

# INDIAN DIASPORA AND MAHATMA GANDHIJI: IN RELATIONS OF AFRICA AND THE REST WORLD

Gopal kumar

Student

Department of Commerce , Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi

Email-id: [gopaldsedu@gmail.com](mailto:gopaldsedu@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The Indian diaspora refers to people of Indian origin who live outside of India. It is one of the largest and most widespread diaspora communities in the world. The Indian diaspora has been shaped by historical factors such as colonization, migration, and economic opportunities.

Indian diaspora communities can be found in various regions, including North America, Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. These communities have diverse backgrounds, including descendants of indentured laborers, professionals, students, and entrepreneurs.

The Indian diaspora plays a significant role in various fields, including business, technology, academia, politics, and culture. Many members of the diaspora have achieved success and prominence in their respective fields, contributing to the development and prosperity of their adopted countries and maintaining strong ties with India.

The Indian government has recognized the importance of the Indian diaspora and actively engages with them through initiatives such as the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the Overseas Citizenship of India scheme. These efforts aim to connect with the diaspora, promote cultural exchange, facilitate investment and philanthropic activities, and address the concerns and interests of overseas Indians.

Overall, the Indian diaspora serves as a bridge between India and the world, fostering cultural exchange, economic cooperation, and people-to-people connections.

**Keywords:** Indian Diaspora, Gandhiji, NRI, International Relations.

## 1.0 Introduction:

The term "diaspora" refers to a scattered population that shares a common origin or heritage and is dispersed across different regions or countries. The Indian diaspora specifically refers to people of Indian origin or descent who have migrated or settled in various parts of the world.

The Indian diaspora is one of the largest and most diverse in the world, with significant populations found in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and the Gulf countries, among others. The migration of Indians to different parts of the world can be traced back to various historical periods, including colonization, indentured labor migration, and more recent economic migration.

The Indian diaspora has had a profound impact on the countries where they have settled as well as on India itself. In host countries, Indian diaspora communities have made significant contributions in various fields such as business, technology, academia, arts, and culture. They have played a vital role in fostering trade, investment, and cultural exchanges between India and their adopted countries.

The Indian diaspora is known for its strong ties to India, often maintaining connections with their ancestral homeland through cultural practices, festivals, and support for social and economic development initiatives. They often act as a bridge between India and their adopted countries, facilitating trade, investment, and knowledge transfer.

Furthermore, the Indian government has recognized the importance of its diaspora and has implemented various initiatives to engage with and leverage the skills, resources, and networks of the Indian diaspora. For instance, the government launched the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Non-Resident Indian Day) to celebrate the achievements of overseas Indians and strengthen their connections with India.

The Indian diaspora plays a crucial role in shaping global cultural diversity, fostering economic ties, and enhancing India's influence in the world. They are an integral part of India's identity and continue to contribute to the development and growth of both their adopted countries and India itself.

## **2.0 Gandhiji and Diaspora**

Gandhi, a prominent leader in India's independence movement, had a significant impact on the Indian diaspora. His philosophy of non-violence and civil disobedience inspired Indians living abroad to actively participate in the struggle for independence. The Indian diaspora played a crucial role in raising awareness, organizing protests, and mobilizing support for the Indian National Congress and Gandhi's ideals.

Throughout the colonial period, Indians living in various parts of the world maintained strong connections to their homeland and closely followed the freedom struggle. They formed organizations and established newspapers to advocate for India's independence. Gandhi's message of non-violent resistance resonated with many Indians in the diaspora, and they adopted his methods to push for political change.

The Indian diaspora actively supported the Indian National Congress and its campaigns, contributing financially, providing resources, and lobbying for international support. They also organized boycotts of British goods, staged protests, and used their networks to raise awareness about the oppressive colonial rule in India.

Gandhi's influence on the diaspora extended beyond the fight for independence. His emphasis on cultural pride, self-reliance, and community development inspired Indians abroad to preserve their heritage, establish cultural institutions, and engage in philanthropic activities. Gandhi's teachings on equality and social justice resonated with the diaspora, leading them to work towards addressing issues such as racial discrimination and human rights violations.

Today, the Indian diaspora continues to honor Gandhi's legacy and promote his ideals in various countries. They celebrate his birth anniversary, participate in peace marches, and contribute to charitable causes inspired by his teachings. Gandhi's impact on the diaspora highlights the global reach and enduring influence of his philosophy of non-violence and his vision for a just and inclusive society.

## **3.0 Indian Diaspora in the world**

1. The Indian diaspora refers to people of Indian origin who live outside of India. It is estimated that there are over 30 million people of Indian descent residing in various parts of the world, making it one of the largest diaspora communities globally. Indians have migrated to different countries for several reasons, including economic opportunities, education, political stability, and family reunification.
2. Here are some notable regions with significant Indian diaspora populations:
3. The United States is home to a large Indian diaspora, with over 4 million people of Indian origin. Indian Americans have made significant contributions to various fields, including technology, academia, medicine, and entrepreneurship.
4. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a significant population of Indians, with estimates ranging from 3.3 to 3.5 million. Indians in the UAE are primarily involved in business, trade, and the service sector.
5. Saudi Arabia has a substantial Indian diaspora, primarily consisting of migrant workers. It is estimated that there are around 2.6 million Indians living in Saudi Arabia, engaged in industries such as construction, healthcare, and information technology.
6. The United Kingdom has a long history of Indian migration. The Indian diaspora in the UK is diverse and encompasses various professions, including business, academia, and politics. It is estimated that there are over 1.5 million people of Indian origin in the UK.
7. Canada has a growing Indian diaspora, with over 1.4 million people of Indian origin. Indian Canadians have made significant contributions to Canada's cultural fabric, economy, and politics.
8. Malaysia has a significant Indian diaspora, primarily consisting of descendants of Indian laborers who were brought to the country during the British colonial period. Indians in Malaysia have preserved their cultural heritage and contribute to various sectors, including business, education, and entertainment.
9. Singapore is home to a sizable Indian diaspora, with over 600,000 people of Indian origin. Indian Singaporeans have made significant contributions to Singapore's economic growth and multicultural society.

These are just a few examples of countries with significant Indian diaspora populations. Indians have migrated to numerous other countries around the world, including Australia, South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius, and many more. The Indian diaspora plays a crucial role in fostering cultural exchange, economic ties, and global connections between India and the rest of the world.

#### **4.0 Indian Diaspora in Africa**

The Indian diaspora in Africa refers to the people of Indian origin who have migrated and settled in various countries across the African continent. The Indian diaspora in Africa has a long history, with significant populations found in countries such as South Africa, Mauritius, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Seychelles, among others.

The Indian presence in Africa dates back to ancient times, with evidence of trade and cultural exchanges between the Indian subcontinent and East Africa. However, a major influx of Indians occurred during the colonial period when indentured laborers were brought to Africa by the British Empire to work on plantations, railway construction, and other labor-intensive projects.

Over time, the Indian community in Africa diversified and expanded into various sectors, including commerce, entrepreneurship, education, healthcare, and professional services. They have made significant contributions to the economic and cultural fabric of their host countries.

The Indian diaspora in Africa has managed to maintain their cultural traditions and practices while also integrating into the local societies. They have established vibrant community organizations, places of worship, and cultural associations that promote Indian arts, music, dance, and cuisine.

The Indian diaspora in Africa continues to maintain strong ties with their ancestral homeland through business networks, investments, and philanthropic activities. They often engage in bilateral trade, facilitating economic cooperation between India and African countries.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in strengthening the relationship between India and African nations, with initiatives such as the India-Africa Forum Summit and increased bilateral trade agreements. This has further deepened the connection between the Indian diaspora and their African counterparts.

The Indian diaspora in Africa represents a diverse and dynamic community that has played a significant role in shaping the social, economic, and cultural landscape of both India and Africa.

#### **5.0 Gandhiji's view on Diaspora**

Mahatma Gandhi believed in the importance of the Indian diaspora and recognized their potential to contribute to the welfare of both India and the countries they resided in. He emphasized the need for Indians living abroad to maintain a strong connection with their homeland and actively participate in its progress.

Gandhi encouraged Indians in the diaspora to promote Indian culture, values, and traditions while respecting and integrating with the local culture of their adopted countries. He believed that Indians abroad should strive to be exemplary citizens, fostering goodwill and understanding between communities.

Gandhi also recognized the challenges faced by the Indian diaspora, such as discrimination and prejudice. He advocated for their rights and encouraged them to stand up against injustice, both for themselves and others. Gandhi believed in the power of nonviolent resistance as a means to achieve equality and justice.

Gandhi viewed the Indian diaspora as a valuable asset and urged them to maintain their connection to India while positively contributing to their host countries. He emphasized the importance of promoting harmony, upholding values, and fighting for justice and equality.

#### **6.0 Conclusion**

The Indian diaspora has a significant presence in Africa and various parts of the world. Mahatma Gandhi, a prominent figure in India's independence movement, played a crucial role in fostering relations between the Indian diaspora and both Africa and the rest of the world.

In Africa, Mahatma Gandhi's experiences in South Africa shaped his views on racial equality and social justice. During his time in South Africa, Gandhi fought against discriminatory laws and mobilized the Indian community to demand their rights. His struggles and activism in South Africa not only benefited the Indian community but also inspired and influenced the broader African anti-colonial movement.

Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent resistance, known as Satyagraha, resonated with many African leaders and activists who sought to challenge colonial rule and achieve independence. Figures such as Nelson Mandela in South Africa and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana were influenced by Gandhi's principles and adopted nonviolent strategies in their struggles for freedom.

The Indian diaspora in Africa played a crucial role in various sectors such as trade, commerce, and education. They established businesses, schools, and cultural institutions, contributing to the development of African societies. Gandhi's advocacy for racial equality and justice also paved the way for improved relations between Indians and Africans, fostering a sense of solidarity in their shared struggles against discrimination and oppression.

Beyond Africa, Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and principles had a profound impact on the global stage. He became an influential figure in the fight against colonialism and oppression, inspiring numerous individuals and movements worldwide. Gandhi's nonviolent approach to resistance and his emphasis on human rights and equality resonated with people across different cultures and nations.

In summary, Mahatma Gandhi's experiences in South Africa and his philosophy of nonviolent resistance greatly influenced the Indian diaspora in Africa and beyond. His teachings and principles continue to shape relations between the Indian diaspora, Africa, and the rest of the world, promoting equality, justice, and the pursuit of freedom.

### **7.0 References**

1. Dubey, A. 2010. Indian Diaspora in Africa: Diversity and Challenges: Indian Diaspora in Africa: A Comparative Perspective, New Delhi: MD Publications Pvt. Ltd.
2. Gupta, R.K. 2013. Indian Diaspora as a Non-State Actor in Promotion of India-Africa Partnership'. J. Soc. Pol. Stu., 4(1): 135-148.
3. Gupta, R.K. 2014. Indian Diaspora in Africa: A Profile, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses: Africa Trends 3(2): 4-9.
4. Kadekar, L.N. 2005. Global Indian Diaspora: An Overview, Research Monograph Hyderabad: Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, 2016 [http://mea.gov.in/images/attach/NRIs-and-PIOs\\_1.pdf](http://mea.gov.in/images/attach/NRIs-and-PIOs_1.pdf).
5. Mishra, A.K. 2016. Diaspora, Development and the Indian State, The Round Table The commonwealth. Journal of International Affairs <http://www.commonwealthroundtable.co.uk/commonwealth/eurasia/india/diasporadevelopment-indian-state/>
6. Mishra, R. and Ranjan, R. 2016. GRFDT Newsletter 5(3-4) March-April, 2016.
7. Mthuli, N., Lufumpa, C.L. and Vencatachellum, D. 2011. India's Economic Engagement with Africa. Economic Brief, 2(6): 1-8. TOI (January, 14, 2016). <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/other-news/India-has-largest-diaspora-population-inworld-UN-report-says/articleshow/50572695.cms>