



The Indian Diaspora: Defining a New Paradigm in India-US Relationship

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Abstract

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made interacting with the vast Indian diaspora a defining aspect of his government's foreign policy ever since he took office in 2014. Modi's courtship of the diaspora has been particularly prominent in the United States, where the Indian Diaspora is both an agent and an instrument of India's soft power, and where it plays a significant role in influencing the dynamics of these countries. Since the Indian Diaspora is among the wealthiest minority in many industrialised nations, we may claim that it is a Rich Minority Group despite its Small Population. This has allowed them to push for advantageous conditions for India's interests. Additionally to improving US-India relations, the wealthy Indian diaspora aids India in influencing American perceptions of the country. The Indian Diaspora has significantly contributed to the improvement of ties between India and the US, from a cultural to a commercial perspective. As the second-largest immigrant group in the country, the American population has increased to over 4 million.

keywords-Indian diaspora , Indo U.S Relations, Government ,Soft power , Diplomacy , Trade , Culture

Introduction

American citizens having Indian descent are known as Indian Americans. Asian Indians are distinguished from Native Americans in the United States, who are sometimes known as "Indians" or "American Indians," by the use of the phrase. Indian Americans are the largest group of South Asian Americans and the second-largest group of Asian Americans, behind Chinese Americans, with a population of more than 4.5 million, accounting for roughly 1.35% of the country's total population. The ethnic group in the US with the highest earnings is that of Indian Americans. The Indian Diaspora is already contributing to a softening of India-US relations and can do so more. It improves relations between the two democracies by bringing together business, technology, investment, education, and culture to work as a diplomatic soft-power tool to bring about mutual prosperity and development and aim to create a global order based on peace, rule of law, and sustainable development. In reality, neither the United States nor India are adversaries or allies. One of the defining partnerships of the twenty-first century might be said to be the developing friendship between the two democratic nations. The Indian diaspora in the US is one of the most vibrant and engaged hyphenated American communities. According to the most current US census data (2021), there are believed to be around 4 million Indian-Americans, or 1.3% of the country's population. One of the ethnic groups in America that is growing the fastest is Indian-Americans, whose population has increased by more than 40% since 2010.



The Biden administration stands out for welcoming a sizable number of Indian-Americans into the presidential administration. Asian Indian Americans performed very well in the Congressional elections of 2021, with all Democratic candidates of Indian ancestry winning re-election. The fact that the current US Vice President, Kamala Harris, is of Indian descent and has an Indian name surely enhances awareness of Indian-Americans in the nation. According to the International Diaspora Engagement Alliance (IdEA), the United States is home to the largest number of people belonging to diaspora communities. Indian-Americans now make up about one percent of the USA's population. It has been estimated that with the current pace of emigration, this percentage would rise to two percent by 2030. The mutual ties that have been possible due to the presence of a strong diaspora in the region that in turn helps boost growth and development along with amicable relations between the two democracies.

The United States is where the majority of those who live in diaspora communities reside, according to the International Diaspora Engagement Alliance (IdEA). Currently, the population of the USA is made up of around 1% Indian-Americans. According to projections, this percentage would increase to 2% by 2030 at the current rate of emigration. The strong relationships between the two democracies that have been made possible by the existence of a large diaspora in the area, which in turn supports growth and development.

Literature review

1. Indre Singh (2015)- Mobilising the Indian American community.” - Inder Singh, who serves as the chairman of the international association of individuals of Indian descent, writes about the Indian diaspora. When significant problems and concerns have surfaced, he claims that Indian community activists have mobilised the neighbourhood to disseminate information, win support, and request cooperation. They encountered racism and antagonism from the populace, but as time went on, these issues diminished, demonstrating the power of community mobilisation to advance shared objectives for the Indian diaspora community.

2. Abraham Thomas (2015), "The power of community involvement-success among American Indians as a whole. Asian Indians are projected to number over 4 million from the US Census of 2010 through 2022. With the change in immigration restrictions, this rising number is a huge success. Since independence, there has been an open door for highly educated people, leading to the creation of new settlements and their growth into significant communities. This has not only benefited the country politically and economically, but it has also created a new community.

3. Vishveswaran Kamala (2013), "Family in the U.S Indian diaspora”-Kamla discusses folk mythology and how it ties together Indian immigrant families, which are not always nuclear in structure. In the same way that they are in India, it is not unusual for parents or in-laws to visit for extended periods of time, and nieces and nephews may be formally adopted into American families for the duration of their college years. They contend that most Indian families should foster and value frequent contact with their relatives.

4. Butler Kim D. (2001) "Defining Diaspora refining a discourse”-Migration and diaspora are distinct concepts, according to the author. "Ethnic nationalism and acculturation are fundamental



dynamics of diaspora," he claims. Diaspora studies academics have paid comparatively little attention to these and other paradigmatic problems.

5.. Kapur Devesh (2012).“Diaspora and development”-the domestic impact of overseas migration in India" Devesh Kapur discussed diaspora in this article with regard to evaluating the political and economic effects of international migration and diasporas on the country of origin. And he has demonstrated that the growth of democracy and the diaspora is a great and ground-breaking topic.

Who’s the diaspora ?

Diaspora is essentially a term used, in a generic sense, for populations of migrants who are living or settled permanently abroad, conscious of their origins and identities, and who maintain varying levels of touch with their own place. The term "Indian Diaspora" refers to a group of people who were born in India but moved overseas for any cause. These people may reside in different nations, but there are numerous ways to recognise their existence and significance. It matters what they contribute to both the local and national economies in India. This Diaspora is considered important mostly because of its economic remittances, but it is also important because of its social remittances, which include ideas, values, beliefs, and practises. The largest in the world, the Indian Diaspora, is a vital source of soft power and plays a significant part in India's development in many ways. Apart from sending the most foreign exchange into the mainland, the Indian Diaspora has made significant contributions in many areas, helping both the country of origin and the country to which it has moved. Since the Indian Diaspora has established itself in a prominent position with Indian authorities and has demonstrated its potential on a global scale, it deserves a genuine thank you.

Current Status of Indian Diaspora in America

The migration trend from India to the United States saw a substantial surge during the start of the twenty-first century. The growth of the information technology sector in South Indian states like Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu resulted in a significant influx of people to the United States. The states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu each have large populations in the US. Over 80% of all H-1B visas are issued to Indian nationals. With an average household income of \$126,891, nearly double the U.S. average of \$65,316, Indian Americans have risen to become the wealthiest ethnicity in America. Many students have begun moving to the United States since 2000 in order to seek higher education. According to various estimates, about 500,000 Indian-American students enrol in colleges and universities each year. According to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) "Open Doors" report, 202,014 new Indian students have enrolled in educational institutions in the United States.

The first female vice president of the United States, Kamala Harris, who is partly Indian American, made history on January 20, 2021. In the 2020 presidential election, she was chosen to be Vice President Joe Biden's running mate. In addition to Harris, another 20 Indian Americans were nominated for important posts in the government, marking a significant turning point in Indian-American history.



The demographic of Indian Americans has changed in recent years, moving from being predominantly made up of immigrants from Gujarat and Punjab to being increasingly made up of immigrants from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, as well as Tamil Nadu. Telugu increased from being the sixth to the third most spoken South Asian language between 2010 and 2022, while Punjabi decreased from being the fourth to the seventh most spoken South Asian language. In terms of socioeconomic characteristics like education, geography, and income, there are considerable discrepancies between these groups; in 2021, 81% of Americans who spoke Telugu at home were highly proficient in English, compared to only 59% of Americans who spoke Punjabi at home.

Diaspora Engagement in the America

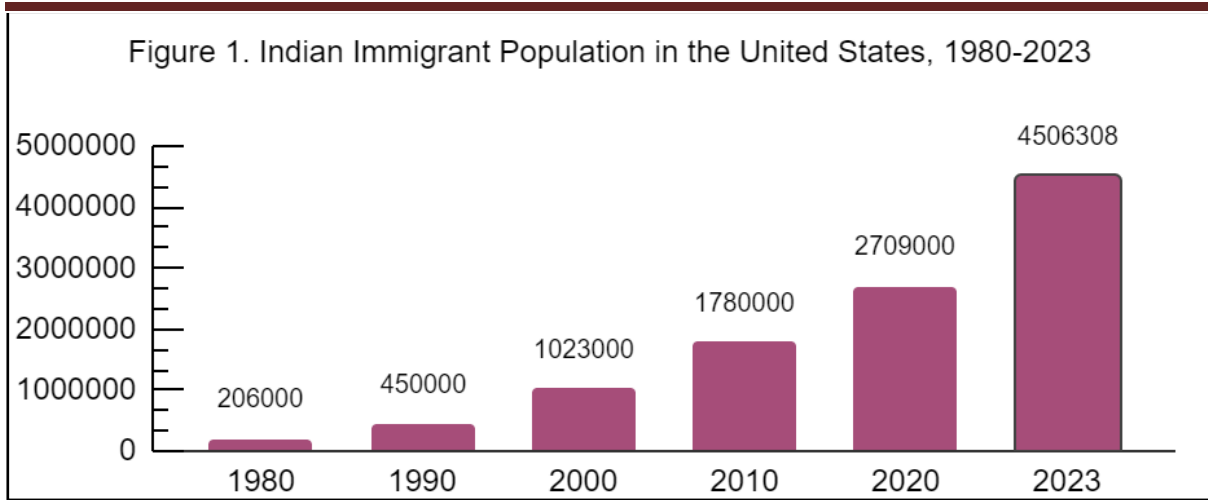
The Indian diaspora community is renowned for being extremely well-organised and having a deep and diversified involvement with the motherland, which includes boosting the growth of India's IT industry. Many now-wealthy Indian immigrants to the United States arrived with minimal means, but they went on to achieve a surprising level of success through a mix of diligence, education, talent, and vision. Many people view giving as a duty and welcome responsibility. The Indian government has acknowledged the wishes of the diaspora to maintain ties to the country and has launched a variety of initiatives and programmes to do so.

The Indian government has kept a place set aside for diaspora and immigrants since 1977. The ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, which was originally founded as a bureau inside the ministry of External Affairs, has been a separate government organisation since 2004 and works to reunite the Indian diaspora with its homeland. People of Indian descent living abroad who register under the Overseas Citizenship of India (OIC) or Peoples of Indian Origin (PIO) programmes may also be eligible for some citizenship rights.

Indian Immigrants In United State(Population)

American citizens having Indian descent are known as Indian Americans. Asian Indians are distinguished from Native Americans in the United States, who are sometimes known as "Indians" or "American Indians," by the use of the phrase. Indian Americans are the largest group of South Asian Americans and the second-largest group of Asian Americans, behind Chinese Americans, with a population of more than 4.5 million, accounting for roughly 1.35% of the country's total population. The ethnic group in the US with the highest earnings is that of Indian Americans.

According to a study published today by the Data for U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2023 American Community Surveys (ACS), Migration Policy Institute(MPI) and Historical Census statistics on the Foreign-Born population of the U.S., a think tank, the Indian diaspora is made up of almost 4.9 million people living in the United States who were either born in India or who reported India ancestry or origin. On the diaspora rankings, Indians come in at number 10. The 5.4 million-strong Chinese diaspora comes in eighth place. Germany, Mexico, and Ireland are the top three nations with the most diaspora residents (41 million, 38 million, and 32 million respectively). The primary recipients of non-immigrant H-1B visas for Highly Skilled Individuals are Indians, who are the second-largest immigrant group after Mexicans.



Source-Data for U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2023 American Community Surveys (ACS), Migration Policy Institute(MPI) and Historical Census statistics on the Foreign-Born population of the U.S.

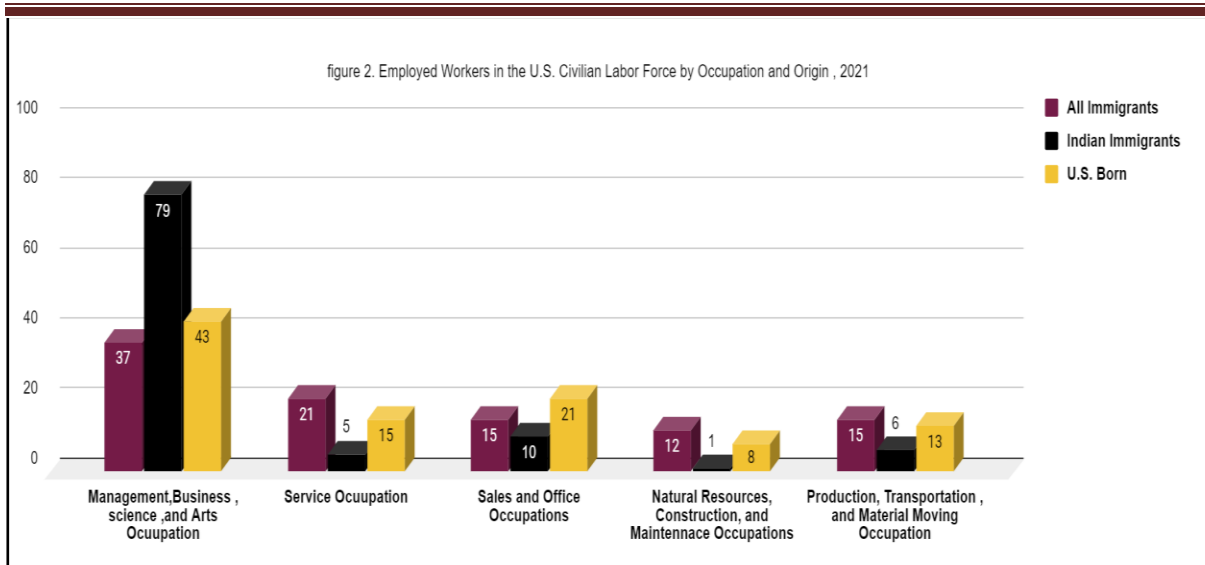
Education Attainment

The Indian diaspora is distinguished from the mainstream American population by its high level of education, and it was one of the 15 groups evaluated by RAD to have the highest level of education. Compared to 31% of the U.S. population overall, 79% of Americans in the Indian diaspora who were 25 years of age or older had at least a bachelor's degree. Compared to 11 percent of the overall U.S. population, 44% of Americans of Indian descent age 25 and older possessed a master's degree, an advanced professional degree, or a PhD.

Employment

Members of the Indian diaspora who were 16 years old and older were slightly more likely to be in the labour force than the general U.S. population: 69 percent versus 64 percent. A factor in the Indian diaspora population's high labour market participation was its age distribution: more than the average portion was working age 18 to 64, and relatively few were children or retirees compared to the U.S. population.

In line with their high levels of education, the Indian diaspora had higher employment rates than the general U.S. labour force (94 percent against 91 percent). The Indian diaspora population has the greatest employment rate out of the 15 categories in the RAD research. Members of the Indian diaspora made up 50% of the workforce in the United States, compared to 31% of the total population. The two diasporas with the highest percentages of professional or management jobs among the 15 groups in the RAD series were Indian and Egyptian. Professional or managerial occupations include roles in administration and management, such as those in finance or human resources, as well as specialisations (such as engineering, science, law, or teaching).



sources-MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS(All data represented in percentages)

Organisation Established by the Indian Diaspora

The Indian diaspora has established countless highly organised, well funded, and professionally managed groups located throughout the United States. These organisations address a broad range in the issues and take on many different forms, including philanthropic projects to improve health and education in India, advocacy organisations, business and professional networks, immense linguistic and religious diversity, but some Indians in the United States have conceived something like a pan-Indian- and some cases, a pan-South Asian- diaspora community.

Indian emigration Involvement in politics in the U.S.

The Indian diaspora has been getting more and more involved in American politics in recent years. Community leaders have started to create political action committees and advocacy groups that aim to increase the visibility of Indian Diaspora voices and perspectives on a variety of subjects. These organisations include the Republican Indian Committee, South Asian Americans Leading Together, Sikh American Legal Defence and Education Fund, and the Indian American Forum for Political Education. The Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-American Affairs and the Senate India Caucus are both bipartisan organisations that focus on issues relating to India and the Indian diaspora.

MARITAL STATUS

Indian Americans have high rates of marriage and low rates of divorce. The percentage of married couple households in the area is 50% higher than the national average, according to ACS data. 66 percent of respondents in the IAAS sample were married or involved in a domestic partnership. Existing research has revealed that among the largest Asian American communities, Indian Americans—including men and women—in both the first and second generations, however there is a noticeably higher rate of marriage outside the community among those in the



second generation. This conclusion is supported by IAAS data. Eight out of ten respondents (between 85 percent of respondents who were born abroad and 71 percent of respondents who were born in the United States) claim to have a spouse or partner who is of Indian descent.

How does the diaspora influence policies of both countries?

Indian immigrants are making contributions to business, science, and technology in all 50 US states. The level of political engagement and activity that Indians exhibit is one thing that is important in influencing policy. A variety of political action groups have emerged to advance the voices of their members as a result of the diaspora's growing involvement in US politics over the past few decades. The United States India Political Action Committee, a nonpartisan organisation, was established in 2002 and seeks to raise issues affecting Indians, such as advocating the H-1B visa as a temporary expert work status.

trade between the US and India, the US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement, world health, and religious freedom. Beginning in the year 2000, the migration trend from India to the United States saw a significant change. The overall migratory outflow was altered by the implementation of privatisation and liberalisation. The growth of the information technology sector in Indian cities like Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad prompted a significant influx of people to the United States, mostly from the southern Indian states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

In the United States, there are large populations in Telangana, Gujarat, Punjab, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, among other Indian states. More than 80% of H-1B visas go to Indian nationals. Indian Americans have advanced to become the wealthiest ethnic group in America, with an average household income of \$126,891, over twice the US average of \$65,316. The number of students moving to the United States to pursue higher education has increased significantly during the past twenty years. Over 500,000 Indian Americans, according to various estimates, enrol in higher education institutions each year.

According to the "Open Doors" report from the Institute of International Education (IIE), 202,014 new students from India registered in US educational institutions. As the nation's first female vice president, Indian American Kamala Harris made history on January 20, 2021. As President Joe Biden's running mate in the presidential election the year before, she was chosen as Vice President. This was a significant turning point in Indian American history, and in addition to Harris, 20 other Indian Americans were nominated for important posts in the administration.

The Indian-American Diaspora and its contribution during the COVID-19 crisis in India

The diaspora, which included many influential and well-known members, campaigned on social media to increase political clout and awareness for prompt US government action regarding vaccine and medical supply donation, sharing patents, raw materials, and the know-how for making generic vaccines.

2. Funds were raised to continue supporting medical supplies. Organising hospital beds and other



equipment, such as oxygen canisters, prescriptions, fast virus tests, and other items.

3. Collective mutual aid, such as setting up community pantries and grief support groups among the diaspora to deal with crises and sending money to family members in India.

4. Indian-American physicians and public health professionals used their platforms and social media to call for US action to alleviate the oxygen crisis and to raise money to send India's necessary medical supplies.

5. During the COVID-19 spike, India-American physicians actively participated in tele-consultations and follow-ups and coordinated with both countries to allow them to practise in India.

Conclusion

India's Diaspora, a strength of the country, serves as the tool of its soft power. The Indian Diaspora in the United States has developed over three stages: first, the pursuit of employment and education; second, as a significant source of remittances; and third, as effective participants in influencing U.S. dynamics. The Indian Diaspora in America is noted for its work ethic, discipline, non-interference, and peaceful coexistence with the local population. It is also recognised as an excellent public diplomacy instrument. These principles ultimately help Indians in the United States create their own identities and cultivate positive public perceptions of them. Indian Americans' rich culture and civilisation have woven themselves into the fabric of America, and both nations acknowledge the advantages of the Indian Diaspora. Through non-governmental public diplomats and cultural diplomats, ID's role in promoting Indian culture also contributes to country branding.

People of Indian descent who live in the United States have a wide range of ties to India, including ties to social and family networks, culture, and politics. These links are stronger among Indian Americans who were born in India, which may not come as a surprise. Indian Americans are worried about India's future course, but the IAAS shows that support for Modi and the BJP is not widespread among different demographic groups, despite the fact that many of them are. According to the IAAS, there are considerable intergenerational variations in attitudes about the political and social developments taking place in India. The characteristics of hyphenated identities vary per generation, just like in other immigrant communities. First-generation immigrants accentuate the Indian component of their Indian American identity when they become naturalised U.S. citizens or permanent residents. On the other hand, their offspring, who belong to the second generation, place a comparatively greater emphasis on the American aspect of their identity. As a result, the diaspora that the Indian government has come to understand is dynamic; Indian Americans who were born and nurtured in the country display a range of political sensibilities, both with regard to domestic politics and those in India. Compared to their parents' generation, they have a lower level of interest in India and a higher level of attention in the United States. The offspring of the following generation, however, place a relatively higher value on being Americans. As a result, the diaspora that the Indian government has come to comprehend is dynamic; Indian Americans who were born and raised in the US exhibit a range of political beliefs with regard to both domestic and global politics. They are more worried about



the United States than their parents' generation was, who are more engaged in India.

The Modi administration's foreign policy has placed a strong emphasis on reaching out to the Indian diaspora. The relationship between India and its diaspora groups has recently been described as having been "transformed by the very unique bonding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has established" with them, according to the Indian external affairs minister. While the enormous numbers at the "Howdy, Modi!" events in Houston, Texas, and at Madison Square Garden in New York City demonstrate that a sizable portion of the Indian American diaspora is in favour of the policy changes brought about by the current administration; the group is far from uniform. A sizable proportion of Indian Americans are worried about the political and social transformations taking place in India.

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