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= 1.940=4.260= 0.350

Article

SOI: 1.1/TAS DOI: 10.15863/TAS International Scientific Journal **Theoretical & Applied Science**

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2023 Issue: 05 Volume: 121

http://T-Science.org Published: 29.05.2023



Issue



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REVIEW: HOW SUITABLE DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT POLICY FOR **UZBEKISTAN?**

Abstract: In today's global environment, engaging with diaspora politics is crucial. To fully realise the potential of its diaspora community, promote economic growth, cultural preservation and social inclusion, and build relationships with its diaspora to reap mutual benefits and achieve sustainable growth, Uzbekistan needs to implement a diaspora engagement strategy. This article looks at India's "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" diaspora engagement policy and focuses on the benefits it has for Uzbekistan. We have found that this policy benefits Uzbekistan by promoting networking opportunities, knowledge sharing, investment and cultural preservation. It also strengthens ties with the Uzbek diaspora and harnesses their skills and resources for the growth and development of both countries.

Key words: diaspora, migration, diaspora engagement policy, India, Uzbekistan.

Language: English

Citation: Juraev, Z., Rasulov, I., & Soliev, K. (2023). Review: How Suitable Diaspora Engagement Policy for Uzbekistan?. ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science, 05 (121), 585-591.

Soi: http://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-05-121-60 Doi: crossee https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2023.05.121.60

Scopus ASCC: 3300.

Introduction

The politics of diaspora engagement is significant in today's global landscape. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, diaspora communities have proven to be valuable assets contributing to economic, social and cultural development in both their countries of origin and their host countries. Recognising the potential of diaspora communities and implementing effective engagement policies can foster mutually beneficial relationships, harness their skills and resources, and advance cooperation on various fronts. In an era characterised by transnational linkages and mobility, diaspora engagement policy is an important tool to harness the networks and diversity talents,

communities to drive sustainable development and forge stronger ties between nations. A policy of diaspora engagement is necessary for Uzbekistan to harness the potential of its diaspora community, promote economic development, cultural preservation and social integration, and strengthen relations between Uzbekistan and its diaspora, leading to mutual benefits and sustainable growth. There is an exemplary model for engaging the diaspora, namely the "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" (Day of Non-Resident Indians). This article aims to discuss the diaspora engagement policy of India: "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" and suggest its benefits for Uzbekistan. We found that this policy benefits by promoting investment, knowledge sharing, cultural preservation



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and networking opportunities, strengthening ties with the Uzbek diaspora and harnessing their skills and resources for mutual growth and development.

Diaspora in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan is a country with a diverse population and there are several diaspora communities living within its borders. There are several notable diaspora communities in Uzbekistan.

Fig. 1. Diasporas in Uzbekistan



First, there is a significant Russian diaspora in Uzbekistan due to historical ties and the presence of Russian-speaking communities. Many Russians and Russian speakers have lived in Uzbekistan for generations. Secondly, there is a significant Korean diaspora in Uzbekistan, commonly known as the "Koryo-saram" [고려 사람] community. They are descendants of Koreans brought to Central Asia during the Soviet era. There is also a Tajik and Kazakh diaspora. Because of Uzbekistan's proximity to Tajikistan, there is a substantial Tajik diaspora living in Uzbekistan, especially in the border regions and areas with historically Tajik populations. And the Kazakh diaspora consists of ethnic Kazakhs who have settled in the country over the years. There are also many other diaspora communities in Uzbekistan. This is because the country hosts smaller diaspora

communities from various countries, including Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan and other Central Asian countries. Therefore, it is important to note that the size and composition of diaspora communities in Uzbekistan may change over time due to factors such as migration patterns, geopolitical developments and demographic changes. The exact number of diaspora communities in Uzbekistan may not be readily available or officially documented.

Geographical Distribution of Diasporas in Uzbekistan

A geographical view of the diaspora in Uzbekistan involves examining the distribution and characteristics of diaspora communities within the country. While Uzbekistan is primarily a country of origin for migrants rather than a destination for large diaspora communities, there are still some diaspora communities living within the country's borders.

Fig. 2. Distribution of Diaspora communities



The geographical distribution of diaspora communities in Uzbekistan can vary due to factors such as historical migration patterns, economic opportunities and proximity to neighbouring countries. There are some regions in Uzbekistan with a notable diaspora presence. First, urban centres.

Major cities such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Ferghana can have more diverse populations, including diaspora communities. These cities often attract foreign residents, expatriates and professionals working in different sectors. Second, border regions. Areas near Uzbekistan's borders, such as those



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bordering Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan, may have diaspora populations from these neighbouring countries. These communities may have historical, cultural and family ties that transcend national borders. Historical diaspora communities also occupied a place. In Uzbekistan, there may be diaspora communities that have lived in the country for generations. For example, the Russianspeaking community is strongly represented in Uzbekistan, especially in urban areas and regions where the Russian-speaking population concentrated. Thus, it is important to note that the size and distribution of diaspora communities in Uzbekistan may change over time due to migration patterns, geopolitical developments and demographic changes. Conducting a comprehensive study or analysis using available data and research sources can provide a more accurate and up-to-date understanding of the geographical aspects of the diaspora in Uzbekistan.

Challenges and Problems.

It is said that diaspora communities in Uzbekistan face various challenges and problems. We would like to mention here some of the most common problems faced by the diaspora in Uzbekistan.

First, language and cultural barriers. Language and cultural differences can be challenging for communities when it comes communication, integration and access to services. Language barriers can affect employment opportunities, education and interaction with local institutions. At times, diasporas can discrimination and prejudice, as they do in every country. Diaspora communities may discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping based on their ethnic or cultural background. This may manifest itself in various forms, such as social exclusion, limited opportunities or unequal treatment. However, we should note that legal and administrative complexities, regardless of reforms improvements, can pose a challenge to diasporas in the country. Members of the diaspora often face administrative problems related to residence permits, work permits, documents and legal rights. Navigating the bureaucratic processes and understanding the legal framework can be difficult for diaspora communities, especially if they are unfamiliar with the local systems.

Socio-economic inequalities are also a problem, as they can exist in any country. Indeed, diaspora communities are affected by economic inequalities and unequal access to resources and opportunities. Some diaspora members face socio-economic challenges, including limited employment opportunities, lower incomes or difficulties in accessing education, healthcare and social services in Uzbekistan.

Social integration and acceptance are really a problem everywhere. So social integration and

acceptance in society is a challenge for diaspora communities. In the case of Uzbekistan, it can take time and effort to build relationships, form social networks and develop a sense of belonging, especially in communities where cultural differences are pronounced.

It is therefore important that the government, civil society organisations and local communities address these challenges by promoting inclusion, providing linguistic and cultural support, ensuring equal rights and opportunities, and creating a welcoming environment for diaspora communities to flourish and contribute to society.

In Uzbekistan, there are several institutions and organisations that look after the needs of the diaspora. These institutions focus on engaging with and supporting the diaspora, promoting cultural links and responding to the needs of diaspora communities. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan plays an important role in diaspora-related matters. It is responsible for developing and implementing policies related to diaspora engagement, consular services and maintaining diplomatic relations with other countries. The External Labour Migration Agency is also involved in the management of labour migration processes, including the protection of migrant workers' rights and assistance to Uzbek migrant workers abroad. In addition, Uzbekistan has established cultural centres and associations in various countries to promote Uzbek culture, language and traditions. These centres serve as platforms for cultural events, language courses and social gatherings and foster a sense of community among members of the diaspora. Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Uzbekistan are actively involved in diaspora activities. These organisations deal with issues such as human rights, migrant workers' rights, cultural preservation and support for diaspora communities. It is important to note, then, that the specific institutions and organisations that deal with diaspora-related issues may evolve or change over time. For the most up-to-date and detailed information, you should consult official government sources and relevant organisations that specialise in diaspora affairs in Uzbekistan.

Exemplar Diaspora Engagement Policy

Indeed, there are several countries that have implemented diaspora engagement policies that are considered exemplary in terms of their effectiveness and impact. One country that is often cited as a role model for diaspora engagement is India. According to many studies, India's diaspora engagement policy, known as "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" (Day of Non-Resident Indians), was introduced in 2003 and has since evolved into a comprehensive framework for engaging the Indian diaspora. You will find that the Indian Diaspora Engagement Policy is exemplary because it has several important features.



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Fig. 3. Significant Features of India's Diaspora Policy.

India's Diaspora Engagement Policy

- •1. Recognition & Representation
- •3. Investment & Economic linkages
- •4. Skill & knowledge transfer
- •2. Networking & Knowledge sharing
- •5. Philantrophy & Social Growth

Firstly, India recognises the contributions of its diaspora by providing them with a platform for engagement and representation. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is an annual event where the Indian diaspora is invited to participate, share their experiences and contribute to discussions on issues of importance to India and its diaspora.

Secondly, India promotes networking and knowledge sharing through the establishment of various platforms, including the Global Organisation for People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) and the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC). These platforms foster linkages among the Indian diaspora, promote business partnerships and provide information and support to diaspora members.

Third, investment and economic linkages. India actively promotes investment by its diaspora through initiatives such as the "Invest India" programme and the "Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra" (Overseas Indian Centre). These initiatives facilitate diaspora investment in India, promote entrepreneurship and provide support for business ventures.

Fourth, skill and knowledge transfer. India's diaspora engagement policy focuses on harnessing the skills and expertise of the diaspora for India's development. The "Know India" programme invites young diaspora members to learn about Indian culture and society, creating a sense of connection and promoting knowledge sharing.

Fifth, philanthropy and social development. India's diaspora engagement policy encourages philanthropic contributions from diaspora memberss for social development projects in India. The "India Development Foundation for Overseas Indians" (IDF-OI) provides a platform for diaspora philanthropy and facilitates partnerships between diaspora organisations and Indian NGOs.

So, the Indian Diaspora Engagement Policy is recognised for its comprehensive approach, institutional support and proactive efforts to engage the Indian diaspora. It has helped foster strong ties between India and its diaspora, resulting in a significant contribution to India's economic, social and cultural development. Other countries can draw

inspiration from India's model for diaspora inclusion in formulating their own policies.

Uzbekistan Can Draw Inspiration from India's Policy!

We believe that Uzbekistan can take inspiration from India's diaspora inclusion policy, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, and adapt its principles for the inclusion of its own diaspora. However, to achieve this, it is first necessary to establish a dedicated platform for diaspora engagement. We think Uzbekistan can create a platform similar to the Pravasi Bharativa Divas where diaspora members are invited to participate in an annual event. This event can be a forum for diaspora members to socialise, share experiences and contribute to discussions on issues relevant to Uzbekistan and its diaspora. Then networking and knowledge sharing are ways to take charge of politics. We believe that Uzbekistan can facilitate networking and knowledge sharing among its diaspora members by establishing diaspora associations, organising conferences, seminars and workshops, and using digital platforms to connect diaspora communities worldwide. These initiatives foster collaboration, stimulate partnerships and facilitate the exchange of ideas, expertise and resources. Investment and economic ties are very good ways to implement policies in Uzbekistan. This is because Uzbekistan can actively promote diaspora investment by taking initiatives that provide information, support and incentives for diaspora members to invest in the country. This can include establishing investment promotion agencies, offering tax incentives or preferential treatment for diaspora investments, and organising investment forums to showcase opportunities in Uzbekistan. Transfer of skills and knowledge is one of the necessary ways, in our opinion. Uzbekistan should develop programmes and initiatives to harness the skills, knowledge and experience of its diaspora members. This includes inviting professionals from the diaspora to contribute to research projects, collaborate with local universities and research institutions, and participate in capacity-building



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programmes to transfer knowledge and skills to the local population.

As Uzbekistan has multicultural citizens, the path of cultural exchange and preservation works there. Uzbekistan promotes cultural exchange and preservation by organising cultural events, festivals and exhibitions involving the diaspora community. If this policy is adopted, cultural exchange and preservation can help preserve Uzbekistan's cultural heritage, strengthen cultural ties and promote tourism by showcasing Uzbek traditions, art and cuisine.

The path of philanthropy and social development helps Uzbekistan. It is really useful to encourage diaspora members to contribute to social development projects in the country. Establishing a diaspora philanthropy platform or foundation can facilitate diaspora contributions, foster partnerships with local non-governmental organisations and support initiatives in areas such as education, healthcare and community development.

Finally, we believe that advocacy and representation are crucial for Uzbekistan. For example, the country can engage with its diaspora community to leverage their support and influence to promote Uzbekistan's interests on the global stage. This can include mobilising diaspora networks to advocate for policy changes, gain international support and improve the country's image.

All in all, implementing a diaspora engagement policy requires cooperation between government agencies, diaspora organisations and other actors. Regular communication, consultation and feedback mechanisms should be established to ensure that policies effectively address the needs and aspirations of the Uzbek diaspora.

Importance of Diaspora Engagement Policy

After reviewing the above analyses, we have come to the conclusion that a policy of diaspora engagement for Uzbekistan is necessary for the following reasons.

Fig. 4. Benefits of India's Diaspora policy for Uzbekistan

Benefits of Policy
1. Economic Growth
2. Knowlegde & Tech transfer
3.Tourism & Culture Exchange
4. Brain gain & Reverse migration
5. Strengthening Social Ties

First, economic development. Diaspora engagement can contribute to economic development by promoting investment, entrepreneurship and trade. Uzbekistan can use the skills, knowledge and resources of its diaspora community to attract investment, promote trade partnerships and encourage diaspora members to start businesses or contribute to existing businesses in the country.

Second, knowledge and technology transfer: Diaspora members often have valuable expertise, experience and access to advanced technologies that they can share with their home country. Through engagement initiatives, Uzbekistan can use the knowledge and skills of its diaspora community to foster innovation, improve research and development, and support technology transfer in key sectors.

Third, tourism and cultural exchange. Diaspora engagement can promote tourism and cultural exchange. Members of the diaspora can act as ambassadors, sharing their experiences and promoting Uzbekistan as a tourist destination. They can also help preserve and promote Uzbek culture, traditions and

heritage by organising cultural events, festivals and exhibitions.

Fourth, advocacy and networking. The diaspora community can play a crucial role in representing Uzbekistan's interests on the global stage. Diaspora engagement policies can facilitate networking, building connections and using the influence of diaspora members to promote Uzbekistan's image, gain international support and advocate for the country's interests in various fields such as politics, economics and culture.

Fifth, brain gain and reverse migration. Diaspora engagement can provide opportunities for skilled diaspora members to return to Uzbekistan and bring their expertise, knowledge and networks with them. This brain gain can contribute to the development of key sectors such as education, healthcare, technology and innovation.

Finally, strengthening social ties. Measures to engage the diaspora can foster a sense of belonging and strengthen social ties between the diaspora and Uzbekistan. This can lead to increased cultural exchanges, philanthropic activities and cooperation



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on social development projects such as education, health care and community development.

To effectively harness the potential benefits of diaspora engagement, Uzbekistan can establish dedicated institutions, programmes and platforms to facilitate communication, cooperation and resource mobilisation with its diaspora community. In addition, dialogue and consultation with members of the diaspora to understand their needs, aspirations and challenges is critical to the successful implementation of diaspora engagement policies.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the Indian policy on engaging the diaspora, known as "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas'," can serve as a useful reference for Uzbekistan. The policy's focus on recognising the contributions of the diaspora, promoting investment and economic ties, facilitating networking and knowledge sharing, and

promoting cultural exchange and preservation can have application in the Uzbek context. By implementing a diaspora engagement policy along the lines of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Uzbekistan can harness the potential of its diaspora community to contribute to the country's economic development, technological advancement, cultural preservation and advocacy. It can help strengthen ties between Uzbekistan and its diaspora, promote entrepreneurship and investment, facilitate knowledge transfer and enhance cultural exchange. However, it is important that Uzbekistan tailors any diaspora engagement policy to its specific context and takes into account the unique characteristics and needs of its diaspora communities. This can be achieved through continuous dialogue, consultations and cooperation with the diaspora, as well as through the establishment of specific institutions and platforms that facilitate effective diaspora engagement and support.

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