
A Comparative Analysis of Pakistani and Indian Diasporas in the West



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Abstract

Pakistani and Indian diasporas are gaining more importance as their respective countries strive for a new posture in the international arena. These diasporas enable their respective countries to project positive aspects abroad, build trust, and shape perceptions that could encourage cooperation from the international community. The Indian diaspora has a significant presence in Western governments, think tanks, media, corporate businesses, and universities to influence policymakers in favour of New Delhi as compared to the Pakistani diaspora, which is missing from such important forums. Despite tremendous potential, the Pakistani diaspora in the West is disorganised and directionless. The potential of the Pakistani diaspora has been underutilised, causing a vacuum and delinking the efforts of Pakistan from its diaspora abroad vis-à-vis matters relating to Pakistan in an institutionalised way that may have steadily helped in flexing muscles on the diplomatic horizon. Little attention has been given in Pakistani literature to utilising the potential of the Pakistani diaspora, especially for narrative building, which is impacting Pakistan's image at the international level. Qualitative research based on a secondary but scientific review of academic sources is used to explore how the Indian diaspora is successfully strengthening positive aspects, building trust and shaping perceptions of India abroad, and how the Pakistani diaspora can play an effective role in cementing mutually beneficial relations with the outside world.

Keywords: India, Pakistan, diaspora, comparison in the West, US-India Political Action Committee (USINPAC), lobbying

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Introduction

Diasporas are groups of people who originate from a common homeland or culture and strongly align themselves with a shared cause, especially while residing outside their ancestral country. They form an organic entity while stationed abroad and are closely interlinked when it comes to protecting the rights of their fellow colleagues and homeland. This is why they inevitably contribute to the economy of their home country and help in ushering development and goodwill. Diasporas also work for immigrants' welfare and go on to establish a number of political, social, and cultural organisations in the host country, and campaign relentlessly for the common good of both the state entities.

They incidentally create a powerful lobby to further national interests, and this is where their role is recognised in nation-building and lifting the image of their country. They work for reshaping public opinion(s) and creating new hallmarks in the realms of media, public service, investment, and transfer of hard-earned money, i.e., remittances. They also exert a structural and positive influence on various think tanks, legislators, and politicians to build relevant pressure for the benefit of their homeland. Indian and Pakistani emigration to the West and other parts of the world has essentially been a phenomenon of the twentieth century. India continues to be the largest diaspora with 17.9 million migrants (2022)¹ and US\$ 87 billion remittances (2021)² across the world. Whereas, Pakistan continues to be the 6th largest diaspora with 9.1 million registered migrants (2022)³ and US\$ 31.2 billion remittances (2021-22)⁴ from across the world.

Political and Diplomatic Clout of Indian Diaspora in the West

The Indian diasporic community exhibits a strong affinity with India and the community leaders display their merit and strength in furthering bilateral ties, and at the same time explore new avenues of

cooperation in various realms of interaction. It is commonly observed that the Indian diaspora works to promote vote banks in their second home, and advocates political and international policies related to their interests. They go on to influence political parties of the Western countries, and strike a common denominator. For instance, in Britain, two out of the three major political parties—the Labour Party and the Liberal Democratic Party has formed the Friends of India parliamentary group,⁵ and of late, has managed to extend their presence to the highest offices.

British South Asians have played a significant role in the politics of the United Kingdom (UK) and have made an impact on the British parliament, starting from Dadabhai Naoroji, the first Indian Member of Parliament (MP) in 1892⁶ and Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, the first Hindu member of House of Lords in 1919⁷ to Keith Vaz, member of House of Commons in 1987.⁸ The Indian community in Britain has made its presence felt in the political arena of the 21st century as well. Presently, the community has fifteen members in the UK's House of Commons⁹ and 11 members in the upper House of Lords.¹⁰

Members of Indian origin who made it to high offices in Conservative Party of Britain are Suella Braverman, Claire Coutinho, Alok Sharma, Priti Patel, Shailesh Vara, Gagan Mohindra, and Rishi Sunak, the current Prime Minister of Britain. In terms of the Labour Party, Valerie Vaz, Preet Kaur Gill, Virendra Sharma, Seema Malhotra, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, Lisa Nandy, and Navendu Mishra are worth mentioning. Likewise, Munira Wilson has been elected on the Liberal Democrats ticket.¹¹

The prominent Indian-origin peerages include Lord Rajinder Paul, Lord Desai, Lord Waheed Alli, Lord Bilimoria, Lord Dholakia, and especially Jitesh Kishorekumar Gadhia,¹² who is a British investment banker and Conservative Party donor.¹³ Gadhia helped craft Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in November 2020 to a full

house at Wembley Stadium.¹⁴ He financially supports the Conservative Friends of India (CFI),¹⁵ which is linked to the Conservative Party in the UK. It is a membership-based organisation that engages with the British Indian community and has played a significant role in the Conservative campaign during the general elections of 2019, besides seeking closer relations between India and the UK to benefit both countries.¹⁶ It lobbies for the Conservative Party in the British Indian community. Moreover, the organisation was responsible for releasing Hindi campaign songs for the Conservative Party in the 2017 elections, supporting David Cameron, Theresa May, and Zac Goldsmith.¹⁷

The Labour Friends of India (LFIN) is another society associated with the UK's Labour Party with the main aim of strengthening the bond between the British Indians and the Labour Party. This lobbying entity is responsible for persuading Sir Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour Party, to issue a controversial statement on the Kashmir dispute stating that: "Any constitutional issues in India are a matter for the Indian Parliament."¹⁸

"Traditionally, Americans of Jewish, Irish, and Eastern European heritage have been the most active ethnic lobbies on foreign policy. Over the past several decades, however, Americans of African, Arab, Armenian, Cuban, Greek, Hispanic, Mexican, and Turkish descent have been increasingly active on foreign policy issues as well. Recently, yet another group, Indian-Americans, has become increasingly involved in the foreign policy process. For these interest groups, their principal foreign policy concern is American policy toward the country or region of their origin."¹⁹ In the post-Cold War era, the 'estranged democracies' of the United States and India have transformed into 'engaged democracies'. An important factor contributing to the upswing in the Indo-US relations is the growing profile of the Indian-American diaspora in the United States (US). The Indian diaspora holds the prominence of being one of the top-earning, professionally qualified and fastest-expanding ethnic groups in the most powerful country of

the world. It is engaged with think tanks, higher education, engineering, show-biz, international finance, Information Technology (IT), management, law, journalism, and medicine. It holds key positions in international finance and management sectors such as Ajaypal Singh Banga, President and CEO of MasterCard, Sanjay Mehrotra, Co-founder and CEO of SanDisk Corp, and Indra Nooyi, Chairperson and CEO of PepsiCo.²⁰

Likewise, Indian immigrants have spread a canvas of opinion-makers, writers, and scholars across their respective second homes and have made great strides in influencing research-based think tanks, universities, and other similar policy-influencing institutions. This advantage is amplified by the absence of Pakistani competitors in intellectual spheres. Indian intellectuals, such as Ashley J Tellis, Tata Chair for Strategic Affairs and Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Dr Rudra Chaudhuri, Director of Carnegie India; Aparna Pande, Research Fellow and Director at the Hudson Institute; and Amar Bhattacharya, Senior Fellow at Brookings, have a notable presence in influential US think tanks like the RAND Corporation. Their contributions significantly shape US foreign policy.

The roots of Indian-origin American political organisations engulf the ethnic and professional organisations like the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), and Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA),²¹ which fostered ethnic activism alongside the economic agenda, creating Indian-American solidarity across professional lines. These professional developments are accompanied by groups that sought to engage the community in electoral politics, including the Indian-American Leadership Initiative (IALI),²² which focuses on developing leadership among the Indian-origin American Democrats. The first major Indian-American lobbying organisation, namely, the US India Political Action Committee (USINPAC)²³ tries to model itself after the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), one of the most powerful pro-Zionist groups of

the Jewish community.²⁴ The USINPAC supports candidates and legislators in the US who share Indian-American concerns. The following Indian-Americans also played key roles in the Biden-Harris campaign victory:

- Shekar Narasimhan, Chairman and Founder, AAPI Victory Fund;
- Arunan Arulampalam, Deputy Commissioner, State of Connecticut, Department of Consumer Protection;
- Amit Jani, Asian American Pacific Islander Director for Biden-Harris;
- Satish Korpe, Founder, Indian American's for Biden-Harris;
- Steve Rao, Former Mayor and Current Council Member of Morrisville, NC;
- Robinder Sachdev, President, Imagindia Institute.

One of the key objectives of USINPAC, among many, is to make efforts in promoting US-India defence and trade cooperation. It touts the Indo-US nuclear deal and various arms deals between the two states as USINPAC's key success stories. The USINPAC, by using India-Israel nexus, receives support from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which is considered as one of the most influential lobbying organisations in the US. Since its inception in 2002, the USINPAC claims to be a valuable resource for Congress, the White House, and Indian-Americans in the US and around the world.²⁵ The USINPAC's website is ultra-active in updating its content on a daily basis, spreading anti-Pakistan venom in its posts. The following are some of USINPAC's clippings/efforts against Pakistan among many others, available on its website:

By USINPAC USINPAC CONTINUES TO PUSH FOR DELAYED IMF FUNDING FOR PAKISTAN In a letter to U.S. Secretary of Treasury Steve Mnuchin, USINPAC urged assistance in opposing any International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to Pakistan until Pakistan ends state-sponsored terrorism.	By USINPAC USINPAC URGES U.S. TO SAY NO TO IMF FUNDING FOR PAKISTAN In a letter to U.S. Secretary of Treasury Steve Mnuchin, USINPAC urged assistance in opposing any International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to Pakistan until Pakistan ends state-sponsored terrorism.
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By USINPAC USINPAC OPPOSES JOHN KERRY’S \$860 MILLION AID PACKAGE TO PAKISTAN NEW DELHI (INDIA): Fresh from his fifth visit to Afghanistan, wherein Senator Bob Corker had a first-hand experience of...  READ MORE	By USINPAC USINPAC CALLS THE DEATH OF OSAMA BIN LADEN AS JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS AND FAMILIES OF 9-11; SEEKS EXPLANATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN USINPAC believes justice has been done with Osama’s death. However, the location of his hideout is a matter of grave concern and...
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By USINPAC INDIA-PAKISTAN NUCLEAR CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES After a long gap, the India-Pakistan nuclear confidence building measures (CBMs) joint working group will meet at Islamabad on December 26, 2011....	By USINPAC USINPAC APPLAUDS THE DECISION TO FREEZE \$700 MILLION AID TO PAKISTAN December 13, 2011, Washington DC: The U.S. India Political Action Committee (USINPAC) applauds the U.S. House-Senate negotiating panel on their decision to...	By USINPAC PAKISTAN’S INTRANSIGENCE OVER PROSECUTION OF PERPETRATORS OF THE MUMBAI TERROR STRIKES IS HAMPERING RAPPROCHEMENT
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By USINPAC

PAKISTAN’S NUCLEAR DOCTRINE IS DESTABILISING

Pakistan’s recent announcement that it has successfully tested the nuclear-tipped Hatf-9 (Nasr) short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) with a range of 65 km...

By USINPAC

PAKISTAN’S UNSAFE NUCLEAR WARHEADS

Pakistan is facing a grave internal security crisis as radical extremists are gradually gaining ground. The crisis is attributable to a large...

By USINPAC

INDIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY’ ONLINE PETITION TO DESIGNATE PAKISTAN A STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM

In the US, the Indian-American community have launched an online Petition to designate Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism. The White...

USINPAC also works closely with the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans in the House, the Friends of India Caucus in the Senate, and the US-India Business Council. Traditionally, Indian-Americans tend to be concerned and serious on important electoral states, i.e., California, Washington, New York, Illinois, Texas, and Pennsylvania and they generously raise funds for the members of their choice contesting elections. On the contrary, Pakistani-Americans have formed organisations mainly on professional lines. For example, Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) exists in the US but organisations like these have not been able to make substantial inroads in the US Congress. Indian-Americans also have similar organisations such as American Association of

Physicians of Indian Origin and the Asian American Hotel Owners Association. USINPAC also founded in 2002, establishing itself in Washington, DC's K-Street, hiring a staff of specialists dedicated to pushing a number of critical foreign and domestic policy goals, and putting in place a full lobbying organisational structure. As a result, it is becoming the primary lobbying organisation for not only Indian-Americans, but it also works for Indian interests.

Indian-origin American tycoons have been running lucrative businesses and enterprises. These include Manoj Bhargava, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and founder of 5-Hour Energy with a net worth of US\$ 4 billion, Gurbaksh Chahal, owner of a technology company in online advertising, named Gravity4, and Naveen Jain, co-founder and chairman of Moon Express, CEO of INOME with a net worth of US\$ 2.2 billion; and Vinod Khosla, co-founder of Sun Microsystems, Venture Capitalist, and founder and CEO of Khosla Ventures with a net worth of US\$ 1.5 billion.²⁶

Indian Information Technology (IT) graduates have also risen to top positions in what is the fastest-paced sector of the US. Some worth-mentioning names in this regard include Satya Narayana Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, Pichai Sundararajan, CEO of Alphabet Inc. and its subsidiary Google LLC,²⁷ Arvind Krishna, CEO of International Business Machines Corporation (IBM),²⁸ Thomas Kurian, CEO of Google Cloud and former President of Product Development at Oracle Corporation,²⁹ Shantanu Narayen, CEO of Adobe Systems, Sundar Pichai, Senior Vice President at Google who leads Android, Chrome, and Google App teams,³⁰ and Rajeev Suri, CEO of Nokia.³¹ This fact has not gone unnoticed in European states, where the doors to hi-tech Indian immigration have opened up.

In addition, India has attracted investment in research and development centres, wholly funded and established by reputed multinational corporations like GE, CISCO, Sun Microsystems, Microsoft, IBM, Hughes Software, Intel, Oracle, Lucent Technologies,

Microsoft Sun Microsystems and Texas Instruments.³² Such initiatives have persuaded the owners of social media to establish their regional offices in India. Facebook India has grown to five offices in Hyderabad, Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai, and Bangalore and expanded from a single online operations team to sales, marketing, partnerships, and policy entities that impact different areas of businesses.³³

Likewise, Twitter (now known as X) also established its regional headquarters in Delhi.³⁴ These initiatives have facilitated India in influencing the security policies of social media houses to New Delhi's favour, in terms of blocking any post-sharing that highlights Indian atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), communal riots against Indian minorities, or other similar content. Ultimately, it has created a setback for the Kashmir cause, while denying rights to Indian religious minorities in this age of social media.

At the moment, when financially powerful and politically well-connected Indo-Americans³⁵ have stepped into US politics, the Indian government has started hiring the services of high-profile legal firms as its lobbying agents³⁶ for effective proliferation of the Indian policy versions on issues ranging from the nuclear tests in 1998, the Kargil Conflict,³⁷ to the Indo-US nuclear deal.³⁸ This measure plays a vital role in creating a favourable environment of opinion in the US Congress.³⁹ For instance, India hired Barbour Griffith and Rogers, a lobbying heavyweight, which had the former US Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill amongst its advisors.⁴⁰ Furthermore, India hired the services of Patton Boggs, a leading lobbying firm, during the Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement. Incidentally, former Ambassador to India Frank Wisner was an advisor of the group.⁴¹ Similarly, Anurag Varma, an attorney, was the lead counsel to a coalition of Indian-American organisations, and this mattered a lot in lobbying.⁴² Varma lobbied for Indian interests in several pharmaceutical firms, including Ranbaxy, the US-India Business Council, and the AAHOA.⁴³

India has seemingly established a constituency in North America with Congressmen and committees of the US Congress with the help of Indian-origin American politicians including Kamala D Harris, Vice President of the US, Nimrata Nikki, former South Carolina State Legislator, former Governor of South Carolina, and former US Ambassador to the United Nations,⁴⁴ Bobby Jindal, former Governor of Louisiana (2008-2016), a former member of the US House of Representatives, and Chairman of the Republican Governors Association (Republican),⁴⁵ Ravinder Singh Bhalla, Mayor of Hoboken, New Jersey,⁴⁶ Neel Tushar Kashkari, politician, banker, and President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis,⁴⁷ Kumar Prabhakar Barve, Commissioner, Maryland Public Service Commission, former Member and Majority Leader of the Maryland House of Delegates and former Chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee.⁴⁸ The Indian community in the US provides a significant platform to strengthen India's relations with the US.

Like the Indian diaspora of the US and UK, Indian-origin Canadians are associated with medicine, academia, management, and engineering sectors. The Indo-Canadian professionals and politicians, such as Harjit Singh Sajjan, Minister of International Development of the Liberal Party,⁴⁹ and Ujjal Dev Singh Dosanjh, former Minister of Health, are following the same pattern of diasporic Indians in the US and UK, in gaining political prominence in the Canadian power corridors. Among the Indian diaspora, the Sikhs are considered as the most influential ethnic group in Canada, and they are critical of the violations of the rights of religious minorities in India, much like Sikh communities in the US and UK. Significantly, a prominent critic of Indian policies is Jagmeet Singh Dhaliwal, Member of Parliament (New Democratic Party), who openly raises his voice in support of the Khalistan movement,⁵⁰ and denounces Indian brutalities in Kashmir.⁵¹ Interestingly, he was denied a visa to India for criticising New Delhi's human rights record.⁵²

It is also noteworthy that Indians overcame the stigma of under-representation in European immigration by virtue of their scholarly approach and knowledge-based education curriculum. The European Union's (EU) desire to compete with the US in skilled human resources led to the opening of gates for immigration, and Indians owing to their high standards of IT and Engineering education made a mark. Professionals like engineers, nurses, business managers, teachers, and scientists have made their way to Europe. This will further strengthen the presence, and ingress of the Indian diaspora in the EU member states, promoting the culture of Indian lobbying and developing India-friendly forums at political, economic, social, cultural, and technological levels in the host states. Ultimately, the Indian narrative gets supportive voices raised in the power corridors of policymaking circles of EU member states. The cardinal features of the Indian narrative are to malign Pakistan abroad and make the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) controversial by defaming China and its friendly states. India is successfully engineering its diaspora channels as a foreign policy tool to achieve its end goals.

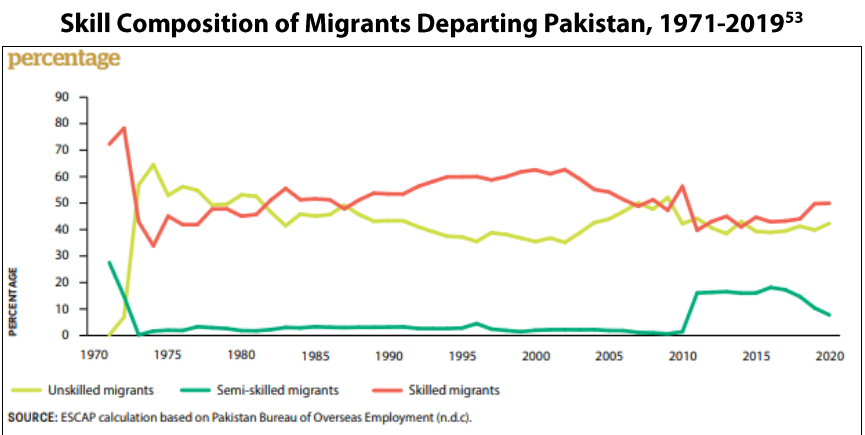
Political and Diplomatic Clout of Pakistani Diaspora in the West

The typology of the Pakistani diaspora primarily consists of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled migrants, professionals, physicians, engineers, businessmen, long-distance nationalists, cultural producers, and students. Figure 1 shows the skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled composition of Pakistani migrants departing the country between 1971 and 2019.

Pakistan, despite having a sizable diaspora in the US, UK, and Europe lacks the needed muscle to portray the country's policies in foreign, domestic, and defence as well as economic vistas. This lack of direction and cohesion is a big issue and demerit. It can be said that while the Pakistani community is too emotionally close to its sense of nationalism, it has lacked the capacity to promote the same in foreign

lands for lack of unity or a policy format. The first and second generations have a strong knowledge and long history of time spent in Pakistan, and their bond with the country is reasonably pronounced. However, the third, fourth, and the upcoming fifth generation did not see the freedom struggle and Pakistan-India wars on the Kashmir dispute. It is imperative to understand the actual perception of the Kashmir dispute among the new generations. They refer to disputes in the way they have inherited from their parents and see it as a political dispute rather than one that they are emotionally attached to.

Figure 1



It can be said that the Pakistani diaspora has been forthcoming in sending valuable financial transactions in the form of remittances and thus, have helped the economy. The same spirit is also needed in the shape of public diplomacy on foreign land for projecting and telling the Pakistani story as the Indians do. In other words, Pakistanis are apolitical on the foreign front, and remain glued to their work, earnings, and remittances. Unlike the previous generation of diaspora, the current ones are lacking in zealously pursuing a political goal abroad for the betterment of their home country. Espousing the Kashmir cause and other issues relating to Pakistan are a case in point. This generation gap in perception has created a vacuum. An effective

diaspora leadership indispensable to lead Pakistan's narrative is required.

Whereas, the Pakistani diaspora, especially belonging to Azad Kashmir has done a wonderful job in promoting not only the liberation cause but also Pakistan's point of view vis-à-vis the referendum. Their clout has bred good results in Western countries, especially in Britain, and many other Western capitals. This has offered them an opportunity to employ their influence on the foreign policy mosaic of the host capitals. For instance, in the UK, the Pakistani community has opted for residential concentration in enclaves at particular localities (Bradford, Manchester, Oldham, Birmingham, and Rochdale, etc.), created local community organisations, and preached their goals and interests in an effective way. This was evident during the general elections of 2019, when 15 British-Pakistani MPs were elected. The winners on the Labour tickets included Tahir Ali, Khalid Mehmood, Shabana Mahmood, Naz Shah, Zarah Sultana, Imran Hussain, Muhammad Yasin, Yasmin Qureshi, Dr Rosenna Ali Khan, Afzal Khan. The winners on the Conservative tickets (ruling party) included Sajid Javid, Nusrat Ghani, Saqib Bhatti, Rehman Chishti, and Imran Ahmed Khan.⁵⁴ The notable Pakistani-origin Lords were Baroness Warsi, Tariq Ahmad, Zameer Choudhrey (Chief Executive of Bestway Group) inter alia.

Similarly, there is another effective and vibrant diaspora in the US, which comprises "new and young immigrants. Sixty four per cent are the ones living in the US for more than 10 years and 34 per cent are new to American society."⁵⁵ The Pakistani diaspora in the US has a close affiliation with natural sciences, as well as other professional organisations, including social sciences, like APPNA, which has around 30,000 members.⁵⁶ "There are roughly 0.5 million Pakistani-Americans who are employed as entrepreneurs, doctors, engineers, and lawyers. The US' fourth-largest source of medical professionals is Pakistan."⁵⁷

Pakistani expatriates in the US are in the top echelons of corporate and government, and at times are in a more effective position than their Indian counterparts. They have wide and deep contacts in the US Congress such as Pakistani-American Democrat Dr Asif Mahmood and Shahid Ahmed Khan, who is on the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts,⁵⁸ along with moderate contacts in the US think tanks, media and universities, that go on to influence policymakers by exposing the Indian propaganda and biased policies against Pakistan. Yet, the Pakistani diaspora has not been able to compete with the power base of Indians in US society. This provides an edge to the Indian narrative over Pakistan, especially in the case of the Kashmir dispute, as well as bilateral relations with Washington. Ultimately, when it comes to strategic issues, the US intelligentsia and policymakers take the Indian tab, which comes as a rude shock to Pakistani interests.

It is observed that Pakistanis prefer to involve themselves in American politics after they acquire legal status. However, they lack the expertise and capacity compared to Indians, owing to their smaller geographical size and limited power base. As many Pakistanis are not US-born and are naturalised, it puts them at a disadvantage compared to the bigger size of the Indian population in the US. This casts imprints on US politics as well. The largest population of the Pakistani diaspora is living in New York City, including Central New Jersey, followed by Texas, California, and Houston.⁵⁹

Like the UK and US, the Pakistani immigrants in Europe maintain contact with their homeland. They influence their homeland culturally and economically by keeping close ties, travelling to Pakistan, and investing there.⁶⁰ They aspire to contribute to both European and Pakistani societies at the same time. The religious and cultural associations of Pakistani diaspora such as Pakistani Community Germany, Pakistan Norway Association (PANA), Pakistan Association Greece, Pakistan Federation Spain, and Pakistan

Community of Barcelona,⁶¹ are the main sources through which the Pakistani community organises and presents itself to the local governments of the European states. The European political parties often see these associations as a useful source of votes and as a means to spread their political ideologies in the Pakistani community.

Strengthening the presence and ingress of the Pakistani diaspora in the EU member states will have a cumulative effect on promoting culture and creating Pakistan-friendly forums at the political, economic, social, cultural, and technological levels.

Indian and Pakistani Diasporas' Economic Contribution to the Home Countries

One of the considerable economic assistances of the Indian community has been in respect of remittances. As per a World Bank Report, India obtained around US\$ 87 billion in remittances in 2021.⁶² Therefore, to mark the contribution of the Overseas Indian community in the development of India, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated on 9 January of every year.⁶³

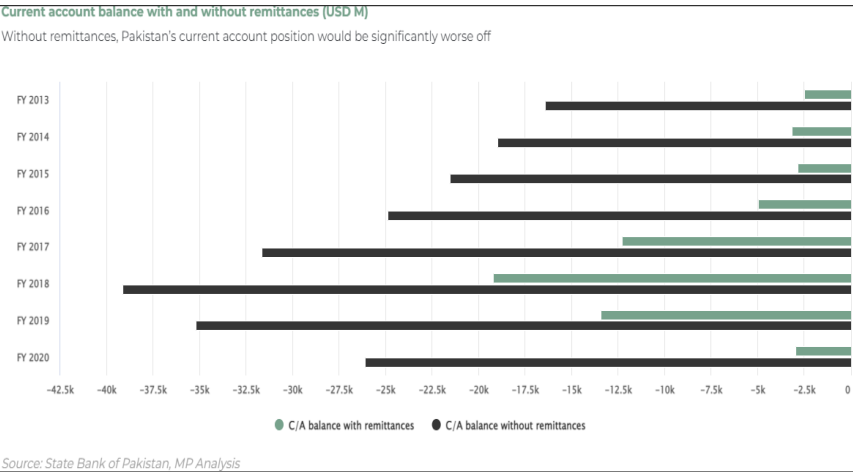
The Indian diaspora plays a crucial role in connecting the country of origin with the rest of the world by providing access to knowledge, experience, resources, and markets to the former. It has played a central role in the field of science and technology. For instance, Silicon Valley is a symbol of Indian success. This has contributed to the development and growth of India. The large inflows of remittances help in poverty reduction and socio-economic growth in the country. The Indian diaspora contributes financially to businesses or educational institutions. It is a significant source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), market expansion, and technology transfer, all of which enhance a country's fiscal assets.

The remittances of the Pakistani diaspora are the backbone of the economy. Remittances from Pakistanis per annum were to the tune of US\$ 31.2 billion in the fiscal year 2021-22.⁶⁴ They help in overcoming the current account deficit, and rollover balance of

payment on the imports side. Remittances to Pakistan have remained consistent and in fact increased during times of crisis.⁶⁵ During the COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistanis stood fast and sent in their remittances to keep the economy afloat. They reached an all-time quarterly high between July and September 2020.⁶⁶ This allowed Pakistan to achieve a current account surplus, after almost five years, and registered the highest amount in value during the last 17 years.”⁶⁷

Figure 2 below shows the country's current account deficit with and without remittances. As shown, if Pakistan had not received remittances, its deficit in 2020 would have been a staggering US\$ 26 billion.⁶⁸ As remittances stood at US\$ 23 billion (2020), Pakistan only had a shortfall of US\$ 3 billion.⁶⁹

Figure 2
Current Account Deficit with and without Remittances ⁷⁰



Remittances are, in fact, shock-absorbers. They keep the economy fluid and address the cash inflow constraints in foreign exchange. They add significantly to consumption and investment in Pakistan. The income that flows into expatriate Pakistanis’ homes add to the vibrancy and purchasing power of the households. “These two core components of aggregate demand then stimulate growth, as an

increase in demand leads to a rise in production, employment, and eventually, productive capacity⁷¹ in the country.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the rise in skilled manpower abroad has buoyed Pakistani remittances. The skilled workers of Pakistan “have much more stable sources of income and, therefore, remit more money back to their dear and near ones.”⁷² Economic prosperity borne out of remittances can create multiplier effects. They build the capacity of the economy, because, the households in developing nations that receive remittances are far more likely to invest in entrepreneurship and education.⁷³ In Pakistan, where there is a low rate of literacy, remittances can help span the canvas of education and likewise promote socio-political interaction. Roshan Digital Account has played an important role in this context in stimulating the economy. The Pakistani diaspora’s contribution in the socio-economic sectors of the country is laudable.

Overseas Pakistanis have rendered invaluable services and provided massive assistance during floods, earthquakes, and other calamities, including the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The Pakistani diaspora is surely contributing to the uplift and is adding value to the business, industrial, agriculture, and services sectors of Pakistan.

Pakistan Government’s Approach

Pakistan has adopted an institutionalised approach to engage overseas Pakistanis based on six goals including the unification of diaspora on common national identity, offering certain national rights, drawing nationally-oriented benefits, enhancing remittances, offering socio-welfare services, and providing incentives to invest in the home country.⁷⁴

The institutional structure of the country is reflected in the establishment of the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) in 1971 with its affiliated organisations like the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), Overseas Employment Promoters (OEPs) and Protectorate of Emigrants; the inception of the National

Talent Pool in 1976; the creation of the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) in 1979⁷⁵ and creation of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) in 2013.⁷⁶

In 2009, the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis drafted a National Emigration Policy.⁷⁷ Then, in 2013, the ministry developed a draft National Policy for Overseas Pakistanis.⁷⁸ The last initiative was to prepare a draft of the National Emigration and Welfare Policy (NEWP) for Overseas Pakistanis in 2018.⁷⁹ Three broader objectives have been defined in the NEWP including a) promotion of safe, orderly and regular emigration, b) protection and welfare of emigrant workers and their families, and c) engagement of Pakistani diaspora and reintegration of returning migrants.

Pakistan has also taken a variety of initiatives to engage, maintain and to develop a relationship with its diaspora including the right to visa-free travel, opening a bank account, buying property, the National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis (NICOP), the Pakistan Origin Card (POC) for foreigners of Pakistani origin, Pakistan Remittance Initiative, Naya Pakistan Calling, Call Sarzameen, Pakistan Banao Certificates, and Roshan Digital Account investment.

Hurdles in Mobilising Pakistani Diaspora

While the Pakistani diaspora forms an essential component of economic empowerment for the state of Pakistan by sending in remittances, that power potential has not translated into political muscles to this day. The denial of the right to vote for overseas Pakistanis is a case in point. This is acting as a perpetual disconnect. A National Emigration Policy and National Policy for Overseas Pakistanis were drafted in 2009 and 2013 respectively. However, both the policy drafts were not approved. The draft of the National Emigration and Welfare Policy 2018 (to engage the Pakistani diaspora and reintegrate the returning migrants) is also awaiting formal approval from the Cabinet. The latest policy was intended to develop a Diaspora Engagement Strategy for impacting national development by all

relevant stakeholders relating to Overseas Pakistanis, which could not be materialised so far. The lack of a formal strategy to engage the Pakistani diaspora has been identified as a significant challenge in fostering meaningful engagement with the community.

The remittances, donations, and charity of the Pakistani diaspora have played an important role in the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development during natural emergencies in Pakistan. However, their contribution to generate a future economic stream to meet national objectives is insignificant even though remittances are the second largest source of income to Pakistan. The country has been unable to fully exploit the potential of its diaspora, which possesses valuable knowledge and holds unique positions that could facilitate the transfer of advanced professional expertise and skills from their resident countries to their homeland. This depicts a lack of a policy framework to encourage the diaspora to reverse-transfer knowledge advancements and techniques from the host country to the country of origin. Remittances help in alleviating poverty and generating employment opportunities. The Vision 2025 envisions increased inflow of remittances from US\$ 14 billion to US\$ 40 billion by 2025. However, the target could not be materialised for the lack of political will.

Embassies prefer to engage with the community members who are economically better off and well-settled rather than the 'working class' segments. It highlights the class dynamics that may shape the nature and extent of the relationship between the diaspora and the authorities. Some associations consider that the degree of engagement with the Pakistani Embassy also depends on the policies and willingness of the Ambassador.

Pakistani Embassies in the Western capitals are seen playing to the gallery by obliging the diaspora for no gainful objectives. The elderly leadership of the Pakistani diaspora is reluctant to give space to a new generation. Unlike their elderly figures, the younger generation

is also less associated with the political lineage of the country, especially on the Kashmir cause, causing a generation-gap that may create a vacuum in the future for effective diaspora leadership, indispensable to lead Pakistan's narrative abroad.

Furthermore, Pakistani diaspora is splintered on ethnic, religious, geographical, political, and professional lines. This is equally evident in their groupings in professional associations, charity, religious endowments, and political groupings. These divergent bodies do not correlate and thus are ineffective in promoting the national interest of Pakistan. Whereas, the Indian diaspora remains integrated on nationalist issues, and their political parties also have foreign segments to further their orientation. Modi's addresses to US Indian diaspora in 2017⁸⁰ and Australian-Indian diaspora in 2023⁸¹ are cases in point where he instigated the nationalist sentiments of the Indian diaspora, while referring the Indian military prowess. He stated that "when India did surgical strikes [against Pakistan] the world experienced our power and realised that India practices restraint but can show power when needed."⁸²

Contrarily, the politically influential Pakistani-Americans have normally served the interests of their home country's political parties in the host country to which they are affiliated, without realising the fact that they are crossing red lines of their home country's national interests. It has impacted the soft image of Pakistan. For instance, Democrat Dr Mahmood launched a campaign to draw attention to the arrest and solitary confinement of Khadija Shah⁸³ who was allegedly involved in the 9 May vandalism of Jinnah House (residence of a Corps Commander Lahore) after the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan. Michael Kugelman, a scholar on South Asia at Wilson Center, Washington, has rightly argued that the Pakistan diaspora has been divided on political lines.⁸⁴

The Pakistani diaspora lacks intellectual depth on matters relating to Pakistan. They seem to have restricted themselves to well-

informed and influential components, with little or no leverage in practical essence. If no efforts are undertaken to invest more on developing the intellectual depth, the intellectual narrative is going to die in the coming years, without being transferred to the next generation. Today, a fight on perception management is being fought on social media forums, think tanks and mainstream media. However, Pakistan has been unable to mobilise a strategic team of its diaspora community on these intellectual forums. Hence, the narrative of Pakistan has not been capitalised at international forums.

Conclusion

The Indian diaspora has attained prominence in the international realm, which has now become an important part of Indian foreign policy tools that offer ample opportunities to New Delhi to project and realise its ambitions. It has led from the front and has churned out some real astonishments by positively promoting not only socio-cultural and political goals and objectives in their respective second homes, but also by creating and making use of lobbies in their country's favour. This has strengthened New Delhi's narrative and perception management against Pakistan to defame the latter on international forums. The post-9/11 security setting, especially in the backdrop of the West-labelled political Islam and US-China uneasy relationship, has also encouraged anti-Muslim/Pakistan antagonism that provided another pretext for the reactivation of long-distance nationalism in the Indian lobbies. New Delhi is investing more in its diaspora to maintain strong affinity and links with the community in order to achieve national security goals. It is evident that the functioning of the Indian diaspora has always been at cross-purpose to that of Pakistan's efforts in the war against terrorism, its advocacy of the Kashmir cause, Pakistan-China relations (especially in terms of CPEC), Pakistan-US relations, and nuclear stability in South Asia, etc.

Organisations like the Conservative Companions of Pakistan (CCP) and Labour Chums of Pakistan Group (LCPG) should be

established separately in collaboration with British Conservative and Labour Parties respectively, with the aim to politically engage the Pakistani-origin British community with British political parties, besides, seeking closer relations between Pakistan and the UK. Furthermore, these organisations should be able to neutralise the insidious Indian propaganda on Kashmir, making it a constitutional and internal matter of the country. A Centre for Pakistani Diaspora Studies should be established in the leading universities of Pakistan for policy analysis. Community Welfare Attaches at the embassies have to be more responsive in looking after the interests of the diaspora. Laws may be reviewed to ensure quick redress of the community's problems. For example, digital authentication of documents can effectively resolve the community's problems. A check-list is a must for the diaspora desk officers to ensure effective utilisation of various tangibles, and how and where they can be utilised. Pakistan should set up Special Economic Zones, and provide the Pakistani diaspora with an open-ended opportunity to invest and take ownership of the enterprise. Likewise, Industrial Parks and Technology Parks can be promoted wherein the expatriates can excel by bringing in their expertise and investment. The procedural work should be minimised to do away with bureaucratic red-tapism and inconvenience caused to the diaspora. NOCs and other governmental permissions should be forthcoming. Pakistan must follow China's pattern to make life easy for expatriates and investors. The Overseas Pakistani Foundation (OPF) and Ministry of Overseas Pakistani must collaborate with the Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission, private vocational along with technical institutions, and skill development companies to prepare and train labourers for the Western market.

The government should construct appropriate modes to enhance overseas employment opportunities by signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with labour-receiving

countries. Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform should devise a long-term development plan that would envision an increase in remittances from the current US\$ 30 to US\$ 45 billion by 2030. The ministry should include the National Talent Programme for Overseas Professionals in the forthcoming 13th Five-Year Plan 2024–29. There is a need to form a committee of expert professionals comprising the concerned stakeholders such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD), Ministry of Information/ National Database and Registration Authority (MOI/NADRA), OPF, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE), and Pakistan Missions abroad. These should be tasked with a mandate to formulate a Diaspora Engagement Strategy devising investment models and channels for the transfer of knowledge which could impact national development. A high-level committee may also be constituted to monitor implementation of the strategy.

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