of the Kenyanisation episode
39. Explain any three of the following:
 - a. The Asiatic Land Tenure Act (the Ghetto Act)
 - b. The Representation of People Act
 - c. The Commonwealth Immigration Act
 - d. The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY)
 - e. ICM & IOM

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വിദ്യാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
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ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
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