



The Remarkable Political Influence Of The Indian Diaspora In Singapore

Narmadha Muthu Ph.D. Research Scholar Department of Political Science & Public
Administration Annamalai University narmadha620@gmail.com

Dr. Neelam Pandey Associate Professor Department of Political Science & Public
Administration Annamalai University neelam.pandey.66@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The notion of Diaspora is variedly used in many streams of political science research. The present article attempts to analyse the remarkable political influence of the Indian Diaspora in Singapore and to analyse the political participation of the Indian Diaspora. The article's main objective is to discuss the aftermath of the visit of Narendra Modi to Singapore and analyze India and Singapore's political perspectives for bilateral relations. On analysing the existing research on defining the idea of the political perspectives gathered from Suranjan Das and Subhadeep Bhattacharya article "INDIA AND SINGAPORE: FIFTY YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS." The article demonstrates the political exchanges based on Defence Cooperation, Trade and Investment, Air transport and Maritime Cooperation, Smart City development, Skill Development, Science, Technology and Research Innovation, Legal, Judicial, Financial and Parliamentary Cooperation. The article concludes that the Indian Diaspora plays a crucial role in politics and both the governments developed economically and financially through political influence.

Keywords: Bilateral Relations, India and Singapore Politics, Policies.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, the Indian government focuses on the Indian Diasporas in foreign countries and builds bilateral relations between India and other foreign countries. The present article elaborately discussed the Singapore Indian Diasporas' political influence and the Indian government Policies and Programmes for Indian Diasporas. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi revealed a gap in the Indian Diaspora and the government's work with Non- Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian origin (PIOs) by adopting a proactive diplomacy strategy to develop and Brand India.

Singapore occupies an important place in India's foreign policy. In Singapore, the Indian Diaspora population is more than 9%, and the Indian Diaspora plays a crucial role in

the cultural, economic, social and political arena. The article deals with Indian Diaspora political participation in Singapore and political influences and discusses the policies and the Indian government agreements between India and Singapore Bilateral Relations based on political exchanges.

BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND SINGAPORE

India and Singapore are the closest and warmest ties and strengths in commercial, cultural and social connection. In 2015, Narendra Modi visited Singapore to attend the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) elevated to the strategic partnership between India and Singapore. After that, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Singapore to create a new strategic partnership in 2018. The prime minister officially visited the ASEAN – India-related summit was the second time. Prime Minister of Singapore Mr. Lee Hsien Long also visited India in January 2018 to participate in the Republic Day Celebrations in New Delhi and co-chair the 2018 ASEAN India Commemorative Summit (AICS).

India and Singapore have shared values and approaches, economic opportunities, cultural engagement and political exchanges to strengthen bilateral relations. Both governments initiated agreements to develop bilateral relations. The agreements are Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (2005) and its Second Review (2018), Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (1994, Protocols signed in 2011), Bilateral Air Services Agreement (1968, revised in 2013), Defence Cooperation Agreement (2003, enhanced Agreement signed in 2015), MOU on Foreign Office Consultations (1994), Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (2005), Mutual Recognition Agreement on Nursing (2018) and cooperation in Fintech (2018), Agreement for Conduct of Joint Army Training and Exercises (renewed in 2019).

Suranjan Das and Battacharya, in his article "India and Singapore: fifty years of diplomatic relations," This article examines the political influence based on the political exchanges of Defence cooperation, trade and investment, air transport and maritime cooperation, smart city development, skill development, science technology and research innovation, legal, judicial, financial and parliamentary cooperation.

EXCHANGES BETWEEN INDIA AND SINGAPORE

Defence and Security Cooperation

Defence cooperation between India and Singapore partnership agreed to enhance maritime information exchange, intensify HADR cooperation, explore cooperation in areas like geospatial data, cyber security, and set up of Joint Test Facilities under the Defence Testing

Infrastructure Scheme of India. Security Cooperation challenges posed by terrorism and extremism between India and Singapore. The areas of security cooperation include cyber security, combating drug trafficking, bilateral MoUs, national security and intelligence coordination. Trade and Investment

The Direct Investment on External Commercial borrowings and Foreign Portfolio Investment. In 2018-19, FDI inflows from Singapore amounted to USD 16.23 billion out of total FDI receipts of USD 44.37 billion in India. 9000 Indian companies are registered in Singapore. 6 PSUs, nine banks, India Tourism, CII, FICCI, Air India, Jet Airways have their offices in Singapore. More than 440 companies from Singapore are registered in India. 2 banks, Enterprise Singapore (ES), Economic Development Board (EDB) and Singapore Tourism Board, have their offices in India. The India-Singapore CEO Forum was launched in November 2018. DBS Bank announced the launch of its locally incorporated subsidiary, DBS Bank India (DBIL), in March 2019

Air Transport and Maritime Cooperation

The Air Services Agreement was revised in 2005, and Mou on bilateral air service was signed in 2013. Singapore is directly connected to 15 Indian airlines. Vistara- JV airlines and tata group jointly launched their first international flights from Singapore to Delhi and Mumbai in 2019. After that, go-air started services from Bangalore and Kolkata to Singapore.

Smart city development

Singapore companies to participate in smart city, urban planning, logistics and infrastructure projects. Singapore is working with Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra to prepare Master Plans for townships. During PM Modi's visit in 2018, the three MoUs in urban and rural development areas were signed by private and public sector institutions, including NITI Aayog. In November 2019, a Singaporean company won the award to develop 15000 homes in 4 cities of Gujarat.

Skill development

Singapore is working with the central and state governments to establish skill development sectors. A World-Class Skill Centre (WCSC) was set in Delhi in 2013. During PM Lee's visit, a Centre of Excellence for Tourism Management was inaugurated in Udaipur. During PM Modi's visit in 2018, five agreements on skill development were concluded.

Science, Technology and Innovation

The two governments have signed an agreement to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fintech. Narendra Modi introduced the first international launch of Indian products- Rupay card, BHIM- UPI App and UPI-based remittance app. He launched a global digital platform, APIX, to connect fintech companies and banks, starting with India and ASEAN Both the government agreements between Nanyang Technological University and leading Indian institutions for cooperation in areas like new technologies (AI, Machine Learning, Blockchain) and space technology.

At 2018 PM visited Singapore signed agreements with six MoUs and concluded by NTU for research & exchange partnership with NITI Aayog in the area of artificial intelligence, machine learning, cognitive computing and big data analytics to improve healthcare, cyber security, automation, mobility, smart energy systems and e-governance, joint Ph.D. and research with IITs and IISc Bengaluru, space research with Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) and establishment of an endowment for Indian research scholars coming to Singapore.

Legal, Judicial and Parliamentary Cooperation

The Indian government implemented laws and schemes for NRIs and PIOs. In Singapore, Indians play a crucial role in the election, and more number Indians in Singapore are civil servants, ambassadors, cabinet ministers, chief justice, federal legislators, parliamentarians and federal legislators. After Narendra Modi's visit, the Indians participated in politics.

THE PREVAILING NOTION OF INDIAN DIASPORA POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN SINGAPORE

Indians have been well represented in national politics, including the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) and opposition parties. People's Action Party is attributable primarily to Singapore's rapid economic growth and improved social welfare. The political influence is based on the political exchanges (Suranjan Das and Battacharya) between India - Singapore and the political participation of the Indian Diaspora. In the 2014 election, BJP won the majority vote and took charge of the Prime Minister. Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India, and he put Diaspora at the centre of political strategy and to develop the bilateral relations between two countries (Business Standard, Archis Mohan 2015). In this article, he examines the Indian Diaspora political consistency and success stories of the Prime Minister. Indian Diasporas play a predominant role in elections, and the foreign arms supported BJP Government. After that, the Modi government created bilateral relations between India and other foreign countries. The government initiated more schemes and agreements between the two countries to build relationships.

The prevailing notion of the present study discussed the political influence of Indian Diasporas in Singapore. According to the 2011 census, 9.2 % of the total population of the Indian Diaspora in Singapore. The Diaspora's role in political participation is more important for both the governments and the governments to create agreements and schemes for them. In Singapore, Indian Diasporas have a unique place, and the Indians have an important role. Rajesh Rai, Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore and an authority on Indian Diaspora study, said, "Indian Diaspora in Singapore has a unique place, and he discusses the Indian Diaspora in Singapore stands out, unlike any other country (Ashraf Jamal, 2017 published in livemint). From this article, he examines the contributions of Indian Diaspora household income. He discusses the Indians' political participation. The more number of Indians have a role on the country's president, deputy prime minister, civil servants, Ambassadors, several members of the cabinet, and members of Parliament. According to the 2011 census, the Indian Diaspora had first place for the household income in Singapore. Indians occupy bottom places in Singapore. From this article, the author concluded the socio-economic or socio-political position of the Indian Diaspora in Singapore is a concern, and then overwhelmingly, it has been a success. In the 2019 election, Pritam Singh becomes the first opposition leader in Singapore. Singh's worker's party won 10 parliamentary seats out of 93 in the general election, making it the biggest opposition party in the parliament history of Singapore. Dr. Tony Tan (2011, Economic Times) said Indians play an indispensable role in Singapore to develop the city politically and economically. The Diaspora plays a prominent role in developing economic, social and political aspects. The Diaspora has played an imaginable role in business, medicines, trade investment, law, judicial etc.

New Perspectives of Diaspora's Political Notion in India and Singapore

In recent times, the political impact gave another aspect to studying and examining the political process and exchanges of Diaspora in India and Singapore. The two countries built a strong friendship. "India and Singapore: Fifty years of Diplomatic relations" (Suranjan Das and Battacharya, 2020). The study discussed Modi's visit and Singapore PMs Visit. They create a strong bond for politics. India and Singapore relations increased for the economic cooperation, political aspects. The political aspects focus on the political exchanges on Defence Cooperation, Trade and Investment, Air Transport and Maritime Cooperation, Smart City Development, Skill Development, Science Technology and Research Innovation, Legal, Judicial, Financial and Parliamentary Cooperation. The study gave new perspectives and strategies to political processes from this article. Our present study focused on the political exchanges in Singapore and India for the Modi Government period (2014 to 2019). Theva Yoganathan and Rahul Mukherji pointed out Indo-Singapore bilateralism is determined by the "interconnectedness of security and

Commercial relations. Both governments influence each other and have strategies for developing policy and politics for economic and social aspects.

Economic Aspect

The two regions share similarities in their levels of economic development for trade and investment. Both the countries were expanding their trade markets in goods and services. The free movement of goods, services and Capital offers mutual benefits for India and Singapore. The trade treaty has boosted bilateral trade. India- ASEAN Trade and Investment Prospects (Yashoda Kapur, 2021, published in India Briefing). India and Singapore bilateral trade relations diagram. India's trading partner in 2019, Singapore, came in fifth (US\$10.7 billion or 3.3 percent). Singapore has the third-largest trading labour force in the world. From the above diagram, India and Singapore discussed the bilateral trade, the gradual development of investment increased; automatically, the Diasporas influence political presumption.

Social Aspect

BJP government has been carefully shaping a new political sphere of power. The effort encourages increasing to invest in India's economic and social growth. The wealthy segments of overseas Indians (OCI) and People of Indian Origin (PIOs) follow BJP's Hindutva ideology- sources of large remittances into India. The Diaspora is cultivated for creating social media influencers. The political power organized many events like Howdy Modi (2019) to build relationships. Both the government influence Diaspora and their political participation.

SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN INDIA

The government has taken several initiatives to engage the Indian Diaspora worldwide. The Indian Diaspora is based on the NRIs and PIOs. The Ministry organizes various other engagement programmes, namely Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards (PBSA), Know India Programme, Study India Programme, Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children, Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Card Scheme, National Pension Scheme for NRI, Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, Students Registration Portal, Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora, Indian Development Foundation of Overseas Indians, Pratishtit Pravasi.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas day celebrated on 9th January every year for the momentum of Mahatma Gandhi's return to India. In India, overseas citizens contribute to economic, cultural, and social development. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas schemes include the Bilateral

Business Opportunities in Services, Resources, Primary Commodities, and Engagement through Culture, Indian Languages, Skills, Infrastructure (Airports, Ports, Road and Construction), Manufacturing, Education, Culture and Youth Dialogue.

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards (PBSA)

The award shall be distributed for NRIs AND PIOs, who has made a significant contribution in the fields of better understanding abroad of India, support to India's causes and concerns in a tangible way, to connect links between India, the overseas Indians and their country of residence, social and humanitarian causes in India or abroad, the welfare of the local Indian community, Philanthropic and charitable work, eminence in one's field or outstanding work, which has enhanced India's prestige in the country of residence, eminence in skills which has enhanced India's prestige in that country (for non-professional workers).

Know India Programme

They know India programme is a three-week orientation programme for youth. It was launched in 2003; the KIP is to familiarize the persons of Indian origin students and young professionals to visit India. It aims to promote awareness on different facts of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields, e.g., economic, industrial, education, science and technology, communication and information technology, culture. The online portal was launched in 2017, and the youths benefited. A maximum of 40 Indian Diaspora youth are selected for each programme and provided full hospitality in India. The Ministry pays 90% of the total cost of international airfare.

Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana

The Ministry started the special know India Programme, launched in 2018-2019. The Yojana is associated with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Cooperation (IRCTC) for the PIOs to connect spiritual and religious aspects of India.

Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children

From 2006 to 2007 for the children of overseas Indian students to gain educational opportunities. The objective of SPDC is to make higher education in Indian universities accessible to Diaspora children and promote India as a centre for higher studies. The scholarship only offered for students to study their undergraduate courses in central universities of India; institutions accredited "A" Grade by NAAC and UGC, Institutions covered under DASA (Direct Admission of Students Abroad, National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Schools of Planning and Architecture (SPAs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IITs) etc.

Overseas citizenship of India Scheme

The Scheme was launched during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention 2006 at Hyderabad. The Scheme provides for registration as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) of all Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs). The OCI is not to be misconstrued as dual citizenship. OCI does not confer political rights. The registered Overseas Citizens of India shall not be entitled to the rights conferred on a citizen of India under Article 16 of the Constitution about equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra

The programme was launched in 2002 to strengthen the linkages of overseas Indians to their place of origin and each other. The programme is expected to develop into a hub of sustainable, symbiotic, economic, social and cultural engagement between India and the Diaspora. The programme focused on the Indian migrant workers and to make policy for Diasporas.

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)

It was set up in 2009 and aimed at assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress and conflicts. ICWF stands too extended to all Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The welfare measures and funds provided to the Indian Diaspora are based on welfare funds.

Students Registration Portal

Indian students pursuing higher education programs abroad are estimated to stand nearly 6.5 lakhs. It was launched in 2015, a volunteer portal for Indian students abroad.

National Pension Scheme for NRI

The National Pension Scheme is a retirement savings scheme launched by the Indian government in 2004. Permanent retirement account number (PRAN) to every subscriber. The scheme contribution towards NPS must come from either an NRE account. Minimum Contribution on opening the account 500rs, Minimum Contribution per month 500rs, Minimum Contribution per annum 6000rs.

Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora

It supports the Indian Diaspora to organize cultural events. The Scheme is to strengthen the cultural bond between India and Diaspora. The Scheme focused on reinforcing the cultural identity of persons of Indian origin.

CONCLUSION

India and Singapore will make special friendships between the two nations, and they deeply value what the other has to offer them. The friendship may take into another notion and perspective of politics. Both the governments followed new strategies and policies to help the Indian Diaspora. The study focused on the new perception of the political influence of the Indian Diaspora in Singapore. The article "INDIA AND SINGAPORE: FIFTY YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS." The study focuses on a different notion of political perspectives of Indian Diaspora based on the agreements and initiatives in the economic, social and cultural policies that may strengthen the political influence of Indian Diaspora in both nations. In the election, the Indian Diaspora plays a crucial role in the politics like ambassadors, politicians, ministers, the opposition party, government officers, etc. The schemes for the Indian Diaspora in India may also be discussed in the present paper. From the Narendra Modi government period, the political participation of the Indian Diaspora may increase, and the agreements and exchanges between two nations may also increase. The relationship can be treated as a massive step towards building a more substantial economic and political influence of the Indian Diaspora in Indian and Singapore.

REFERENCES

1. Brewster, David. 2009. "India's Security Partnership with Singapore." *The Pacific Review* 22(5): 597–618.
2. "Can Singapore Be a Hong Kong to India?" : 3.
3. "CECA_Legal_Text.Pdf."
4. "Classes, States and the Politics of the Tamil Diaspora." :
5. Collin, Koh Swee Lean. 2013. "ASEAN Perspectives on Naval Cooperation With India: Singapore and Vietnam." *India Review* 12(3): 186–206.
6. Das, Suranjan, and Subhadeep Bhattacharya. "India and Singapore: Fifty Years of Diplomatic Relations." : 18.
7. "Indian Diaspora as a Strategic Asset." : 5.
8. Kiamba, Anita. 2014. "The Indian Diaspora and Policy Formulation in Kenya." *Diaspora Studies* 7(2): 88–99.
9. Kipgen, Nehginpao. 2020. "India–ASEAN Relations: The Initiatives, Successes, and Challenges." *India Review* 19(3): 207–22.
10. Mohanty, Jayashree, Hyekyung Choo, and Srinivasan Chokkanathan. 2018. "The Acculturation Experiences of Asian Immigrants in Singapore." *Asian Population Studies* 14(2): 153–71.
11. Nathan, K.S. 2015. "The Indian Diaspora in Southeast Asia as a Strategic Asset of India's Foreign and Security Policy: A Malaysian Perspective." *Diaspora Studies* 8(2): 120–31.

12. Pande, Amba. 2014. "The Role of Indian Diaspora in the Development of the Indian IT Industry." *Diaspora Studies* 7(2): 121–29.
13. "ProQuestDocuments-2021-05-17.Pdf."
14. "Protocol Amending Singapore-India DTA (Ratified) (27 Feb 2017).Pdf."
15. Saran, Shyam, ed. 2018. *Cultural and Civilisational Links between India and Southeast Asia: Historical and Contemporary Dimensions*. Singapore: Springer Singapore. <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-981-10-7317-5> (January 9, 2022).
16. Sen, Rahul. 2003. "The India–Singapore Comprehensive Economic Co-operation Agreement (CECA):: A Good Beginning Towards an Enduring Economic Relationship." *Asean Economic Bulletin* 20(2): 179–83.
17. Shekhar, Vibhanshu. "India-Singapore Relations." : 8.
18. Singh, Sinderpal, and Syeda Sana Rahman. 2010. "India-Singapore Relations: Constructing a 'New' Bilateral Relationship." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32(1): 70–97.
19. Tan, Kwoh-Jack. "Singapore-India Relations: Cultural Engagement and Foreign Policy." : 15.
20. Tejada, Gabriela, Uttam Bhattacharya, Binod Khadria, and Christiane Kuptsch, eds. 2014. *Indian Skilled Migration and Development: To Europe and Back*. New Delhi: Springer India. <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-81-322-1810-4> (January 9, 2022).
21. Yahya, Faizal. 2008. *Economic Cooperation between Singapore and India: An Alliance in the Making?* 0 ed. Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781134084609> (January 9, 2022).