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Diaspora and Transnational Communities

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By: Dheeraj

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

DIASPORA AND TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

M.S.O.E.-2

Time: 3 Hours] ***[Maximum Marks: 100***

Note: *Answer any* ***five*** *questions. All questions carry equal marks.*

Q. 1. Discuss the approaches to the study of Indian diaspora.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 6, 'The Study of Indian Diaspora', Page No. 7, 'Studying Indian Diasporic Communities: Some Perspectives'.

Q. 2. Examine the difference betwen Chinese and African diaspora.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 11, 'The Chinese Diaspora' and Page No. 12, The African Diaspora'.

Q. 3. Critically analyse the ethnicity perspective in the study of diaspora.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 1, 'Introduction', Page No. 2, 'The Ethnicity Approach' and Page No. 5, Q. No. 3.

Q. 4. Discuss the evolution of Indian state's position on its diaspora.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 89, 'Introduction' and Page No. 91, 'Pro-active Interest of the Indian State Towards the Diaspora'.

Q. 5. Explain the nature of Jewish diaspora.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 10, 'The Jewish Diaspora'.

Q. 6. Discuss the typology of issue-based emigration policies in origin countries.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 80, 'Typology of Issue-based Emigration Policies in Origin Countries'.

Q. 7. Examine the perceptions of Indians on the Non-Resident Indian (NRI).

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-21, Page No. 141, 'What Indian Thinks of the Indian Abroad'? and Page No. 143, Q. No. 3.

Q. 8. Discuss the nature of Indian diaspora in the cyberspace.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-18, Page No. 121, 'Defining Cyberspace' and Page No. 122, 'Indian Digital Diaspora'.

Q. 9. Examine the importance of diaspora in the age of globalisation.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-17, Page No. 113, 'Growing Importance of Diaspora'.

Q. 10. Explain the relationship between globalization, nationalism and the issue of identity.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-22, Page No. 144, 'Globalization : Transnational Networks and Identities'.

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QUESTION PAPER

December – 2022

(Solved)

DIASPORA AND TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

M.S.O.E.-2

Time: 3 Hours] ***[Maximum Marks: 100***

Note: *Answer any* ***five*** *questions. All questions carry equal marks.*

SECTION – A

Q. 1. Explain the concept of diaspora and its relation with transnationalism.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 9, 'Understanding Diaspora' and Chapter-1, Page No. 1, 'Transnationalism, Globalization and Diaspora'.

Q. 2. Explain the patterns of Indian emigration.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 17, 'Five Patterns of Indian Emigration'.

Q. 3. Write an essay on the Jewish Diaspora.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 10, 'The Jewish Diaspora'.

Q. 4. Do emigration and immigration policies affect migration patterns? Explain with reference to the Indian diaspora.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 79, 'Evolution of Restrictive Immigration Policies' and Page No. 80, 'Typology of Issue-Based Emigration Policies in Origin Countries'.

Q. 5. Explain the major policy initiatives for mobilising Indian diaspora-homeland relations.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-17, Page No. 115, 'New Policies for Mobilizing Diaspora–Homeland Relations'.

SECTION – B

Q. 6. Discuss the nature of immigration of Indians to Gulf countries.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 73, 'Indians in the Gulf Region'.

Q. 7. Compare the situations of Punjabi and Gujarati diaspora as sub-national identities.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-23, Page No. 151, 'Indian Diaspora: The Regional Dimension'.

Q. 8. Explain the concept and contours of transnationalism.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-24, Page No. 158, 'Transnationalism' and Q. No. 1.

Q. 9. Discuss the situation of Indian diaspora in the United Kingdom.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 55, 'Indian Diaspora in the UK: A Case Study'.

Q. 10. Describe the process of Indian Diaspora Foundation in the United States of America.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 60, 'Indian Diaspora in the United States' and 'Profile of Indian Diaspora in the United States'.

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Sample Preview of The Chapter

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DIASPORA AND TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

UNDERSTANDING DIASPORA

Conceptual Understanding of Indian Diaspora and Transnational Studies

1

INTRODUCTION

There are several concepts that need to be understood in order to comprehend the term diaspora. Thus, such related concepts have been explained in this chapter. Later, Indian diaspora has been explained in the context of globalization. It may be said that transnationalism is an offshoot of the global process in which both real and virtual connections have become more important and speedy at present. Hence, the Diasporas are now in constant touch. These connections have been made possible through travels, net, telephone, media and such other means. In this way, the concept of transnationalism, globalization and diaspora have been explained. The related theories and perspectives have also been dealt with. Finally, the diasporic situation of Indians has also been examined.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

TRANSNATIONALISM, GLOBALIZATION AND DIASPORA

Glick Schiller (1999) described transnational migration as a kind of migration in which social connections are maintained with the original polity despite they migrate across international borders and settle and establish social relations in a new state. These migrated people live across international borders in transnational social fields. Since old connection is maintained by such communities even after migration, the process is called transnationalism which is the result of globalization process. Globalization, thus refers to interconnected communities where events in one part of the globe affect the other parts as well due to the presence of global markets, networks and communications.

It has been observed that the process of globalization is driven by three interconnected imperatives–the transnational networks, new technology and the market. In the processes of transnationalism and globalization, diaspora plays an important role. However, it may be noted that the usage of diaspora, diasporic and diasporism etc. has been criticized since the generalization and universalization of cultural specific entities is illegitimate. According to Safran (1991), there are six features of diaspora as given below:

- Vision of the original homeland.
- Retention of collective memory.
- Idealized wish to return original homeland.
- Continuous renewal of linkages with homeland.
- Desirable commitment to restoration of homeland.
- Dispersal from the original homeland.

Scholars have proposed both inclusive and minimized working definition of diaspora. According to Markovits (2000), diaspora covers the criterion of 'circulation' but the Indian diaspora is a misnomer given the extensive ongoing circulation and exchange.

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However, Hasen (2002) finds unsuitability of the notion for South African Indians because of the nostalgia of Indian roots and any engagement for what is authentically Indian is belied by the experience of present-day third-fourth generation of South African Indians. This is in contrast to the commodified nostalgia of the recent new migrations in Europe and North America.

PERSPECTIVE ON STUDYING INDIAN DIASPORA

There are various perspectives according to which Indian diaspora have been studied. Some of the important ones are discussed below:

The Retentionist Perspective: This deals with cultural persistence recording the ability of the Indians to retain, reconstitute and revitalize many aspects of their culture in a new setting. For example, Morton Klass's study of East Indians in Trinidad (1961) which shows that social organization the villages of Indians in Amity were faithfully modelled after a kind of generalized North Indian culture. These kind of studies fall under the acculturation process perspective. Thus, there is a bias in which such studies over-emphasize the retention of customs and traditions. Even the changes in the Indian and the overseas societies which have taken place over time are not considered in such studies. Thus, it is a static and not a dynamic perspective.

The Adaptationist Perspective: These studies are mainly concerned with the adaptation of the social group or an immigrant society in host society. For example, R. K. Jain's study (1970) of South Indian migrants in Malaysian rubber plantations highlights the interaction between norms of a traditional rural people from South India and the ideology and procedures of an industrial bureaucracy and hence adaptation of the Indians in a particular Malayan environment. Moreover, Buton Benedict also studies Indians settled in Mauritius according to the adaptationist perspective and tries to show that there is communication and mobility between sections of Mauritian society tending to unify it, and in case bars to communication, tending to drive sections apart. Adrian Mayer has applied the same perspective to the study of the rural Indian society in Fiji. However, this perspective has been criticized as it fails to incorporate the comparative aspect and is not able to relate in a systematic manner the microcosm to the macrocosm.

Plural Society Perspective: For Furnivall (1948), the colonial society of South East Asia possesses cultural, economic and political characteristics. First, a plural society has incongruous and incompatible cultural sections between which communication is hampered. Second, the economic relationships between cultural sections are those of market place and politically such society is held together due to being dominated by exteranal colonial power. According to R.K. Jain (1986), this concept of plural society is applicable to only settlement societies and not to civilizations.

The Ethnicity Approach: As the study of Guyana and Fiji by Jayawardena (1980) shows, the ethnicity approach accords primacy to relations of class, status and power where ethnicity is seen as coming out of these factors. The indo-Guyanese were found to possess both an ethnic identity and ethnicity in which they had lost all but the basic principles of traditional Indian culture and were hence forced to fabricate a mythical identity. On the contrary, Fiji Indian population possessed an ethnic identity but not an 'ethnicity' since its members maintained regular contact with their homeland and regarded their Indian identity as a routine feature of their lives. Drummond (1981) criticizes Jayawardena because the latter accords a secondary status in the domain of explanatory concepts. Thus Drummond (1980) offers the linguistic/cultural model to the study of cultures in the context of poly-ethnic emigrant societies. He argues that just as the coexistence of several languages created Creole languages so the co-existence of different cultures created Creole cultures which produced a society based on inter-systems or a cultural continuum. Thus, any element from a particular culture shaded into one from another and this enabled actors to combine and recombine elements into a coherent whole.

The Political Economy Perspective: The sociologists such as John Rex (1982) find a continuity between the 19th century emigration of Indians and the 20th century migrations to the industrially developed countries. Racist barriers are maintained against the movement of labour from the underdeveloped countries to metropolitan countries as we can see that they are not accorded the same status as the labour force of the host countries. According to Beckford's thesis of "persistent poverty" in the plantation areas there is a continuity of socio-economic and cultural systems in plantations and other areas of Indian immigration in 19th

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century. Similarly, Amin (1976), Wallerstein (1974) and Gunder Frank argue in terms of a core-periphery model of the global development of capitalism. Thus, Indian diaspora seems to belong to the underdeveloped and deprived section of global population. This neo-Smithian Marxism has been criticized by, for example, Bremner (1977). Thus, with the globalization of ethnicity as the post-modernist phenomenon of our times, the overseas Indians should be studied under both micro and macro structures, including both the past and future directions of these communities.

Longing and Belonging: The 'in-between' Space of Diaspora: Globalization has increased the pace of migration to such an extent that people everywhere belong to many places, they are everywhere and in some sense nowhere. Hence, they are between belonging and longing and in an 'in between' state. There is a strong interactive relationship between the diasporic imaginary and global networks in the Indian diaspora case. For instance, Axel (2001), Sandhya Shukla (2003) and Pnina Werbner (2002) have dealt with the question of identity as subjectification in the imaginings of the diasporics. Tambs-Lyche, Markovits (2000), Xiang Biao (2001) and Voigt-Graf have implicitly dealt with the question of identity in relation to the socio-legal aspects of citizenship. They have done while dealing with networks. Both type of scholars have been interested in the transnational dimension of the diaspora. While the former have discussed 'deterritorialization' and 'reterritorialization' in their attempt to delineate a unique 'diaspora space', the latter have focused on the interface of nation-states with ethnicity.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q. 1. Do you have any members of your family living abroad or do you know people who have moved abroad? If you do know of such people, find out from them how the internet and tele-communication technologies have brought them close home?

Ans. Internet is assuming today a pivotal role in augmenting diaspora identities and transnational networks. Descendents of the families scattered as indentured labour across the globe are networking and reuniting. Ravi Naidu, a management professional from South Africa, for instance, had successfully traced his uncles and cousins spread over in Mauritius, UK, US, and Fiji before he met me at the Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora in Hyderabad for locating his ancestral home and relatives in India to reunite the family and celebrate. Thus, today, we find transnational networking among the Indian diaspora based on multiple identities of religion, region and also of caste, especially among the new diaspora and the diaspora communities which have retained closer linkages with places of their origin. The process of contemporary globalization has only furthered these networks, taking them to the realm of cyber space, creating virtual communities or onlinecommunities and identities.

Q. 2. How can one explain the popularity of bollywood cinema among the Indian migrants? In what way is this connected with globalization?

Ans. Indian cinema has been one of the most dominant and distinguishing features of the subcontinent's popular culture for the past sixty years. The Indian cinema industry, most commonly known as Bollywood (although Bollywood represents Hindi film industry alone), is the world's largest film industry in terms of the number of films produced, though not for its financial returns. To satisfy the 14 million Indians who go to the cinema every day, the Indian film industry produces more than 1000 films each year compared to Hollywood, which only produces about half that number. Unlike Hollywood, the film business in India is decentralized. Mumbai, or 'Bollywood' as it is commonly called, produces Hindi-language films, which are popular throughout India and among expatriate Indians living abroad. Though Bollywood is the best-known Indian film industry, individual states such as West Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala also produce films in regional languages.

One of the significant reasons for the increase in popularity is due to the change in producers' attitudes towards the motion picture business. Film producers like Ronnie Screwvala and Aditya Chopra have begun professionalizing the cinema business, bringing in outside investors and aggressively marketing films with novel plots. Their production companies have successfully cut the old format of three-and-half hour movies to a fast paced 120 minutes and have hired Hollywood scriptwriters to make films more appealing and watchable. This is particularly a significant factor in Bollywood's popularity as the new movie format that will break into the Indian diapsora more often that the age-old Bollywood movies. One example for such

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successful collaboration was the recent blockbuster by Mira Nair's New York based production, The Namesake, a story about the relationships and identity struggles between the son and his Indian immigrant parents. The film grossed close to $14 million at the box office with nearly 95 per cent of the ticket sales generated from the United States. This international reach of Bollywood is rather important as it assures financial returns and also increases the interest among Indian diasporic community to watch the new short and slick Bollywood movies. Second, the Indian movie industry started enjoying an impressive boom due to the improved Indian economy with a significant number of Indians getting wealthier and spending more on entertainment. Lovgren observed that the tele-communications revolution and information technology explosion witnessed an all-time growth in the Indian economy that propelled the middle class life style into newer heights. A study by the McKinsey Global Institute also discovered that Indian consumer spending increased from $250 billion in 2004 to $400 billion by 2007. The economic boom and improved conditions of the middle class sector greatly encouraged Bollywood producers to invest more money in films and to improve technical quality in order to ensure maximum financial returns both in domestic and overseas market. According to Aditya Chopra, one of the popular Bollywood producers, as technical quality advances, moviegoers come in increasing numbers to watch these latest movies.

Another important reason for Bollywood's popularity can be attributed to the growing Indian population overseas. The Indian population around the world is estimated around 25 million consisting of both Non-resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (POI) (Indian diaspora). The Indian community in the United States alone increased from 1.68 million in 2000 to close to 2.5 million in 2005. The U.S. Census Bureau found that the Indians are the fastest growing community among Asian communities in U.S (Indian American population). As stated earlier, the most common tool for a force of bonding through entertainment media would be "Hindi cinema," a phenomenon unique to the Indian diaspora community to stay connected to the homeland. New media technologies like satellites, the Internet and digital home video devices such as DVD's have opened new distribution channels to bring Bollywood into the living rooms. Thussu observed that the availability of these new delivery and distribution mechanisms have contributed to the global visibility of popular Indian cinema. Researchers like Kaur and Sinha suggested that DVD, the Internet, and satellite television have cultivated and increased number of fans in countries like Great Britain, the United States, and Australia. Representation of the Indian diaspora, and foreign locations made Bollywood movies a household name amongst diasporic communities. Finally, Bollywood exports play an important role in Indian film industry's growing popularity overseas. The era of globalization effectively placed Indian film industry on a global platform. This essentially popularized Bollywood movies in countries like the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand, and Australia. Dave (2007) observed that roughly half of Bollywood's estimated $2.2 billion annual revenue comes largely from these overseas markets where Indian communities provide a great number of audiences for theatrical releases and DVD sales. According to the Internet Movie Database, films from India do more business in the United States than films from any other country.

Yash Raj Films, one of India's largest film production and distribution companies, reported that Bollywood films in the United States earn approximately $100 million a year through theatre screenings, video sales and the sale of movie soundtracks. Although it seems a small number in comparison to Hollywood financial returns, these revenues contribute significantly to drive Indian filmmaking to new heights in terms of quality, cinematography, and innovative story lines, as the $100 million accounts to a huge amount in Indian currency. According to an estimate $100 million represents film production costs for approximately 33 Indian films compared to about 2 films in Hollywood. The aforementioned reasons make Bollywood films a much sought after entertainment source for Indians living in India as well as abroad. Dissanayake (2006) argued that the diaporic communities are becoming more interested in Bollywood films that deal with Indian history, Indian heritage and culture and Indian nationhood. With popular Indian television channels playing Bollywood movies at least once a day and the Internet providing various options to watch Bollywood movies, one may safely assume that Bollywood movies are becoming an integral part of the Indian diaspora

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