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Diasporic International Relations: Agent of Change as Soft Power Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

The emerging power of the Indian Diaspora in the US plays a vital role in bridging the country of origin and the adopted home country. The contributions are made by the Diasporas of Indian origin in various sectors of the Indian economy and in the polity. It analyzes the Indian Diaspora brain drain's daulaat-drain-in for the country of origin that could safely make arrived at the conclusion that in national balance sheet the credit side is heavier in the process of assessments of the values of the contributions made thus far by the Indian Diaspora. Straight on the onset, as rightly pointed out by the record of brain drain set right with the commonly assumed theory that quite contrary to the idea of brain drain that dominated the development debate in the 60s and 70s among the scholars and policymakers of developing countries, diasporas in the age of internet are seen as resources who accumulate financial, and social capital for the development of their home communities. That is what I called daulaat-drain-in by the brain drain for the country of origin. The Government of India has taken initiatives at the top level to provide an institutionalized platform to facilitate the Diasporas to play development role back home.

Keywords: Indian Diaspora, Indian economy, Human, Financial, Social capital, Home communities

INTRODUCTION

The paper tries to look into the emerging power of the Indian Diaspora in the US that plays a vital role in bridging the country of origin and the adopted home country. This section also focuses on the contributions made by the diaspora of Indian origin in various sectors of the Indian economy and in the polity. Above all, it analyzes the brain drain's daulaat-drain-in for the country of origin that could safely make arrived at the conclusion that in national balance sheet the credit side is heavier in the process of assessments of the values of the contributions made thus far by the Indian Diaspora. Straight on the onset, as rightly pointed out by the concept note of the seminar, the record of brain drain is set right with the commonly assumed theory that quite contrary to the idea of brain drain that dominated the development debate in the 60s and 70s among the scholars and policymakers of developing countries, diasporas in the age of internet are seen as resources who accumulate human, financial, and social capital for the development of their home communities. That is what I called daulaat-drain-in by the brain drain for the country of origin. The Government of India has taken initiatives at the top level to provide an institutionalized platform to facilitate the Diasporas to play development role back home.

Thus, the need arose to develop a conceptual understanding of the terms diaspora, soft diplomacy and development itself which is linked to the onslaught of globalization and its impact in India. Lord Bhikhu Parekh, member of PM's Global Advisory Council then said that the "diaspora could help in policy change as they had a rich global experience and could learn from good governance in other parts of the world". In understanding the regional context of development, Diaspora Role Models from the North East and its Success Stories had interesting experiences of people who had moved from the North East and they had been successful. Though

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they all came from a similar background-small place, simple circumstances—they seized the opportunities and overcame obstacles and were now keen to give back so that others could benefit. In 2011, North East is projected as a hub of an area of focus of interaction for development. It is hoped that there is diaspora's shift for development in a regional wise as rightly pointed by our seminar here. In this case, it is interesting to note of destination of the remittances which has shifted significantly from Kerala and Gujarat to Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Today, the 'burnt bridge' has become an important bridge to access knowledge, expertise, resources, and markets for the country of origin. They spread along with them their culture and bridge the country of origin. People of Indian origin migrated from India during the colonial era. Indian Diaspora, initially, was literally pushed with their backs against the wall in order to survive. Still, they decided to give the best of their abilities to their new, adopted home countries. For them, that time, the bridge to come back to India was burnt. So they willy-nilly struggled, grew in stature, and move up to socio-economic ladder in most of the countries they were in. There was a mixture of people, some 'free passengers' from India, who went as traders, merchants, small businessmen, and construction workers. They took Indian entrepreneurship and traditional business skill with them. In the last three decades of the 20th century the character of migration has begun to change and a 'new Diaspora' led by high skilled professionals moving to the western world and semi-skilled contract workers moving to the Gulf, West and South East Asia emerged. India now has become not job seekers but demand driven supplier of these professionals. Some of the Indian labor was linked in the remote part of the states under the British Colonies in the Nineteenth Century.

On the other hand, the skill labors, due of their professionalism and expertises convenient its way to advancing countries such as United State, Canada, and other parts of the western countries in the twentieth-first century. In turn, these professionals gain new expertise in various fields also. It is also observed that the Indo-American community in the US has been found to be the most educated immigrant community in the US. It is seen in the recent upturn that they have a lot to do with the lobbying, influence, and reputation of the Indo-American community. This section of my paper looks into the emerging power of the Indian Diaspora in the US that play a vital role in mutually benefiting engagement. During the post-independence phase, a large number of Indians went to the West and North America as high skilled top notch professionals. India wishes to engage, pursue and promote the dynamic Indian Diaspora in a strong and sustained way to develop and project a coherent, intrinsically motivated and progressive identity and our capacity to showcase in the sphere of tourism richness of Indian ethos, customs, traditions, culture and heritage for a rewarding mutual engagement. The Indian diaspora is the largest category of South Asians both in the USA and the UK and next only to Chinese Diaspora in the world. Indian Diaspora has roots in every country in the globe. India has presented a 25 million strong Diaspora in 130 countries. The pertinent question is: can the Indian Diaspora play the same or similar role in the economic transformation of India that the Chinese Diaspora has played in the People's Republic of China (PRC)? The answer is "yes". In the Gujarat earthquake phenomenon, the Indian Diaspora greatly mobilized relief fund resources collaborating with other private relief agencies. It was observed that Bill Clinton was able to raise with the strength of Indian Diaspora in US tens of millions of dollars for the earthquake victims. There are two poles apart attached to each other. One of the United States of America's demand for skilled immigration caters to the needs of the proportion of the elderly in rich countries like the US. Two, the India immigrants are skilled ones, and apparently, the demand will be met from India. Thus, giving rise dramatically the immigration to meet this challenges their original home country, India. This process will perhaps give a boost to both economies and polity of interacting nations. Further, as the reforms are still in full swing with the expectation running high for the bureaucratic hassles to scale down in India, at least to the Indian Diaspora they will be wooed and given some amount of investment opportunities, their original home country, India. "The rise of Indian multinationals, capable of wooing Indian professionals abroad back to their country, will only add to this process. The hiring of 20 out of the 85 members of its drug discovery team from U.S. and European companies by Ranbaxy Laboratories two years ago was just the beginning of that process. What can the government do to tap the Indian Diaspora more effectively? The steps necessary to achieve this objective are not dramatically different from the reforms needed to improve the country's investment climate in general" (Paragariya, 2001). Nevertheless, "it is easy to

underestimate the potential of the Indian Diaspora. Thus, focusing exclusively on the Indians living in the United States, consider a few salient facts. Based on median income, Indian-born residents in the United States comprise the highest paid group in the country. They are represented in virtually all professions including agriculture, biotechnology, business, economics, finance, information technology, journalism, management, medicine, and various sciences" (Paragariya, 2001). The initiative is undertaken by the Government of India, when in 2003 the first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was celebrated and thus, marked the beginning of a new chapter between India and the Indians abroad. Through such creation, it was further realized that despite the global success story of the Indians abroad, it was also felt that there exist a gap between the Global Indian Society and India. The report on the gap between the Global Indian Society and India suggests that with appropriate conditions, can the Indian Diaspora provide India the necessary capital flows for sustained and rapid economic development to overtake China? The answer is yes!

The constitution of India not only guarantees a person's freedom of religion and conscience, but also ensures freedom for one who has no religion, and it scrupulously restrains the State from making any discrimination on grounds of religion. (Articles 25 to 28) Single citizenship is assured to all persons irrespective of their religion. But indigenous tribes/Adivasis are treated as second-class citizens. Not that they are granted dual citizenship. Is this what we called India the Secular Republic? Secularism implicitly and explicitly implies that the State has no official religion. Secularism pervades its provisions that give full opportunity to all persons to profess, practice and propagate the religion of their choice (Article 25). The expression 'secular' in the Indian sense also means there is equal respect for all religions. In this secular vein, Revd.ValsonThampu, Principal of the St. Stephen College, University of Delhi, remarks on the Christian atrocity in India with particular reference to Kandhamal, "...it is an issue of disrespect to the members of the particular community; it has nothing to do with Christianity acts need to be dealt with the application of the law of the land."Pope Benedict XVI condemned the attacks on the Indian Christians as an attack on 'human lives', and added 'whose sacred character must be respected by all….' Former Home Minister, Shivraj Patil had visited the riot-affected areas and confirmed that the situation in the Kandhamal district of Orissa was not normal, contrary to BJD-BJP government administration claims. Even the Supreme Court issued directives to secure the right to life and property. It is observed that a situation like this is an attack on the secular democratic principles. What is the use of Secular ideals enshrined in the constitution of India, when situations like this, is misused by political parties for their own benefits? In regards to migrant workers in the home front, their plight is pathetic. There is no proper care of the domestic workers, which form huge chunk rendering service to the elites in the cities in India, particularly the capital city of Delhi. A proposed bill for unorganized sectors is still pending, keeping aside later delay implementation. This also is a worry as a country known for its equity and tolerance, justice, freedom, and liberty. Against this backdrop, the writer of this paper assumes that all this development is at the cost of the poor. Above that, while India has a proud record of functioning democracy as it has not always empowered people at the grassroots level. For democracy is much more than regular elections. Political exclusion can include denial of citizenship rights to organize, and also of personal security, the rule of law, freedom of expression and equality of opportunity. As political exclusion also involves the notion that the state, which grants basic rights and civil liberties, is not a neutral agency but a vehicle of a society's dominant classes, and thus may discriminate between social groups. This somehow is related to the social exclusion leading to economic exclusion. Now given that India's poor are poor because they are poorly given access to educational facilities, perhaps owing to the flaw educational policies of the colonial India, where they thought that educating the Brahmins would trickle down the education to the lower strata of the society. Whereas it never does, rather widens the gap between these groups of the caste-ridden Indian society. The growing inequalities between the rich and the poor are the evidence of various policies, including education which is still of the middle and upper middle oriented and the poor are discriminated, excluded and marginalized. It is to be noted that Democracy without people is meaningless. Participation implies, when they participate then, they also have a share in the planning and the profit, whether it is governance, economy, or development. The derivatives of the words from the Greek word meaning demos and kratos combine to suggest that "the people rule. But then, who are "the people?" "We, the people of India" means all citizens as mentioned in Part II (Citizenship) as enshrined in the

constitution. But in the sense of participatory democracy in India, all these citizens do not participate. Except citizens attaining 21 years of age irrespective of sex who are given the right to vote. Later this was reduced to 18 years of age by the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. What does 'citizenship' mean for excluded groups around the world? What do these meanings tell us about the goal of building inclusive societies? What are the advantages of adopting a social exclusion approach to issues of citizenship rights? Citizenship rights appear to be severely limited in many low-income countries, with civil and political rights often as reduced as social rights. Human rights conditionality prods governments to provide certain rights to their citizens, but macroeconomic conditionality undermines countries' actual capacity to do so.

This section of the paper focuses "specifically on the shifting perceptions of power in India's foreign policy. Apart from analyzing the dynamics of hard and soft power in India's foreign policy, the paper also attempts to identify the role of soft power and its impact and influence on the foreign policy decision-making of India" (Sullivan, 2015). India has pursued both hard and soft power to deal with both foreign and domestic problems. There are innumerable instances in which the Government of India employed hard power on one hand and soft power diplomacy on the other. The term 'soft power' was first coined by the Harvard University Professor, Joseph Nye (1990). The term 'soft power' has become an issue of agenda in international relations in the post-cold war era. The propounder of the term 'soft power' in his two books— "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power" (1990) and "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics "(2004) discuss in detail about the term 'soft power' besides "hard power". The two terms are explained in the succeeding discussion of this paper. There are various factors that give rise to soft power. In a more broadened definition of the same, Nye specifies that soft power lies primarily on three resources— culture, political values, and public diplomacy (through foreign policy). Soft power is the ability to obtain what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises due to the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies, that is, through elements which are 'real but intangible.' Soft power is often linked to the rise of globalization and neoliberal theory. Popular culture and media are often identified as a source of soft power, as is the spread of a national language, or a particular set of normative structures. Cultural Attractiveness In this regard, "India continues to have tremendous potential for soft power because of its culture and civilizational links—its large diaspora, popular films, music, art and historical and cultural links with several countries around the world all contribute to its soft power. For this, culture is the most important source of soft power. India is at a very advantageous position as far as culture is concerned and has historically enjoyed much soft power" (Sullivan, 2015). Have they gone back to slums and remain again as underdogs? 'Mother India' heroes have become auto-drivers for great Mother India? "When Indian writers win international awards like the Man-Booker prize, when India becomes the guest of honor at international book fairs like the Frankfurt Book Fair, when Indian movies are screened at International Film Festivals like Cannes and when Indians win awards like the Nobel and Magsaysay awards, India's soft power is built. In the US, for example, the stereotypical Indian is no longer a starving peasant, but a highly professional IT specialist who tells helpless Americans how to work with their computers. India's diaspora is a huge soft power asset and they have contributed immensely to the countries they have settled in and command influence and respect in these countries" (Kobayashi, 2015) Sporting Culture "The lack of success in sports and a non-existent sporting culture are also impediments in the growth of India's soft power. No other aspect of culture has the capacity to bring together a powerful tool for international engagement as sports do. For instance, China, having held an extremely successful Olympics and having topped the medals tally, has gained new-found respect from countries across the world. The importance of soft power in the contemporary world can be seen if we look at why China pulled out all stops to hold a successful Olympics. The success of the Beijing Olympics 235 has helped increase China's soft power around the world with the associated benefits" (Horsburgh, 2015). In India, when the first Asian Games was held in New Delhi in 1952. Whether such acclamation was received in the world community is a big question. Again in 1982, a little bit of world recognition may have been seen in holding the Asian Games in India. The host country also received some kind of benefits in the form of infrastructural development and tourism promotion. But the recent Common Wealth Games was a success to the extent of revealing all corrupted babus and sulphonation or diversion of funds are marked for development of the marginalized

section of the Indian society. Political Values The improvement in Indo–US strategic relations at a time when US soft power is at its lowest in most countries also erodes India's soft power in countries that are not part of the Western bloc. India may well have paid an economic price for democracy and may do so for some time, but that is the only political system that can define this Republic and our nation. India is India because it is a pluralistic, secular democracy. India is the world's largest democracy. India's biggest asset in terms of soft power is its successfully-functioning democracy which has survived despite many challenges. One of these many challenges includes America's reservation of successful democracy in India. It was doubted that democracy would never be a success in such a large population in India. A country where poverty is rampant. Indian has shown to the world that democracy is potential to all section of the societies not only mended for the elite western nations. This democracy endures all sphere of the stakeholders under difference castes and creeds or genders are significant parts in the governance. In fact, the recent installation of democracy in Bhutan and Nepal are also part of commitment optimistic by its neighboring country India's. India has the potential dedication to democracy, for which infrastructure erect our ethical power and soft power as well. The existence of freedom of express constituent the essential parts of assembling the resources and play a larger role in under construction of soft power. The country has a flourishing of every social stakeholder and also made them inclusive on in any conclusion of social grievances. The ideas were shown in the perspective ranging from alleviation of poverty, environmental consciousness and also regularly exigent to government policies for the upliftment of larger interest group. The country has always encouraged using both the soft and hard power, preaching of only one narrative may not establishes the proper link in international relations. As per the time and situation, the nation has diplomat strategies on use of the two options. However, properly use of the policies will enhance strategic result, this is why the thoughtful combination of the two powers are known as "smart powers" quoted by Suzanne Nossel. India as a nation inherits tremendous opportunities in smart power, equating our environment and knock into it to international aspiration. Unsettled Problem The election, election, election and elected, elected, elected is not what you only need to know on this earth. India claims to be a successful democratic country for reasons like regular periodical elections, an independent judiciary, an executive and legislative and fourth pillar of democracy—free press or the role of media both electronics and print ones. However, "unresolved disputes within India, like the ones in Kashmir and the North-East also affect India's soft power. The very fact that these disputes continue despite years of democracy is proof that the benefits of democracy and development have not reached people in these regions" (Sillivan, 2015). The success of "soft power heavily depends on the State's reputation within the international community, as well as the flow of information between States. Soft power cannot produce results as fast as hard power, its effects are more long-lasting and it is less expensive than hard power. The importance of soft power is due to its ability to influence others unobtrusively and unconsciously. It is thus an indirect way to get what you want and hence has been termed the 'second face of power" (Sullivan, 2015). Foreign Policy A country is defined and known by "the foreign policy it adopts as the basis and framework of its relations with other countries. Joseph Nye says that a country's foreign policy can increase its soft power if its foreign policy is perceived by other countries and people to be 'legitimate and having moral authority" (Cubb, 2015). "India's foreign policy has been based on moral values from the time of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who remains a tremendous influence on Indian foreign policy even today. India's soft power, in any case, got a major boost with the way it achieved independence. The legacy of the Indian freedom movement and that of its leader, Mahatma Gandhi, certainly built India's soft power from the very beginning as a country which had achieved independence with non-violent methods. This soft power was consolidated by the foreign policy agenda set by Nehru" (Sillivan, 2015). "The 1962 Sino–India war marked a turning point in Indian foreign policy to one shorn of most of the idealist rhetoric and moral grandstanding of the Nehruvian era" (Cubb, 2015). "This shift was also in part due to the realization among Indian policymakers that all the trust (soft power) that India enjoyed in the Third World was of little use as few of these countries came out in support of India. The Sino-India war, the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 and the integration of Goa, Daman and Diu in 1961 into the Indian State were instances where India used hard power to achieve its objectives, though these two wars were admittedly forced on India. Indira Gandhi's strong personality was reflected in her foreign policymaking"

(Sullivan, 2015). "Unlike her father, she was a practitioner of real politic. She believed that India's foreign policy should be tied to the country's economic, political and security interests and that these interests primarily depended on India becoming strong and self-reliant though she continued to support the NAM. Subsequently, she established a strategic partnership with the Soviet Union, upgraded India's defense capabilities, won a war against Pakistan in 197" (Sullivan, 2015). "Despite having more sources of hard power, India was not able to transform the military victory of 1971 over Pakistan into a long-lasting solution of the Kashmir issue. Added to this even tested a nuclear device in 1974. However, the 1971 Bangladesh war was also framed as 'humanitarian intervention' to maintain India's standing in world politics and to ensure that there was minimal effect on its soft power" (Sullivan, 2015). Both of "Indira Gandhi's tenures as Prime Minister saw a return to traditional concepts of International Relations like realism and balance of power and the dominance of strategies identified with hard power. All this certainly did nothing to add to India's soft power. The Morarji Desai government took several initiatives to improve relations with China, the US, and Pakistan" (Kobayashi, 2015). India was seen as a hegemon through much of the 1970s and 1980s, particularly by its neighbors. Deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka paid the cost of Rajiv Gandhi's life. So was Indira Gandhi's life in 'Blue Star operation' episode in 1985" (Sullivan, 2011). "India has moved closer to the US than ever before in history while maintaining robust relations with Russia and China. After the 1990s, India has tried to play down its 'big brother' image in South Asia by taking initiatives to resolve disputes with its neighbors and scrupulously avoiding interference in the internal affairs of its neighbors" (Horsburgh, 2015). "Wagner argues that India's regional policy after the 1990s has been characterized by greater emphasis on soft power strategies. One example of this is the 'Gujral doctrine' which introduced the principle of nonreciprocity, emphasizing that India not only had a bigger responsibility but should give more to the smaller neighbors than she would receive" (Sullivan, 2011). "This doctrine echoed domestic changes in India, especially the economic liberalization post–1991. This shift towards soft power was not caused due to altruistic reasons, but due to the fact that India's hard power approach of the 1970s and 1980s was not very effective in achieving its goals" (Sullivan, 2015). "The limitations of the hard power strategy also became evident in the 1990s when the conflict over Kashmir continued and sparked off bilateral crises. Moreover, with globalization and liberalization of the economy, as countries become more interdependent, India could not afford to antagonize other countries by stressing on its hard power capabilities" (Kobayashi, 2015). "It is in this context that India has strengthened its soft power strategies like moving towards closer economic cooperation through initiatives like the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and proposals for confidence-building measures (CBMs) with other countries" (Sullivan, 2015). "Even after the tests in 1998, India adopted the policy of unilateral selfrestraint and imposed a unilateral moratorium on further tests to assuage worldwide condemnation of the tests and salvage some soft power". "The NDA's initiatives to increase people-to-people interaction between India and Pakistan and other CBMs that it initiated with Pakistan also attempted to improve India's image in Pakistan and increase its soft power. India has also shown interest and taken the initiative in solving long-standing border disputes with its neighbors like China and Bangladesh in recent times" (Sullivan, 2015). "The Kargil war between India and Pakistan of 1999 was important in terms of soft power due to two factors: it won over world support for India as most countries accepted India's contention that Pakistan was at fault for initiating the intrusion and India won global respect for its restraint in not crossing the border" (Horsburgh, 2015); second, "it proved the limitations of hard power as being 239 nuclear powers, neither of the two countries could attack each other for fear of a full-fledged nuclear war. India's support for the Palestinians at the UN has also ensured that its soft power is intact in the Arab countries even while its relations with Israel are growing. In an ironic situation, even the Indian Army has shown that it is not averse to using soft power" (Sullivan, 2015). "India's participation in UN peacekeeping operations can be interpreted as an attempt to increase its soft power in countries around the world. The Indian Army has also attempted to use soft power in militancy-affected states like Jammu & Kashmir to win the 'hearts and minds' of people in places where there is an insurgency. 'Operation Sadhbhavana' in Jammu and Kashmir and other operations in which the Indian army has built infrastructure, refugee camps and given medical aid to people in militancy-infested regions are good examples for this" (Cubb, 2015). Conclusion India, in the context of development *vis-à-vis* diaspora, there is every

reason to appreciate the work initiated by the Government of India as there has been clear recognition of the contribution on the Indian diaspora in strengthening the fabric of Indian democracy and its principles wherein such a country of diversity and poverty, democracy functions till today since the inception which was doubted even by the US as of that time. This, of course, does not assure the full pride India can relish on. There are areas where India needs improvement and transformation. Particularly in solving the distributive equity and justice in the context of India. The disparity in sharing the developmental benefits is alarming. In addressing these issues, the diaspora can be of great help as it can invest its reserves, as rightly called as National Indian Reserves that rescued the economy when it sunk. India is rightly managed in the investment and the expertise of the diaspora can sooner or later overtake China, always staring the statistics of economic indicators since the economic liberalization in the 1990s as compared to China which liberalized in 1970s.

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