



Diaspora Governance and National Security: Challenges for India

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Introduction

Diaspora has become an important factor in the foreign policy and national security of the countries in the contemporary globalized international system. It has moved to the top of the security agenda, due to the concerns that it poses security threats such as networks for international criminal activities and providing conduits for the spread of international terrorism. However, such concerns need to be placed within the broader context of the range of impacts that Diaspora has on the state's core national security interests. There is a need to have an objective and balanced view of Diaspora roles and their impact on security which requires recognizing not only the negative impacts of Diaspora groups on security but also their potential to enhance local, regional and international peace and security. As the Diaspora escapes the direct control of its state of origin, it is rational for the state to pursue policies that aim at rendering the Diaspora governable mainly by producing a self-disciplined Diaspora that can act in accordance with its national interests. Thus the states with Diaspora or migration policies that harness the power of Diaspora will be more secure in the new globalized security environment.

India's engagement with the world is increasing, so is the demand and desire for the protection of its national interests. Eventually, India is gearing up to play an important role in global affairs with its Diaspora emerging as an important factor in foreign policy with wider implications for national security. In this context, the paper will examine the role of Diaspora in promoting security or insecurity. It will further explore the changing importance of Diaspora in the foreign policy of India and its implications for national security. The case of South African

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Indians will be scrutinized to provide insights on how Diaspora contributes to security dilemma and risk.

Diaspora: Promoting Security or Insecurity

A critical analysis of the contribution of Diaspora in the security arena reveals both its positive and negative roles. Diaspora's initiatives for development in the home country have the potential to promote the national security of the country. Some of the propositions by various scholars working on the security aspect of Diaspora could be summarized as:

“The remittances sent by Diaspora to their relatives in the home country are the most significant examples of Diaspora involvement in securitizing their home countries politically and economically” (Lyons, 2006). “Remittances have the potential to harness the economic security of recipients, and the development of societies recovering from the distress of war or economic collapse” (Faist, 2005). In the era of globalization, remittances have increasingly become a potent tool that has projected the agenda of diasporic involvement in the development of the home country. However, an important issue is the role of such remittances in enhancing security or insecurity in the receiving and sending states (Lindley, 2006). “The investments and trade initiatives by the Diaspora can affect significantly the development agenda of the home country. These can serve as catalysts for promoting security since the causes of insecurity are not only political but are also rooted in materialistic or economic reasons” (Adamson, 2006).

Diaspora is also engaged politically in the security arena. Lobbying for their cause in the adopted homeland and the international affairs can have a positive impact on their country of origin. Diaspora often plays lobbying and advocacy roles to bring issues concerning their home country onto the international agenda. Though usually, the lobbying takes place in the host country in some cases, Diaspora members also network with international agencies. “Lobbying and advocacy may take different forms which include raising awareness of the situation in the home country by disseminating information, organizing demonstrations for more specific causes and promoting public education and relations” (Horst, 2007). “Diaspora organizations lobby the host governments, to shape policies that are favorable to, or against, a homeland government. They also influence their homeland's policies through their support or opposition to the governments. Such influence is also demonstrated through the financial support of political parties, social movements, and civil society organizations” (Baser & Swain, 2008). “the Diaspora has the potential to act as critical agents of social change. Diaspora groups

can serve to act as bridges or as mediators between their home and host societies and transmit the values of pluralism and democracy” (Shain & Barth, 2003). Social remittances i.e. new ideas, values/norms as well as new forms of collaboration are central to the processes of social change.

Thus, there are four main mechanisms by which Diaspora can contribute positively to the country of origin: (1) knowledge application through knowledge transfer, capacity development, and ‘brain circulation’; (2) social development through philanthropy and volunteerism; (3) political influence through political participation, cultural diplomacy, awareness-raising, and conflict transformation; and (4) financial development through remittances, fund-raising, investments, and business networks.

However, negatively the Diaspora networks can act as dangerous grounds for identifying, recruiting, and training local and international terrorists and drug and human traffickers among other international criminals. The Diaspora is a security risk factor and has a bearing on the security of their home as well as host country (Collier, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Diaspora could get engaged through economic, political, and military means in the conflict in their home country in numerous ways. “Diaspora may be directly or indirectly involved in illegal trade and money laundering activities that support warring parties, and through which resources for continued conflicts can be allocated” (Duffield, 2002). Diaspora can secure tangible and intangible resources to fuel armed conflicts, and they can provide opaque institutional and network structures that enable the transfer of arms and money to terrorist groups (Bercovitch, 2007). Though the information about the actual amounts, scope, and impact of Diaspora support to the warring parties through remittances remains inadequate it should not be underestimated and needs to be considered with caution. Thus, there is a need to control and have proper supervision over remittances because they could be used for funding wars or terrorist activities.

Indian Diaspora: Importance for the foreign policy and National Security of India

India is gearing up to play an important role in global affairs with its Diaspora emerging as an important factor in foreign policy and having wider implications for its national security. The positive contribution of the Indian Diaspora in providing support to the Indian economy through remittances is well recognized. "They have also the potential to bring investments and know-how to strengthen the Indian economy. The Indian Diaspora is in a privileged economic

position and also enjoys political influence in various countries and thus could facilitate the Indian foreign policy goals. It can also play a positive role in mobilizing support in their respective host countries in favour of India-related issues. They can politically lobby and propagate the Indian point of view to the relevant decision making authorities within their host countries" (Pathak, 2017).

In short, politically, the Indian Diaspora in their host countries could promote and safeguard the Indian interests with its potential to act as a lobbying or pressure group. Secondly, the Indian Diaspora could contribute significantly to the economic security of India through remittances, investments, transfer of technology/skills, and foreign trade. India tops the chart in the world with over \$79 billion in annual remittances. "Indian Diaspora is also a good market for trade within the host population. Thirdly, the Indian Diaspora could provide an opportunity to India and their respective host countries to strengthen their relations by forming bridges of cooperation. Besides, they could contribute significantly to the development of cultural linkages. India has thus started a robust and unrelenting engagement with its Diaspora" (Pathak, 2017).

Since the 1990s, "India started setting up dedicated institutions and also created incentives for overseas Indians to invest in India. Though economic factor has remained the most important driver of India's policy approach towards its Diaspora, however, it led to the realization of many other aspects related to the significance of the Indian diaspora for the country's growth and development. The new feature of India's diplomacy since the 1990s has been also to strengthen its partnership with different countries. Thus, India is engaged in a vigorous strategy to rope in its diaspora not only for economic purposes but also to strengthen its relations with their host countries" (Pathak, 2017). "Engaging its Diaspora in a sustainable and mutually rewarding manner across the socio-economic and cultural space is at the heart of the Indian policy and to create conditions, partnerships, and institutions that will best enable it to connect with Diaspora comprehensively is central to all the programmes and activities" (MOIA, 2015).

"The success of Indians in diverse professions like Academics, Media, Film and IT apart from successful entrepreneurs, CEOs, scientists, and other professionals has created trust in India's intellectual abilities abroad. It has been a crucial factor in branding India as a source of well-educated and hard-working professionals. Besides, the Indian diaspora has also been instrumental in safeguarding India's interests in their host countries. For example, the Indian diaspora in the US, lobbied hard as a pressure group to promote Indian interests during the

Kargil war, India's nuclear tests (1998), for blocking the Burton amendment (to cut aid to India), and during the agreement between India and the US on civil nuclear cooperation" (Pathak, 2017).

However, there are concerns as well about the negative influence of the Diaspora role which has implications for the national security of India. There are concerns that it could provide conduits for the spread of international terrorism as well as poses other security threats. "Groups and individuals within the Diaspora have been suspected of continuously supporting various insurgent groups operating in India, lending them both moral and material support through hawala operations, money laundering, etc. Kashmiri separatists, Khalistan supporters, Tamil Tigers, Al Qaeda associates enmeshed with other state and non-state actors are among India's security challenges. It is worthwhile to note that while India has not been fully successful in capitalizing on its Diaspora but Pakistan has been effectively leveraging elements within the Indian Diaspora to destabilize and obstruct India. David Headley, Tahawur Hussain Rana, Dawood Ibrahim, and Abu Jundal are examples of how Pakistan has been using the Diaspora community to carry out acts of terrorism against India" (Sharma, 2012). Fugitive economic offenders like Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, and Vijay Mallaya also add to this list of Diaspora communities involved in money laundering scams and facing corruption charges in India. The role played by Indian businessmen like Ajay Gupta (Gupta family) who is facing corruption investigation along with former President Zuma in South African politics is another cause for concern.

Sometimes the negative influence of Diaspora activism is also visible on India's bilateral relations with the country of residence. For example, "Operation Blue Star, which hurt the sentiments of a large number of Sikhs across many countries besides India, adversely impacted India's relations with Canada..." (Sharma, 2012). Another case is the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka, which has an undesirable impact on India-South Africa relations. Tamil communities in South Africa showed solidarity towards the Tamils of Sri Lanka and lobbied with the South African government for support to the LTTE and also able to raise the anti-India temper.

South African Indians: Security dilemma and Risk

South Africa is very important from the Indian point of view for its interests in Africa. It can work as a diplomatic and economic guarantor for India in Africa. South Africa stands out as one of the biggest trading partners of India in Africa and has the potential for a durable trade

relationship with India. To secure its interest and enhanced its maritime presence in the Indian Ocean, India's collaboration with South Africa is also inevitable. South African Indians provide an opportunity to India for strengthening its linkages with South Africa. "The million-strong Indian community in South Africa provides familial and trading links between the two countries and contribute significantly to the overall economic relations" (Pathak, 2003).

The Indian Diaspora constitutes about 3 percent of South Africa's total population and is currently estimated to number around 1.5 million. PIOs in South Africa constitute a major segment of an economically advanced class since the 1960s. They are engaged in various sectors of the economy namely farming, trade, manufacturing, transport, government services, and other professions like medicine, law, accounts, and teaching, etc. They have become known for their economic, professional, academic, scientific, and artistic successes and have captured the trade, commerce, and business leadership of their new homelands. South African Indians have been actively engaged in philanthropic activities through establishing educational institutions, hospitals, giving donations to the poor and needy people, and providing relief in natural calamities (Pathak, 2011). They have also played a considerable role in the political domain of South Africa.

Initiatives have been taken by the Indian government to strengthen its relations with South Africa with the Indian Diaspora forming the bridges of cooperation. In this context, the organization of 'PBD Africa' on 1- 2 October 2010 in Durban in which the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, and the Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, Zweli Mkize's participated points to a certain realization. Not only it underlines India's eagerness to draw in its diaspora towards foreign policy objectives, but also shows the PIOs' interest and South Africa's readiness to accept such linkages to strengthen the bilateral relations with an old ally by accepting its drive to rope in PIOs for economic gain. The Indian Diaspora in South Africa could further contribute to India's development process through investments, transfer of technology/skills, and foreign trade. They could also act as lobbying or pressure groups within South Africa to safeguard the Indian interests.

However, there is also a need to understand the negative impact of the Diaspora role which in the South African case was revealed during the Tamil crisis in Sri Lanka. The Tamil issue in Sri Lanka hurt the sentiments of a large number of Tamils across many countries including India and South Africa which adversely impacted their relations also. "Following the defeat of the LTTE in May 2009, the mood in the Diaspora has been a mix of anger, depression, and

denial. Nonetheless, most Tamils abroad remain profoundly committed to Tamil Eelam, the existence of a separate state in Sri Lanka. Tamil communities in South Africa showed solidarity towards the Tamils of Sri Lanka" (International Crisis Group, 2010). There was a demand from powerful Tamil Diaspora lobbies to push the human rights agenda. There was also a strong lobby in South Africa that was taking an anti-Sri Lanka stand. Even the UN Human Rights High Commissioner Navi Pillay was under pressure from a 'tsunami' of emails from the Tamil Diaspora including the South African Tamil community to call for a war crimes probe (Samath, 2009). This was a typical illustration of the influential lobbying role of Diaspora. The Tamil Diaspora in South Africa lobbied with the government for support to LTTE and also able to raise the anti-India temper.

LTTE activities and influence in South Africa: "Initially, the LTTE raised funds through officiating priests in the Hindu temples, who were Tamils from Jaffna, northern Sri Lanka, to procure weapons to support their war for an independent state in Sri Lanka. Later, they effectively won the support of key political leaders, particularly from the South African Indian Tamil community" (Gunaratna, n.d.). Among them were ANC leaders including parliamentarians. "In 1995, LTTE began to operate a series of training camps in South Africa. The camps provided accommodation and facilities to train recruits in guerrilla warfare. The South African Tamils formed South African Tamil Tigers and many of them were trained by LTTE trainers from Sri Lanka and retired South African service personnel drawn from Koevoet and 32 Battalion. Upon graduation, the best were transported to Sri Lanka and were inducted via India by boat and via the Maldives by air" (Gunaratna, n.d.).

On the order from President Mandela to dismantle the camps "the South African troops assisted by NIA raided the three LTTE camps on October 29, 1997" (Gunaratna, n.d.). The camps were in Laudium near Pretoria, Lenasia near Johannesburg, and New Castle near KwaZulu-Natal. However, neither the trainees nor the trainers were arrested. "Within a month the LTTE resumed training but at a lower scale and in smaller groups. The LTTE established its influence in South Africa through a series of front organizations that adopted a technique to portray themselves as peace organizations. In addition to disseminating propaganda and raising funds, these fronts organized public events and engage in lobbying. Among the most active LTTE fronts are PASLO, MASLO, DPJ, TESM, PSLSM, and TRO. LTTE also attempted to infiltrate other Tamil organizations like the Natal Tamil Federation, the South African Tamil Federation,

and the Tamil Federation of Gauteng" (Gunaratna, n.d.).The LTTE front organizations continue to operate in South Africa.

The LTTE lobbied and received the of support many South African Indian Parliamentarians. The "South African Tamil parliamentarians were more vulnerable towards supporting LTTE interests in South Africa. The LTTE and their fronts used the strategy of drawing parallels between Sri Lanka and South Africa. As a direct outcome of propaganda, South Africa banned the sale of weapons to Sri Lanka. Despite efforts by the Government of Sri Lanka to explain its position to Ibrahim Ibrahim, then Chair, Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Kader Asmal, Chair, Portfolio Committee on Defence, South Africa did not revoke its decision. This explains the influence of the LTTE, which they had painstakingly built in South Africa over the years" (Gunaratna, n.d.). They also mobilize Tamil support in South Africa for demonstrations, rallies, seminars, and lobbying. For instance, on June 4, 1996, when Sri Lanka's national airline Air Lanka flew into South Africa, 100 Tamils were demonstrated in Durban.

The Tamil communities in both countries, India and South Africa are vulnerable to LTTE influence. Similarly, the leaders in both countries, India and South Africa are vulnerable to ethnic compulsions. They can be against the LTTE but cannot afford to be against the Tamils. The problem both amongst the Tamil minority in South Africa and large sections of the Tamil population in India is that the LTTE successfully manipulated Tamil opinion. "There are prominent South Africans, including South African Tamils who are aware of LTTE's role in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination in 1991 and do not wish to support the LTTE. But they form the silent majority" (Gunaratna, n.d.). It is natural that the Tamil issue will not have only an impact on Sri Lanka and South Africa, but will have also implications for India and international security as well.

"Amongst the language groups represented among the Indian immigrants who came from India to Natal, South Africa, from 1860 onwards, Tamil people form the majority. Now there are more than 250,000 Tamils spread over in many cities, the concentration being in Natal and Durban. Tamil heritage has been an inspirational and healing factor during the turbulent periods that they have undergone. During the period 1900 to 1949 many temples were built and the rich traditions are well nourished by priests from Sri Lanka" (Sivasupramaniam, 2017).

The role of the Diaspora is also under scrutiny due to their involvement in opposing not only Indian government policies but involvement in raising anti-India temper and lobbying for it. In 2018, "the South African Muslim Lawyers Association and the South African Kashmiri Action Group laid a complaint with the National Prosecuting Authority, calling for the arrest and prosecution of PM Modi, for crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute, upon his arrival in Johannesburg for the 10th BRICS Summit" (Singh, 2018). Some activists have accused the South African government of betraying the human rights-based foreign policy in favour of India by not opposing India on the Kashmir issue and even the CAA.

Meanwhile, it is also worthwhile to recall that an international bonding was forged for the cause of Indian Muslims once the South African Muslims met the British Indian Muslims in London in 1905. The delegation of eminent members like Abdul Gani (Chairman, TBIA), Haji Habib (Secretary, Pretoria Committee), Haji Ojer Alley, and Ayub Hajee Beg Mahomed of the Indian community in South Africa (who were trying to repeal the Peace Preservation Ordinance under Mahatma Gandhi leadership) tried to enlist the sympathies of a few Britishers including prominent Indians who had settled down in Britain, the most important among them being Justice Amir Ali. This meeting of the South African Muslim leaders with Amir Ali forged a long-lasting comradeship that led to the origination of the All India Muslim League and Hamidia Islamic Society, both established in 1906. Later, in 1908 Amir Ali established Muslim League in London. This was the first phase of isolation where the Muslims drifted from the larger national cause in favour of their sectarian agenda and forged a communal brotherhood. This was the edifice for the Khilafat Movement that started in 1919. The same naivety, which was in display during the Khilafat, has repeated itself in the recent anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests as radical Islamist forces are using the jargons of secularism, constitutionalism, and democracy to further their communal radicalization and consolidation. The most striking feature of this whole process is that impacts of radicalization instantly manifest with a violent and vulgar polarisation of Islamist forces to defame the image of the nation.

Conclusion

Diasporacommunities have become significant and increasingly important players in today's globalized world. However, as the Diaspora escapes the direct control of its state of origin, it is rational for the state to pursue policies that aim at rendering the Diaspora governable mainly by producing a self-disciplined Diaspora that can act in accordance with its national interests. This accounts for Indian policy initiatives because it aims at creating what has been called a

"transnational governmentality" through institutions, privileges, and discursive strategies, and seeking to render the diasporic population governable and favourable to its national interests. It is obvious from the Indian government's plan to rope in its Diaspora for the quest of resources, business, and strategic partnership to enhance development goals and national security of the country. However, the challenges to overcome the national security threats posed by elements within Indian Diaspora remain a major concern. Though the Indian government has increasingly incorporated its Diaspora into its foreign policy strategies in recent years, a lot remains to be done on the national security front to address the challenges. A greater engagement with Diaspora and emphasis on cultural and civilizational linkages could be an appropriate policy option.

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