



The Indian Diaspora

For Prelims: Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD), Non-Resident Indians (NRI), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs)

For Mains: Indian Diaspora - Significance

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister **inaugurated the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas convention** in Madhya Pradesh on the occasion of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas (PBD).

- Over the years, the convention, which began in 2003, **has grown in size and scope, particularly since 2015, when the yearly convention became a biennial affair.**

What is Diaspora?

- **Origin:**
 - The term diaspora **traces its roots to the Greek diaspeiro, which means dispersion.** The **Indian diaspora** has grown manifold since the first batch of Indians **were taken to counties in the eastern pacific and the Caribbean islands under the 'Girmitiya' arrangement** as indentured labourers.
- **Classifications:**
 - **Non-Resident Indians (NRI):** NRIs are Indians who are residents of foreign countries. A person is considered NRI if:
 - She/he is **not in India for 182 days or more** during the financial year Or;
 - If he/she is **in India for less than 365 days** during the 4 years preceding that year and less than 60 days in that year.
 - **Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs):** PIO refers to a foreign citizen (except a national of Pakistan, Afghanistan Bangladesh, China, Iran, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal) who:
 - At any time held an Indian passport, or who or either of their parents/grandparents/great grandparents **was born and permanently resided in India** as defined in **the Government of India Act, 1935 or who is a spouse of a citizen of India or a PIO.**
 - The PIO category **was abolished in 2015 and merged with the OCI category.**
 - **Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs):** A separate category of OCI was **carved out in 2005.** An OCI card was given to a foreign national:
 - Who was eligible to be a citizen of India on January 26, 1950
 - Was a citizen of India on or at any time after January 26, 1950 or belonged to a territory that became part of India after August 15, 1947.
 - Minor children of such individuals, **except those who were a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh,** were also eligible for OCI cards.
- **Geographical Spread:**

COUNTRIES WITH OVER 1 MILLION OVERSEAS INDIANS



Source: MEA, as on Dec 25, 2021

TOP DESTINATIONS FOR INDIANS

- United Arab Emirates
- United States
- Saudi Arabia

REMITTANCES (IN 2020)

India	\$83.15 bn
China	\$59.51 bn
Mexico	\$42.88 bn
Philippines	\$34.91 bn
Egypt	\$29.60 bn

- According to the **World Migration Report, 2022**, India has the largest emigrant population in the world in 2020, making it the top origin country globally, followed by Mexico, Russian and China.
- The data shared by the government in Parliament in 2022 showed that the **geographical spread of the Indian diaspora is vast. The countries with over 10 lakh overseas Indians include:**
 - United States of America, the United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Kuwait and Canada.
- **Remittances:**
 - According to the **World Bank Migration and Development Brief, released in 2022**, for the first time a single country, India, is on track to receive more than USD 100 billion in yearly remittances.
 - The World Migration Report notes that India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt are (in descending order) **among the top five remittance recipient countries.**

What is the Significance of the Indian Diaspora?

- **Enhancing India's Soft Power:** Indian diaspora is one of the richest minorities in many developed countries. Their advantage is evident in "**diaspora diplomacy**", whereby they act as "**bridge-builders**" between their home and adopted countries.
 - The Indian diaspora is not just a part of India's soft power, **but a fully transferable political vote bank as well.**
 - Also, many people of Indian origin hold **top political positions in many countries**, which enhances India's political clout at multilateral institutions like the United Nations.

- **Economic Contribution:** Remittances sent by the Indian diaspora have positive systemic **effects on the [Balance of Payments \(BOP\)](#)**, which help to bridge a wider trade deficit.
 - The migration of less-skilled labor (especially to West Asia) has **helped in bringing down [disguised unemployment in India](#)**.
 - Further, the **migrant workers facilitated the flow of tacit information**, commercial and business ideas, and technologies into India.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. 'Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries'. Comment with examples. **(2020)**

Source: IE

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