



ODI

Diaspora Newsletter

Editor's Message

There has been a grand change occurring in the global demography in last two centuries consequently affecting the socio-cultural, economic and political spheres. Diaspora is one of the outcomes of these changes carried out mainly by continental human movement. Today we find diasporas across the globe.

We have also been witnessing a very significant increase of interest among various policy bodies, academics, media etc. to capture various dimensions of the diaspora. However, documenting these developments in a more systematic manner is missing resulting in difficulties in grasping the various dimensions of the problem. Launching a Newsletter is an initiative by Organisation for Diaspora Initiatives (ODI) to fill such gap, which ultimately intends to provide valuable inputs to researchers and policy makers.

ODI also launched an academic journal 'Diaspora Studies' recently and wishes to carry out more intensive research in future on diaspora. The Newsletter will also create a multidisciplinary and multi stake holders platform who evince interest in diaspora and with special focus on Indian diaspora. The journal has already brought out two issues in 2008.

By launching this Newsletter we wish to seek valuable inputs from all the stake holders to have cutting edge research on the theme. All are welcome to provide their suggestions.

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Organization for Diaspora Initiatives (ODI) is working to understand the status and role of diasporic communities across the globe— both in domestic and international context. It maps the emerging roles, networks and operations of different Diasporic communities as a resource in the international civil society space as well as in the host and the home countries. ODI specifically focus on Indian Diaspora as the main thrust of research.

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ODI News

Organization for Diaspora Initiatives Women's Network (ODIWNET)

The Organization for Diaspora Initiative (ODI) launched its women's network cell Organization for Diaspora Initiative Women's Network (ODIWNET), on 7 January 2009 in a conference held in conjunction with the PBD celebrations at Chennai Trade Centre, Chennai. The Ministry of Overseas Indians Affairs facilitated and supported the launch of this network.



The network aims to connect women of Indian diaspora globally in order to understand common concerns and issues and adopt joint strategies to address them. It seeks to create a platform where women focused civil society organisations from the Indian diasporic communities around the world can interact on a regular basis and an active dialogue is created. The network also hopes to focus on issues PIO/NRI women, their aspirations, and examine various levels of partnerships between Indian and PIO/NRI women.

Launching the network, K Mohandas, Secretary, Minister of Overseas Affairs, expressed government's willingness to extend all support to local initiatives working in the interest of Indian Diaspora women. He mentioned "Women, especially at the ordinary levels, living outside India need all help and support about lot of laws and initiatives. Such help can only be extended by local communities and local women's network."

Various speakers and participants present in the launch meeting reiterated the need for a women's network while sharing their perspectives. Ms. Leela Gujadar Sarup the President ODIWNET stated that women of Indian diaspora belonging to different socio-cultural-religious backgrounds, although distanced from each other as well as the mother nation would like to know about culture and traditions that are followed in their daily lives. This network she said would facilitate such dialogue.

Molly Banerjee from Canada, founder of 'One People', a social organisation, emphasized the need for a women's network to help Diaspora women to deal with various situations. She said that there is a lot of legal help available in Canada for women. However, such help is not culturally tailored and hence mostly rejected. But networks such as ODIWNET can serve as a platform for women to come together and discuss issues and concerns including culture-related topics.

A participant from Reunion opined that network such as ODIWNET could bring into focus issues relating to hardships that women face in various countries. The speaker mentioned so while highlighting the plight of women working in the fields in Reunion Islands.

Dr. Bashabi Gupta, National Coordinator, ODIWNET, said that women groups across the world are working together with similar objectives but do not interact with each other. So there is a need of a dialogue which would provide a common ground where both can share their lived experiences and provide support in their various endeavours of each other.

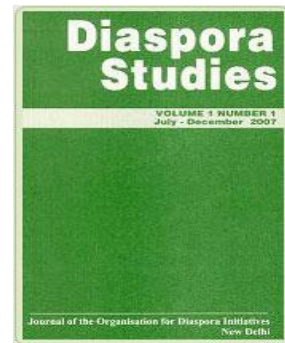
Indicating at the government policy on the NRI/PIOs one of the speaker highlighted that the gender dimension does not find much space in Indian policy thinking towards Indian diaspora. But with ODIWNET, there is a hope to connect with global women organisations and work out effective solutions so as to effect certain policy changes.

The launch of women's network cell of ODI initiated a meaningful dialogue amongst the speakers who participated in the conference. All the participants felt that there is a need for such a network as ODIWNET to bring together more and more Indian diasporic women and organizations across the world to discuss understand common concerns and issues.

In view of this ODI would like to conduct a conference in conjunction with the next PBD celebrations, with the support of the MOIA.

Journal- Diaspora Studies

Diaspora Studies, a referred journal published by Organisation for Diaspora Initiatives (ODI) , New Delhi has already brought out two issues. The journal has an interdisciplinary approach. It focuses on transnational alliances and diasporic networks, which have recently emerged as an important factor influencing international relations. Along with the theoretical issues on Diasporas, the journal covers classical and modern Diasporas from different regions of the world, both in historical and contemporary perspectives.



Editor-in-Chief: Professor Ajay Dubey

Journal Content, Vol.1, No.2, July 2008

- N. Jayaram- Heterogeneous Diaspora and Asymmetrical Orientations: India, Indians and the Indian Diaspora
- Ginu Zacharia Oommen-Migration and Socio-Cultural Changes among the Cochin Jews in Israel
- Ganganath Jha- Indian Diaspora in Myanmar
- Muchkund Dubey- Changing Salience of the Relationship between the Indian Diaspora and India
- Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam- From RPGs to MoUs: The LTTE and the Media Perceptions of a 'Terrorist Movement among the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora
- Book Reviews

Delegation to International Conference on Serbian Diaspora



Prof. Ajay Dubey was one of the delegates at the International Conference on Serbian Diaspora and Homeland Development, Belgrade 18-20 November 2008. The International Conference on Serbian Diaspora and Homeland Development aimed to provide a platform in which information, knowledge, experiences, and different perspectives will be exchanged about the role diasporas can play in Serbia's development.

The conference had experts from international organizations, leading academic institutions, and governments with significant experience in the field of diaspora-homeland relations.

Appointment

Shri Malay Mishra was appointed as the High Commissioner to Trinidad & Tobago.

Shri Malay Mishra, Joint Secretary. (Diaspora), who was for long associated with the MOIA, was appointed as the High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago which has good number of Indian Diaspora.

Shri Mishra is also associated with ODI and his appointment will be surely benefit the Indian Diaspora Community and also ODI in strengthening its activities.



Mr. Malay Mishra

Current Events International

African diaspora remittances dry up in global recession

17 March 2009

Diana Games

REPORTS are starting to creep into the African media about how thousands of families may no longer be able to feed themselves, pay school fees or build houses because of a dwindling flow of money from Western countries that has been helping to keep Africa afloat.

Remittances, worth billions of dollars a year to the continent, are starting to decline as Africans working in Western markets start to feel the pinch of the global financial crisis.

A recent World Bank report said remittance inflows to developing countries could fall this year by anything between one percent and six percent from last year, which would have a marked effect on communities in Africa.

The report suggests that shrinking economies will also lead to anti-immigrant hostility, further affecting the employment of foreigners in Western countries.

Diana Games is director of Africa @ Work, a research and consulting company

<http://www.dispatch.co.za/article.aspx?id=301459>



National Devt: FG Woos Nigerian Diaspora

•As remittances hit \$18bn

5 March 2009

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Dimeji Bankole, has called on Nigerians in the diaspora to join hands with government in the task of re-engineering the socio-economic and political life of the country. This came as he disclosed that the major contribution of Nigerians in the diaspora towards national development is through remittances to relatives.



<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=137270>

Courting Rwandan diaspora

4 March 2009

Emanuel Ngomiraronka has lived in China for ten years. Like millions of his fellow Rwandan exiles, he longed to return home. Now he finds himself in the vanguard of a movement that aims to unite the desire of the Rwandan diaspora to forge links with their homeland with their financial muscle.

Today, Ngomiraronka is the CEO of the Rwandan Diaspora Mutual Fund (RDMF), a fund set up by prominent members of the Rwandan diaspora at a meeting in Kigali late last year for the purposes of investment in Rwanda.

The Rwandan government is keen to cultivate the Rwandan diaspora as a source of economic development, and the Rwandan Central Bank has offered to provide the RDMF with investment advice.

The Rwanda foreign affairs ministry estimates that there are about six million Rwandans living abroad – well over half the Rwandan population.



Emanuel Ngomiraronka

Some fled during the 1959 genocide, when the Hutu ethnic group overthrew the Rwandan king and forced him to leave his kingdom. Others fled during or after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. The two tragedies forced many Rwandans into exile in neighbouring countries across Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas and elsewhere.

The role of the Rwandan diaspora was neglected during President Habyarimana's rule. But following the many political, economic and social reforms enacted after the genocide, the diaspora matters today.

Economic growth, a clampdown on corruption and improved security have created a welcoming atmosphere for Rwandan exiles looking to return to or invest in their home state.

In February 2007, the Rwandan government created a special diaspora unit in the ministry of foreign affairs to mobilise resources from the Rwandan diaspora. In June 2008, this body was formalised into the Diaspora General Directorate (DGD).

Remittances, the most traditional form of exile investment in the homeland, have certainly helped Rwanda. Kadozi says that remittances from Rwandans abroad increased from \$ 60 million in 2006 to \$150 million in 2008. Yet many diaspora members are starting to take a more strategic economic interest in their homeland. Many have found business success, and are considering turning back their eyes to home.

Fiji coup regime ruled unlawful, Implications for Indian Diaspora

A court in Fiji has ruled the military government was illegally appointed after a 2006 coup, and that democracy should be returned as soon as possible. The Fiji Court of Appeal - the nation's second highest court - said an interim prime minister should be appointed to dissolve parliament and call elections.

Fiji's military leader Frank Bainimarama has been in power since staging a bloodless coup in December 2006. He's since failed to hold an election to restore democracy.

The regime has a devastating economic impact on the Fiji nation. The coffers are running dry, with government departments recently ordered to reduce their operating budgets by 50% to stay afloat.



Military ruler Frank
Bainimarama

"The economy is in a desperate state," says Dr Jon Fraenkel, also of ANU. "Fiji's government revenue has virtually collapsed because exports are down, business confidence is down and foreign investment is low. "That's why they're making these draconian announcements about cutting back on state expenditure."

Indigenous Fijians, who make up 57% of the population, mostly want elections as soon as possible to get back to constitutional democracy, Fraenkel says.

And the minority Fiji Indians, who initially felt they had been better served by this coup more so than the coups of 1987 and 2000, were also looking for change.

Power Grab in Madagascar: PIOs again Threatened

Madagascar called for support from "friendly nations" to offset a decline in revenue following a political crisis on the Indian Ocean in which the nation's president was deposed. Madagascar, the world's fourth-biggest island and a former French colony, is home to about 20 million people.

Madagascar's former President Marc Ravalomanana resigned last month following two months of protests by supporters of opposition leader Andry Rajoelina, in which at least 100 people died. The country has been suspended by the African Union and the 15-nation Southern African Development Community, while the U.S. has halted non-humanitarian aid.



Mr. Rajoelina

The political turmoil has jeopardized the economy of the country in general and the ethnic Indians in particular.

National

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

7-9 January 2009

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is the annual flagship event of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) which aims to connect more 25 Million Indians with India's Economic and Social development. The event was organised by the ministry of overseas Indian affairs in partnership with the Tamil Nadu government and the Confederation of Indian Industry. About 1,500 delegates from 48 countries attended the event, maximum number of 270 delegates from Malaysia followed by 127 from the US.



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh greets delegates during the opening ceremony of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2009 in Chennai

The theme was 'Engaging the Diaspora - the Way Forward', with sessions reflecting diaspora concerns on the current economic crisis and cultural linkages with India.

Thirteen prominent Indians abroad presented the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman. The Global Indian Knowledge Network launched to create a virtual think tank by connecting the diaspora. Qualified professional holding overseas citizen of India card can soon practice in India. There was a consensus for increased diaspora participation in health, education and rural development under public-private partnership

NRI Institute celebrated the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas, 09

13 January 2009

The two-day event started with a grand reception hosted by the British High Commissioner to India Sir Richard Stagg for the delegates of the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas on 9th January. The theme for Pravasi Divas this year was "NRIs be Partners in India's Progress". The event was inaugurated by Dr Justice A R Lakshmanan (Chairman Law Commission of India) on 10th January.

The NRIs showed optimism on importance of India in the global arena. However, they also expressed concern that India has to be more assertive to fight the forces of terror. The Government should work proactively to promote investment from NRIs.

The event organized a special felicitation function in the honour of Mr Ylias Akbaraly for being conferred the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman, 2009 by the President of India at Chennai. Here, Jagmohan Singh proudly mentioned that out of 11 recipient of Pravasi Bhartiya Samman, 5 have been felicitated by NRI Institute before.

NRI Institute is a voluntary registered body of Indians and Non-Resident Indians founded in the year 1989, aiming to provide a platform for the Indians living in India and abroad. Since its inception, the NRI Institute is dedicated in strengthening Indo-British ties by organising seminars and conferences in the UK and India.

Compiled from www.delhilive.com



Seminar/ Conferences

Indian Diaspora in the Gulf Countries

Gulf Studies Programme, Centre for West Asian and African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, had organized a one-day seminar on the Indian Diaspora in the Gulf Countries on Tuesday, 24 March 2009. The seminar addressed the issues related to Indian expatriates and diaspora in the various Gulf countries. Multidisciplinary experts from both Academics and Administration had shared their views on the subject. The keynote address was given by Mr. D.N. Srivastava, Joint Secretary, MOIA, New Delhi. Scholars such as Prof. Yogesh Atal, Sociologist, Ex-DG UNESCO, Prof. A.K. Pasha, Director, Gulf Studies Programme, Prof. A.K. Dubey, Chairperson, CWAAS have addressed in the seminar.

Forthcoming

U.S. to host conference on diaspora relations

19 March 2009

Azerbaijan, Baku, Trend News, A. Huseynbala

New York will host a scientific-practical conference on "Role of diaspora organizations in developing relations amongst nations and countries as in Azerbaijan and U.S. case". "The Azerbaijan-New York Association, Caucasus Jews Cultural Centre in U.S. and AZEM society which comprise representatives of different nations moving to U.S. from Azerbaijan are organizers of the event," the Azerbaijani State Committee on Diaspora told Trend News on March 19.

The conference will take place with support of the State Committee and the Azerbaijani Permanent Representation to UN. "The event will focus on discussions, and reports on the topic: cultural relations between the diaspora organizations in U.S., intellectual potential diaspora, countrymen's adaptation to conditions of the new U.S. policy, as well as perspectives of its relations with the Azerbaijani and Jewish Diaspora organizations," the committee said.

Source: <http://news-en.trend.az/society/diaspora/1443349.html>

Diasporas, Migration and Identities

Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism (CRONEM) will be organizing a conference on “Diasporas, Migration and Identities: Crossing Boundaries, New Directions”, 11 to 12 June 2009, Guildford, United Kingdom. The aim of the conference is to examine the past and present impact of diasporas and migration on nation, community, identity and subjectivity, culture and the imagination, place and space, emotion, politics, law and values.

For more details visit: <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM/index.htm>

Postcolonial Translocations

21 to 24 May 2009, Muenster, Germany

The conference is concerned with the concept of translocation, which denotes not only a 'change of location', but also a new kind of location, a trans-location consisting of fractured and variously connected spaces.

For more details visit: <http://www.gnel2009.de>



2nd Global Conference “Diasporas - Exploring Critical Issues”

Monday 6th July - Thursday 9th July 2009, Mansfield College, Oxford

This inter- and multi-disciplinary project seeks to explore the contemporary experience of Diasporas – communities who conceive of themselves as a national, ethnic, linguistic or other form of cultural and political construction of collective membership living outside of their 'home lands.' In particular, key issues to be addressed include: what are the defining characteristics of Diasporas and what distinguishes one from the other? What role does 'home' and 'host' cultures play in developing relationships between communities in a global environment? How new is the concept of Diasporas; does it capture new global realities or designate old phenomena in a new way?

The conference is part of the 'Ethos' series of research projects, which in turn belong to the 'Critical Issues' programmes of ID.Net. It aims to bring together people from different areas and interests to share ideas and explore various discussions which are innovative and challenging.

For more details visit: <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/ci/transformations/diasporas/diasporas.html>

International Conference on the Iranian Diaspora

March 29, 2009

Iranian Alliances Across Borders will be holding its fourth bi-annual International Conference on the Iranian Diaspora at UC Berkeley's Pauley Ballroom on April 4th and 5th, 2009. This year's conference is hosted by UC Berkeley's Iranian Student Alliance in America and is aimed to discuss the accomplishments of the Iranian Diaspora community, its current situation as well as its future. The conference promises to bring together journalists, activists, and scholars from across the world to discuss their accomplishments and their ideas in a number of panel discussions. The speakers are said to be the leaders of major NGOs, academia, corporations, and the arts.

Some of the topics which will be discussed during this conference are as follow: “Classifying a Community: Definitions of Race and Ethnic Identity”, “Negotiating Identity: Exploring Cultural Production”, “Paving the Way: Prominent Voices of the Community”, “Challenging Established Views: Fostering New Dialogues about Culture and Tradition”, “Media as a Form of Expression”, “Understanding Global Perspectives: Unique Outlooks from Abroad”, and “Going Back Home: Narratives of Exploration and Engagement”. There are also a number of workshops offered for the attendees which run simultaneously on both days of the conference.

For more details visit: <http://iranianalliances.org/conference>

Research

Fortunes of Indian diaspora enthuse GU students

9 March 2009

Ahmedabad: Who has been funding the dreams of the many Gujaratis who emigrate? Temple coffers overflowing with moolah donated by villagers, of course.

Did you know some NRIs suffer from reverse cultural shock they leave India with a certain image and when they visit, they're not able to digest the modernisation that's taken place.

These are some of the interesting findings of MPhil research work on the Indian diaspora at Gujarat University's Centre for International Studies. The multidisciplinary programme was launched in July 2008 and at present eight students are pursuing the course.

Says GU vice-chancellor, Parimal Trivedi, "I introduced this course because I feel the way Gujarati diaspora contributes to both host and mother country, no other community does. We are inviting visiting faculty from abroad for this course and I'm planning a PhD programme on this topic too."

There are only three other centres in the country which have programmes on the diaspora Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, Osmania University in Hyderabad and North Gujarat University in Patan, says Dr Neerja Arun, coordinator of GU's centre. The Group of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) is also involved in the programme.

The growing economic and political clout of Indians in UK, plight of NRI brides who are never taken abroad and portrayal of women in short stories of diasporic writers are some of the other subjects that have aroused keen interest among students.

Earlier, the term used to describe the situation faced by the diaspora was 'sandwich culture' with a slight negative connotation. Today, we use the term 'acculturation' where NRIs are able to adopt and adapt to western culture, while still retaining elements of their own.

Times of India, 9 March 2009

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Ahmedabad/Fortunes-of-Indian-diaspora-enthuse-GU-students/articleshow/4242413.cms>

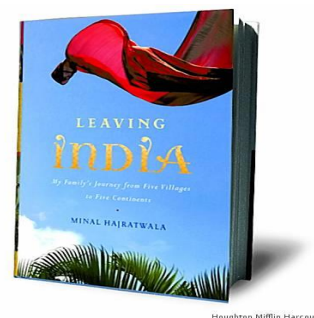
Book

Minal Hajratwala explores Indian diaspora

March 18, 2009

Journalist, performer, teacher, and left-leaning lesbian activist, Minal Hajratwala has published her first book, *Leaving India*, a grand collection of family histories culled from interviews with over 70 members of her extended family settled in a dozen countries.

The book focuses on Gujarati families but Hajratwala, who worked at San Jose Mercury News for over six years, shows that the compelling stories in her book have universal resonance. A third-generation Irish immigrant in America or Australia [Images], for instance, can understand why so many Indians left their country over many decades in the past 200 years ago.



The Irish who know how their ancestors suffered a huge potato famine in mid-19th century in their country can relate to the Indian Diaspora often triggered by famines and poverty, she feels. San Francisco-born Hajratwala, who was raised in New Zealand [Images] and America, began her study about seven years ago by asking simple but key questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? What did we give up and gain in the process? She tells rediff.com's Arthur J Pais that she has told 'the stories of ordinary people who were shaped by history'.

Black Bazar



In his new novel, *Black Bazar*, the award-winning Congolese author Alain Mabanckou recounts the diverse realities of the African diaspora in France. Mabanckou wittily portrays the African diaspora in Paris, stressing its diversity despite the unity of color. "Black people make themselves prisoners of the image white people have of them. So they think they are united, when it really is a patchwork community with disparate interests. I can tell you dozens of differences between Caribbeans, West Africans and Central Africans! That's really what I tried to portray in this novel."

Mabanckou's own African roots run deep. He was born in 1966 in Congo, which he jokingly calls the "little" Congo (capital Brazzaville) as opposed to the adjacent "big" one, the Democratic Republic of Congo (capital Kinshasa).

Awards/Recognitions

V S Naipaul nominated for Man Booker International Prize 2009



The Man Booker International Prize recognises one writer for their achievement in fiction. Worth £60,000 to the winner, the prize is awarded every two years to a living author who has published fiction either originally in English or whose work is generally available in translation in the English language.

V S Naipaul was born in Chaguanas, Trinidad, on 17 August 1932. His novels include *The Mimic Men* (1967), winner of the 1968 WH Smith Literary Award, *In a Free State* (1971), which won the Booker Prize for Fiction. V. S. Naipaul was knighted in 1989. He was awarded the David Cohen British Literature Prize by the Arts Council of England in 1993 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001. He holds honorary doctorates from Cambridge University and Columbia University in New York, and honorary degrees from the universities of Cambridge, London and Oxford. He has also been nominated for the Man Booker International Prize 2009. He lives in Wiltshire, England.

Ref: <http://www.themanbookerprize.com/prize/authors/12>

Obituary

Janet Jagan, former Guyanese president, dies at 88

London, March 30 (IANS) India and its huge diaspora around the world have lost a great supporter in the death of Janet Jagan, former President of Guyana and widow of the country's Indian-origin President Cheddi Jagan.

American-born Janet Jagan, who died in Georgetown March 28 at the age of 88, became prime minister of Guyana from May to December 1997 following her husband's death, and was then elected president at the end of the same year.

Janet, who inherited the mantle of the Indian-dominated People's Progressive Party (PPP), remained an important figure in the party, reflected in her choice of successor Bharat Jagdeo upon her resignation in 1999 on account of ill-health.



A lifelong admirer of Cheddi Jagan and the Indian diaspora, Janet wrote in 2002: “I came across a beautifully illustrated book “India - a Wealth of Diversity”... In the selection on the Indian Diaspora (Indians living in other parts of the world), attention is given to what Indians have done in various parts of the world.

“It focused on South Africa where Indian immigrants including Mahatma Gandhi and many others led the struggle against apartheid.”

Janet quoted the book as describing her late husband as “a statesman of world stature, a socialist, anti-racist and anti-colonial warrior of the noblest kind”.

She wrote: “Most truly great leaders have had to live through endless persecution, vile attacks and hatred. Witness the travails of Nehru, Gandhi, Mandela, Bolivar, Allende, Nyerere and others, who were finally revered and respected by history and their people.”

Janet Jagan is survived her son Cheddi ‘Joey’ Jagan Jr., the leader of the United Party of Guyana, and daughter Nadira.

<http://www.sindhtoday.net/south-asia/80871.htm>

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