(RE)INVENTION OF DIASPORIC TRADITION AND THE FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN THE NATION STATE: THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

Raj Sekhar Basu[1] Sayantika Biswas[2]

Calcutta University. India

Abstract:

Indians abroad, the largest and most heterogeneous among the global communities, have become central to debates on identity, migration and transnationalism. Globalisation has reinforced ties with the homeland while embedding these communities in host societies, thus producing dual identities that challenge conventional notions of nationhood. Further complicating the analytical precision of "diaspora", the Indian case exemplifies the plurality of society and the heterogeneity of migration causes and phases. This exemplification makes it difficult to subsume the contexts of diaspora under a single paradigm. Despite various divergences, a shared sense of Indianness persists across the communities abroad, sustained through cultural memory, identity and origin. This enduring collective consciousness makes the strategic significance of the Indian diaspora in shaping global discourses on belonging and transnational identity.

Keywords: Indian diaspora, globalisation, transnationalism, identity, migration, cultural memory, indianness, heterogeneity

Titulo en Español: La reinvención de la tradición diaspórica y la formulación de la política exterior en el Estado-nación: La experiencia india.

Resumen:

Los indios en el extranjero, la comunidad más grande y heterogénea entre las comunidades globales, se han convertido en un tema central en los debates sobre identidad, migración y transnacionalismo. La globalización ha reforzado los lazos con la patria al tiempo que ha integrado a estas comunidades en las sociedades de acogida, lo que ha dado lugar a identidades duales que desafían las nociones convencionales de nacionalidad. El caso de la India, que complica aún más la precisión analítica del término «diáspora», ejemplifica la pluralidad de la sociedad y la heterogeneidad de las causas y fases de la migración. Esta ejemplificación dificulta la subsumción de los contextos de la diáspora bajo un único paradigma. A pesar de las diversas divergencias, persiste un sentido compartido de identidad india en todas las comunidades en el extranjero, sostenido por la memoria cultural, la identidad y el origen. Esta conciencia colectiva perdurable confiere a la diáspora india una importancia estratégica en la configuración de los discursos globales sobre la pertenencia y la identidad transnacional.

Palabras Clave: *Diáspora india, globalización, transnacionalismo, identidad, migración, memoria cultural, indianidad, heterogeneidad.*

[1] Raj Sekhar Basu is Professor in the department of History, University of Calcutta.
E-mail: <rajsekharbasu2001@gmail.com>.
[2] Sayantika Biswas has completed her MA from Calcutta University.E-mail:<sayantikabiswas648@gmail.com>

1. Introduction.

India remains a stake whose value to the diaspora community has been defined from the very beginning as a resource. The Indian diaspora, with its vast numbers, heterogeneity, and global spread, has become a key area attracting the interest of contemporary debates on identity, migration, and transnationalism studies. Globalization has increased the links between diaspora communities within homelands, while positioning them within mainstream cultures, thus exploding a dual form of belongingness, undermining mainstream definitions of nationalism in general. However, it had become commonplace to diffuse a homogenous meaning to "diaspora," applying it to immigrant, refugee, or ethnic communities with a level degree of accuracy, to say the least, that makes it more a mistaken identity than a defined category in itself. In other words, the Indian diaspora, much like Indian society, is plural in nature, with its heterogeneity in terms of its migratory stages, reasons, and mainstream versions in foreign lands that defies any easy paradigmatic fit in general. Despite all such differences, however, a common experience of "Indian-ness" unites them nonetheless with a commonality in terms of memory, identity, and shared roots, to say the least.

The conceptual framework under which we can situate the Indian diaspora is quite a negotiation of identity between difference and commonality. The framework is often a comparative and interdisciplinary approach drawing on historical, sociological, and political perspectives to illuminate the mosaic of Indian identities abroad and their significance in both academic and policy contexts. Theoretical debates on diaspora showcased historical phases that traced the host country's variations to highlight "Indianness" in diverse forms. It aims to clarify the conceptual boundaries of diaspora studies by offering insights into the policy implications of engaging with overseas Indians.[3] Historical, social and political perspectives on theoretical frameworks of diaspora are shaped by several influential theoretical frameworks, each attempting to capture the complexity of transnational communities and hence their changing dynamics with cultural traditions. Cultural reproduction in the Indian diaspora has played an equally integral part in identity building, and this has been in relation to experiences of colonization and indentureship. Cultural reproduction essentially translates to the preserves and transferences of language, rituals, ethics, and traditions from one generation to the next as a way of creating continuity and memory through culture.

However, in the context of the diaspora, this reproduction was far from smooth and straightforward. This was all in light of being in a contested space in terms of displacement and assimilation in the colonies. The question of identity building thus was an interaction between the theoretical aspects of culture and the lived experiences of displacement. For Indian citizens in the situation of indentureship, the displacement from their lands of birth essentially posed an inherent emotional challenge in terms of identity. In the way in which there was an inherent emotional challenge and volatility in relation to their cultural identity. The displacement from the lands of birth essentially posed a threat in relation to their essential emotional and traditional identifications. This was again in a way disruptive to their traditional rituals and practices, and essentially posed a challenge in terms of identity.

2. Theoretical Perspectives on Diaspora

The study of diasporas has been shaped by several influential theoretical frameworks[4], each attempting to capture the complexity of transnational communities. William Safran's seminal. Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return (1991) offered six

---

[3] Pande, Amba: "Conceptualising Indian Diaspora: Diversities within a Common Identity", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 48, nº 49 (2013), pp. 59–65.

[4] Safran, William: "Diasporas in modern societies: Myths of homeland and return", *Diaspora: A journal of transnational studies*, Vol.1, nº1 (1991), pp. 83-99

characteristics of diasporas, of which dispersion from an original homeland, a collective memory of the homeland, alienation in the foreign society, and a commitment to return to the homeland are a prerequisite. Safran's theory, based on the Jewish experience, highlighted the paramount importance of 'homeland consciousness' and 'return myth'. The theory has been termed too rigid to be applied to diasporas that do not articulate a 'return' but 'hybrid' identities in the foreign lands.

Robin Cohen's "Global Diasporas" has expanded the definition of diasporas into various groups, like victim diaspora, labor diaspora, imperial diaspora, trade diaspora, and cultural diaspora. [5] Robin Cohen's work is more flexible, as he understands that diasporas can arise from different sources and are not always the victims of trauma or exile. Perhaps one of the reasons why Cohen's definition is so apt for the Indian diaspora is that it can encompass the traditional Indian diaspora, the traders and preachers who settled outside the boundaries of ancient India, along with the more recent groups of indentured labor, experts, and current migrants. His definition of diasporas as "agents of globalization and the carriers of cross-cultural flows and Cohen's typology permitted much greater flexibility, realizing that diasporas could emerge from multiple historical processes and might not necessarily be defined by trauma or exile. In the context of the Indian diaspora, Cohen's framework is especially helpful, since it encompasses within its fold both the 'classical' wave of traders and preachers who went abroad in ancient times and the later waves of indentured labour, professionals, and contemporary migrants. His emphasis on diaspora as agents of globalization and cultural exchange underlines the role of the Indian diaspora in shaping multicultural societies around the world.

Rogers Brubaker, in his work "The 'diaspora' diaspora", published in 2005, criticized the proliferation of the term itself, considering that "diaspora" had been used as a catch-all phrase which is too generic for any migrant or minority community.[6] He identified three core elements dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary maintenance but urged against an overstretching of the concept and create most analytical dilution. Brubaker's caveat is exceedingly german in the Indian case, where haphazard use is made of the term "diaspora" to refer to anything from non-resident Indians (NRIs), people of Indian origin (PIOs), and even temporary migrants. His intervention underlines the importance of conceptual clarity while engaging with heterogenous population.

N. Jayaram's work on the Indian diaspora situates these theoretical debates within the specific context of India's diverse migration streams. In *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration* (2004) and *Diversities in the Indian Diaspora* (2011), Jayaram emphasizes the heterogeneity with respect to experiences informed by dynamics in the host countries, from pluralism in Fiji to exclusion in the Gulf states to multiculturalism in Western societies. He proposes that "the Indian dispora defies any general theory, which must be replaced by a multiphasic, pattern- or process-oriented approach." Jayaram's concern with "unraveling diversity" resonates with Brubaker's reluctance, as well as Cohen's multiphasic approach.

Taken together, these paradigms demonstrate both the potential and the difficulty of a general theory of the Indian diaspora.[7] Safran's work points to the appeal of homeland identity while Cohen offers a model sufficiently general to encompass the range of Indian disporas, Brubaker cautions against the dangers of bad conceptualization, while Jayaram supports all these debates with the empirical realities of the Indian disporas. The challenge for the scholar or policymaker is to find a way to synthesize these paradigms into a coherent model that

[5] Cohen, Robin (2022): *Global diasporas: An introduction*, Abingdon, Routledge.
[6] Brubaker, Rogers: "The 'diaspora' diaspora", *Ethnic and racial studies,* Vol. 28, nº 1 (2005), pp.1-19.
[7] Oonk, Gijsbert G. (ed.) (2007): *Global Indian Diasporas: Exploring Trajectories of Migration and Theory*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press.

understands the differences, yet the commonality of the Indianness, which still unites the overseas Indians.

The Indian diaspora with its massive numbers representing a multiplicity that makes it one of the most dispersed diaspora communities in the world. It has become a paradigm case in contemporary debates on identity, migration and transnationalism displaying a complex interplay between homeland consciousness and the construction of multi-locational identities among Indians. It is a way of negotiating between belonging and finding an identity. Globalization has increased links between diaspora groups and their homelands, while incorporating them into a host society, thus giving a double meaning to a classical idea of belonging. "Diaspora" itself has become a rather vague term, often synonymous with immigrant, refugee, or ethnic community. Even though "homeland consciousness"[8] means a recognition of a motherland that exists outside the borders of settlement, a remembered or constructed 'home', particular homeland consciousness, as that identified with the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspore community, is a desire to establish an independent homeland even if a tangible 'homeland' is never experienced directly. A homeland that might remain a vision, a dream, a far-off land that breathes in imagination and hope. At the same time, diasporic identity is multi-locational shaped by hostland dynamics ranging from artificial pluralism in Fiji to integration in the Caribbean. Besides, this heterogeneity points to the near impossibility of theorizing the Indian diaspora as a singular category. Given its historical migration streams that ranged from preachers and traders to sailors, labourers, and adventurers whose movements are noted in sources of Indian History, the mosaic of Indian identities abroad reflects both the plurality of Indian society and varied experiences of settlement. Diasporic homecoming is fraught with reintegration problems, as returnees often find themselves being treated as strangers in their own homeland. Theoretical frameworks have tried to catch these facets.

Taken together, these frameworks[9] reveal both the promise and the challenge of theorizing the Indian diaspora, showing that no single theory fully explains its complexity across time, but when combined, they allow for a nuanced understanding of the diaspora as both heterogeneous and unified by a persistent sense of Indianness that continues to bind communities across generations and geographies.

3. Historical Phases of Indian Migration

Lond distance nationalism and diaspora found its roots in the colonial economic patterns and the growth of plantation economies during the 19th and early 20th centuries, which gave rise to "old diaspora". This migration, mainly of maistrys, began with the large-scale settling of Indians in diasporic colonies around the globe, from Mauritius and Guyana to Fiji, Trinidad, and Burma. This propelled with the abolition of slavery and the need for cheap labor. The indent system, represented a form of regulated wage labor while in reality remained a dehumanizing process of slavery, characterized by adverse working and living conditions, religious persecution, and social control. However, despite these challenges, over time, the status of the indentured Indians altered decisively as they increasingly participated in the social, political, and economic fabric of their countries of residence and in so doing, established lifelong diasporic communities.[10]

[8] Pande Amba: "Conceptualising Indian Diaspora: Diversities within a Common Identity", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 48, nº 49 (2013), pp. 59–65.

[9] Dwivedi, Sunil Kumar.: A Conceptual Framework of Indian Diaspora. *The Creative Launcher*, Vol. 7, nº 6 (December 2022), pp. 66-74

[10] Arshed, Tanwir, and Basu Partha Pratim: "The Making of India's Foreign Policy: Elements and Determinants", in Basu Partha Pratim and Arshed Tanwir (2004)*75 Years of India's Foreign Policy: Bilateral, Conventional and Emerging Trends*, Singapore, Springer Nature.

The "kangani and maistry system," common to southern India, involved networks of headmen over whom laborers were subordinated in what often became family-centered groups, facilitating in turn the establishment of more cohesive diasporic communities abroad. At the same time, convict-labor migration occurred in the establishment of penal settlements in Southeast Asia. The semi- and skilled workers were recruited to serve as service providers and guards in further expanding the diaspora. Free passage Indians, consisting mainly of traders and professionals, migrated on their own, establishing business enterprises and leadership within indentured communities thereby challenging European dominance. Gradually, these varied streams of migration produced layered identities. These identities were toned with a sense of exile in the voice of indentured labourers. On the other hand it created a strong tie to India through remittances and caste networks. Generations later in the late 20th century new patterns of migration emerged, including so-called 'brain drain,' which was succeeded by 'brain regain' as diaspora communities sparked the information technology revolution in India.[11]   On one hand, massive migrations of labor to the Gulf and Southeast Asia led to new groups of Indians making up diasporas characterized by exclusion and precarity. But then came 'twice migrants,' such as Indo-Guyanese living in North America or Indo-Fijians living in Australia. These second-migration groups migrated from their initial host countries to developed countries and carried with them very complex and layered. This multiplicity of experiences makes up the diverse Indian diaspora which is driven by force, choice, and re-migration and which also brings out homeland consciousness and the construction of multi-locational identities. The Indian diaspora thus cannot be theorised as a singular entity but must be understood as a mosaic of experiences across time and space, unified by a persistent sense of Indianness yet differentiated by the historical, social, and political contexts of migration and settlement.

4. India´s Foreign Policy and Diaspora Diplomacy

The research on India's external affairs has witnessed a drift away from an institutional perspective that considered the personalized styles of prime ministers in influencing their country's foreign policy.[12] Rather, it is the ideological underpinnings of these policies that have received attention in research studies, with the emphasis on the norms, principles, beliefs, and ideas that have had a sustaining effect on India's external affairs in the past. However, these ideological streams do not remain constant and adapt to the constantly changing domestic and external circumstances. There is also a dynamic interplay between these ideological streams and various actors whose participation has remained inadequately analyzed in the past.On one hand the military establishment, business class, and even the press have assumed the importance of "foreign policy actors" in influencing India's external policies by providing inputs at the formulation and implementation levels of these policies. On the other hand, the various typologies of research on India's external affairs have identified the complexities associated with these studies. Realist approaches emphasize the primacy of power in these studies, while the centrality of identity narratives has been emphasized in postcolonial research and studies on multilateralism focus on India in the broad institutional setting. Such a variety of approaches is a testament to the fact that it is difficult to categorize, to say the least, a body of scholarship that itself is fluid and contentious in nature. In fact, even if one looks at the evolution of India's foreign policy, it is a testimony to this fluid nature, from a non-alignment policy that suited it during the Cold War era but not in today's multipolar world to its currently favored world of multi-engagement and multi-lateralism. It is necessary to have a realization regarding foreign policy conundrums that India might be facing, along with a realization regarding its foreign

---

[11] Basu and Arshed, *op. cit.*

[12] Nincic, Miroslav, and Ramos Jennifer M.: Ideological structure and foreign policy preferences. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 15, nº 2 (2010), pp. 119-141.

policy goals.[13] Against this backdrop, India's bilateral and multilateral relationships with major global powers are characterized by a degree of continuity and change. Relationships with the USA have undergone a transformed definition since the 1990s, due to shared stakes in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, globalization, the war on terror, and regional balance of powers equations in a context of the relative decline of the USA, the rise of China, and the ambitions of India. Relationships with China, marked by a dialectics of cooperation and competition, are plagued by problems like border differences, the Tibet factor, security threats, and readings of regional ambitions. The partnership relationship with Russia, founded on shared anti-colonial, anti-Nazi, and anti-Cold War opposition, has undergone a reinterpretation, reflecting the shared needs for joint security, connectivity, and balance for the Indo-Pacific, making an effort towards a shared and collective security mandate through cooperation. Interactions with West Asia, characterized by a practical narrative motivated by the needs for oil, labor, and remittances, have moved towards a non-alignment vision panacea through a cohesive regional policy position by India. Similarly, relations with Southeast Asia, shaped by cultural and geopolitical proximity, have passed through phases of syncretic pre-colonial ties, post-independence visions of Asian solidarity, Cold War estrangement, and post-1990s reinvigoration under the Look East policy[14], culminating in contemporary collaborative frameworks. India's engagement with Africa, initially animated by anti-imperialism and solidarity within the nonaligned movement, has in recent decades been driven by pragmatic concerns such as access to natural resources and competition with China, while also serving India's ambitions for greater global influence, including its claim to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. In the main, these diverse strands underline the complex interplay of ideology, domestic determinants, and international structures in shaping India's foreign policy and point to the necessity of locating India's external engagements within both historical trajectories and contemporary strategic importance.

Contemporary scholarship on India's foreign policy has increasingly expanded dimensions beyond conventional military and institutional concerns, reflecting the complex realities of the twenty-first century.[15] Non-traditional security challenges, emerging from socio-economic and environmental contexts, have been recognized as arguably more serious than traditional military threats in recent times. India's ability to negotiate these challenges, particularly through her role as a leading supplier of medicines even before the pandemic, illustrates the growing importance of health security, food security, environmental security, and responses to international terrorism in shaping its diplomatic agenda. Besides this, India's security and defence policies continue to grapple with long-standing issues that embrace not only threats and risks but also aspirations connected with control and influence. Over time, these policies have moved toward a consensus that combines incremental internal balancing though their implementation remains hampered by internal divergences between civil and military perspectives as well as mismatches between resources, capabilities, and ambitions.[16] There has also been the rise of economic diplomacy, which has assumed importance, especially in the post-liberalization era. With the presence of business organizations and lobbying in a key crucial position, economic diplomacy helped in defining the country's policy in foreign direct

---

[13] Sikri, Rajiv: "Challenge and strategy: rethinking India's foreign policy", *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, Vol. 9, nº 1 (2014), pp.56-69.

[14] Haokip, Thongkholal: "India's look east policy: Its evolution and approach", *South Asian Survey*, Vol.18, nº 2 (2011), pp.239-257.

[15] Chatterjee, Shibashis: "Approaches to the study of India's foreign policy: An overview.", in Arshed, Tanwir, and Partha Pratim Basu (eds.) (2024): *75 Years of India's Foreign Policy: Bilateral, Conventional and Emerging Trends*, Singapore, Springer Nature, pp. 39-62.

[16] Hill, Christopher (2015): *Foreign policy in the twenty-first century*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing.

investment and economic globalization. The engagement of India in the international financial institutions like the World Bank and WTO underlines the politics of bargaining between the Global North and South. The strategy for economic interdependence has defined the approach to multilateralism and sub-regionalism. Adding to this economic importance would be a pragmatic approach in the rise of cultural diplomacy, which has attempted to define and advance the soft power of the country. The transition in the early regimes of Nehru and Indira Gandhi and in the late 1990s and early 2000s of a "smart power" for the country has also attempted to locate the assets, potential, and constraints of its culture in the international sphere. The involvement of the diaspora in India's foreign policies is another area that has experienced both continuity and shift. The early involvement of the diaspora in foreign policies began with anti-colonial solidarity and a quite restrictive strategy, but later it turned quite pragmatic under Indira Gandhi and then experienced a radical shift in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War and globalization, as it reordered the relationship between the Indian diaspora and the homeland. More contemporary regimes have even further intensified engagement with the diaspora, and quite prominent interactions have highlighted its significance as both a goal and instrument of foreign policies. The story of environment diplomacy is representative of the shift in India's involvement in international climate meetings from the 1990s, as it embodies the tension between domestic and international priorities. India's negotiating position shifted from insisting that mitigation was the responsibility of developed countries to gradually accepting obligations alongside other advanced developing states, culminating in its adoption of INDCs under the Paris Accord.

India's engagement with multilateral and minilateral organizations has similarly evolved, shaped by its commitment to sovereignty, non-interference, and global justice. From its early involvement in multilateral institutions to its gradual transformation from a rule-taker to a rule-shaper, India has sought to balance its priorities while participating in minilateral groupings such as the G20, BRICS, and SCO. These platforms have allowed India to pursue more focused cooperation on issues like climate change, counter-terrorism, and maritime security, complementing broader multilateral efforts. Finally, the rise of digital diplomacy has marked a transformative shift in India's external engagement. The integration of digital platforms into diplomatic strategies has enabled India to disseminate its ideas and vision, counter misinformation, and amplify its cultural and economic strengths globally. In an interconnected world marked by power uncertainties and India's aspirations to be acknowledged as a major power, digital diplomacy has become a vital tool for shaping perceptions, enhancing India's global image, and consolidating its presence as an influential emerging actor.

5. Role of Diaspora in Preserving and Transforming Cultural Identities

The Indian diaspora is increasingly being acknowledged as a vital factor in the preservation as well as the evolution of cultural identities, simultaneously being the "repository of tradition" and "sites of transnationalism." The Indian diaspora preserves its culture through a set of traditions, such as language, worship, festivals, food, and social manners, which act as a "cultural marker" of continuity with the homeland. At the same time, these communities do not remain static, being the repositories of any particular homogeneous culture, as the experience of "displacement" due to migration to foreign countries, with their varied cultures, gives rise to the production of a new identity that mixes Indian culture with the new, hence replicating the notion of 'indianness' in transnational social spaces.[17] Generation differences of the Indian diaspora further add to these complexities with the first generation being more preservation-oriented, whereas the second and third generations move towards identity construction on a

---

[17] Gowricharn, Ruben S (ed.) (2020): *Shifting transnational bonding in Indian diaspora*, New York, Routledge.

fluid identity trajectory that balances the preservation of their heritage with adoption of the new society. They gave rise to new hybrid forms of culture like 'Bollywood,'" among others. Such two-fold preservation and transformation are also related to India's foreign policy and diaspora politics, where the Indian state now increasingly identifies the overseas Indian as a cultural and political asset to be shown through diaspora networks for the projection of soft power and the enhancement of the Indian image in the international arena. However, the questions of assimilation, marginalization through discrimination, and the splitting of identity through diaspora also introduce the complexities of authenticity and hybridity and the continuity of culture in diaspora identity politics. The diaspora policy articulation of India's foreign relations also brings out such complexities of diaspora identity politics, as during the Nehru years there was a marked restraint as a legacy of anti-colonial solidarity and non-interference in the host countries' politics, and there was an emphasis on pragmatism during the later years of India's foreign policy agenda to the changes occasioned by the globalization of the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland community. The Indira Gandhi years saw an opening up to the diaspora, and there was a radical shift during the later years after the end of the Cold War as the Indian state now realizes the value and power of the diasporic ties. More recent governments have deepened this engagement, with highly visible interactions underlining the diaspora's significance as both an object and an instrument of foreign policy. In this respect, the diaspora is not a passive bearer of tradition but an active actor in the reprocessing of cultural identities. It generates new modalities of belonging that are at once Indian and global, while also acting as a strategic agent in India's quest for soft power and international influence.[18]

The objectives of the study are framed within an understanding of the processes of migration and settlement, the mechanisms by which Indians in Europe united as a cohesive group given heterogeneous linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The role of ethnicity in reinforcing diasporic identity and the ways these communities built a global identity as part of the greater Indian diaspora. The analysis is based on participant observation and interviews over four decades, supplemented by primary and secondary sources of data, including monographs, government reports, and scholarly articles.

There has always been an entanglement of identity in terms of migration, immigration and emigration. Migration is when people move from one place to another. Immigration is when people move to a country and stay there for a long time. Emigration is when people leave their country to live in another country. Migration and immigration and emigration are issues that involve many things. The thing is, when we talk about immigration there are two reasons why people move from one place to another. One reason is that they are forced to leave their homes, which is called "expulsion". This happens because of problems like not having food or money. On the hand some people move to a new country because it is attractive, to them, which is called "attraction". This happens when a country has social services and takes care of its people.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is really important when we discuss immigration. This document says that everyone is equal no matter what they look like what they believe in or where they come from. Because of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it became easier for people to move around Europe. Some other important things that happened include people from the Commonwealth being able to move to Britain and other European countries before 1962. As more and more migrants came things started to change. The way the public and the media thought about migrants also played a role, in how migrants

---

[18] Singh, Zorawar Daulet (2018): *Power and diplomacy: India's foreign policies during the cold war*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

were seen. The. The way people thought about the migrants changed over time as the migrants kept coming to Britain and other European nations.

The process of immigrants becoming part of a society is called acculturation of immigrants. This is when immigrants seem to disappear into the culture of the host society. This idea was used by plantation colonies in Europe during the period.

On the hand integration is different. Integration allows minorities to keep their culture, language and religious beliefs. At the time integration allows minorities to accept the culture of the host society. Integration and acculturation of immigrants are two different things. Acculturation of immigrants is when immigrants become part of the host society, and integration is when minorities keep their culture and accept the host society's culture. The Indian people who live in Europe have done a job of fitting in over the last thirty years by following the laws, learning the languages of the countries where they live etc. At the time, the Indian people in Europe still found ways to be connected to their roots. They have built temples, ate the kind of food and celebrated the same religious holidays that they used to back in India. The Indian diaspora in Europe has managed to balance these two things. People who move to a country have to make dual adjustments. They try to keep their culture alive at home, but they also have to follow the rules of the new society. This is called " Plural accommodation". It is a way for different communities to survive with dignity.[19]

One of the major problems faced during accommodating is discrimination, when they try to fit in with the society. They want to be seen and respected which is not always easy for the diaspora populations. The diaspora populations have to deal with being treated which is very hard, for the diaspora populations. People often face problems and struggle that can lead to tensions in society. These problems usually cause people to be hostile or exclude others, which shows that something is not working well with how people cooperate and integrate with each other. This has happened to Indians who live in Europe they have faced discrimination which makes it hard for them to keep their traditions and also be a part of European society. These communities fight to figure out who they are and where they belong in the world.

The European cases show us how groups of people who moved away from their home country like India started organizations to remember who they are and where they came from changed over time. These groups became a way for people to connect with each other and share their culture with others. This is similar to what India is trying to do when it tries to extend its influence gently, by using Indian diaspora organisations as a tool. The Indian diaspora organizations are now used to help India connect with countries and cultures, which is a big part of Indian diplomacy. The experience of migration and integration as well as the processes and impacts of discrimination that have continued to characterize Europe offer a set of insights into the processes surrounding ethnicity and identity formation that are not only informative in the Indian context but are related to its overall foreign policy paradigm as a means of using the diaspora as a tool for extending its soft power and strategic reach.[20]

The diaspora identity is really into the idea of the country being independent and making its own decisions when it comes to foreign policy. This means the country can work with lots of countries in different ways. The diaspora groups use their culture and money to help the country get what it wants from other countries. They can do this because they have connections and relationships that go beyond the way countries interact with each other. The diaspora groups are good at this because they have a lot of experience with diplomacy and economic lobbying

---

[19] Basu and Arshed, *op. cit.*
[20] Spiro, Peter: "Dual nationality and the meaning of citizenship", *Emory Law Journal*. Vol.46, nº 46 (1997), pp. 1411–1485.

and they have big networks. This helps the country have power and influence when dealing with other countries. The diaspora identity and the country's foreign policy approach are closely. The diaspora groups play a big role in helping the country achieve its goals. The country is working hard to keep its heritage alive outside of the country. This helps the country show that it is a power around the world. The country's diaspora group is making contributions to the country's economy. They are sending money home and investing in the country. This helps the country grow and develop. It also helps the country be seen as a player on the global stage. The country's diaspora group is really helping the country's economy and its position in the world. The diaspora's lobbying roles within the host country are often reflective of the country's strategic positioning on issues such as its roles and contributions within the framework of its foreign policy initiatives on issues such as climate change negotiations, terrorism-related issues, as or aspirations for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. By mobilizing diaspora networks, India is able to complement its multilateral engagements with minilateral and bilateral initiatives, thereby consolidating its position as a pragmatic actor in global governance.

The Indian diaspora is very important to Indias history because it shows how India tried to balance being modern by keeping its traditions. The Indian diaspora is a part of this story and it helps us understand how India is becoming a bigger player in global affairs, which is a very complex and important role for India. This is about trying to balance being part of the world and being part of a specific country. The Indian diaspora is an example where Indian cultural traditions are kept, changed and mixed with other cultures, showing that Indian people can stay the same and change at the same time when it comes to figuring out who they are, as Indian people. [21]The diaspora communities that Charu Khatri Tailang talks about keep their ways alive. They do this through their churches and other community groups and at events. They always change these old ways a little bit so they fit in with their new life to keep their heritage alive. The diaspora communities make sure their heritage is something that is always growing and changing with the country they are in. Athira Prakash talks about how the diaspora community's changing ideas of identity. In the past, workers who moved to countries stuck together to survive, but in recent times, professionals who live in different places are figuring out who they are in a more modern way. Athira Prakash says that the diaspora identity is no longer about keeping old traditions, but about reinventing themselves. Sakshi Kanchan and Puneet Chansauria discuss this further and call this process "hybridization". The Indian diaspora, who are now descendants of migrants, make their identities by combining things like nationality, ethnicity, religion and generations. This creates " cultural expressions" that are unique and cannot be easily defined. It is an active process of exploring one's identity, one's belonging, one's being, where the lines between tradition and the new, heritage and modernity, merge. When we look at the diaspora and how different cultures come together, we can see how people figure out who they are. The Indian diaspora is always. Adapting to new things, which helps people be creative and find new ways to express themselves. The Indian diaspora does not just hold on to its heritage tightly; it makes new versions of it and interacts with it in a way that works with the countries where they live now and their new lives around the world.

The study of cultural intersection within the Indian diaspora reveals identity as a dynamic process of negotiation, adaptation, and innovation. Diasporic communities do not merely preserve traditions in static form, they reconfigure them through encounters with host societies, transnational networks, and generational shifts.[22] Diasporas are in a state where the cultural practices they got from their families are seen in a new light. The cultural practices of

[21] Ngomdir, Hanna: "Generational Conflict and Cultural Transmission in the Indian Diaspora", *International Journal of Novel Research and Development (IJNRD)*, Vol. 7, nº 4 (April 2022).
[22] Hall, Stuart (2015): "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in Williams, Patrick and Chrisman, Laura (eds.) (2015): *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory,* 1st ed., Abingdon, Routledge, pp. 392-403.

diasporas are changed in a way that helps them fit into this world, creating and sustaining identity.

6. Overview

The Indian Diaspora has really helped shape globalisation, dual belonging and conceptual ambiguities of defining "diaspora". The Indian Diaspora is complex, and theoretical approaches can help us understand the Indian Diaspora better. Historically, Indian migration has unfolded through multiple phases, from the "old diaspora" of indentured labour and free traders to the late 20th-century brain drain, Gulf labour flows, and twice migrants, producing layered identities that reflect both continuity and transformation across time and space. India's foreign policy has evolved in tandem with these dynamics, shifting from non-alignment to multi-engagement, shaped by ideological foundations, bilateral and multilateral relations, non-traditional security challenges, economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, environmental negotiations, minilateral platforms such as BRICS and G20, and the rise of digital diplomacy.

The foreign policy of India has changed a lot over time. It has been shaped by different forces and has gone through many transformations. The foreign policy of India is defined by different things, including its defense strategy. Indias defense strategy has been developed over time and includes many different approaches, such as non-traditional defense methods. The foreign policy of India is also based on its foundations, which are the beliefs and values that guide its actions. The foreign policy of India includes different things, such as bilateral and multilateral relations, which are relationships between India and many other countries. Non-traditional security challenges, such as terrorism and climate change. Economic and cultural diplomacy as well as digital diplomacy which are the schemes of power to achieve foreign policy goals. Environmental negotiations, which are talks between countries about issues on minilateral platforms, such as BRICS and G20.

The Indian diaspora is a part of India's foreign policy and global presence. Within this context, the diaspora plays a dual role as custodian of tradition and agent of transformation, sustaining heritage while generating hybrid identities across generations, and serving as a strategic instrument of India's soft power. Case studies in Europe further illustrate how heterogeneous communities negotiate ethnicity, assimilation, and global identity, underscoring that the diaspora is both diverse and unified by a persistent sense of Indianness.

Bibliography

Arshed, Tanwir, and Basu Partha Pratim: "The Making of India's Foreign Policy: Elements and Determinants", in Basu Partha Pratim and Arshed Tanwir (2004)*75 Years of India's Foreign Policy: Bilateral, Conventional and Emerging Trends*, Singapore, Springer Nature.

Brubaker, Rogers: "The 'diaspora'diaspora", *Ethnic and racial studies,* Vol. 28, nº 1 (2005), pp.1-19.

Chatterjee, Shibashis: "Approaches to the study of India's foreign policy: An overview.", in Arshed, Tanwir, and Partha Pratim Basu (eds.) (2024): *75 Years of India's Foreign Policy: Bilateral, Conventional and Emerging Trends*, Singapore, Springer Nature.

Cohen, Robin (2022): *Global diasporas: An introduction*, Abingdon, Routledge.

Dwivedi, Sunil Kumar.: A Conceptual Framework of Indian Diaspora. *The Creative Launcher*, Vol. 7, nº 6 (December 2022).

Gowricharn, Ruben S (ed.) (2020): *Shifting transnational bonding in Indian diaspora*, New York, Routledge.

Hall, Stuart (2015): "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in Williams, Patrick and Chrisman, Laura (eds.) (2015): *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory,* 1st ed., Abingdon, Routledge.

Haokip, Thongkholal: "India's look east policy: Its evolution and approach", *South Asian Survey*, Vol.18, nº 2 (2011).

Hill, Christopher (2015): *Foreign policy in the twenty-first century*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ngomdir, Hanna: "Generational Conflict and Cultural Transmission in the Indian Diaspora", *International Journal of Novel Research and Development (IJNRD)*, Vol. 7, nº 4 (April 2022).

Nincic, Miroslav, and Ramos Jennifer M.: Ideological structure and foreign policy preferences. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 15, nº 2 (2010).

Oonk, Gijsbert G. (ed.) (2007): *Global Indian Diasporas: Exploring Trajectories of Migration and Theory*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press.

Pande Amba: "Conceptualising Indian Diaspora: Diversities within a Common Identity", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 48, nº 49 (2013).

Safran, William: "Diasporas in modern societies: Myths of homeland and return", *Diaspora: A journal of transnational studies*, Vol.1, nº1 (1991).

Sikri, Rajiv: "Challenge and strategy: rethinking India's foreign policy", *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, Vol. 9, nº 1 (2014).

Singh, Zorawar Daulet (2018): *Power and diplomacy: India's foreign policies during the cold war*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Spiro, Peter: "Dual nationality and the meaning of citizenship", *Emory Law Journal*. Vol.46, nº 46 (1997).