

Organised by



ReddyJana Sangha First Grade College

Permanently Affiliated to Bangalore University | Accredited by NAAC | 2F and 12 B recognised by UGC, ACT OF 1956.

No. 1, Mahayogi Vemana Road, 16th Main,
Kormangala 3rd Block, Bengaluru - 34.

Phone : 080 25525534 | Email : rjsfgc@yahoo.com | Website : www.rjsfgc.edu.in

Proceedings of International Conference on

“India and Its Diaspora Engagement: Comparative Global Practices”

ISBN : 978-81-929698-4-8

Edited By

Date : 12th January 2017

Dr. Vijaya Reddy & Ms. Jyothi R.

Venue : KRJS MC Hall

DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES-A CASE STUDY APPROACH

DR. R PARVATHI¹

B RAMMYA²

Abstract

Diaspora is a term which refers to community of people who have moved out from their home country for seeking economic opportunities. Diasporas play an exorbitant role in the development of nation's capacity building as well as economic growth and development. They help in many aspects like promoting trade, investment, cultural exchange, spur entrepreneurship, brand nations and many other things. But in the course of all these positive implications they also face challenges and problems. The researcher aims to understand the Diaspora engagement and its economic opportunities and experiences through a case study approach. The researcher proposes to collect information from 2 respondents through personal interview and arrive at a conclusion on their experiences on Diaspora engagement. Also analyse and understand the problems and challenges associated with engagement and try to arrive at some amicable solution.

Key words: Diaspora engagement, opportunities, experiences, problems and challenges.

Introduction:

DIASPORA MEANING

A Diaspora is a large group of people with a similar heritage or homeland who have since moved out to places all over the world. The term diaspora comes from an ancient Greek word meaning "to scatter about." And that's exactly what the people of a diaspora do — they scatter from their homeland to places across the globe, spreading their culture as they go.

The Indian Diaspora is a generic term to describe the people who migrated from territories that are currently within the borders of the Republic of India. It also refers to their descendants. The Diaspora is currently estimated to number over twenty million

A simple term, the source of any Diaspora is migration. Migration, a fundamentally essential ingredient of global social change and economic activity. It is a phenomenon that has been taking place for thousands of years and continues all over the world. It happens when people can no longer sustain themselves within their own milieu and they migrate to places where resources are more easily available. In earlier periods, people migrated from one place to another in search of food, shelter, and safety from persecution. Today, people tend to migrate in search of better career opportunities and a better quality of life. The statistics states that, there are 14.2 million Indian migrants worldwide; after the United Arab Emirates (2,852,000), the United States (2,061,000) is the second-most common destination. Other popular destinations include Saudi Arabia (1,762,000), Pakistan (1,396,000), Nepal (810,000), and the United Kingdom (756,000), according to mid-2013 estimates by the United Nations Population Division.

Diasporas can play an important role in the economic development of their countries of origin which in return helps in standard of living of individual and group. Beyond their well-known role as senders of remittances, Diasporas can also promote trade and foreign direct investment, create businesses and spur entrepreneurship, and transfer new knowledge and skills. Although some

-
1. Academic Director, VET FGC, J P Nagar, Bangalore
 2. Asst. Prof, VET FGC, J P Nagar, Bangalore

policy-makers see their nationals abroad as a loss, they are increasingly realizing that an engaged Diaspora can be an asset — or even a counterweight to the emigration of skilled and talented migrants.

Diaspora engagement: Governments at both ends of the migration cycle increasingly recognize the value that Diaspora populations bring to development efforts and are seeking ways to magnify the human capital and financial resources that emigrants and their descendants contribute to development in their countries of origin. Beyond the remittances they generate, Diaspora members fulfill a key development role in their countries of origin: as major donors, investors in critical and emerging industries, generous philanthropists and first movers in the growth of important sectors such as tourism, and in the development of human capital.

Functions of Diaspora engagement

1. To coordinate the development, implementation and review of Diaspora focused policies, legislation and ensure the incorporation in national development frameworks;
2. To sensitize and promote the understanding of the role of the Diaspora in the development of the country;
3. To develop and maintain a database for the Diaspora;
4. To provide technical advice to Diaspora participation in relevant sector in the country;
5. To coordinate and sensitise the participation of MDAs and Non-State Actors in activities relating to the Diaspora;
6. To facilitate and advise the Diaspora to access investment opportunities in the country;
7. To coordinate with other entities initiatives geared towards the promotion and protection of the welfare of the Diaspora; and
8. To coordinate labour arrangements and agreements with other countries with a view to promoting and secure decent international employment for qualified Tanzanian candidates.

Opportunities:

1. Enhance business and industrial growth.
2. Enhance international capital investment.
3. Enhance national economic development projects through skilled individuals.
4. Enhance foreign exchange reserves of the country.
5. Enhance employment opportunities deploying technical and managerial talents.
6. Enhancing growth and development of the nation.
7. Creating brand image for the brand.
8. Enhancing soft power and smart power of the country.
9. Enhancing global network.
10. Identifying new markets.
11. Enhancing international relationship.
12. Enhancing CSR projects.

Objective of the Study

- To understand the economic opportunities of Diaspora engagement
- To study the experiences of individuals in Diaspora engagement
- To arrive at the conclusion about the opportunities and experiences of Diaspora engagement

Methodology:

The researchers have collected both primary and secondary data from 2 individuals. The data has been collected through personal interview by the researcher. The researcher proposes to use the case study method for the study.

Sample Size:

The sample size is 2 respondents. One respondent migrated permanently and the other visits different countries for various reasons mainly with economic activity.

Sampling method:

Personal Interview through telephonic conversation, e-mails, whatsapp and video calling.

Scope:

The scope of the study is restricted to two individuals and their experiences on engagement opportunities and challenges. Since the sample size is two, the experiences of two individuals cannot be generalized.

Limitation:

1. As the study is restricted to case study of two individuals of IT professionals, the result cannot be generalized for all.
2. Diaspora has come to refer particularly to historical mass dispersions of an involuntary nature but article is restricted to economic activity of two individuals.

Case Study 1

As an IT professional, he has travelled to many European countries from 2012. He would like to share my bit of experience how our culture and way of work differs compared to European way.

His first travel was back in 2012 to England, when he landed in the airport first thing one has to do is immigration check in order to work in that country for the specified time mentioned on our visa. He moved to one of the immigration officers (UK border security officers) where he asked him about his job and the company suddenly from nowhere he asked him a question that "Are you here to take a millions of pounds from our country?" he told him that he works in IT industry, he is here to make their society better by providing awesome software to you guys and he just smiled and stamped on his visa.

Heathrow airport is big maze it took almost 2 hours to complete the immigration check and to exit after collecting the baggage.

When he called the cab driver who was supposed to pick him and the cab driver was waiting for him in a different arrival point then the driver came to the place where he was waiting. The driver looked very professional and dressed in suite and it was a shocker for him to see normal people dressed in suite. Also the driver told him that he was late by 30 min and the driver said he will make the company to pay for it. One thing he came to know from this experience was time means money in abroad.

He stayed in a place called Milton Keynes which is 80KM from London, on that Night when he reached B&B it was around 11PM. He got in to a room to relax started to feel thirst waited and searched 1 hour to see where he can get drinking water then decided to give a call to one of his friend who was staying in UK from couple of years. The friend told him to walk in to washroom and take the water from there. He asked him whether he was sick, later the friend told him there is no difference between water which they get in washroom and drinking water. Yes that is true, water which they get in most part of Europe is pure.

Coming to office culture people are very professional they give equal importance to work and personal life. You don't generally see people working beyond 5'o clock in UK and also in Netherlands. One day when he was staying beyond 5 'o clock his manger walked up to his desk and asked him, why he was staying beyond 5'o clock? Did he fail to prioritize his tasks? Why are his team members not helping him? Usually if a person slogs beyond 5'o clock company has to pay overtime money which usually varies from 20 to 100 pounds per hour so company don't encourage its employees to do OT unless in some extreme situations.

Indians are treated very well at the office due to our technical skill but also people see us as a treat to their jobs which few people share when they become more comfortable talking to you.

One of his Indian manager was returning back to India after 10 year of staying in UK, he asked him a question why he is not planning to settle down permanently in UK, the manager replied an answer which is still echoing in his ears "Rather than being 2nd or 3rd grade citizen in 1st grade country (developed country) he would like to be first grade citizen in 2nd grade country (developing country)" this he also experienced firsthand after couple of months of his stay.

One thing he observed in Europe is that they prefer quality over the quantity they see what quality work we have delivered and they never compromise on quality.

At work place in European countries you generally see people who are aged more than 40 or 50 working as a normal developers(Entry level jobs) along with you, many people don't get in to the management role since there won't be much difference in salary .

One summer afternoon when they were travelling to a Scotland from England they came across huge traffic.He saw one empty lane and asked cab driver to hit that lane, He then started explaining me that it is called "hard shoulders" in UK and it is for purpose, Generally it is used by Ambulance or fire extinguisher to reach the accident site quickly and also it is for parking our vehicles when it is brakes down on the motor way (high way).Indeed he saw ambulances just moving in full speed in that lane after couple of mins.One thing he learnt out of it is people respect law and they are afraid to break the law for which they might have to face some serious consequences .

One day they visited a place called isle of weight where they were traveling to a beach location in a bus, One old person who was like around 80+ years sat next to him and he was going through some novel and after half an hour time they reached this beach location and they went to beach to relax. There he saw this old person wearing just shorts and taking sun bath and he was really surprised to see in such an old age celebrating every moment of his life.

In Netherlands there is a separate track for cycling next to side walk. Initially this was very much surprising for him since this is not normal in India, Here you see high profile people like politicians, CEO/MD of the company coming in cycling to their work location. Most efficient way of commuting short distance in Netherlands is by cycling (biking).He believes it is one of the safest place on earth to do cycling.

In Netherlands people can opt to work only 4 days a week usually weekend for most of the Dutch starts on Thursday evening itself.Dutch people have multiple hobbies starting from skiing to salsa.

One day he saw his colleague who is like 50 years old skating (roller skate) to office; he went to the skater and asked why is he skating to office instead of coming in car. He told me that it keeps him fresh mentally and physically throughout the day if he skates to office every day.

Netherland is a country where everything is legal (right from soft drugs to brothels) , He went to one of the senior person and asked him, why all the illegal things elsewhere in the world is legal in Netherlands?.He told me because of this our youth's don't get spoiled when you make something illegal people try to do it more and big mafia's get created around it since it is legal our youth try for 1 time and loose fun in it.

Case study 2

He came to the US on Jan 8, 1986. Initially was planning to return back to INDIA in 2 years. But

Destiny had other things in store for him and he decided to settle in the US, As he indicated that his original intention was to work in the US for a couple of years and return back to INDIA with the new experience of the outside world. So work was one reason and also another reason was

higher studies to go to an MBA school in the US

The personal experience after he landed in the US to say the least was like a story script right Out of a movie or should he say could be made into a movie. It had everything you name it that will be in a movie, suspense, mystery, action, excitement, fear, comedy to mention a few of the traits of a good movie except for romance which actually happened after the 'eagle landed' in New York JFK airport. Looking back at all the incidents that happened right after he saw the faces of his parents one last time as he passed through the Bombay airport makes him feel that everything is so pre-programmed in this universe and we are just actors acting it out even today. To elicit the chain of events right from the point he left Bombay around 2AM on Jan 7, 1986, the plane sat in the runway in New Delhi for 8 hours because of fog while his parents contemplating that he was somewhere over the Alps, he was actually just over Qutubminar. Then the plane leaves to Dubai and then to Heathrow London and on to NY JFK. Then the interesting set of things happened. The flight is obviously late by 8 hours and reaches at 2AM local time on Jan 8, 1986. When they are about to get out of the plane, they hear over the PA system that there is a bomb scare and everyone needs to get on the plane and have to identify their baggage as they are coming out. So by the time he came out to the terminal it was around 4AM. In the meantime the person who was supposed to receive him has not seen him. Those were the days when there were no phones or internet and all the other things that connect people even before they meet. So here he was coming to NYC about 9 hours late and he didn't even know how his receiving party, Pranav Shah, looked like and not even sure if he is going to be there because of the extensive delay. But thanks to Jet lag, he was in a daze and did not even fathom the seriousness of this problem. As he came out of the airport he was under the impression there will be a few Indians and it should be easy to ask each one of them whether they are waiting for me. Well to his surprise the whole airport was filled with Indians akin to coming out of Bombay airport. Hundreds of teeming Indian faces that he can't in his entire day go one by one and ask them if they are waiting to receive somebody by name Ram! However, Pranav was smart. He somehow quickly figured out how he may look based on some description he got from the employer and also checked on the delay of the flight and showed up when it was necessary. Finally they connected and they were able to chill out a bit in the airport before they left to the place that he would be staying for the night.

On the professional one, he had to get to work that day and since it happened to be a Friday, he was relieved to find out that people don't work on Saturdays in the US unlike we did in India. So it was a welcoming surprise. The first day at the office was extremely pleasant and quite different from it would be in India at that time. The office head took him around and introduced him to everyone on the floor personally. He thought that was quite an eye opening experience. In India the department head is not even seen by employees who have been working there and there was a strict hierarchical approach to everything. The US paradigm appealed to him a lot and right on the first day itself his idea about the US companies and their successes became quite apparent at the way they treated the employees and placed employees first before any title or hierarchy.

a. Few Positive points include:

- i. Value for employees
- ii. Value for people's time
- iii. Commitment and ownership
- iv. Respect to each other
- v. Lending an ear to everyone's opinion regardless of whether they are senior or junior member in the team
- vi. Willingness on everyone's part to put their personal ego aside for the sake of team success. This was a key to the success of America.
- vii. Be sincere and honest to oneself first and not just do something to please others
- viii. Take pride in whatever you do
- ix. Weekends off. Gives time to wind down and spend time with friends and family

b. Some of the Negative aspects were:

- i. Capitalistic short term goals and targets compromises the emotional aspects
- ii. Witnessed the stock market crash serious in October 1987 called 'BlackMonday.' Lot of people lost their livelihood and lives in some cases.
- iii. Relationships tended to be cursory. Required a bit of thawing time to establish good long term connections.
- iv. I felt people are more human in countries like India than in a fast-paced economy like the US. People get more selfish with their time and things! This phenomenon is plaguing India now!

b) After 5 years of stay there,

a. some Positive learnings include:

i. Understanding the culture more get to realize that the emotions and feelings are quite similar to any other human in other parts of the world. The way it is being expressed is different. The only thing is you have to look at it from another paradigm.

ii. Respect and value people's time.

iii. Commitment and ownership.

iv. Be sincere and honest to oneself first and not just do something to please others.

v. Take pride in whatever they do even if it means living on the street.

vi. Music and cultural understanding and able to blend in with the American culture.

vii. Also value importance of quality of what you do.

b. Few minus points to be done away with include:

i. Dysfunctional aspects of family.

ii. How people tend to get more selfish and possessive even to the extent of ignoring their own parents.

c) After 10 years of stay

a. few Positive aspects include:

i. Able to relate to the emotional side of the American people.

ii. Were able to blend the understanding of our own culture with the west.

iii. Became a different person from what he was growing up both in terms of tolerance on the personal and the professional end.

iv. Made some really great friends.

b. the Negative points include:

i. Fast paced society and wanting to come up with new things in a short time. Latching on to a 'Non Sustainable' approach. It feels like the screw is getting wound up tighter and tighter to make the wheel go faster. A bit scary at times because eventually such an approach will have a fatal breakdown.

ii. Greed and selfishness are on the rise. Possesiveness and localization has become important elements. The human aspect of respect is getting compromised and we see the uprising now with people like Trump getting elected.

iii. For him a compromise and diversion from Indian values and culture is something that he had

to barter in exchange for some of the positives that he acquired.

The most memorable event on the professional front, he enjoyed are professional front was to be written up and pictured on the January 9 2006 issue of the TIME Magazine for developing NOTION, the Best Software of the Year in the Music Performance and Generation field. TIME magazine Article: <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1145248,00.html>

TIME magazine Cover of the issue – Jan 9, 2006: <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/0,9263,7601060109,00.html>

Coincidentally it was EXACTLY 20 Years after he landed on the US Soil! There he went! That tells a great deal about the USA in terms of how you can come from being a complete 'nobody' aka 'alien' to be able to be on the prestigious TIME Magazine!

The worst experience faced is when they were trying to raise money for the Music software startup to build NOTION (above) and got rejected in the US about 200 times. In a country where he thought everything is awarded based on merit was clouded with the fact there is also a 'ground reality' here. It came down to who you knew even in the US!

And then they put all our money, sell everything we have, Jack (Lori's dad) pulls out ALL his retirement savings and they come to India, hire a software company to do the job and find out after 5 months that they just provided lip service. They lost all their money by then with just left for 1 more month of survival there. While he was contemplating coming back and making the money and sending to Lori and Jack in India for them to continue, unbeknownst to our expectation of India, through his brother's contact they were able to get the funding that they wanted in a matter of 'literally' 5 minutes! So the worst experience of total bankruptcy had to be traversed through to come to the other side of seeing the paradise. Good lesson learnt and good for everyone to know about!

Findings

Contribution to the other countries:

- i. The respondents were able to bring a new perspective to the people in the other countries
- ii. The respondents found a different way of approaching life using Indian values and cultures
- iii. On the business front the respondents were able to add brain value to corporations
- iv. The respondents were by doing multiple start-ups, were able to contribute to new innovations coming out of the US and also adding revenue stream as a result.
- v. The respondents learnt to respect time, value people, mingle with people alike irrespective of designation, punctuality among many more.

Contribution to the Home country India:

- i. The respondents were able to bring a different perspective to the people in India in terms of life in general and also quality of work.
- ii. The respondents were able to educate the folks about respecting others, ownership elements, communication and expression and finally placing importance in doing things with passion and interest.
- iii. They were able to bring business value and money in-flow into India as a result by setting up business in India and contributing to the export share of the Indian economy.
- iv. Creation of jobs and give opportunity to brilliant youngsters a chance to work on world class product creation, an opportunity to seldom have in India.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that Diaspora engagement is very fruitful and beneficial both from personal and professional fronts. There are lots of positives and negatives. The positive learnings include being professional, punctual, disciplined and so many other traits which can make the engagement beneficial to the home and away country alike.

References:

- <http://indiaamericatoday.com/article/indian-diaspora-past-present-and-future>. Indian American Times. Article | March 17, 2013 - 8:43pm | By Ashok Rao
- <http://www.migration.ox.ac.uk/odp/diasporas-emigration-states.shtml>.
- <http://www.foreign.go.tz/index.php/en/diaspora>. Diaspora Engagement and Opportunities
- Migrants as agents of development: Diaspora engagement discourse and practice in Europe, G Sinatti, C Horst - Ethnicities, 2014 - etn.sagepub.com
- The Diaspora solution to innovation capacity development: Immigrant entrepreneurs in the contemporary world, X Lin - Thunderbird International Business Review, 2010 - Wiley Online Library
- Regenerating Scholarly Capacity through Diaspora Engagement: The Case of A Ghana Diaspora Knowledge Network, WJ Tetey - Diasporas, Development and Governance, 2016 - Springer
- The Global Forum on Migration and Development and Diaspora Engagement, Irena Omelaniuk. Volume 5 of the series Global Migration Issues pp 19-32
- Diaspora engagement: need for paradigm shift – Indian perspective, AlopeKahali, Pages 1-24 | Received 05 Jul 2014, Accepted 01 Aug 2016, Published online: 14 Oct 2016, Diaspora Studies journal.
- Diaspora, Development and the Indian State, Amit Kumar Mishra, The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs, Volume 105, 2016 - Issue 6:Pg 701-721.