



Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – Europe

Held at The Hague, the Netherlands
September 19, 2009



Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – Europe

Organized by the
Foundation for Indian Diaspora in Europe (FIDE)
On behalf of
Foundation for Critical Choices for India (FCCI)
Indian Business Chamber (IBC)
Global Organization of People of Indian Origin, the Netherlands
(GOPIO)
Indian Expat Society
Foundation Ujala
Federation Eekta

In partnership with
Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Govt. of India
Embassy of India, The Hague
City Council of The Hague

A Report

By
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PREFACE

The *First European Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* was held at the World Forum, The Hague on 19th September, 2009. The main theme of the Meet was “*The Rising India and The Role of Indian Diaspora*”. The event was organized jointly by representatives of major Indian Diaspora organizations in the Netherlands, namely the Foundation for Critical Choices for India, Indian Business Chamber, the Netherlands Chapter of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (*GOPIO*), Federation *Eekta*, The Indian Expat Society and Foundation *Ujala*, under the umbrella organization the “Foundation for Indian Diaspora in Europe” and assisted by a number of other organizations and NRI/PIO volunteers. The partners in this event were The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Govt. of India, The Indian Embassy at The Hague and the municipality of The Hague.

Over 600 participants, including 500 delegates and many outstanding speakers from 20 different European countries, attended the Meet. The day’s deliberations, in addition to the Inaugural Session, in which the dignitaries like Former Dutch Prime Minister and former UNHCR Chief, Indian and Dutch ministers, the Mayor of The Hague and the Indian ambassador to The Netherlands addressed the audience, were divided in three working sessions: namely, Session One - *The Rising India and the Role of Indian Diaspora*; Session Two: *Tradition, Heritage and Culture - Opportunities and Challenges*; Session Three: *Business Opportunities for the Diaspora*. At the end of each session there was an active interaction between the panel members and the audience. The main emphasis during the discussions was on the tremendous willingness and potential of the Indian Diaspora to contribute to India’s economic and social development and various means and channels through which this can be realized. A number of specific suggestions and recommendations have been made to involve the Diaspora in different sectors in major development projects in India.

In the evening, the Hon’ble Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs hosted a sumptuous Indian Dinner for all the participants and invited guests. The dinner was followed by a cultural extravaganza, presented by the local artists, artists from other European countries and by a special group from India, sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas-Europe not only provided an opportunity for the Diaspora groups from different European countries to know each other better but also to establish longer term contacts. We hope this leads to more frequent interaction of Indian Diaspora in future.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee, I would like to thank Hon’ble Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Mr Vayalar Ravi, his senior staff members, H.E. Mr Manbir Singh, the Ambassador of India and the senior officers of the Embassy, Hon’ble Mayor of The Hague, Mr J. Aartsen, and his colleagues for making this

meet successful. I will also like to thank all the speakers for their stimulating contributions, all members of the participating organizations, all volunteers and the management of the World Forum; I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the sponsors and donors for supporting this event wholeheartedly. My thanks also go to all the artistes for making the evening colourful and unforgettable, and to all the audience for their enthusiastic support and active participation. My sincere thanks to Dr. Vasant Moharir and Dr. H.U. Qureshi for preparing this report.

Jasbir Singh

President, Foundation for Indian Diaspora in Europe

The Hague, Sept. 2009



Chief Guest Prof. R. Lubbers,
Ex-Prime Minister of the Netherlands
lighting the Diya.

PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS - EUROPE

Conference Program

SATURDAY 19th SEPTEMBER 2009

08.30-09:15	Registration, Meet & Greet
09:15	Arrival of Special Guests Welcome by the Organising Committee: Mr Oedith N. Jaharia, Mr Ram L. Lakhina, Mr Badri N. Madan, Mr Rajen Ramnath, Mr Rajindre Tewari, Mr Jasbir Singh. (Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Secretary Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and Ambassador of India would also be present to receive specified dignitaries)
09:30-10:20	Inaugural Session
09:30-09:35	Opening remarks by Mr Jasbir Singh , Chairman of the Organising Committee & President of Foundation for Critical Choices for India
09:35-09:40	Lighting of the lamp
09:40-09:50	Address by The Mayor of The Hague, Mr J. Van Aartsen , former minister of Agriculture & Foreign Affairs
09:50-10:00	Address by Mr Vayalar Ravi , the Hon'ble Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India
10:00-10:10	Address by the Chief Guest of the Session, Hon'ble Prof. Dr. Ruud Lubbers , Former Dutch Prime Minister & UNHCR Chief
10:10-10:20	Address by the Guest of the Session, Hon'ble Mr Jan Piet Hein Donner, LL.M. , the Minister of Social Welfare & Employment and former Minister of Justice, The Netherlands
10:20-10:30	Address by H.E. Mr Manbir Singh , the Ambassador of India to the Netherlands
10:45-12:15	Working Session – One Rising India and the Role of the Indian Diaspora
	Moderator: Mr T.P. Sreenivasan , former Secretary, MEA and Member of the Advisory Board for PBD-2010 Convention

10:45-10:55	Address by the Chief Guest of the Session, Mr K. Mohandas, Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs
10.55-11.05	The Role of Indian Diaspora in India's Emergence as a Global Power, by Mr R.L. Lakhina, M.A., Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardee, Executive President of the Netherlands-India Chamber of Commerce & Trade (NICCT), President Emeritus, Foundation for Critical Choices for India (FCCI), and Former Chairman, Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO International)
11.05-11.15	"The Role of Indian Diaspora in Enhancing Indo- European Cooperation" , by Prof. Dr. Prabhu Gupta, Executive Director, Organisational Development WOLFSBERG, (UBS AG, Switzerland)
11.15-11.25	Global Diaspora Trends, By Drs Sandew Hira, Author , Scholar & Publicist on the Global Diaspora
11.25-11.35	Empowerment of Women in India & Role of Indian Diaspora By Mr Raj Loomba, Chairman, Pushpawati Loomba Trust, U.K.
11.35-11.45	Address by Mr T.M. Jacob, President, World Malayali Council, Bonn, Germany
11.45-12.15	Interaction with the audience
12:30 – 13:30 Lunch break	

13:15 – 15:00 Working Session - Two	
Tradition, Heritage, and Culture: Opportunities & Challenges for the Indian Diaspora	
Moderator: Drs Ryan Tewari, President of GOPIO, The Netherlands & Secretary General of the Organizing Committee	
13.20-13.30	Address by the Chief Guest of the Session, Prof. Lord Navnit Dholakia, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardee, Chairman of Nacro, Former Liberal Democrat whip, Home Affairs spokesman for LD in House of Lords
13.30-13.40	Tradition, Heritage, and Culture: Opportunities & Challenges for the Indian Diaspora - Overview, by Drs B. N. Madan, President of the Netherlands-India Association (NIA) & Chairman of the Indian Business

13.40-13.50	Chamber (IBC) Perspective from the PIO Community in The Netherlands, Dr. Ruben Gowricharn , Professor of Social Cohesion & Transnational Culture, University of Tilburg
1350-14.00	Bridging Sensitivities & Sensibilities – Reference Tradition, Heritage & Culture: Lajja Sambhavnath , Research fellow and artist, Portugal
14.00-14.10	The Indo-European Culture Dialogue from the Swiss Perspective by Mr Arun Amritham, Former President of the Indian Association Zurich, Switzerland
14.10-14.20	Leverage the potential of the Indian Youth By Ms. Mamta Bhatia, International Leadership & Development Coach, UK
14.20-14.30	The Value of Indian Network Associations in relation to Tradition, Heritage and Culture by: Mr Ashook Ramsaran, Vice-President GOPIO International, USA
14.30-15.00	Interaction with the audience
15:00 – 15:30	Tea/Coffee break

15:35 – 17:00	Working Session - Three
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE INDIAN DIASPORA	
Moderator: Mr Oedith N. Jaharia , Chairman of the Indian Expat Society	

15.35-15.45	Address by the Chief Guest of the Session, Mr Vayalar Ravi, Hon'ble Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India
15.45-15.55	Indo - EU Economic Developments: Mr Kiran Malhotra, Chairman of the Indo-German Business Forum, Germany
15.55-16.05	Address by Mr Gopal Ramanathan , Global Chairman Transactions Services KPMG; Chairman India work Group H.F.C.; Chairman India Workgroup Dutch Trade Board; Chairman Great India Industrial Group
16.05-16.15	Diaspora Entrepreneurship. By Drs. Rishi Kartaram, CEO of Gameworld B.V. from The Netherlands
16.15-16.25	Business Opportunities & Challenges for Indian Diaspora: By the Rt. Hon'ble Baroness Sandip Verma of Leicester, Shadow Minister for Education and Opposition Whip in the House of Lords, Baroness of Leicester, UK

16.25-16.35	Business Opportunities in Europe and The Netherlands, the role of The Hague Municipality. By Mr Henk Kool, Alderman for Social Affairs, Employment and Economy, City of The Hague, The Netherlands
16.35-17.00	Interaction with the audience
17:05-17:15	Reflections & The Way Forward: Dr. Vasant Moharir , ex-president of FCCI
17:15 - 19:00	Networking break
19:00-20:30	Dinner Hosted by the Hon'ble Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Mr Vayalar Ravi
20:30-21.45	Cultural Programme Opening of the Cultural Evening by Mr Rajen Ramnath, Founder and chairman of the advisory council of EEKTA Foundation; Chairman of the Foundation for Hindu Education (SHO).
20.30-20.35	Sitar & Tabla by Mr Sidhart Krishna & party,, flute by Mr Pyrelal Bhaggan
20.35-20.45	"Chora Desh, Sanskriti na Chori" musical play by Dance Group Madhoeri led by Ms Aartie Jagmohan
20.45-21.00	Indian Dance Creation by ICCR group, led by Mrs. Tanusree Shankar, India
21.00-21.25	Bhangra performance by Desi Crew , France
21.25-21.45	21.45 Closing and Vote of Thanks by Mr Jasbir Singh, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the PBD – Europe, President, Foundation for Indian Diaspora in Europe and Foundation for Critical Choices for India
22.00 End of PBD-E 2009	

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – Europe

Celebrated at
The World Forum, The Hague on 19th September, 2009¹

1. The *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas - Europe* was celebrated at the *World Forum, The Hague* on Saturday, the 19th September, 2009. This *One Day Event* was organized jointly by important organizations of Indian and Surinami Hindustani communities living in the Netherlands, such as the *Foundation for Critical Choices for India, Indian Business Chamber* and the *Amsterdam chapter* of the *Global Organization of People of Indian Origin*, (GOPIO International). Around 500 delegates and Indian origin individuals from 20 different European countries attended the Conference.
2. The *One Day Programme* started at 9.15 a.m. and came to an end the same day around 10.00 p.m. after a colourful cultural programme. Mr Jasbir Singh, President of the FCCI and Chairman of the Organizing Committee



Mr Jasbir Singh,
President of the FCCI and
Chairman of the Organizing Committee

(consisting of Mr Oedith N. Jaharia, Mr Ram Lakhina, Mr Badri N. Madan, Mr Rajen Ramnath, and Mr Rajindre Tewari) welcomed on behalf of the Organizing Committee the Hon'ble Indian Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, Mr Vayalar Ravi, H. E. Mr Manbir Singh, Ambassador of India to the Netherlands, H.E. Mr J. van Aartsen, Mayor of The Hague, Chief Guest, H.E. Prof. Ruud Lubbers, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands and UNHCR

Chief, Hon'ble Mr Jan Piet Hein Donner, the Dutch Minister of Social Welfare and Employment, and other participants. He emphasized the unique nature of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas - Europe, which has been honoured by the presence of a senior Cabinet Minister of India, a former Dutch Prime Minister and a Cabinet Minister of the Netherlands, along with a former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs and Agriculture and currently the Mayor of the city of The Hague. He thanked the Mayor and

¹ Full text of some of the speeches can be made available to those interested on their written request.

his staff for their help in organizing the Conference in The Hague at the well known conference centre *World Forum* as well as all the participants. He briefly described the day's programme and emphasized that many opportunities for the Diaspora in India do exist. He further told the audience that in order to safeguard the interests of both the NRIs and the PIOs in property and other investments a special NRI court has been planned to look into their grievances. But, he put forth the following requests to the Indian and Dutch ministers on behalf of all the PBD-E participating organizations: 1) Creation of NRI courts through out India; 2) Creation of Indian Cultural Centers all over Europe (starting with the Netherlands) and, 3) an update on Indo-Dutch Social Security treaty. He expressed the hope that both the ministers will give due consideration to these requests and take prompt action on them.

3. **Inaugural Session:** The Conference was declared formally open by lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Hon. Mr Vayalar Ravi, accompanied by all Dutch VIPs as well as the members of the Organizing Committee.



Mr J. Aartsen,
Mayor of The Hague

Mr J. Aartsen, the Mayor of The Hague also extended a hearty welcome to all participants, emphasizing that The Hague is a truly cosmopolitan and international city and second city of the United Nations in Europe. He informed that The Hague is the seat of the International Court of Justice, many U. N. tribunals and other organizations related to international law and international

relations. He also emphasized the fact of increasing close economic and trade relations with India and that many Dutch private sector companies in The Hague are closely working with their Indian partners/counterparts.

4.1 Address by Hon'ble Mr Vayalar Ravi, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs



Hon'ble Mr Vayalar Ravi,
Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs

Hon. Mr Vayalar Ravi addressed the 500 odd Indian Diaspora from 20 European countries attending the Conference. Speaking of more than 2 million Indians in Europe, he highlighted the two groups of the old and new Diaspora in Europe and particularly about the two very active Diaspora groups in the Netherlands *viz.*, the Indians from the mainland and Hindustani Surinamese who migrated to the Netherlands in '70s. He also emphasized

the long relations between Europe and his own home state Kerala where *Vasco de Gama* landed in 1498. He further underlined the close partnership between Europe and India and that Europe is the biggest trade partner of India. He referred to much ongoing and current collaboration in various sectors. Explaining the significance of the annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held every year on 9th January in India, he expressed his pleasure over this first European but third Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, as a forum for dialogue between his ministry and the regional Diaspora groups.

4.2 Stating that the present size of Indian Diaspora is approximately 25 million, spread out in 136 countries of the world, he informed the audience that now it is an ideal time for the Diaspora to invest and start such other activities in India. He further elaborated that the country was less affected by the universal banking crisis and, as such, India will be able to push development at a higher speed. Commenting on India as a land of many economic opportunities that will help in accelerating the process of it becoming a *Global Power* soon. He enumerated the achievements of his ministry in the short period such as the establishment of a *High Level Committee of Indian Diaspora* to advise the Prime Minister, *India Development Foundation* which will support initiatives in the area of micro-credit, raising the female literacy level and other projects in the states and other regions. In this context he mentioned the special emphasis that the present Government is putting on female uplift and their mental and literacy development and for which the Cabinet has already decided to raise female reservation in *Panchayats* up to 50%.

Similarly the work being done on *Knowledge Network for Diaspora* to serve as an electronic platform, as well as bilateral agreements signed by his ministry with Belgium, France and Norway on science and technology, and payment of social security in India were mentioned. He ended his address by inviting the audience to attend the next Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in New Delhi to be held in January 2010.

4.3 Chief Guest Prof. R. Lubbers, Ex-Prime Minister of the Netherlands



Prof. R. Lubbers,
Ex-Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Prof. Lubbers who is quite familiar with India and with some of the senior political leaders of India, told the audience about a communication from the Director-General of UNESCO written by Mahatma Gandhi on the role of women. “Emphasizing further the present clamour for rights by different groups, he stated that the rights and duties go together, and awareness of this needs to be created. Characterizing the present international context in which India has to function, as a multi-pole world with coming

together of various civilizations, he expressed a hope that India would succeed in realizing its goals with hard work, in which the Indian Diaspora can play a useful role.”

4.4 Guest of Honour Hon’ble Mr Jan Piet Hein Donner, Dutch Minister for Social Welfare and Employment:



Hon’ble Mr Jan Piet Hein Donner,
Dutch Minister for
Social Welfare and Employment

Mr Donner also emphasized the present interdependence situation and the vital role that social interaction plays in that. Paying tribute to *Great Culture of India* and its love for peace, Mr Donner commented on the need for *our two countries to know each other better and more*. Describing the impact of economic downturn in the Netherlands, he stated that the Netherlands is a good destination for investment by Indian companies. In this context, he

referred to the already existing Indian companies in the Netherlands, such as *Tata Consultancy, Mittal, Infosys*, etc. In view of strategic location of the Netherlands in Europe and its developed infrastructure, he invited India to make the Netherlands a *beachhead* for Europe. He also informed the audience that soon he will be visiting India to sign the bilateral agreement on payment of Dutch Social Security in India to (retired and/or) returning Indian Diaspora.

4.5 H.E. Mr Manbir Singh, Ambassador of India to the Netherlands:

After welcoming Hon. Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, Mr Vayalar Ravi, the Dutch Minister for Social Welfare and Employment, Mr Donner, and the Mayor of The Hague, Mr J. van Aartsen and all the participants, Ambassador



H.E. Mr Manbir Singh,
Ambassador of India
to the Netherlands

Manbir Singh expressed his appreciation for the Organizing Committee whose members had been involved in intensive preparatory activities for the *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas - Europe*. Commenting on excellent bilateral relations between the Netherlands and India, Ambassador Manbir Singh stated that the relationship in all different areas like trade, commerce, culture, media, science and technology, etc. is resulting in considerable mutual benefit. Praising the exemplary work done by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in a short period, he identified many areas where the community of

Overseas Indians can make useful contribution, such as trade, manpower and in science, technology and tourism. He admired particularly the Hindustanis from Suriname who have kept active links with the motherland. Supporting observation of Mr Narayan Murty that NRIs have distinguished themselves in different countries, he hoped the members of the Indian Diaspora will also be

helpful in setting up of joint ventures and act as catalyst in enhancing trade and commerce, and investment which at present stands at a high level.

4.6 With the Indian Ambassador's address, the Inaugural Session came to a close until and after the coffee break when Working Session One started its deliberations at 10.45hrs.

Working Session One:

Rising India and the Role of the Indian Diaspora:

Moderator: Mr T.P. Sreenivasan, Former Secretary, MEA and Member Advisory Board, PBD 2010

5.1. Introduction by the Moderator: Welcoming participants and Panel Members, Mr Sreenivasan briefly commented on the theme of the session. He stated that in the context of India's ascent towards a developed Global Power, there is a re-discovery of Indian Diaspora and of their potential contribution. It is also interesting to see how *Rising India* can help Indian Diaspora and how the Indian Diaspora can contribute towards enhanced India-Europe relationship.

5.2 Address by the Chief Guest of the Session, Mr K. Mohan Das, Secretary, MOIA.

Paying tribute to the mutually fruitful growing interaction between Government of India and the Indian Diaspora, he stated that the present situation is ideal for a more comprehensive contribution of Diaspora. In this regard he talked about the resilience of Indian economy despite present economic downturn and the fact that India is at present one of the fastest growing economies in the world. This provides considerable business opportunities and also a good destination for direct foreign investment. Mentioning that remittances by Indian Diaspora have crossed 400 million US\$ which is 1/3rd of Indian GDP. Stating that India has become a net exporter of capital and is also known for its skills such as in marketing, and well trained manpower in science and technology. According to him, now is the opportune time to take a strategic view of the relationship. He further told the audience that members of the Diaspora can utilize four main instruments for channeling their contributions to India's development process, namely, use of Overseas Citizenship, services of the *One Stop Diaspora Facilitation Centre, the Global Diaspora Network of Knowledge and India Development Foundation.*

5.3 Key note speech by Mr R.L. Lakhina, PBD Samman (Honour) Awardee:

In his systematic and well researched presentation, Mr Lakhina covered all aspects of the phenomenon of India Rising and as a future Global Power, emphasizing the role of Indian Diaspora in accelerating that process. Mobilization of intellectual, technical and financial resources of Indian Diaspora has been a passion for Mr Lakhina in the last 30 years. He raised the issue whether India as a Global Power is a hype initiated and sustained by

media or a reality? Based on the observations of many Indian and foreign scholars and the continued high key performance of Indian economy, presently disrupted by the global economic downturn, Mr Lakhina stated that if the relevant policies are continued by India, there are all the ingredients, necessary to enable her to become a Global Power in near future. Enumerating the common attributes of a Global Power, Mr Lakhina stated that the achievement of this status depends upon three types of power, namely, economic, military and soft power, however the starting point is economic power. India had been able to break the monotony of 5% per annum growth during the planning era and started making quantum jumps in economic growth after economic liberalization started in early 1990s. Not only that growth rates increased continuously touching 7.8% and moving fast to the magical figure of 10%. In support, he quoted U.S. Secretary of State, Mrs. Clinton that accepting India as a Global Power is as natural as accepting the law of gravity. Fast increasing direct and indirect foreign investment, Indian exports increasing rapidly, India becoming a net capital exporter, its considerable military strength, its enviable democratic performance and enormous soft power indicated by popularity of Bollywood films, cuisine, Indian clothing and fashions, and the fact that India is already the *fourth biggest economy of the World*, in terms of P.P.P. and therefore India soon going to become a Global Power; it is no more a hype but a real phenomenon. Mr Lakhina further stated that this process can be further accelerated by a comprehensive approach to involvement of and contribution by the 25 million and odd Indian Diaspora whose tremendous has been utilized in the past to a very small extent. In his opinion Government of India should consider its Diaspora as a national resource and asset and utilize its potential of innovation, generating new ideas, and technology transfer as agents of India's soft power, in improvement of performance in health, education, social welfare, industrial production, energy development, etc. Already, remittances by Indian Diaspora are the highest in the world but their contribution can be much more than this. The best is yet to come!

5.4 Prof. Dr. Prabhu Guptara, Executive Dir. Woflsberg (Switzerland)

Role of Indian Diaspora in enhancing Indo-European Cooperation:

Emphasizing on non-traditional initiatives undertaken by individual members of Indian Diaspora, Professor Guptara narrated many initiatives taken by him and other Diaspora members like him in order to enhance Indo-European cooperation. He suggested that to improve understanding of Indian culture, politics, economy by Europe and Europeans, Diaspora members should write articles in mainstream news papers, journals as well as in bilingual magazines. In this context he mentioned the work of fellow Diaspora members Ms. Rema Bajaj and Mr Arunachal of India. He said that Indian Diaspora members can do something in their own area of expertise. In this context he indicated the philanthropic work being done by *King's Curry* chain of restaurants which donate 10% of their profit for charitable causes in India. Similarly, he pointed to the exemplary work of *William Curry University's* work in Assam for higher education. In order to create and sustain interest among younger

generation of European Indian Diaspora in India, he suggested that they could also be involved actively in activities which bring out India in limelight in Europe. In this connection he mentioned the example of his twin sons of 13 years old who were awarded a prize for their first novel at a very young age. He also emphasized the need for young NRI volunteers to organize social and cultural activities for younger persons. Prof. Guptara concluded by saying that in additions to remittances, Indian Diaspora in Europe can help India in many other ways, too.

5.5 Drs. Sandew Hira, Managing Director Amrit Consultancy, the Netherlands

Global Diaspora Trends – A case of Surinami Hindustanis:

Drs. Sandew Hira, a well known researcher and writer on the saga of Indian indentured labour in Suriname, their migration to the Netherlands and their socio-economic problems, narrated briefly various stages in their story. He stated that some of the Surinami Hindustanis have recorded events for the posterity, such as the book *Ram Sahay's journey*. The harsh nature of the initial historical journey from U.P. and Bihar to thousands of miles away to Surinam, problems of settling down and sustaining own culture and religion in a multicultural and multiracial society, prompted some of the families to return to their homeland after the expiry of their first contracts, while others continued the development of the community during the colonial period and after independence. In mid 70s, after the Dutch Government granted independence to Suriname, a large number of Surinamis of Indian origin migrated to Holland and settled down here. They have made considerable progress in all sectors of Dutch life and at present many members of the community have attained the positions of doctors, professors, lawyers, accountants, members of municipal, provincial and national legislatures. A project of compiling 30 volumes history of Surinami Hindustani Diaspora is already started . Besides that many social, cultural, religious organizations of the Community are actively busy in propagating Indian way of life. Drs. Sandew Hira concluded his presentation by enumerating some of his past and future Diaspora studies on *Meaning of Ethnic Identity*, *Database of Social Institutions*, including their infrastructure, *Global Atlas of Diaspora*, etc. Session Moderator, Mr Sreenivasan aptly described Drs. Hira's presentation as *food for thought*.

5.6 Mr Raj Loomba CBE, Chairman Loomba Trust and Rinku Group, U.K.

Empowerment of Women in India and the Role of Indian Diaspora:

Emphasizing the overall role which women are playing all over the world in national life, Mr Loomba stated that though there has been considerable advancement among women in urban India, those in the rural areas are still lagging behind considerably. According to him, members of Indian Diaspora, particularly women among them, should play a significant role in their empowerment. Mentioning some mechanisms of empowering women in India,

he mentioned specific projects aimed at helping women in increasing their income, education of girls, improvement of health and sanitation projects, etc. In accomplishing such projects, charities play an important role in the U.K. where the former British Ambassadors in India have played a facilitative role. Also, other dignitaries like the Mayor of London, prominent businessmen like Mr Branson and Lord Dholakia, have also contributed extensively in projects for empowering women in India.

**5.7 Mr T. Jacobs, President, World Malayali Council, Germany -
The term “NRI” should not mean *Never Returning Indian*:**

Commitments of the Government of India:

Coining yet another term for Indian Diaspora, Mr Jacobs stated that though many Members of Indian Diaspora may not be returning back to India for different reasons, this should not stand in the way of developing a mutually beneficial relationship between them and the Government of India. Even without being physically present in India, members of Indian Diaspora can still help the motherland through remittances, charities, NGO projects, investment in infrastructure and other programmes such as poverty alleviation. Referring to the legal difficulties which members of Indian Diaspora face in India in connection with buying and selling property, borrowing money from banks, acquisition of land for building factories, schools, etc., he stated that the normal courts in India take a long time to resolve these issues, which discourage Diaspora members in undertaking such activities. In order to avoid or minimize such problems, Government of India may consider setting up special Diaspora Bank and a separate *Pravasi Bharatiya Tribunal*.

5.8 Discussion: Commenting briefly on different presentations, the Moderator of the Session invited comments and questions from the audience. Referring to the excellent presentation of Mr Lakhina, Mr Wahid Saleh asked him how he arrived at the figure of 30 million members of Indian Diaspora. He also wanted to know about the share of Indian Diaspora in the Netherlands in total remittances to India. Mr Lakhina stated that we have been using the figure of 25 million for many years, but recently he came across a more up-to-date figure of 30 million. With regard to remittances of Indian Diaspora in the Netherland, he stated that the breakup of the total figure of remittances was not available in Holland but bulk of these remittances is coming from members of Indian Diaspora in the Gulf countries. Another member of audience asked about arrangements and facilities for those who study in Europe and visit India to study social projects there. To this, Mr Loomba answered that his Trust and other organizations in UK are encouraging European students to visit India for studying problems and issues of their interest, and it would respond to specific proposals from interested students. Prof. Prabhu Guptara also offered to help any European student who is interested in studying in India. To another question by Dr (Mrs) Shruti Shukla about mechanisms available for non-monetary help to Indian organizations, Mr Mohan Das, Secretary, MOIA, responded that the *India Development Foundation* which will be functioning

by November this year, is the appropriate channel and coordinating institution both for monetary and non-monetary Diaspora contributions, including for those who cannot visit India physically. Another lady participant, Dr. Gupta, asked how income generating projects for women should be organized, to which Mr Loomba responded that in the light of his experience he would recommend that women should be supported with work possibilities in their own environment. Dr. Mohan Gautam asked why the help projects cannot be in countries other than India where members of Indian Diaspora may also require similar help. Mr Loomba, informed Dr. Gautam that charities managed by his Trust will also extend help in near future to Diaspora members in Surinam, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Prof. Guptara also reminded the audience about a restaurant project in Switzerland which devotes 10% of its profit for similar activities. Dr. Pramod Agrawal, associated with an Indian students' organization, informed about a charity organization of such students which does not have any overhead costs as all work is done by volunteers, and that can also help in identifying problems, preparing project proposals, etc. In response to the issue raised by Mr Jacob, Chairman of the World Malayali Council regarding the need for special court for NRIs, Mr Mohan Das, Secretary, MOIA, replied that the Protection of Property Act is one possible solution for the problem, but since land is a state subject and hence they need to take action regarding that. He further informed that in the annual *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2010*, property issues will be a major topic of discussion. He also informed the audience that even without a separate tribunal, some high courts like the Allahabad High Court have given directives that NRI cases should be given priority in court deliberations. The discussion session ended after Mr Sreenivasan, the Session Moderator thanked all speakers for their stimulating presentations and the audience for their keen interest and relevant questions.

**Working Session Two: Tradition, Heritage, and Culture:
Opportunities and Challenges for the Indian Diaspora.**

**Moderator: Drs. Ryan Tewari, President,
GOPIO, the Netherlands and Secy. General, Organizing Committee**

**6.1 Address by Chief Guest of the Session, Lord Navnit Dholakia,
PBD Samman (Honour) Awardee; Chairman, Nacro; Home Affairs
Spokesman for LD in the House of Lords**

Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Culture and Heritage:

Narrating the history of Indian Diaspora in the UK, Lord Dholakia, stated that since its inception the size, nature and type of problems have changed both for the Indian Diaspora as well as for India. The UK Indian Diaspora has now grown to 1.6 million people; the combined income of the community is estimated to be 30-50 million pounds; there are more than 10,000 Indian restaurants in London and the National Health Scheme (NHS) will collapse without Indian doctors; and prominent Indians are also elected to the municipal and national legislatures, and many successful Indian businessmen have been

honoured for their entrepreneurial skills. The British Indian Diaspora is quite cosmopolitan and always projects the best image of India. Referring to the exodus of Indians from East Africa, Lord Dholakia stated that despite two international shifts, the East African Indians have resettled in UK soon and now progress well in all sectors of local life.

6.2 Commenting on the theme of the session, Lord Dholakia stated that every decision has political implications. Culture is also not static and changes with a change in the environment. Yes, use of language along with dress and habits of Indian Diaspora in UK has changed *but not the identity*. Although till now emphasis has been more on remittances, now we must pay attention to cultural development side by side with economic development. Emphasizing the necessity of assimilation of Indian Diaspora with the wider cultural diversity of the UK, Lord Dholakia reminded that *what you put in a country should be greater than what you have got*. He also encouraged the Diaspora to learn from other communities how to save your property and prodded them to go beyond human rights and contribute to elimination of dire poverty in the country. Lord Dholakia concluded his presentation with a slogan: *There are no heights to which we cannot fly!*

6.3 Opportunities and Challenges for Indian Diaspora:

**An Overview by Drs. B.N. Madan,
President, Netherlands- India Association;
Chairman, Indian Business Chamber**

Giving an overview of Indian Diaspora in Europe, Drs. Madan stated that they play an important role in preservation and advancement of culture, traditions and heritage. In Europe, there is both the old and the new Diaspora, numbering more than 2 million inhabitants, spread out in 18 countries, with the greatest group in the UK (1.6 million), followed by the Netherlands. Despite the diversity of language, religion and origin in India, it is the culture that binds them together. In this connection, Drs. Madan mentioned Indian classical dances, music, hip-hop, Bollywood, Indian TV serials, as some of the things which bring them together.

He further elaborated that as far as films are concerned not only they come from India but of late, some Diaspora producers are also making films on *fusion* topics. Referring to the increasing popularity of Yoga, Drs. Madan informed that in the Netherlands, Yoga is being practiced in hospitals also. Commenting on some of the problems of the Diaspora in Europe, he mentioned *finding a cultural balance*, differences in attitude of older and younger generations, differential approach of Indian and local communities on issues like homosexuality, are some examples. Despite some differences, Indians respect local values and norms and are law-abiding citizens. Family is still very important for Indian Diaspora and linkages with the greater family in India are still strong. Mentioning that by and large Indian Diaspora in most countries of Europe have distinguished themselves in all sectors except sports, military and politics. Excepting English speaking countries in Europe like the

UK, Ireland, Scotland, participation in politics in other countries is limited because of the language problems. There are almost no prominent Indian players in Europe's most popular sport football. Drs. Madan concluded his presentation by making a recommendation for setting up a cultural centre in the Netherlands as a forum for all Indian cultural associations to come together in support of advancing India's soft power.

**6.4 Perspective from the PIO Community in the Netherlands:
Dr. Ruben Gowricharan, Professor of Social Cohesion and Transnational
Culture, University of Tilburg**

Presentation of Professor Gowricharan dealt with the issues of assimilation and autonomy of Surinami Hindustani Community in the Netherlands. He stated that the question of cultural, linguistic and biological assimilation of immigrant groups need a long time to resolve. Similarly, other issues related to assimilation like dress, religion, marriage, etc. are deeply ingrained in individuals from childhood and are not easy to change rapidly. However, the Surinami Hindustanis did not have much of a problem with the language and norms and values of the Dutch Society, as they grew up as part of the Dutch colony in Surinam. As in other cases, there is also a generation gap between the first and second generation Hindustanis in the Netherlands. The second generation is more assimilated with the Dutch mainstream. The caste system still exists and so do the separate organizations for Arya Samajis and Sanatan Dharmis. Hindus are still prominent among Hindustanis. However, all of them are very fond of Bollywood films, Indian clothing and fashions, visiting India for tourism, pilgrimage to Sai Baba and other *mandirs* (temples) and also to discover roots in U.P. and Bihar. In a way the second generation is more inclined towards India.

**6.5. Bridging Sensitivities and Sensibilities – Referencing Tradition,
Heritage and Culture**

Mrs. Lajja Sambhavnath, Performing Arts Professional, Portugal:

Presenting the problem of assimilation is not but as a two way process involving sensing the sensitivities of the host community and sensibilities of the immigrant community, Mrs. Sambhavnath, stated that in this process the Indian dancers and musicians who now have a feeling of being global citizens, can play an important role. Keeping one's own culture intact and also intensely interacting with the host and other cultures, is like walking on a rope, a balancing act. Describing the popularity of Indian dance and music in Portugal and their growing significance at global level also, Mrs. Sambhavnath stressed the importance of an international cultural forum which is necessary for preservation and development of culture. She concluded her presentation by stating that *what happens to art is very important, as an individual does not live by bread alone!*

**6.6. Indo-European Cultural Dialogue from the Swiss Perspective
Mr Arun Amritham, Ex-President, Indian Association, Zurich:**

Members of Indian Diaspora in Europe are part of the European Union phenomenon, and as such an ongoing cultural dialogue between them is of considerable mutual benefit. Referring to the Indian Diaspora in Switzerland, Mr Amrithan stated that the relations between the two countries are very cordial and Indian food, clothing, fashions are quite popular. The two countries have many things in common like love for peace, pluralistic democracy, and inhabitants of both countries visit each other for tourism and other purposes. Mahatma Gandhi visited Switzerland in 1931 and in 1948 a Treaty of Friendship was signed between the two countries. At present the Indian Diaspora consists of Indian students, diplomatic staff, African Indians, Indians working with UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Indian businessmen, restaurant owners and workers, etc. There are also special institutions devoted to the study of Indian culture, such as the European Institute of Indian Culture, Bern, Indian music and dance schools, Yoga centres, and film theatres showing Indian films. Stressing that *Civilization is not a state*. Mr Amrithan stated that Indians should interact with other cultures also in Switzerland.

6.7. Ms. Mamta Bhatia (U.K.)

Leverage the Potential of the Indian Youth:

Based on her experience in UK as a International Leadership and Development Coach and also her own upbringing in England, Ms. Bhatia presented the special case of Youth in Indian Diaspora who are caught up between both the Eastern and Western values, norms, as well as in differences between generations of immigrants. Advising the youth in Indian Diaspora to seek for the commonality between them, at the same time preserving one's own culture and way of life, she stated that the first generation Diaspora did not have much of a choice. However, the youth of today in UK have much greater freedom and choice, and a great potential for contribution to society. Characterizing most Indian youth as shy, she advised them to reach out to others, share what they have, work hard, engage in creative work and maintain confidence in one's own rich culture. She further urged them to respect their elders and attempt to bring together the old and the young in the society.

6.8. The value of Indian Network Associations in relation to Tradition, Heritage and Culture:

Mr Ashok Ramsaran, Executive Vice-President GOPIO International, (U.S.A.)

In this last presentation of this Session, Mr Ashok Ramsaran talked about the need and usefulness of Diaspora Network Associations in relation to culture, particularly in the context of the Caribbean. Describing the baggage with which an Indian immigrant comes, Mr Ramsaran stated that "*We take with us Masala, Music and Diaspora*" and highlighted the role played by the pioneers. Taking the example of British Guyana, he stated that there have been 4 generations of Indian Diaspora with 26 *mandirs* (Hindu temples) and other educational and health infrastructure. Many sons and daughters of Indian

Diaspora are at present academics, businessmen/women, sportsmen/women, politicians, etc. It is necessary for members of Indian Diaspora to have their organizations not only to maintain and develop their cultural heritage but also to interact with (like-minded) organizations of other groups. He concluded by informing the audience about the chapters of GOPIO and their non-religious, non-political activities.

6.9. Interaction with the audience:

Session Moderator: Drs. Rajindre Tewari

Mr Tewari praised the panel members for their informative contributions on different dimensions of the Diaspora problem and invited audience to comment and ask questions to panel members. Ms. Marian Oort observed that International Conferences on study of Sanskrit are a dying species and asked the speakers about places in India where support for learning Sanskrit is available. On this Dr. Gopi Menon, ex-staff member of Leiden University and at present connected with the University of Kerala, added that there the teaching is done in Malayalam language, which is very close to Sanskrit. Dr Mrs Sharma asked Mrs. Sambhavnath of Portugal about help by EU for the teaching of Indian dances in Portugal, to which the Panel Member from Portugal replied that she has been intensively busy with teaching of Indian Dances but unfortunately European Community does not understand the idea behind the Indian classical dancing!

A student from Delft University stated that Indian students at the university also try in their limited resources to propagate Indian culture and its changing role in global scene but what is lacking is direction from elders living here in the Netherlands for a longer time. Another member of audience told that there are centres for propagation of culture of other countries like *Alliance France*, why, then, not an Indian Cultural Centre in the Netherlands? Is it money or any other reason? To this H.E. Ambassador Manbir Singh replied that Government of India is aware of this and we are busy with setting up soon such a Centre here in the Netherlands. Mr Chellaney asked why there is no Youth Wing of Netherlands-India Association to which Mr Madan replied that it is a big family of Indian Diaspora in the Netherlands and they are busy with providing a better access to both younger Diaspora members and Indian students studying in the Netherlands. The interaction with audience ended with the Moderator thanking the speakers and members of audience for their contribution to the discussion of issues relating to Tradition, Heritage and Culture.

Working Session Three:

Business Opportunities for the Indian Diaspora

Session Moderator: Mr Oedith Jaharia, Chairman, Indian Expat Society, the Netherlands

7.1 Session Three began its proceedings with the address by the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Vayalar Ravi, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs. The Hon'ble

Minister informed the audience about the tremendous progress made by India since introduction of economic liberalization in 1990s. As a result it is today one of the largest economies of the world with accelerating growth rates uninterrupted by the global economic downturn. At present India's foreign exchange reserves are high and both direct and indirect foreign investment in India is increasing rapidly. The previous economic reforms have already shown results and the present government is also planning to introduce more reforms which would facilitate quicker decision-making on outsourcing, joint ventures and investment, both by the Indian Diaspora as well as others. The Hon'ble Minister appreciated the work done by European Indians in general and those in the Netherlands in particular and their organizations. He stated that he was looking forward to his second visit to Europe soon to attend the EICC-IMC Business Meet in Brussels on 30th September, 2009.

7.2 Indo-Europe Economic Development:

Mr Kiran Malhotra, Chairman Indo-German Business Forum, Germany
Tracing highlights of India's recent economic development, Mr Malhotra stated that today India is one of the fastest growing economies, constituting the fourth biggest economy in the world based on purchasing power. Also, he emphasized other strong attributes of the Indian economy such as good macro-economic performance with limited fiscal deficit, growing foreign direct investments and exports, as well a reservoir of a large pool of young scientific and technical personnel. Despite current set back due to global banking crisis, India expects the per capital income to double in the next 2 decades, releasing considerable purchasing power of the growing middle class. Referring to the growing trade between the EU and India, which will lead to increased European direct foreign investment and possibly more outsourcing and joint ventures in India he informed the audience that India is putting more emphasis on public-private partnership in infrastructure and other sectors as part of the economic strategy. Mr Malhotra suggested that India can also benefit from the long experience of European countries in this area.

7.3 Mr Gopal Ramanathan, Gopal Chairman Transactions Services, KPMG, Chairman India WorkGroup H.F.C., Chairman Dutch Trade Board, Chairman Great India Industrial Group, Netherlands

Mr Gopal Ramanathan outlined opportunities for investment in India in sectors like water development, retail trade, food processing, hospitality, infrastructure and logistics, renewable energy, etc.

7.4 Drs. Rishi Kartaram, CEO, Gameworld B.V., the Netherlands Diaspora Entrepreneurship:

Drs. Kartaram presented to the audience the interesting example of how new, innovative approaches in entrepreneurship can lead to success and win-win outcomes, even in the present economic downturn. Giving more details of his company which makes new, challenging and absorbing games for the growing computer savvy and possessing increasing purchasing power, younger

generation all over world, Drs. Kartaram stated that due to India's hegemony in ICT, Indian entrepreneurs both in India and outside India can be successful in this growing field which is at present dominated by the South East Asian countries. The Indian mythology and literature can provide also good examples for designing different types of games. This is also an area where cooperation between relevant entrepreneurs in India and those in Indian Diaspora in different countries can also take place for mutual benefit.

7.5 Rt. Hon. Baroness Sandip Verma

Shadow Education Minister and Opposition Whip in House of Lords (UK)

Business Opportunities and Challenges for Indian Diaspora:

Baroness Sandip Verma, who herself had achieved high political positions in the British scene, urged Indians abroad to assert their leadership in the social and political spheres. Commenting on the achievements of the Indian community, she stated that though they constituted only 2.5% of the population but contribute more than 10% to the national product. Further the Indian community has a dominant position in cash and carry retail trade, they control 40% of trade in pharmaceuticals, and they are prominent in medical and ICT professions. She further noted that 43% of Indians are self employed, 4 times the national average. Being very proud of the increasing clout of Indian business community in the UK, Baroness Verma emphasized their big potential contribution to India in bio-tech, education and other sectors. Her description, "British Indian Community punch well above their weight economically", aptly characterizes their present status. Addressing the complaint often made in India about relatively meager foreign direct investment by Indian Diaspora, Baroness Verma requested Indian government to make it easier for small and medium Indian enterprises abroad to invest in India by doing away with procedural and other bureaucratic bottlenecks. The system can be simplified for quicker and transparent decision-making.

7.6 Mr Henk Kool, Alderman for Social Affairs, Employment and Economy, Municipality of The Hague

Business Opportunities in Europe and the Netherlands:

Alderman Kool told the chairman of the session and the audience that he really Enjoyed the seminar and listened to various interesting and informative presentations. Commenting on the sizable population of both groups of people of Indian Origin living in The Hague, he informed the audience about the good relations between the Municipality and the Indian Diaspora community in the Hague and their popular activities like the annual *Milan Festival*, *Bollywood Film Festivals*, etc. He also mentioned the increasing Indian investments in the Netherlands in ICT, steel and other sectors. He invited members of Indian Diaspora and the entrepreneurs in India, to take advantage of the excellent infrastructure and other facilities made available by the City of The Hague.

7.7 Interaction with the audience:

The Session Moderator, Mr Oedith Jaharia, thanked the Hon'ble Minister and the panel members for their excellent presentations and invited the audience to react to them with comments or ask specific questions. Hon'ble Minister Vayalar Ravi supplemented the information on opportunities for investment in India, stating that there are many possibilities of investments in many small, medium and big projects being initiated in India in the water sector. In reply to another question from audience, Baroness Verma responded that 42% of Indian Diaspora in Europe live in the UK and contribute 30% of GDP. Supplementing the panel member contributions on charities and other mechanisms of helping special disadvantaged groups in India, Dr. Gopi Menon stated that taking advantage of a recycling programme, a number of computers were modified in the Netherlands, for their use in Indian languages, in projects concerning women and development in India. Another example of the recycling the waste water project without losing a single drop, to be used for irrigating 450 acres of land in Thailand.

7.8 Dr. Vasant Moharir, Former President, Foundation for Critical Choices for India Reflections and the Way Forward:

Stating that it is for the first time that the two distinct Indian communities in the Netherlands, namely Surinamese Hindustanis and the Indians who have come more recently, and their important organizations have together organized such a major event on a European scale, he thanked both the Hon'ble Minister Vayalar Ravi and Ambassador of India, H.E.Mr Manbir Singh, for making it happen. In view of the limited time available and his being the last presentation of the day, Dr. Moharir informed the audience that he will not provide further comments on the day's deliberations but concentrate on some recent trends in relations between the Diasporas and their motherland, and present some recommendations to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for facilitating better and more comprehensive contribution to India's economic and social development.

Among the major international trends, Dr. Moharir mentioned broader and closer involvement of Diaspora in development of their motherland, shift of emphasis from *financial remittances to social remittances*, attempts to utilize remittances in support of regional and local development plans, formation of region, locality based associations of the Diaspora and in some cases direct representation of Diaspora communities in national and regional legislatures.

In this context, he mentioned the pioneering study by the World Bank in 2004 on Diaspora and development which commented on the considerable past contributions by Diaspora to India through financial remittances and tremendous future potential of Diaspora support in major sectors of development in their motherland and many suggestions for closer and broader involvement of Diaspora both by the motherland as well as by the Donors.

This study has been followed by studies by other institutions and specific actions taken by countries like China, ROC, Mexico, Philippines, Nigeria, East European countries like Poland, Slovenia, etc. He referred those interested in further details to study the relevant background paper on the subject prepared by the FCCI and included in the Conference folder.

7.9 Dinner hosted by the Hon'ble Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, H.E. Mr Vayalar Ravi

A sumptuous Indian dinner was hosted by the Hon'ble Minister for all VIPs, invited guests and participants in the World Forum building premises from 19.00 to 20.30 hrs. Hon'ble minister Ravi welcomed all and expressed his appreciation and satisfaction over the deliberations of the day and high level of presentations and participation by the audience. He further thanked the Govt. of the Netherlands, ministers of the Dutch administration and the Mayor of The Hague for their presence and support.



7.10 Indian Cultural Extravaganza

- The day's activities were crowned by a more than 100 minutes of a feast for eyes and ears, presented by both the Diaspora artistes and those especially flown-in from India by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).
- First, the Mr Siddarth Krishna and Party put the audience on the seventh heaven with their sitar and table rhythmic recital aptly accompanied by the pleasing flute music by Mr Pyarelal Bhaggan.
- Their performance was followed by a melodramatic presentation, appropriately entitled "*Chhoda desh, Sanskriti nahien chhodi*" (We did leave the country but not [our] culture). The drama was presented by *Dance Group Madhorie*. Ms Artie Jagmohan left the audience spell-bound by her masterly performance and acting. For a while, the audience forgot that they were not in Europe but in U.P., Bihar or Orissa in India.
- Next was another superb 15-minute non-stop music and dance presentation by the ICCR group led by Mrs Tanusree Shankar.

- Of course, no such cultural extravaganza is ever complete without the earthmoving, blood pulsating, and vigorous dance rhythm of *Bhangra*; this time it was excellently performed by the *Desi Group* of France. Need not to add that the whole audience was on the floor!

7.11 The day's deliberations and the events were wound-up by the PBD-E Organizing Committee President, Mr Jasbir Singh after thanking all concerned, particularly the MOIA and the Mayor of The Hague.

Following recommendations and suggestions were made to MOIA and other concerned organizations in India:



Mr Vayalar Ravi , the Hon'ble Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India and H.E. Mr Manbir Singh, the Ambassador of India to the Netherlands with the group of volunteers who made PBDE 2009 a success.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- To set up Diaspora Advisory Committees for crucial ministries in Delhi and States, particularly Ministries of External Affairs, Education, Health, Water Development, Science and Technology, Law and Planning Commission. Also, on the pattern of the PM's Advisory Committee for Indian Diaspora at the Centre, at the state level also there should be a Chief Minister's Advisory Committee.

- b. To set up Diaspora Councils abroad in countries with greater Diaspora concentration, such as UK, USA, the Netherlands, Canada.
- c. Increased Diaspora involvement with the Ministry of Finance and India Investment centres abroad for increased foreign direct investment by Indian Diaspora
- d. Diaspora involvement in some major problem areas of India such as poverty alleviation, energy, urban infrastructure and mega projects, water development
- e. Encouragement of formation of city or region oriented Diaspora Organizations for big cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Banares, Srinagar, Gauhati, etc.
- f. Utilization of expertise of retired members of Indian Diaspora for development activities in India at a small cost.
- g. A separate chapter in the Five Year Plan of India to make involvement of Indian Diaspora in development process more visible.
- h. Where relevant, appointment of Diaspora experts as advisory Members of Committees and Commission set up to examine strategic issues.
- i. Representation of the community of NRs/PIOs in Central and State Legislatures of India.



Further details and substantiation of above recommendations are given in the Theme Paper prepared by the Foundation for Critical Choices for India for the *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas - Europe* held on 19th September 2009 in The Hague, The Netherlands. A hard copy of the text was provided to the participants with the Conference folder.

Dr Vasant Moharir and Dr H.U.Qureshi
for and on behalf of
The Organizing Committee of the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas – Europe 2009

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – Europe

Organized at The Hague, The Netherlands

On 19th September 2009

India Rising: The Role of Indian Diaspora in accelerating India's transition as a Global Power:

Background Paper prepared by the Foundation for Critical Choices for
India

- 1. Introduction:** Purpose of this background paper is to scan the subject area of the theme of the Conference, and drawing the characteristics of India as an Emerging Global Power, spell out more specifically the role which the community of NRI/PIOs in Europe can play in realizing some of the objectives of India in this area. The contents of the paper are not comprehensive but concentrate more on the contribution of Indian Diaspora. Our starting point is that already Indian Diaspora has contributed considerably to India's economic and social development through remittances, philanthropies, through NGOs, etc but we feel that the potential scope of its contribution is tremendous. Paper tries to spell out some of the instruments and mechanisms which can be used by the Government of India and the State Governments, in realizing this potential. The paper will be revised further as a result of discussion and suggestions made by different speakers and those attending the Conference.
- 2. India as An Emerging Global Power:** Right from the Independence, Late Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent Indian leaders and people of India, have been dreaming of joining the club of "Developed" countries", as early as possible. With this in background, India has been playing a major role in international sphere, as a prominent and active member of the United Nations, a member of the Group of 8 and Group of 20, a member of the Group of Four Emerging Countries (BRIC) (*Justine Fox, 2009*), and a frontline leader of the Group of Non-Aligned Countries. Though, it has not yet become one of the permanent members of the Security Council, many leading nations support its claim, and in actual practice it is already

counted as one of the major global powers of the world. Its active participation and advice is sought after by the world leaders in analysis and solution of major world problems. Its economic, educational and political development in a short period of 62 years after independence has attracted the attention of many political actors on international scene. Many experts in economic development and strategic studies are commenting on India as an Emerging Global Power, as a Super Power, and as one of the four major economies of the world.

3. **Dr. Steven P. Cohen's study on *India Emerging Power*:** In a more or less mono-polar world at present, much depends upon what the major super power United States thinks about other claimants for the place in the Sun. Many think-tanks in America engaged in strategic studies, defense studies, studies of war and peace, have been focusing attention on India, since the end of the cold war era. In the wake of this, the rise of new problems like international terrorism, and the need to share the costs of making peace prevail on the earth, Brookings Institution, a well known think-tank specializing on Asia and South Asia particularly, brought out in 2001, a study by Dr. Steven P. Cohen, a South Asia Expert on India, projecting it as an emerging power in Asia and the world at large. Cohen's critical and well documented study has led to a number of other reactions and world leaders looking at India seriously from this impending perspective. Documenting precisely how India has grown considerably in all spheres which are characteristics of a global power, he has indicated how it is in the interest of the United States and the world, that India realizes this status as early as possible. He concludes that already after Japan and China, India is the third Asian Regional Power and, the strategic planning of world powers need to take notice of this. Admiral Robert, Commander of U.S. Pacific Command, stated in his confirmation hearings that, "India's growing economic, diplomatic and military power makes them a key player, not only in South and Central Asia but globally as well." "*India's Growing Power Makes it a Global Player*", Times of India, 10 July, 2009.
4. **What it means to be a Global Power?** Steven's book and writings of many others on international relations mainly emphasize the apex position of India with regard to economy, political governance, military power, visible and invisible influence on world and regional strategic decisions, superiority in space, science and technology, relative abundance of natural and other resources, etc. Advantages of being a leader in economy and military give rise to large amounts of state revenues which help the country in acquiring leading positions in other spheres also, such as sports, art and culture, medicine, environment and climate change, interfaith dialogue, international tourism, etc. One indicator of this is the number of gold medals won at International Olympics. India got only one at the last one at Beijing, while China scored over United States in the tally of gold medals. In other words, attributes of

a global power are many and not all countries may fulfill all criteria. But they can compensate lack in one by almost monopoly in the other. Against this background let us look at India at the present and the foreseeable future.

- 5. India as a world economic power:** Economy of a country is the main barometer of its overall strength. GDP and GDP per capita indirectly provide a ranking of leaders, followers and those who also ran. Some observers state that India was already a leader in the world economy at the end of the 1st Millennium and its GDP then was half of the world known then. Subsequent invasions, occupations and colonization of the country led to exploitation of its wealth, and at the dawn of independence left the country with a war shattered economy, frequent famines, low farm outputs, little development of infrastructure, health, education facilities and a big population. However, since independence India has made tremendous progress in the economic sector. Famines have been eliminated, and thanks to the Green Revolution the country not only became self sufficient in food but was also able to keep the biggest buffer stock of food grains in the world - not only for its own people but also to help other countries suffering from crop failures.

In a comprehensive and objective analysis of the Indian economy from Independence to date, Aravind Panigaria in his book "*India the Emerging Giant*" (Oxford University Press, 2008), has sketched the "surge" and march of Indian economy towards becoming a world economic giant, if the policies of economic liberalization, poverty alleviation and governance reforms are continued. Some observers like Goldman Sachs also see a distant possibility of India surpassing China by 2050.

- 6. Economic Development in Planning Era:** The Indian leadership was very much impressed by the liberal democracy of the West and the economic and social planning approach of the Soviet Union. In fact, initial plans were prepared by the economists who studied under Holland's famous economist, Prof. J. Tinbergen. In view of the limited development of the private and voluntary sectors during the colonial period, state was forced to enter into some of the highly desirable activities for economic development, such as heavy and strategic industries, major infrastructure, higher education, etc. Planning in India never followed the rigid, centralistic Soviet type of planning and implementation. For great part of the period after independence, India followed its own version of *mixed economy* and a comprehensive planning system with involvement of the states (provinces), much decentralization and use of experts in technical and economic decision-making on projects, etc. As Gurucharan Das observes, "Despite Nehruvian socialism, three fourths of the economy has been in private hands (*India Unbound*, 2002, p. 317). Despite occasional fluctuations, India attained an average growth rate of 5% consistently. One should not forget that it was only that this planning era had already prepared a relatively more advanced and comprehensive economy with a balanced development of different sectors, that the era of economic

liberalization starting in 1990s helped the country to attract much foreign and local investment and started the process of increased exports, resulting in increasing growth rates of 6,7, 8, 9 % which have now been interrupted due to global economic crisis and quantum drops in growth rates everywhere. However, actual drop in India has been much smaller than in Europe and United States and as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh emphasized in his speech from the Red Fort on 15th August 2009, that he is still hopeful that the rate of 9% can be achieved already this year and that 10% is not too far.

7. **Can India join the 10% Club?** Taking advantage of globalization, and introducing timely economic liberalization, Asian “Tigers” like Japan and following the “*Look East*” policy, other countries like China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, all increased incoming foreign investment and realized the magical 10% increase in GDP per annum. Leaving out China, the increased growth in other South East Asian countries survived on the basis of increased exports and outsourcing. All this was based on stock exchange share market which collapsed in 1980s, India and China are fortunate that they have very big internal consumer markets and also possibilities of more foreign direct investment. Both India and China have a big Diaspora which came to the rescue of their motherlands during financial crisis at different times.

7.1 Much Optimism about India: pre and post Global Banking Crisis: Before the onslaught of the Banking Crisis, political leaders, economists, trade specialists were very confident of India joining soon the “10%” club, and many investors, industrialists and forecasters were very optimistic about India’s economic development galloping fast and joining soon the club of Global Powers also.

China which had an early start with economic liberalization and advantage of a one party system, suffered a lot also as a result of slow-down in world economy. Moreover, many European and North American investors started feeling the increasing constraints in China, its not so good human rights record and limitations as a world knowledge economy. On comparison, many investors would prefer India due to its open, democratic process, use of English language, a large pool of well trained scientists and technologists, a large and diverse private sector of its own, and increasing efforts of the Government to improve economic infrastructure and introduction of still more liberalization in economic decision-making, legal processes, etc. Already the Indian entrepreneurs are showing their hunger to takeover some of the big enterprises in Europe and elsewhere. At present India is one of the big foreign investors in the Netherlands. Some Indians are regularly figuring in the list of world economic and political elites like the Forbes List and Time’s *The World’s 100 Most Influential People* (Nilekeni and A.R. Rahman, (TIME, May, 2009) etc. Observers, both inside and outside the country are forecasting that Indian economy will emerge still stronger after the banking crisis. Time Magazine states that out of 15 world’s large economies, only two namely China and India

will have positive high growth rates, in the immediate post banking crisis era. The same magazine while locating India at No. 50 in the table of competitiveness, in its study of 3000 companies from developing countries, suggests that 20 Indian companies have the potential to be global players in near future. (Time, October 27, 2008). Economist (London) also observed that India is likely to come out more successful from the present economic downturn, as it was hit less hard by global recession, its industrial production has perched up and the domestic spending has bounced back (*Astonishing Asian Rebound*). EU Trade Commissioner, Chris Patten, is of the view that “India is unstoppable ‘heavy weight’, ready to take the world by surprise”. Mr Vyacheslav Trubinkov, Ambassador of Russian Federation in India thinks, “post-globalization India has overstepped its role as a regional power and is now emerging as a global power”.

8. **Indian Scenarios and Visions of a Developed India.** In addition to Indian Planning Commission’s official *Long Term Perspective Plan of India*, there have been also other long term visions of India in the new Millennium. *Vision India 2020*, authored by the former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Dr. Rajan not only consists of the overall vision of the country in 2020, but also analysis and targets of the specific sectors of the economy. The authors argued that if the Government and others accept their analysis and targets set by them for different sectors, *India will be a developed nation by the year 2020*. But this scenario has become irrelevant for two reasons: one it was based on the assumption of continuing the planning growth rate of 5% per annum and second, it ignores completely the possible multi-faceted contribution of Indian Diaspora (*Foundation for Critical Choices for India: A Quarter Century of Service to India, 2008*). We, and some other keen observers of India feel that if the rate of foreign investment increases faster, the required economic reforms are introduced soon, economic and physical infrastructure is updated, the backlog which India has with regard to basic education, adult literacy, girls education, environmental sanitation is tackled on war footing, *India can achieve the status of a Developed nation earlier than 2020, may be by 2015*. Based on the recommendations of the Knowledge Commission, chaired by Dr. Sam Pitroda, to the Prime Minister, Government of India has already put their implementation in the fast track with accelerated presentation of many legislative measures like right to education, establishment of a large number of new world class universities, reform of the legal and trade system, etc.

8.1 India’s advantages in the Run to Global Status in Economy:

India had been very fortunate in inheriting at independence, a well developed system of political and economic governance (Pavan K. Verma, 2004). Few people know that the second Stock Exchange in the world was established in Bombay (Mumbai), the first one was in London. Mumbai was also the second city in the world to have electricity after Paris and London. Private banks and Reserve Bank existed for long in colonial

period also, already more than half of the senior Administrative Cadre was *Indianised*, a number of well organized local ownership enterprises existed in major sectors like textiles, sugar production, iron and steel, bicycles, tractor and auto industry, tea, coffee and other plantation products, paper and pulp, basic medicines, film making, cement, etc. to which, were added engineering, aircraft, heavy chemicals, fertilizers, aluminium, copper cables, etc. Already in 1980s, India was considered one of the top 12 industrialized countries of the world. India has a tremendous labour reservoir of unskilled, semi-skilled and highly skilled labour, a large fleet of engineers of all types, India ranks 3rd in the world for number of graduates in science and technology, next to USA and Russia. India's largest middle class has also been commented upon by western experts. The impact of increased consumption of high price, high quality goods is already seen and with increase in purchasing power of the rural masses, India will also be able to sustain the level of economy mostly on the basis of consumer spending, as in the USA. Although many industrialized countries in the world have to face increasing problems of sustaining expenditure on old age pension and health problems of aged, India is very lucky that for a long period the increasing labour market of young and the middle aged persons, will take care of it without burdening the state finances too much. Already, *India ranks as the 4th biggest economy in the world using purchasing power criterion. The strength of Indian Rupee has also been more or less stable, and foreign exchange reserve is very high.* Possibilities of outsourcing in manufacturing, service sector, education and training, research and development, maintenance of aircrafts, are considerable, with further economic liberalization, both indirect and direct foreign investment can increase further and possibly its status in the world economy can move to the 3rd place after US and China by 2050 (Mc Kinsey Study 2003). Instead of speculating further when this will happen, we will move to other sectors of global power leadership such as, political governance, military power and what is typical to India the *Soft Power*.

- 9. Political and Diplomatic Power of India:** As future global power, attention is often focused on India's political system and process. As already stated in the introduction, all concerned appreciate India's status as the largest democracy in the world. Despite the divisions of religion, caste, language, economic status, India has been successful in maintaining the democratic and secular nature of the country. Except for a brief period in mid-1970s when parliamentary system was compromised, in all its 62 years of Independence, it has taken pains to observe all requirements of a democratic system. Elections are held periodically, power changes hands on the basis of people's verdict. There exists an Independent Election Commission, independent judiciary, freedom for anyone fulfilling minimum criteria to contest elections to local, regional and national legislatures. Executive is accountable to legislature and to people at large. There is considerable decentralization of power at sub-state level to the districts and *panchayats*. There is a reservation of seats for the

disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities like Anglo-Indian Christians, women, etc. In this context *recently India has reserved 50% of the seats in panchayats for women*. At most national elections observers from other countries, researchers and newspaper correspondents, have free access to the process and its outcome.

10. Maturity of Indian Democracy: Everyone is aware that democracy as an ideal itself is not perfect but that is the best we know. Also that democratic maturity is a long drawn process. Even in Europe in some countries women have been given the franchise only recently. In parliaments of some of the European countries one sees occasionally the same scenes of disruption, throwing of chairs by members against each other, as is considered a common characteristic of legislatures in developing countries. The process becomes more difficult for a country like India in the context of its being a secular country, with 4-5 major religions, hundreds of ethnic groups, 15 main and many other languages and dialects, contrast of some very rich people and the biggest group of people living under poverty line in the world. Nevertheless, Indians have taken to democracy and politics as a fish to water. At the last general elections for the central parliament there were more than 1500 candidates for 530 seats, there are 7 national and 40 state level registered and 730 unrecognized, registered political parties published by the Election Commission in 2005. Thirty-five years after independence the Congress Party, and soon thereafter the opposition party Bharatiya Janata Party, lost their hold over the electorate. Since then the country has seen now two successful Coalition Governments of NDA and UPA with, one of the two major parties forming the government with the help of number of regional (state) parties and independent candidates represented in the Lok Sabha. In India the Communist Party was recognized as the Opposition party in the First Lok Sabha, though now it is split into CPI (M) and CPI, their appeal to voters has been restricted to the States of Kerala and the West Bengal. They have functioned all along within the constitutional and legal framework. They participated also in the Congress led Coalition Government of the UPA, but towards the end withdrew their support. In India all political parties need recognition by the Election Commission and all candidates have to provide in advance a statement of their assets and take an oath of holding up the Constitution and in particular the secular nature of the country.

11. Political Leverage of India as a Democracy: Most global powers and other countries also, hold India in awe and its moral leverage vis-à-vis other countries, particularly other developing countries, is high. Often the Indian Election Commission is invited by some of the African countries to help them in holding elections there. The Constituent Assembly of South Africa looked extensively at India's Constitution and process of making it. Like parliaments of many Western countries, parliamentary debates are televised; there is a fierce reporting and commenting on parliament's handling of important, sensitive issues like terrorism, nuclear power deals,

and/or major lapses by state institutions, etc. The recent act of Right to Information (RTI) has put all government institutions and political leaders on their toes. It is gratifying to note that in the present Cabinet, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has not allowed anyone with a criminal record to join the Council of Ministers. Although, Indian legislation does not require any specific educational qualification for a candidate, it is heartening to note that the proportion of matriculates and higher educated has increased visibly in the 15th Lok Sabha, so also representation of women and youth. Although, there are still some lingering problems of governance, particularly at the local level, but there is nothing which takes away the mature nature of its democracy. In this context it is important to note that someone who wishes to join the club of global powers, need to conform to the highest demands of governance for a global leader. Failure to do so stood against the OECD membership of some South East Asian countries. Already some prominent Indian political leaders have become global icons like Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, etc.

12. Military Power of India: Even during the colonial period the Indian Army played an important role in the Second World War in the European war theater. Right from the independence, India provided and observed meticulously the subordination of military to civilian leadership, and it goes to the credit of the Indian military establishment that they have also observed it very meticulously, participated extensively in India's development process, and extended help in the national calamities. In all its history, India never tried to add any territory by external conquest. In general, it follows Mahatma Gandhi's message of *non-violence* and moral protest. However, it has been compelled by some of its neighbours, and the changing world order to develop its defense against invaders from outside the border (this has happened a few times since independence) and changing international scene. Today, probably India has the third or fourth largest military power, next to US, Russia and China. It is one of the 7 space powers, and also one of the countries with nuclear weapons (Chellany, 1999). As regards the nuclear weapons, India on its own accord, announced that "It is not a first strike country". Besides that, the use of its army outside its borders, this has been mostly on United Nations Peace Force Missions in some of the warring countries. In view of the considerable increase in the defense expenditure and acquisition of modern cannons, fighters, frigates and submarines by its neighbours, and the increasing threat of terrorism from air and water, in addition to land, India is strengthening its preventive power. All global powers at present recognize the crucial and strategic role which India can play in preventing regional and, if need be, also global military confrontations. It is in this context that India's membership of Security Council is justified.

12.1 India's Soft Power: What distinguishes India's claim to global leadership is its unique, unobtrusive, persuasive "soft power". Steven Cohen calls it "Reputational Power". This word was coined by Professor Nye of Harvard University, which refers to not really "power" or

“authority” but an “influence” over other people, their behaviour, habits, tastes, and way of life. He defines it as “the ability to get what you want through *attraction* rather than coercion or payments” (Joseph Nye, 2004, p. x). Further “Soft power” rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others (p.5). In the context of globalization, Nye identifies three main sources of soft power of a country, namely its culture, its political values, and its foreign policies. All Major Global Powers also score higher on soft power and Nye includes both India and China also with considerable potential soft power, with a higher probability of success for India due to its grand democratic experiment. You do not see it, you cannot ascribe it to any specific source, a person or an institution but it is a sum total of how other people see India as an ancient society with world wisdom, tolerance and moral authority derived from its culture, history and its world view. In his path breaking book *TRIBES: How Race, Religion, and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy* (1993), Joel Kotkin includes Indians and Chinese, along with Anglo-Saxons, Jews and Russians, which have shown attributes of *becoming global force*. Indians living abroad are considered by some people as “*real global citizens*”. Since the days of Swami Vivekanand who mesmerized the American people with his message of peace, tolerance and personal development, there has been a lot of proliferation of various Indian institutions abroad.

10.2 Public Diplomacy: The concept of *Public Diplomacy* follows from the concept of soft power. International politics is competition in credibility in which every nation tries to project an attractive image to others through information, diplomatic representations and other means. However, there are often limitations to these and hence the need for other cultural, educational, recreational, unobtrusive means for image building and image projection abroad. Striking examples are institutions of world fame and global icons, such as *Fulbright Fellowship, Hollywood, Bollywood, CNN, BBC, Oxford, Harvard, Yoga, Kungfu, Hamburger, Pizza, French Campaign and Scotch Whisky, Shaharukh Khan, Ben Aflek, Aishwarya Rai, Kate Winston, etc.* Realizing the potential of *public diplomacy as a strong supplement to diplomatic means*, the State Department of US has a special Division of Public Diplomacy. Nye and some others also see a big and effective role for non-state actors and Diasporas in exercise of public diplomacy (Steven Vertovec, 2005). In this regard note this comment from Shashi Tharoor: “*The most important asset for India in Afghanistan does not come out of our diplomacy but from one simple fact: Don’t try to telephone an Afghan at 8.30 in the evening when Indian opera “Kyunki Saas Kabhi Bahu Thi” dubbed into Dari, is telecast on Tolo TV, and no one wishes to miss it.*” (Times of India, 28 Jan. 2009). It is in this context that countries with sizable Diaspora have started looking at their potential, not merely for much needed remittances but more importantly as a partner in development in a comprehensive sense.

13. Religion: Many westerners find Hindu religion a very open, peaceful and a faith tolerant of other religions. Unlike in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,

there is no *One God* and no *One authoritative institution* like Church; Hindus can believe in any One of the thousands of gods. Increasingly the ritual part is getting reduced and the morals, principles part is increasing. What appeals to foreigners is that Indian temples are open to all, even to the followers of other faiths, and Hinduism basically does not encourage conversion. Some state that the only secular religion is Hinduism. There are different groups and cults in Indian religion and some of them have their presence in other countries also. Famous among them are Ramakrishna Missions, Arya Samaj and Sanathan Dharm Temples, Gurudwaras in countries like USA, UK, South Africa, Canada, Caribbean, etc. Some of the male and female Gurus who regularly visited countries abroad for lectures are: Rajnish, Swami Ramdas, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Guru Ma, Nirmala Devi, etc. The emphasis of most of these visitors abroad is on spiritualism, rather than on religion *per se*, on yoga, vegetarian food, meditation, mental peace. These unobtrusive messages appeal to a large number of young and old people in the West who find it a good respite from the daily work, family and health worries, inability to concentrate, etc. Recently in an article in Newsweek (Aug. 24-31 2009) entitled “We Are All Hindus”, American writer Lisa Miller states: “A million plus Hindus live in the United States, a fraction of the billion who live on earth. But recent poll data show that conceptually, at least, we are slowly becoming more like Hindus and less like traditional Christians in the ways we think about God, our selves, each other, and eternity. In support, she further states that “thirty percent of Americans call themselves ‘spiritual’, not ‘religious’, and “more than a third of Americans now choose cremation”.

14. **Yoga:** Interest in the Indian Yoga system of mental and physical development is increasing all over the world. Training institutes/centres for Yoga are to be seen in almost all countries of Europe, in United States, many nations of South America, in Africa, as well as in Australia. A large number of ordinary people as well as highly accomplished elites have adopted Yoga routines in their lives. Many people visit India to attend well known institutions of Yoga to gain peace of mind, putting body in shape and learn how to meditate and concentrate one’s mind power. The emphasis in genuine Yoga training is on “spirituality” and not on religion. Hence, followers of Yoga are from different religions. In the West some of the leading politicians, film stars, industrialists, musicians, physicians, follow Yoga. It is entirely individual, non-violent and least costly system of physical fitness. Association with Yoga leads to discovering more dimensions of Indian society and culture, politics, music.
15. **Bollywood:** Indian films and increasingly Indian TV serials are getting popular in many countries in Europe, Africa, Middle East and USA. Indian Film industry with its main centre in Mumbai (Bombay) is very old. Films were screened in Mumbai since July, 1895. Today India produces more than 1,000 films in Hindi and other languages, *per annum*, more than what Hollywood does. For Indians, wherever they are, in India or abroad, Indian

films are the most popular means of entertainment. In many Middle Eastern and African countries, Indian films are dubbed or shown with local language subtitles. Indian male and female film stars like Amitabh Bachhan, Shahrukh Khan, Hritik Roshan, Amir Khan, Aishwarya Rai, Shilpa Shetty, Shabana Azmi, are invited as judges or as prominent guests at international film festivals. Recognizing the important role which the film media in general and some of its icons play in projecting India abroad, some of them like Amitabh Bachhan and Shahrukh Khan, are bestowed honorary doctorates by well known European/American universities. In addition to providing employment to a large number of people in India and contributing significantly to export earnings, Indian films have become also a representation of modern India: its joys, sorrows and social problems. Increasingly, there is a trend to make some Indian films in English language for both internal and external market. Many show business people in Europe and Hollywood have started investing in Indian films and TV Serials. Selection of the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, and grant of many Oscars to it including for the best fusion music by A.R. Rahman, finally recognized the hidden, *soft power* of Bollywood.

- 16. Indian Fashions:** Interest in Indian clothing, textiles and fashions is not new. Even in 50s and 60s, *Nehru Sherwani* became quite popular in Europe and America, many European tourists visiting India got for themselves male and female office suits, silk garments and delicately embroidered clothing, made.

Some of the Indian fashion designers set up their stores in Paris, London, New York, Dubai and/or Abu Dhabi. Many famous Hollywood personalities wear dresses made by Indian designers at their marriage, at Oscar and other events.

Some of the Indian Diaspora members in Europe have also popularized their designs like the House of Mexx. A recent special issue of Time on “Fashion’s New Attitude” (April 2009) hinted at more demand in luxury market for African and Asian designs and materials to sustain economic downturn. At the level of general population also, the Indian *Pashmina* Shawls and richly embroidered male long shirts are becoming popular. Also selection of a relatively large number of Indian beauties as “Miss Universe” or “Miss World” etc in international competitions, is another example of the *brand India products* (Rangnekar, 2005).

- 17. Indian Cuisine:** The way to the heart of people is through their stomach, they say! Indian cuisine, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian is becoming popular very fast. The “*curry appeal*” is irresistible. Number of Indian restaurants in major cities of Europe is increasing rapidly accounting for employment of a large number of people, considerable import of Indian grains, lentils, condiments and other ingredients from India. Many social, economic and political elites in Europe are often seen at some of the posh Indian restaurants along with their families. It is not a surprise that “*Chicken Tikka Masala*” has become Britain’s main dish. Many Indian restaurants display paintings by famous Indian artists and often the guests

are treated to a display of Indian music and dance. Recently, a famous “Kabab” specialist in London has announced a franchise for his recipe, (Mc Donald, *be aware!*). In America not only that they have monopolized the *motels* and *donut chains*, but now a *Dosa-Idli* franchise can also be seen in some cities of USA; if pizza has already replaced hamburger as the most popular global dish, can *Masala Dosa* be far behind!

18. **Indian Music:** Both Indian Classical and Pop Music is becoming very popular in Europe, America and night clubs in some African, Middle Eastern countries. *Ravi Shanker's* Sitar music is very popular in America, there is also a big following in America and Europe for Zakir Hussain's percussion themes; for *Bhangra* music, rhythm and dance. Increasingly the Indian film artists' shows and music concerts are attended by many non-Indians! At music and dance schools run by Indian artists for members of local Indian community, increasingly children and youth from other communities can also be seen!
19. **Indian literature:** Knowledge and command over English language have given Indians a head start *vis-à-vis* other immigrant groups in America and Europe. Both in England and USA, Indian correspondents of influential newspapers and periodicals like New York Times, Time Magazine, are prominent, and also anchors of CNN, BBC News Service. A relatively large number of Indian writers, who have received the Man Booker and Pulitzer Prizes, has also, added to the many facets of increasing appeal to India at international level. Indian media is among the oldest in the world also. Indian media started in 1780 and radio broadcasting in 1927. As of 2007, 79 million copies of newspapers are circulated daily. India is the second largest newspaper market in the world. In 2008, India had 60,000,000 internet users, and the country ranks 8th in the world by number of TV stations.
20. **Conclusion:** In 62 years after Independence, India has made tremendous progress in all most all sectors of the society. In comparison to its immediate neighbours and most other developing countries, India has already established itself as a worthwhile member of the Global Community.

Part II

India emerging as a Global Power: Role of Indian Diaspora

21. 1 Stephen Cohen in his book *Emerging Power India*, pays a glowing tribute to Indian Diaspora in USA, in effective lobbying for India and in improving considerably the dialogue and discussion on India in US political institutions. Of course Indian Diaspora in US is not only 2 million strong but also consisting of highly educated and experienced professionals. This is also applicable to Indian Diaspora in England, Australia, Canada (and all other countries with English language at the local levels). That in other countries, despite language and other problems,

has equally been active in improving image of India at popular level, making relations between the host country and India more diverse and fruitful, and contributing to India's development through different channels. However, as stated in the introduction, the potential scope of Indian Diaspora's contribution, particularly in India becoming a Global Power can be considerable, but a very little of this potential is being used at present. The Indian Diaspora are very appreciative of a number of diverse activities which the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) has undertaken since its creation, such as bringing together members of world-wide community of NRIs/PIOs once a year in India at the *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* and also now in countries abroad where there is a greater concentration of them (America, Singapore and now Europe including the Netherlands), creation of an insurance programme for Indians working in the Gulf countries, publication of a periodical on Diaspora Affairs, setting up of India Development Fund, creation of database for Overseas Indians, a Facilitation Centre in New Delhi, etc. We also appreciate Government of India's facilities and incentives for investment, introduction of PIO card, grant of Overseas Citizenship, announcement by the Prime Minister of the grant of voting rights to NRIs and setting up a High Level Advisory Committee of NRIs/PIOs to advise him on important Diaspora policy issues.

21.2 Indian Diaspora in Europe: The size and variety of Indian Diaspora in Europe is increasing fast. Today, there are more than 2 million of them, spread over 18 countries. On the one hand there is the old Diaspora group of 1.6 million in the UK where the Diaspora members have achieved great success in all sectors of the of the country; on the other hand there are also small groups of few thousands in countries like Finland, Italy, Spain and Poland, where due to recent arrivals and language difficulties, achievements have been relatively limited. However, amongst them are senior politicians, leading entrepreneurs, scientists, doctors, academics, attorneys and lawyers, skilled workers, religious and spiritual leaders, community leaders, media specialists, etc. Their past performance through remittances, transfer of resources, technology, promotion of Indian exports, contributions to charitable establishments, support to small projects through NGOs, etc., is no less than that of Diaspora from other regions. Also, the future scope for their contribution is tremendous, provided some institutional measures are undertaken to bring them together and pool their sources.

21.3 Potential Contribution of European Indian Diaspora:

“Remittances are not the only instrument of Diaspora contribution. They can be a major source of Direct Foreign Investment (FDI), market development (outsourcing), technology transfer, philanthropy, tourism, political contributions and more tangible flows of knowledge, new attitudes and cultural influence.” (Kathleen Newland, “Beyond Remittances: The Role of Diaspora in Poverty Reduction in Countries of Their Origin”, *Migration Policy Institute, Washington, July 2004*). There

is no up-to-date estimate of Indian Diaspora resources but an estimate in 2000 stated that “The economic output of NRIs/PIOs was estimated US \$400 billion, almost the same as total GDP of India.” Today’s estimate may be US \$600 billion. As Pavan Verma observes, “*Indian Diaspora in USA has emerged as that country’s richest immigrant community, with nearly 200,000 millionaires*” (2004, p.200).

At the international level also, there is a trend now for *social remittances connoting Diaspora contributions in wider fields of health, education, environment energy, municipal management, traffic management, etc.* Canadian Indian Diaspora also emphasize the need for “Diasporic transition to a Cultural force and “establishing Indian Heritage in Global Space” (Sushma Verma and Radhika Seshan, 2003).

Recently, there have been some country wise and comparative studies of different Diasporas, specially in the context of their contribution to the development of motherland, by World Bank (*Role of Diaspora Networks as Development Springboards*), social science teachers and researchers and Special Commissions set up by the mother countries. Probably Diaspora can also play a role to fight the present global economic downturn (Sunil Prasad “Indian Diaspora can help India fight the global economic downturn”; June 5, 2009 address to GOPIO Meet, Brussels, July 7 2009). Recently, there has been considerable rethinking world wide, about widening the contribution of Diasporas in development. In most comparative studies, India and China are singled out for country comparisons but otherwise Diaspora policies of other countries like Mexico (more than 5 million Mexicans in USA), Philippines, Nigeria, East European countries (like Poland and Slovenia), Bangladesh, etc. are also examined in this context. Although the main focus in all of them in the beginning has been on regular remittances to motherland which often are not sent through official channels, they end in conspicuous consumption, on housing by the families of Diaspora, and the impact of remittances, though very high in amount (total remittances by Indian Diaspora more than US \$6 billion) on development is limited. As a result, World Bank and some of the donors started thinking of ways and means of involving the Diasporas more substantively in the development process of their countries, through their involvement in the planning and implementation of various projects. Mexico organized City Oriented Groups of Diaspora in US and other countries who hailed from a particular city or a region. Some countries associated Diaspora of a particular country to accompany the Head of State or other important political leaders, on official visits to countries of their origin (During President Clinton’s visit to India, there were quite a few Indian Diaspora members accompanying him), development assistance ministries/agencies used the Diaspora on some of the major projects in their countries), well known NGOs also used them as consultants, and also to seek financial support. Based on some of these experiments and ideas, an analysis of the Indian Diaspora, its strengths and

weaknesses, and the ways and means in which their involvement can be increased, are given below:

22. Suggestions and recommendations:

(i) Diaspora Advisory Committees for crucial Ministries in Centere/States

We think for greater involvement of Indian Diaspora in different economic sectors and in different parts of India, *Advisory Committees in crucial Central Ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Education, Health, Water Development, Law, Science and Technology, and agencies like Planning Commission should be established to which specific individuals can be appointed in consultation with the local Indian embassy. Also, on the pattern of the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee at the Centre, in the states also a Diaspora Advisory Committee to Chief Minister, with substantive number of Diaspora abroad as members should be appointed. Procedural, financial and other aspects can be worked out later.*

(ii) Diaspora Councils abroad in countries with greater Diaspora presence:

At the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, in January 2009, Former Ambassador of India to Canada and at present permanent resident of that country, Mr Kant K. Bhargava, made a suggestion to set up Diaspora Councils whose main objective will be “to facilitate sustained and tangible progress in India’s relationships with host countries that will lead to mutual benefits. Through it, the Diaspora can play its dual role of advisory and advocacy”. Another role which they can perform is to optimize their potential to build bridges between India and various regions in the world. One example of such a body is that of the *American Council*. Care should be taken to have representation of different professional fields, women, and regions of India in its membership. Such Diaspora councils can initially be established on an experimental basis in countries like the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland with a dynamic chairperson. Setting up of a Country or Region Internet Network of Diaspora, will be helpful in virtual interaction.

(iii) Increased foreign direct investment by Indian Diaspora

Often comparison is made by researchers and others between Indian and Chinese Diasporas and surprise is expressed why foreign direct investment by the Indian Diasporas is merely 5% of FDI, whereas that of Chinese is much greater both I percentage and the absolute amount. Our view is that this is not due to lack of potential of Indian Diaspora, which is quite great. Though, it is difficult to estimate investible funds of Indian Diaspora, many Indian entrepreneurs have invested in other countries extensively, and there is no reason, given the necessary climate and opportunities they would also invest much more than the present situation. Some of the barriers which deter other foreign investors, may also be the factors why the Diaspora entrepreneurs are not coming forward.

Other reasons why comparison with China is not realistic is that China started process of economic liberalization two decades earlier than India: China has a large and wealthy Diaspora in neighbouring countries who, taking advantage of liberalization, invested heavily in small, medium and even heavy industries in China, Chinese Government provided representation to the Diaspora in its parliament where they could safeguard their interests. In comparison Indian Diaspora consists of all categories but a large number, especially in Gulf countries are workers and lower/middle level service personnel. However, Diaspora in America, Canada, Europe are different with a large number of professionals (doctors, engineers, scientists, international finance, marketing experts, academics) with high salaries and their wealth is substantial. One indirect measure of this is the fact in the USA, that for financial support to the Presidential candidates of both the Republican and Democratic parties, not the first, but the second group of financial supports are American Indians! India need not have an inferiority complex. Most Diaspora-owned business enterprises of China are from neighbouring countries, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, whereas Indians have managed to set up a number of firms in the most cutting edge, knowledge based industries (software, Infosys, Wipro, and in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, Ranbaxy and Dr. Reddy's Labs). In 2002, World Rankings of Forbes 200, (an annual ranking of the world's best small companies) included 13 Indian firms, but just 4 from mainland China. China has suppressed its own private sector and boosted its big public enterprises. But China has been bolder with external reforms (Huang and Khanna, 2003). On a long term perspective also, Indian growth can be sustained on personal consumption which is 67% of GDP, only US is higher with 70%, but China's is only 42%.

(iv) Increased Diaspora involvement with the Ministry of Finance and India Investment Centres abroad:

It will help in analyzing the reasons why more FDI investment is not forthcoming. Also, Indian entrepreneurs/investors could be consulted in the process of privatization of public enterprises. So far, Govt. of India's interest has been mostly on bulky, major investments in new or existing enterprises. An interesting lesson from China is that initially, the Chinese Govt. allowed Diaspora investments in small local level activities for which decision-making was decentralized to local governments.

(v) Diaspora Involvement in some major problem areas of India:

The high level knowledge, technical expertise and practical experience of many members of Indian Diaspora can be useful to India in some priority sectors or problem areas *such as Energy, urban infrastructure(mega projects), water development and poverty alleviation programmes.*

We would like to suggest that to start with this may be done in two sectors or areas, namely ***energy and poverty alleviation***. In both these areas already

there are national and state plans but the Indian Diaspora should be given a chance to make a visible contribution to this, based on their experience in other countries, their familiarity with the Indian scene, and innovation and creativity which comes with different experiences. This can take shape *by Diaspora in a specific country selects itself or GOI allocates to them a sector and a region where they can visibly show their value added. For example, the Diaspora in England and France may be allocated Energy Sector in UP/Bihar, those in the Netherlands, Switzerland, may be allocated Poverty Alleviation in Maharashtra, Gujarat.*

(vi) Major Diaspora Associations for Big Cities:

Based on what has been a big success in Mexico, City Associations of Diaspora for big cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Lucknow, Amritsar, Kanpur, Ahmedabad, Srinagar, Gauhati, etc. should be encouraged to mobilize their financial, intellectual and professional resources for betterment of their metropolis. One can identify with his city/town much more than the entire state/region. Also, problems of coordination with local authorities are simplified and visible results can be seen in a short time in areas like reduction of traffic accidents, improvement of environmental hygiene, improvement of water supply, safety on roads, etc.

(vii) Utilization of expert advice and experience of retired members of NRI/PIO community:

The number of retired members of the community is increasing in most countries of Europe. Many of them have higher qualifications and considerable international experience in areas vital to India's economic and social development. Many of them are in good health and able to spend longer periods of time on improvement of specific policies, work on projects, render consultancy advice, provide on the spot training in new techniques or in ways of doing things. This happens now but on a very small scale and not in a institutionalized way. Here in the Netherlands, the Dutch Government has created a special organization "PUM", which makes available to developing countries Dutch retired experts at a very small cost. A similar organization can be created in MOIA to tap this vast reservoir of knowledge and experience at a nominal cost.

Data base for this can be created by Indian Diaspora organizations in different countries and made available to MOIA.

(viii) More visible involvement of Indian Diaspora in the planning and Development process in the country:

We think to leverage the Diaspora factor effectively; it is *desirable to make their involvement more regular and visible*. To this effect, following suggestions are made:

- A separate chapter in the Five Year Plans of India and the states on contributions of Diaspora in different sectors through government, private and voluntary organizations;
- Where relevant appointment of Diaspora experts as advisory members of high level committees/commissions established by the Government of India/States.

(ix) Representation of NRI/PIO Community in legislature:

Foundation had already in 1980s made specific proposals to appoint some representatives of the community in *Lok Sabha* and *Rajya Sabha*. FCCI has highlighted these issues in its latest publication (*FCCI: A Quarter Century of Service to India, 2008*). It would be proper here to recall that Mexico is leader in “Diaspora Options” that provides representation to them in the national legislature. Both the PRC and Taiwan have representation of their Diaspora in their national legislatures. Some of the East European countries have also followed this practice. Croatia has allotted 12 out of 120 seats to overseas Croats - more than those allocated to other ethnic minorities, so also has Armenia.

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