Chapter 9

Multicultural Approach of Indian Diaspora in the UAE: Examining Diaspora, Identity and Media

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Abstract

In my chapter, I analyse how the multicultural approach of the Indian diaspora has changed historically in the UAE, while examining it from an inclusive perspective. Diaspora people change from who they were at their origins and contribute to the sociocultural heterogeneity of their diaspora. A social change results in regarding migration as rooted in the distinctive insight of society and its transformations: it is a segment of the transformation process that is neither a reason nor a result of social change. This essay argues that to understand the chronological growth of the Indian diaspora in the UAE, one must connect local-level migration experiences with other socio-spatial levels. Doing so will help one to better comprehend the current dynamics in which migration, identity, the media, economics and politics are all intertwined.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Ethnic Media, Indian Diaspora, Soft Power, Bollywood

Introduction

Diaspora is a term used to describe various migratory groups that have left their native countries but have a strong sense of national, religious, or ethno-national distinctiveness. Subsequently, in the mid-1980s and throughout the 1990s, the description of "diaspora" has grown to incorporate more ethnic and racial groups and more emphasis has been placed on hybridity, which is an essential mechanism of diasporic identity. The term "diaspora" or "tokens of a single diaspora" has come to refer to those seeking refuge, expatriates, trading groups, guest workers, exiles, immigrants, forced migrants, asylum, and ethnic communities of numerous kinds (Cohen, 2008). Liberal multiculturalism's disparities result from its strong emphasis on national cohesion rather than its poor commitment to diversity. Thus, multicultural ideologies support liberal regimes where nostalgia for the real past plays a significant role in the formation of citizenship and political consciousness.

The dispersed configurations of diasporas and the numerous impacts they have on their several groups may lead to conflicting observations of the shared identity and blur the boundaries of authority. Nevertheless, despite the reduction of sociocultural barriers, some retention in diasporic groups is still empowered by intercontinental interchanges and yields them a major factor in the multiculturalisation of their current surroundings. The transcontinental diasporas exhibit two separate magnitudes, i.e., the socio-cultural heterogenisation of contemporary global socio-cultural reality and the power of multiculturalisation. This reality encompasses adversities as well as solace. The diaspora members frequently experience such a sense of comfort in their new environment that, despite any prejudices that may be aimed at them, they voluntarily and outwardly proclaim their uniqueness and depict this environment as a true—possibly their first—homeland (Knott, 2010).

Some academics now refer to "hybridisation" as a characteristic of modern social dynamics because of these

processes. The term "cultural hybridisation" refers to the borrowing by one culture of the norms and values of another. The result includes both the formation of new in-between categories and alterations brought on by cross-cultural interactions. Analysts who disapprove of "objectivist" approaches to collective entities criticise this idea. In the current context, hybridisation is useful since it identifies a significant source of recent cultural advances. Additionally, it increases the analyst's awareness of the overall impact of the evolution of cultures on multiculturalism in terms of inventions and symbolic blending. The result is a propensity for social borders to be more fluid, which allows participants to reflect on and reinterpret their identities in the never-ending discussions that characterise modern intellectual undertakings.

Multiculturalism and Problems of Diversity

Multiculturalism is a society or a world where multiple cultural and ethnic sets are present and are deemed to have political magnitude, as well as a programme or policy that espouses such a culture. Political theorists strive to approach multiculturalism's concerns, yet there is strong disagreement on what constitutes fair treatment. Given the significance that different cultures have for different people or even for society, multiculturalism may imply the granting of entitled privileges both individual and communal. To provide evenly balanced access to the assistance that social involvement brings and avoid unfairly benefiting major clusters of societies, a multicultural government may therefore be one in which different levels of acknowledgement are given to cultural clusters. In contrast, it could be argued that, exactly because of the great cultural and social multiplicity, the state should uphold its neutral stance towards groups and ensure that core democratic rights are fairly and unswervingly imposed across cultural differences. Allowing recognition of groups runs the danger of "politicising" modes of ethnic identity that are best retained out of local decision-making involving the allocation

of resources and commodities. This could compromise personal security and interests. These thoughts manifest not only contrary hypotheses regarding the correlation between cultures and our well-being but also philosophical debates over what freedom and equality are.

The ideals of political life that have been advanced throughout much of the history of Western political thought have assumed that individuals share not only a common political position but also a common language, ancestry and culture. This is evident in Greece where, despite Aristotle being a resident alien of Athens, he was one of the key players in the development of Western political theory. J.S. Mill, a supporter of individual freedom, believed that liberal organisations were impossible among a population without fellow feelings or who spoke and read other dialects. According to him, a state's borders should in the main equal those of ethnicities (Mill, 1975). The assumption that governments should be culturally homogeneous was linked to several problems that still plague current political thinkers, as well as, no doubt, simple prejudice against outsiders and foreigners. Among these is whether a shared culture is necessary for justice to inspire the goodwill and sacrifice that it generally calls for from citizens. Can a civic society be strong and sturdy if its people and cultures are too diversely represented? If the citizens of a state speak numerous languages, hold diverse views, and yet understand their country's history differently, can a representative association function and be viewed as authentic? Can we strike a compromise between the needs of cultures and the demands for equality if people are inherently equal? Western philosophers from Aristotle to Mill (and beyond) have served to respond negatively to these problems; they believe that too much cultural diversity endangers the prospects for a society that is peaceful, affluent and ultimately just. The issue is that it is impossible to avoid the difficulties presented by cultural variety. Witnessing the resurgence of nationalism, the banquet of ferocious ethnic wars in South-East Asia, Africa and Europe, and the unusual movement of people absconding from cultural and economic

torture, the history of the twentieth century, and particularly of the last few eras, makes this copiously clear. But first, what do political philosophers mean when they mention cultural diversity? Culture and ethnicity were frequently linked in the nineteenth century, leading to conclusions about the intrinsic dominance of one form of ethnicity over another. This trend persisted into the twentieth century, manifesting itself in violent ways. Thus, the idea of correlating cultural features with biological or quasi-logical traits has come to be regarded as exceedingly dubious, entailing both shoddy science and ethically dubious practices. Instead, anthropologists (among many) have discussed that culture should be recognised as a collection of ultimately flexible and accessible social and cognitive backgrounds that govern individual behaviour. These frameworks are complicated, vigorous rather than stationary, and brought together from different sources rather than being woven from equivalent material.

Speaking of societal ethos or even a single multi-ethnic culture runs the risk of excluding the intrinsic diversity and hybridity of cultural and political identities because there is no identity without heterogeneity. The major goal of justice should be to remain analytically receptive to this agility and multiplicity rather than reaffirm found or existing cultural formations because people and clusters are made up of a variety of ethical foundations (Connolly, 1995; Bhabha, 1994). Therefore, the term "multicultural politics" alludes to the idea that social and political change is required because of social and cultural variety.

Reasons for Indian Diaspora in the UAE

It is crucial to investigate the circumstances and background that led to Indians leaving their ancestral lands. The first wave of contemporary Indian immigration began in the 19th century for the following reasons:

- **Linguistic affinity, linkages, and socio-ethnic empathy:** Although the outmoded social hindrances the passage of talent across countries as variances in

linguistic, social behaviour, and cultural traits are less of an impairment to highly knowledgeable migrants, the presence of these characteristics can indisputably promote the enablement of global migration. The large-scale emigration to the UAE is therefore perceived as a deliberate choice because of pre-existing migratory patterns, ancestral and kinship ties, and determined diaspora associations (Birks, 1980). The decision to move the family is also influenced by factors such as how easily they will adjust, how familiar things will be, and social links. As the migrant family moves, they establish and retain their cultural linkages, which facilitates emigration from Indian collaborators and neighbours (Fargues, 2011).

- **Demand for wealth and aptitude:** Considering the high levels of underemployment in India and the UAE, which are both driven by the need for directly prolific aptitude in the workforce, a migration drift will unavoidably form in the direction of the nation with the best economic prospects. India has a sizable pool of highly qualified, English-speaking workers who can cover the labour shortages in these economies (Jain, 2005). In contrast, the UAE experiences acute local labour shortages due to a demographic disparity, which has given Indians the chance to work in the UAE. Although the extensive development projects launched in the UAE after the oil boom initially required a higher dependence on low-skilled workers than entrepreneurs and white-collar professionals, only a few entrepreneurs were of the view that demand for wealth and aptitude in the form of talent was their motivation for emigrating.
- **Transfer of funds:** This essential element of migration is frequently referred to as the transfer or flow of migrant wages from outside their nations of origin to their homeland. Global development agendas have recently grown to rely on migrant remittances, which are now a crucial part of any poor country's balance of payments (Gabi, 2012). Similarly, remittances from Indians living abroad include payments made to household

members and their means of subsistence exclusive to India, as well as domestic withdrawals from NRI rupee deposits, non-resident external rupee accounts, and non-resident regular deposit schemes. Such private, unrequited transfers are accounted for in the current account of the home country's balance of payments and, as a result, have a significant impact on the country's available income. The Indian economy also continues to benefit greatly from remittances, since it is the largest beneficiary of remittances in the world.

- **Policy regimes and immigration policies:** Economic and governmental policies ultimately have an impact on the migration of people between countries. The decision to remain, depart, or restore is determined by the general policy framework in the host and home countries. The vigorous nature of policy implications means that they have the potential to drastically alter migration trends as well as the rules governing foreigners' entry and exit from the country. Until recently, substantial numbers of Indian migrants, who suffer unfavourable political conditions like officialdom and unpredictability back home, were drawn to the UAE because of the economy's need for skills and the liberalisation of immigration and economic policies. Numerous immigrants and businesspeople have been able to create global companies in only a few days and lift their families out of poverty in India because of the tax-free appeal and free economic zones of the UAE (Keane, 2008). However, with growing concerns among the native population about the dominance and overdependence on Indian expatriates, these worries may eventually lead to the introduction of stringent immigration laws and nationality quotas.

Indian Diaspora in the UAE

Due to trade and other commercial ties between India and the various Emirates of the UAE, Indian engagement with the

UAE extends back several centuries. It stands out from every other expatriate community in the UAE due to its breadth in terms of numbers and depth in terms of the types of workers it employs. Before the 1958 petroleum discovery, the UAE's economy was based primarily on low-tech pursuits like pearl diving, subsistence farming, fishing, and herding, which caused a variety of migrant flows, including traders from Persia, the Indian subcontinent, and Baluchi families. The local labour force ended their age-old work. It moved to the new oil-manufacturing regions where income was attractive and stable after modest amounts of oil were discovered in Dubai and Abu Dhabi (Errichiello, 2021). Petroleum, the country's primary economic resource, had a significant impact on the economy and communal life of the Emirates, granting funding for massive development projects that were undertaken as soon as the country gained independence in 1971 (Sh'arawi, 2004). Remarkable changes in the economic and demographic makeup of the Emirates were sparked by the oil boom of 1973. Whereas formerly the UAE was underdeveloped, with high fertility rates, poor educational attainment, low levels of industrial and service employment, and inadequate infrastructure for communication, transportation or industries (Birks & Sinclair, 1980), the immense oil profits enabled the UAE to "bypass the traditional stages of capital accumulation experienced by developed countries and to jump directly to the stage of mass consumption" (Shihab, 2001). The establishment of the Internet, media cities and free zones, as well as the growth of the tourism, financial and commercial sectors, are just a few of the ambitious development initiatives that the UAE has initiated in several different economic areas. Its operation and the anticipated growth were strongly reliant on the importation of foreign labour, particularly highly qualified experts with a variety of specialisations. These already-established mercantile families were joined by "new" immigrants who gradually surfaced in three recorded waves of migration: mass immigration following the oil boom in 1973, mass immigration in response to restrictive immigration policies, and the need for skilled workers for development projects in 1990, and mass immigration because

of skyrocketing oil prices in 2000 (Kumar, 2014). The effect of the expatriate community in the UAE is blatantly obvious. The country and its workforce have been characterised by large-scale immigration and surges of migrant influx, which numerically dominate at every occupational level and rapidly yield a demographic imbalance.

The Indian merchant community in the Gulf region prospered during the eighteenth century. Previously, the Indian merchant diaspora had established their base in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf regions, with pearls replacing dates and gemstones in the historic Silk Routes' international export of spices and textiles. The wealthy colonies of Gujarati traders and Sindhis, who loved religious liberties, not only played a foremost role in maritime trade and finance, serving as agents for government contractors, importers, exporters, bankers and local merchants (Suter, 2005) but also impacted the GCC countries in terms of initial modernisation, cultural renaissance, reform movements, and facets of sociocultural life (Jain, 2005). The Indian diaspora has contributed significantly to India's expansion and success over the course of the economic reform period.

- **Labour:** The UAE is the top destination for Indian migrant workers in the Gulf, followed by Saudi Arabia and Oman. The GCC nations had to make significant human resource expenditures in the early 1970s to carry out development operations in the fields of infrastructure, communications, agriculture, industry and transport. As the economy of the Gulf states grew dramatically in the decades that followed, the numbers gradually increased. Due to a lack of local labour, the Gulf region began to invite international labour. Destitute South Asian workers were willing to accept lower wages and low-skilled jobs. Gulf countries were especially attracted to hiring more labourers from these regions. A change in trend can be seen if we examine the regional pattern in the migration of Indian workers: workers primarily came from Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu during the initial phase of labour migration from

India to the Gulf, but more recently, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Goa, and Bihar have emerged as the top states for menial workers' emigration. Due to its proximity to India and the associated financial benefits, Indian labourers choose to work in the Gulf region, where they continue to make up a significant portion of the labour force. However, white-collar workers were in great demand as they were highly skilled and technically trained professionals working in government agencies and public-sector businesses, earning enormous salaries and emoluments. Indian professionals can afford to bring their families with them to the UAE because of the high basic income criteria established by the UAE government, and children are allowed to live with their parents until they complete their education.

The phrase "temporary migration" to the GCC countries refers to movement, but many workers stay in the Gulf for a long time, increasing the number of second and third-generation migrants. Though Saudi Arabia places many limitations on exercising one's faith or erecting a Christian church or Hindu temple, other nations, such as the UAE and Bahrain, have more tolerant cultures that allow for the free expression of migrant groups' cultural norms and beliefs. However, there has not been much overall sociocultural collaboration or incorporation of immigrant communities in the Gulf states. Regardless of playing a significant role in building their economies, the problem of migrant rights has been essentially overlooked by the GCC. Presently, immigrants have little access to, if any, of the social, civil, and political rights correlated with citizenship, meaning they have no chance of assimilation.

- **Soft Power:** India's scope for soft power has been widened by showcasing its social and cultural ideals on multiple stages and in varied settings. The Indian Social Centre, Al Ain, the Indian Tamil Fine Arts Association in the UAE, and Indian Social and Cultural Centre in Abu Dhabi are some of the Indian associations that have been effective in the UAE through authorised

> registration in the host states. Indian cultural activity infuses the region with some much-needed dynamism, and Indians continue to be the favoured immigrant community due to their extraordinary levels of technical proficiency and discipline, ability to easily adapt to the lifestyle in the UAE, and reputation for being kind and understanding people.

Numerous schools with an Indian curriculum and affiliations to organisations such as the CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) have been founded in the area by professionals and white-collar Indians. In Dubai, there are branches of Indian universities, including the Manipal University, I.G.N.O.U, and Birla Institute of Technology and Science that provide engineering, management, and medical guidance for both the public and commercial sectors. Additionally, research institutes like the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi concentrate primarily on researching India's foreign policy ingenuities while vigorously collaborating with its academicians and decision-makers.

Contracting and Negotiating Indian identity and Media

The Indian diasporic identity is constructed, negotiated and transmitted by three main actors: First, ethnic Indian media in the UAE; second, Indian cinema commerce; and third, commercial interaction with global and local businesses.

Ethnic Indian Media in the UAE

Over the past two decades, the Indian media has experienced an unheard-of expansion. Increased democratic engagement will not necessarily result from this growth, because the entire concept of the "public" has changed, as seen by the media's ideological coverage, the public sphere's international membership, and the interactive nature of the public. Ethnic media are media produced for a particular ethnic community.

Global Indian Television, for example, is a television show produced by Symphony TV, an independent, Kerala-based producer that caters to the sizable Gulf-based Malayalam-speaking diaspora from the south Indian state of Kerala. Similarly, privately-owned Indian radio stations like Radio Mirchi in Abu Dhabi (97.3 FM) and Big FM in Dubai (106.2 FM) operate in the UAE and mostly hire vernacular speakers from different regions of India to serve as presenters.

Indian Cinema Commerce and Over-Nativeness

The UAE now boasts the greatest box office in the Middle East, with Dubai and Abu Dhabi, its two main cities, accounting for the majority of this. Although several social, religious, linguistic and cultural organisations play a significant role in preserving and promoting Indianness among Indians in America, their combined influence cannot compare to that of "Bollywood". Bollywood, the Hollywood of Bombay, is the world's biggest film producer. Its movies, dance, music, and artworks have become synonymous with a globally recognised identity. Hindi films are widely distributed and advocate for traditional Indian values and the idea of "unity in diversity". They represent the triumph of Indianness over non-Indian ideals, are melodramatic in style and packed with music and dances. These qualities are appealing to non-Indians as well as to Indians living abroad and within India. One example is the Middle East, where nearly all Hindi films have Arabic subtitles, even though most Indians do not speak Arabic (Bose, 2006).

Films by filmmakers like Nikhil Advani, Aditya Chopra and Koran Johar appeal to higher middle-class Indian diaspora residents and aim to reinforce the optimistic bonds of culture, religion and Hindu ethnicity that can be construed almost exclusively through the lens of diaspora; secondly, such Indian diasporas were encouraged to consolidate an emotional and national identification by investing financially in Indian cinema. The amalgamation of internationally disseminated motion pictures and a commercial financial set-up dictated by the international marketplace rather than the nation, reflects

the prominence of the Non-Returning Indian as an optimistic, energetic character who subscribes to and supports national values in the diaspora, one that reflects the ideologies of class, religion, and gender with a transnational Hindutva modernism and entrepreneurial consumerism.

Zed Aflam (2009), Zed Alwan (2012), and MBC Bollywood (2013) are three cable and satellite television stations with dedicated Bollywood content that have been launched in the UAE in the past ten years. Most of this content is dubbed into Arabic and is largely aimed at the local Emirati audience. Hindi film producers appeared to be leaning towards Arabic phrases and tunes to appeal to Arabic audiences, evident in the current popularity of "Bollywood in Arabic" in terms of Hindi cinema utilisation today. Certain legendary Hindi movies like Ali Baba and Chalis Chor had a song called "Khatooba"; the film Ek Tha Tiger had a melodious beat song called "Mashah'allah", and "Ya Ali", a song from the film Gangster has an Arabic influence which establishes a great interrelation with Arabic and Indian spectators and forces them to dance to Arabic music.

Dubai is home to the world's first Bollywood theme park that is creditable and praiseworthy in the UAE. The Government's neoteric decision to provide a ten-year Golden Visa to Bollywood actors built a stronger relationship. The drive-in movie theatre experience in locations like the Mall of the Emirates, Zabeel Park, and Dubai Hill Estate gave its audiences a tremendous cinematic experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recently opened Madame Tussauds in Dubai exhibits wax sculptures with seven themed zones and over 60 lifelike wax statues. Visitors can dance in front of a digital interactive screen in the Bollywood section. It has numerous Bollywood celebrities like Salman Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Shahrukh Khan, Katrina Kaif, and many more. Recent hit films like Dangal (2016) and Pathan (2023) ranked in the region as one of the most-watched movies, with massive box office takings and huge profits. The major box office collection markets for Indian film producers, particularly those in Bollywood and Mollywood (Malayalam), are the UAE cinema markets.

Numerous Indian expatriates live and work in the UAE, demonstrating the long-standing cultural ties between the two nations. Bollywood's dance, music and movies are well-known and cherished elements of Indian culture. Bollywood films are primarily in Hindi, a common language throughout the Indian community in the UAE, giving Indians who live abroad a sense of comfort and familiarity. Because of this, they can appreciate the films and comprehend the plots, which makes Bollywood an essential aspect of their cultural exposure. Over the years, Bollywood's popularity in the UAE has continuously increased, making it one of the top marketplaces for Bollywood films (Indiana, 2021). In conclusion, Bollywood gives the Indian population in the UAE a cultural link and a sense of home. Its vast appeal and popularity have contributed to the nation's entertainment industry.

Commercial Interaction with global and local business

Traditional wooden dhows from the Gulf would dock in Indian ports and bring back spices, tea, cotton, indigo, and teak along with their cargoes of incense, gold, and dates. Hindustani is a language that many Arabs in the UAE speak, and shops still call the dirham, the country's currency, rupiah—a holdover from the British era when Indian rupees could be exchanged for it. Standing in the center of Dubai's bustling Meena Bazaar, it is not difficult to picture yourself 1 200 kilometres away in Mumbai on the other side of the Arabian Sea. Names like Biryaniwalla & Co., Mini Punjab Restaurant, and Tanishq Jewellery may be found in the lanes. Communication can be accomplished in Malayalam, Hindi, and Arabic. The financial institution that towers over Dubai Creek and is under the control of the Indian government is the Bank of Baroda.

A senior or middle-level Indian professional is often employed by a well-established Bahraini corporate organisation in an operational or advisory capacity. Indians are found in senior- or middle-management positions at prestigious Bahraini corporate houses like Mohammed Jalal,

Ahmed Mansour Al Ali, Bahrain Aluminium, Zayanis or Al-Moayyads, as well as in petrochemical and ship repair firms. Several Non-Resident Indians and People of Indian Origin have also set up businesses, and humanitarian and educational institutions in the region. For example, Dr. Shetty established UAE Exchange in the year 1980 which deals with remittances and foreign exchange in over thirty countries across the world. The significant Indian expatriate community leaders in UAE, Mr. Bava Pandalingal and Mr. Vasudev Shamdas Shroff were presented with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award in January 2013 and January 2017, respectively. As the first female gynaecologist from India, Dr Zulekha Daud relocated to the UAE in 1964 and has also been honoured with the award in 2019.

Almost every substantial Indian organisation has a presence in the UAE through trade and investment, or a representative office; several Indian businesses have opened local offices or industrial facilities there. Many Indians also operate hypermarkets and name-branded businesses, such as the Lulu Group, which has locations in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The key drivers of the rise of Indian economic interests in the Gulf area include safe markets, favourable dividend payments, and close political and ethnic links. The development of strong trade ties between India and the UAE is significantly influenced by the diaspora factor. The UAE is home to 1.2 million Emiratis and over 3.5 million Indians. India is a source of food, diamonds, jewellery, leather, people, pharmaceuticals, and business prospects for this region. For India, the UAE is an essential source of cash and, increasingly, a location where Indian businesses can effectively connect with global markets without being hindered by the oppressive red tape, snarling traffic, backed-up airport immigration lines, and harsh taxes of their own country. When the Meena Bazaar received its name in 1973, an establishment selling Indian saris, this relationship would have been unfathomable. Abu Dhabi was in abject poverty. The lack of desalination resulted in frequently brackish water. The local currency up until 1966 was a variant of the Indian rupee known as the "external

rupee". The Trucial States, a group of tribal lands connected by antiquated treaties, were what became known as the UAE only in 1971. Nearly all the world's trade, which (pre-oil) mostly involved stones, pearls, and diamonds, flowed via Bombay. After fifty years, the situation had completely changed. The most cutting-edge products in the world may be found in crowded Emirati malls. The 68-story Almas Tower in Dubai is occupied by Indian gem traders, who are driven by restaurants like Mumbai Masala and Delhi Darbar Express on the first floor. Manu Chhabria, whose main company, Jumbo, is based in Dubai, is arguably one of the most well-known Indians with a presence in the UAE. Jumbo was founded in 1974 and currently represents numerous global brands, including Sony, Electrolux, Supra, Ricoh, Casio and Krups. Chhabria has even established businesses in Germany, the United States, Japan, the UK and Hong Kong.

The UAE's tax approach is attractive, i.e., there are no personal taxes. Indian income taxes, in comparison, are close to 40% and are added to hefty consumption levies. In India, corporate income taxes are not only more expensive but also more complicated than ever. However, conducting business in the UAE is not simple. The market is cutthroat and value driven. Indian brands including Amul, Bru, and Hawkin's pressure cookers are widely available. Indians primarily purchase them. The Indus Valley rice produced by Hindustan Lever is marketed to the neighbourhood Arabs. STC, MMTC, Tata Exports, and ITC are Indian businesses with regional headquarters in the UAE. India and the UAE signed agreements in July 2023 about trade settlement in national currencies and establishing a real-time interface for cross-border transactions. Following the adoption of the new trade settlement system, the first transaction involved the export of 25 kg of gold to the YES Bank in Mumbai for a rupee payment of Rs. twelve crores. De-dollarisation is particularly important because the UAE is India's second-largest supplier of LPG and LNG and its fourth-largest supplier of crude oil.

Indian Diaspora Challenges

The UAE faces a significant difficulty because of the large number of expatriates and diaspora members living there, which jeopardises their domestic labour forces and alters the social structures of these nations.

Social, Economic and Political Issues

The fundamental goal of UAE labour laws over the years has been to closely control the imported labour force and make sure that it is only transitory in nature. However, a worker sponsorship programme known as kafala, where the state delegates migrant workers' immigration and employment status to a private employer, has come under increasing worldwide criticism, including from India. In many different industries, it is said that there is an abuse of the sponsorship system, as well as dangerous working environments, insufficient housing, economic hardships, and worker human rights abuses. Migration from India has mostly met the demand in the UAE for low-category labour including domestic helpers, chefs, carriers, and gardeners. This group of workers, however, is not covered by any local labour regulations. In several Gulf nations, housemaids and governesses are exposed to mistreatment, including occasionally sexual abuse. Workers who are unskilled or semi-skilled are typically housed in confined quarters in makeshift camps with subpar amenities while working on infrastructure and development projects. Unfavourable working circumstances, unfavourable weather, a lack of social opportunities, and protracted absence from family members tend to cause mental stress for the unskilled Indian diaspora in the UAE. Moreover, the workers and labourers are not allowed to take part in any protest. Additionally, even after being in the UAE for several years, they are not granted citizenship as there are stringent naturalisation and citizenship laws.

Security Impasse

The Gulf region faces new difficulties in the twenty-first century, including internal Islamist terrorism, the fragility of UAE-Iran relations, and concerns over regional defence and collective security. The violent attempts to overthrow dictatorial regimes in West Asia that followed the so-called "Arab Spring" have spread to the Gulf nations, causing panic among diaspora communities who fear that stability, employment, and a safe return to their home countries may be at risk. Although India has been able to maintain close ties with all nations and is unlikely to face significant difficulties in coping with the rapidly shifting balance of power in the Gulf, it still needs to be aware of several immediate threats in the area, including the widening Shia-Sunni divide, Arab fears of a Shia takeover led by Iran, and the possibility of a permanent US military presence in the Gulf and its effects on extremism, rapid shifts in the region's social and political systems, the pursuit of nuclear and other weapons capabilities, and growing public resentment. In the long run, India's ability to implement New Delhi's "Look West Policy", which aims to improve ties with all the countries in the region, depends critically on its ability to comprehend the difficulties that the Gulf region faces. Even though the mere existence of superpowers like the USA and China may not hurt the Indian diaspora's role and soft power potential in the Gulf, covert barriers to Indian migration to the Gulf and political and social development may discourage India's efforts to project soft power in the region.

Conclusion

The Indian diaspora has considerably shaped and influenced world dynamics, adding to the complex fabric of diversity. Indians have dispersed around the world, resulting in a blending of cultures and the emergence of hybrid identities. The Indian diaspora frequently creates distinctive cultural fusions by fusing aspects of their native country with the local

customs of their new nations. This process of globalisation has included the development of Indian enterprises, media, and cultural traditions, which have influenced and been influenced by other world cultures. Transnational linkages have been made possible by technologies and communication systems, which have enabled diaspora populations to maintain ties to their homelands and make contributions to the advancement of both their home and host nations. The world is now more culturally diverse and interwoven because of the diaspora's active participation in international politics. The diaspora of Indians has made substantial economic, knowledge-sharing, and exchange programme contributions to the global phenomena. The Indian diaspora in the UAE adopts a multicultural approach that incorporates media interactions, identity development, and diaspora dynamics in a complex way. Fostering a greater understanding of the experiences and contributions of the Indian diaspora in the UAE requires an understanding of these dynamics. The protracted stay of Indian migrants in the UAE has contributed to laying the groundwork for a solid bilateral connection between India and the UAE. The Indian community significantly impacts both India and the UAE's economic progress. In addition to trade, commerce and investment, both nations stand to gain from the expanding energy collaboration between India and the UAE. Given this, both countries should concentrate on the Indian diaspora in the United Arab Emirates. This might be a useful tool for developing this connection. However, there remain issues that Indians in the UAE need to be fixed. Indian workers complain most frequently about their poor living and working conditions, workplace discrimination, illegal stealing of passports, and other violations of their human rights. The governments of India and the GCC nations should take rapid steps for the welfare of these employees, so to positively strengthen the Indian diaspora.

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