Role of Diaspora in India’s Soft Power Diplomacy

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Abstract: The person of Indian origin (PIO) and Non-resident Indian (NRI) commonly known as Indian Diaspora has played a major role in enhancing India’s soft power approach in the recent years. India since the rise of Narendra Modi to power in 2014 has given new dimension to India’s engagement with the world. Soon after the result of 2014 Parliamentary elections more than 8 lac people have migrated to Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCC). The predecessor of Modi did not dwell on the idea of ‘who we are’ and mostly involved in domestic quarrel over Muslim-Hindu. Modi’s rise to power has provided sizable recognition to the diaspora and linked overseas Indians to the mainstream. The NRIs have got sizable recognition abroad. Prime Minister himself takes care of grievances and welfare of the PIOs during his visit to UAE modi addressed large number of Indians. Overseas Indian has represented India an and its culture and is main force behind the development of Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Most of these Indian belongs to the Indian state of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh. The presence of overseas Indians has given leverage to India in its engagement with the other region especially in case of West Asia where Indians have been working since the oil boom in 1970s. They have created a bond of trust and relationship with host countries which has given pace to India’s soft power approach. The proposed paper is an attempt to analyse the role of Indian diaspora in the rise of India’s soft power diplomacy since the rise of Narendra Modi to power.

Keywords: Soft Power; Diaspora; Culture; Foreign Policy, India.

1. Introduction

Soft power is an approach in international relations, the term was first coined by Joseph Nye. He wrote an article in the year 1990 entitled as “Soft Power” which got published in journal of foreign policy in which he defined soft power as “when one country gets other countries to want what it wants—might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants” (Nye 1990:166). It is basically an enhancement of countries power through cultural interaction or it is the acceptance of country’s attractions or its ability to influence other societies through such real but intangible elements as culture through export of products like in the American case Hollywood movies, McDonalds. In the Indian case religion, culture, yoga, gurus, mysticism are the instrument of soft power diplomacy and as C. Raja Mohan calls the “biggest instrument for our soft power is Diaspora” (Rajamohan, 2003). According to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) report, there are around 30,995,729 Indian Diaspora residing outside of India (MEA, 2018b).

The modern Indian diaspora actually came into existence due to the subjugation of Indians by the British colonial empire. Large number of Indians during the colonial era were taken over as indentured labour to various part of the world during the 19th century. Since then they have been residing outside as culturally distinct communities with deep roots in ancestral land and maintains gigantic cultural connections with the home country. At a large scale they are considered as part and parcel of Indian civilization and culture (Rehman 2013: 31). The enormous inflow of Indian labour was witnessed by many Gulf/West Asian states soon after the oil boom in 1973 which led to huge infrastructure projects in most part of the region. Largely, due to the quadrupling of oil prices and revenue generation by exporting oil to the world. This led to the enormous development programmes in Gulf states. This resulted in unprecedented demand for work force and led to huge inflow of expatriate workers to these nations. The development projects were the pull factor for Indian workers to pursue career in West Asian states mainly to search for livelihood and employment (Azhar, 2015). The Indian expatriate working force around the world is the main source for remittances earnings for India. India has become the largest recipient of remittances, of which large share (around 56%) came from gulf states, which is expected to rise in the years to come. The Indian Community, workers or the overseas Indians around seven million in the Gulf/West Asian region form a thirtieth state of India with population almost equivalent to the Indian state of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (Haider, 2016). The Diaspora has played a
very crucial role in soft power diplomacy of India. PM Modi has proactively promoted soft power of India in achieving various crucial objectives. His various trips to foreign nations have united Diaspora as one force and it is of the view that soft power of India may not be able to precisely influence foreign nations to back India’s position on miscellaneous matters but in the long period it will make it simple for India to bolster its conventional foreign-policy objectives.

II. Soft Power Diplomacy under Modi
Modi knows the importance of Diaspora which is the main source for the enhancement of country’s Soft Power. Therefore, using Diaspora, Buddhism, Yoga, Mysticism as resource to promote Indian culture at the global level. Which was visible since United Nation Security Council (UNSC) passed resolution 69/131 to proclaim 21 June as International Yoga day this was the sign of ‘Indian soft power at work’ (Govindarajan, 2016). The PM visited many countries to connect with Diaspora, he visited UAE, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Oman, Palestine, Israel, United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK) and various others and pressed on improvement of condition of workers in these countries (Pillalamarri, 2016). Sushma Swaraj (Minister of External Affairs) have argued in the parliament that “Prime Minister (PM) has consistently advocated a proactive and innovative approach to foreign policy that is aligned with our Government’s primary goal of accelerating national economic development. India needs access to capital, technology, resources, energy, markets and skills, a secure environment, a peaceful neighbourhood and a stable global trading system” (MEA, 2015). Since the sixteenth Lok Sabha elections in the year 2014 more than Modi 8.4 lakh people emigrated from India, out of which 3.29 lakh went to Saudi Arabia; 2.24 Lakh went to UAE; O.75 went to Qatar; 0.51 went to Oman and India has witnessed a subsequent rise in India’s haj quota which was 1.36 lac in the year 2014 which has become 2 lakh in the year 2019 soon after the visit of crown prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammad bin-Salman who announced this rise (TET, 2019).

The PM is familiar with the importance of Indian diaspora’s presence in dwelling connection with the world and breeding generosity over time, PM Modi during his various trips made a point to address the Indian community in various capitals of the world and addressed large number of Indians in Madison Square, Doha, Dubai and Muscat, London, Sydney, met overseas Indians and posing with many of them for selfies and argued during his address to diaspora community “I see mini India, diaspora is eager to invest in the progress of India and When India was raising the issue of terrorism, many nations were calling it a law and order problem. However, terrorists have explained terrorism to them, so we don’t have to. Today, the world is troubled by terrorism. This terrorism is an enemy of mankind” (TOI, 2017).

The PM endeavours to reach out to the PIOs and NRIs in the world who have been residing outside of India but been part of India’s strategic planning for furthering relations with host nations and to help develop positive image of India as a state that is admired by others. The NRI Day (Pravasi Bharatiya Divas) the practice of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) I-II government to celebrate the success of overseas Indians has been continued by National Democratic Alliance (NDA-II) government. Largely, to acknowledge the contribution made by overseas Indians in the development and growth of India as source of technology, knowledge and investment. Diaspora contributes to the enhancement of India’s current bilateral relations with their host countries. Many of the overseas Indian occupy prominent positions abroad in fields such as business, non-profits, higher education, politics, think tank and the like, and thus are very well connected with government of their residence. Diaspora can be helpful in furthering India’s foreign policy objectives. The active engagement of NDA under the leadership of PM Modi has built strong cooperation with nations having sizable number of Indian diaspora (Pethiyagoda, 2017). PM Modi has made ninety-two visits in fifty-five months including repeated visits. In other words, before the seventeenth Lok Sabha elections which are schedule to be held in May 2019 the PM have made large number of foreign trips which put him to second position after Indhira Gandhi who made hundred and thirteen foreign trips during her tenure as PM. Nevertheless, she took three terms or fifteen years for making this record whereas PM Modi has made ninety-two in just four year and seven months’ time. Whereas Mannmohan Singh has made ninety-three visits in ten years’ time (Shrivastava, 2018).

The foreign policy vision of Modi government is integrated with domestic agenda. Whereby modi woos the audience of globe with his vision of new, inclusive and dynamic India by positioning himself as a global leader and largely representing India as multi-cultural in spirit, soft power that is democratic which is also the defender of an open global system. The PM is aware of the rise in tariff and non-tariff barriers and drastic decrease in cross-border flow of investment (Barman and Chaudhary, 2018). Foreign policy has been given a scant attention under his reign largely because of speculations that’s others made about him for not having enough experience in the field (foreign policy matters) but the PM has wronged all the assumptions others made about him. India’s image has risen to be seen as net provider of assistance, peaceful rising power, security provider and a country that is unbiased, anti-racism, anti-oppression, anti-colonial and has strong believe in international law. Large number of nations now are looking up to India for assistance and help. Mainly due to its image as non-threatening peaceful rising power which have been given boost by powerful presence of overseas Indians which not only represent India and its culture but are the main force in the development of many countries in the Gulf/West Asia. Most of them are working as labourer’s, mason, drivers, engineers, technical experts, information and technology experts
etc. The presence of Indian labour in Gulf/West Asia has developed extensive cultural relations with the West Asia (Jain 2003: 102). Indian languages are most spoken language in many countries, countries such as UAE are having Indian radio programmes and Bollywood movies are watched in many countries in the region and have successfully created a bond with influence on their societies where Indian art, music are being appreciated. The holy places in the region such as Mecca and Medina are far more accessible. India’s growing communication with many countries in the region with travel access to many countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Israel and others in the region with facilities such as visa on arrival in case of Qatar (Gulf Times, 2018).

India has developed extensive trading relations with West Asian states whereby mutual benefit is mantra for cooperation. In 2001 Indians in these countries numbered around 3.5 million which today is more than 8.5 million. Kerala has largest number of people working in the Gulf region. The presence of Indians in unpredictable West Asia is a source of concern for India. Therefore, during all his visits PM Modi focused on diaspora, their issues and concerns with the host countries. The administration of Modi is building collective attempts to project India’s soft power in service of major important targets. It is of view that it may not be able to directly pursued foreign players to support India’s position but support India’s stand on different political matters in the long term, it will make conducive for India to further its conventional foreign policy ambitions concerning economy and security interest of the country. It has therefore focussed on Diaspora to balance India’s traditional diplomacy with projection of India as non-threatening rising power, help attract foreign investment, boost international image, promote technology and attract tourists in order to boost development and economic advancement (Mazumdar 2018: 468-487).

The Indian diaspora community has worked hard for securing India’s interests abroad. The fact that people of POIs and NRIs have settled in nations far away from India and have been contributing determinately to the development of India, exclusively in terms of investment, transfer of technology, foreign trade, enhancing cultural linkages with foreign nations (Kumar, 2012). The Indian community supported India during the Kargil War, blocked Burton amendment, Dan Burton (Republican Congressman from Indiana) time and again criticised India for the situation in Kashmir. Due to the scant opposition from the Indian community in USA towards the anti-India measures, he had to withdraw his amendment to the Foreign Operations Bill (FOB) in the year 1999 which sought to cut United States development aid to India by twenty-five percent. It could only happen largely due to the support from the Indian diaspora which opposed anti-India propagandas in US. Burton decided to withdraw in order to escape a defeat on the floor of the house as it happened earlier in the year 1997 where Burton only got support from eighty-two members while three hundred and two voted against his amendment (Krishnaswami, 2000). Indian diaspora community supported India’s nuclear test on 11-13 May 1998. It also lobbied and acted positively for the civil-nuclear cooperation between India and USA, all was done to promote India’s interests. The economic success of India in the recent years especially under the leadership of PM Modi has also added to the standing of the overseas Indians in their respective host countries, Indian diaspora has developed itself to become a useful link to sought engagement more actively and work for the growth of India and strengthen its partnerships with host countries. The initiatives by PM Modi have enhanced diasporas standing and value in the nations where they worked and live. The few issues at home also impacts India diaspora for example Operation Blue Star impacted India’s ties with Canada and large number of Sikh diaspora community was upset due to the operation. Apart from this, India uses its diaspora to strengthen cooperation for economic development of both countries. Pakistan on the other hand uses its diaspora community to carry out terrorist attacks against India, Dawood Ibrahim (1993 Bombay Bombings), Tawahur Hussain Rana (supporter of Lashkar-e-Taiba), David Headley (plotted 26/11 Mumbai attack), Abu Hamza (involved in 26/11 Mumbai attack), Mohammed Ajmal Kasab (terrorist killed many in 26/11 Mumbai attack) are the example of how it uses its diaspora. There are also individual, groups within the diaspora community working against the territorial integrity of India (Kumar, 2012).

III. Government’s Pro-active Policy towards Diaspora

The overseas Indian communities’ demands were mostly unheard during the UPA era. But since the rise of Narendra Modi to power the diaspora have got sizable recognition abroad. The government is independently and directly taking action and putting forward demands instead of taking rules, the NDA II government under the dynamic leadership of PM Modi is writing new rules of engagements (Mohapatra: 2017). UPA policies were predictable and guided by set of principles and rules, therefore change was required. Due to the strong relations cultivated by the Indian workers community in country of their employment succeeded in creating a bond of trust and relationship with the host countries which led to furthering of partnerships. Soon after the visit by PM to countries such as UAE, which agreed to construct a Hindu temple in UAE. Similarly, to Saudi Arabia where modi was honoured with the highest civilian award of the country the ‘Abdul-Aziz Shash’, modi became the first non-Muslim to get this award from the King of Saudi Arabia (King Salman) during his visit in April 2016 (TIE, 2016). He also became a recipient of ‘Zayed Medal’ for enhancing relations between UAE and India (TET, 2019a).

The UPA (I-III) run government did not do enough for the security and safety of Indians abroad. Indians at large were held hostage and rescued when stuck but a crisis management cell was established by NDA II government to monitor the situation and coordinate Indian response. The government sent envoys and also established round
the clock helpline service. Apart from this, high-level engagements are also visible under the NDA II run government, the PM and foreign minister meet the national security advisor, intelligence bureau as well as the family member of those affected, the government gave wide acceptance to countries in shaping the Indian foreign policy, the e-diplomacy of modi government smoothen engagements by targeting the domestic as well as foreign audiences (Madan, 2014).

The Modi administration using diaspora to reach to their host countries for the purpose of transmitting information regarding development in India and has cultivated diaspora in a sustained manner to seek investors and partners for investments for the development of India’s economy (Mazumdar 2018: 476). The agenda of NDA II government is security and safety of Diaspora. Therefore, launched various operations such as ‘Operation Raahat’, ‘Operation Maitri’, ‘Operation Sankat Mochan’. Operation Raahat was launched on 1 April 2015 and lasted for 9 days with help from Indian armed forces. India evacuated more than 4500 Indians as well as 900 foreign national from forty-one countries. The operation was result of Saudi intervention in Yemen. The operation was ironic because countries that could not launch their operations sought India’s help to evacuate their citizens countries such as Bahrain, United Kingdom, USA, Jordan, Egypt, Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, Cuba, Kenya, Russia, Lebanon, Syria, Czech Republic, Turkey, Uganda, Romania, Italy, Morocco, Romania, Hungary, Philippines, Pakistan took India’s help to evacuate their citizens (TIE, 2017).

Operation Maitri was another operation launched by Government of India (GoI) and carried out by Indian Air Force in April 2015 when a big earthquake caused destruction in Nepal. It was of magnitude 8.8 on the Richter scale that caused heavy damage to Nepal’s infrastructure and human life. India rescued stranded Indian as well as nationals from distinct foreign countries, more than 2,200 people were saved through rescue operations from dangerous zones by forces (Pandalai, 2015). Operation Sankat Mochan on the other hand was launched on 14 July 2016 at the time of South Sudanese civil war. The operation was conducted by Indian Air Force to rescue Indians from South Sudan. There were around six hundred Indian trapped in this conflict zone, of which four hundred and fifty were in Juba, General V K Singh (Minister of External Affairs) onboarded C-17 Aircraft of the Indian Air Force and rescued large number of Indians (TIE, 2016a).

Apart from these operations the administration of modi is adhering to complaints of the diaspora community. The Indians diaspora complained about harassment and strict visa process and unnecessary delays which caused a lot of problems to them. Therefore, the NDA II government has developed an institutional framework to deal with issues and concerns of Diaspora. It has established the Division of Overseas Indian Affairs (OIA), began in 2004 and merged with ministry of external affairs in 2016 to provide information, services and facilitated matters regarding the NRIs and POI to maximise governance to reduce the unnecessary harassments and delays in the process (Bureau, 2016). The OIA an initiative to “connect Indian diaspora community to the motherland by focusing on developing network with and amongst overseas Indians with an intent of building partnership with the diaspora” (MEA, 2017). It is also engaged with many initiatives with OIs for the promotion of education, trade, culture, investment, science, technology and health (Ibid).

To engage with the diaspora the government has launched various programmes such as the National Pension Scheme (NPS) for NRIs. Under this scheme any NRI aged between 18 to 60 years of age can invest their money in pension scheme. The minimum contribution can be of 6000 and after attaining the age of sixty years annuitisation is allowed minimum forty percent and maximum withdrawal is sixty percent if the corpus is less than two lac rupees, complete withdrawal is allowed after attaining the seventy years of age. The subscribers can stay connected to NPS, Online Services for Voters is another launched by OIA of ministry of external affairs to facilitate the overseas Indians (Ray, 2015).

Overseas Citizenship of Indian (OCI) Scheme programme was launched by the GoI in response to the growing demand for citizenship by the Indian diaspora community. Therefore, the scheme was introduced in August 2005 through the amendment in citizenship act, it provided the registration facility for overseas citizen of India of POIs but it does not provide political right to the diaspora but gives them exemption from fees and can come any time, there is no limit on exit and entry, are also provided with lifelong visa (MEA, 2017a; Pal, 2017).

Know India Programme (KIP) of ministry is basically a programme launched by GoI to familiarize the youth of Indian origin, aged between eighteen to thirty years to know contemporary India and their origin, it’s a flagship program to engage with diaspora. The modi government already organised a three-week orientation programme, in 2016 and this scheme was restructured to raise the duration of this KIP from twenty-one to twenty-five days, with ten days visit to one or two states and preference were given to PIOs from Girmitiya (descendent of Indian labour). Six KIPs have been organised in a year and has an online portal (kip.gov.in), was launched in 2017 (MEA, 2017b). The Indian Origin (IO) youth in order to participate in KIP, can submit their application online by using this platform. Under this programme forty Indian Diaspora are selected and provided full funding that covers international airfare, the entire process for this scheme is online. Under this scheme, youth gets to know about the country, its political process, development in various sectors, chance to interact with students as well as the faculty in universities, visit some industries and in order to understand the villages they are taken to the villages to see the typical village life, visit Agra, visit one or two states in India, meet organizations dealing with women affairs,
interacting with NGOs, visit monuments and historical sites, participate in cultural programmes, exposed to Yoga, meet high dignitaries (Rijiju, 2018; MEA, 2017b).

Know Goa Programme (KGP), another initiative to connect with diaspora, is organised by government of Goa for PIO and NRI youth aged between eighteen to twenty-eight years whose ancestors have migrated from Goa and are currently residing outside of Indian (MEA, 2017c). GoI also has a Scholarship Programmes for Diaspora Children, this programme was introduced to make the Indian institution of higher education accessible to NRIs and PIOs as well as to promote Indian higher education studies. Under this scheme OIs are awarded scholarship of up to US$ 4000 per annum mainly to cover the admission fee, tuition fee, post admission services under graduate courses in technology, engineering, liberal arts, journalism, management, animal husbandry, agriculture and hotel management. This scheme underwent changes in the year 2016-2017 to expand the intake of countries covered under this scheme from forty to sixty-six including seventeen emigration check required (ECR) countries and increased the number of scholarships from hundred to hundred and fifty with fifty reserved for children of Indian labourers working in ECR nations, studying in India. This scholarship is conferred to student studying in Indian central universities (MEA, 2019).

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), was established in 2009 to assist NRIs and POI in times of emergency and distress or in most deserving cases based on the situation. It is basically an emergency support for the evacuation of Indian nationals from national disasters, conflict zones and challenging situations. Therefore, it is extended to all Indian missions and posts abroad. The guidelines for getting the fund has been revised and are operational since September 2017 and also extended to posts and mission outside of India to provide greater flexibility in smoothly addressing the requests for assistance by NRIs and POI. This fund is expected to cover the distress situation such as boarding and lodging, air passage to India in crisis situation as well as the legal assistance, financial assistance is also provided under this scheme to abandoned women who are cheated, abused by their foreign spouses as well the NRIs and POIs. This scheme provides financial assistance up to seven year after their marriage, the payment for fines and penalties is also provided by this fund in respect of Indian nationals for minor offences like illegal stay, funds are provided to transportation of mortal remains of deceased Indian national to the country, if the company is unable to do as per the contract or if the family is unable to fund the expenses, emergency medical care overseas Indian who by chance meet with an accident are provided fund under this scheme, government also gives support for community welfare activities the Indian posts and mission may bear the expenditure on community activities which are intended to promote Indian culture and provided sizable recognition to Indian diaspora in a major festival or national day of India, payments to teachers teaching Indian languages can also be covered under this fund, support is also provided for the welfare activities intended for Indian students organizing annual day for Indian students or to discuss issues faced by Indian students, this scheme also covers the expenses for the improvement of consular services, incur administrative expenses for hiring vehicle, for translation, organising labour camps, setting up twenty for seven toll-free helpline (MEA, 2017d).

Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra (PBK) were setup to commemorate the migration of Indians to various part of the world, the kendras were established to discuss the challenges faced by them in the foreign countries and would also discuss their contribution and achievements. Kendras are expected to develop hub of activities for mutually rewarding economic, cultural, social engagement, between Diaspora and India. Seminars, activities, workshops, events pertaining to the Indian diaspora are expected to be organised in PBK, which is established to become focal point for networking between the two and commemorate the achievements of diaspora as well trials and tribulations. The museum of Kendra also depicts the history of migration of NRIs and POI, their contribution and experiences. In the kendra conference, workshop and with NRIs and POI on issues related to them organised regularly. It also houses Centre for Migration and autonomous body working as think tank working on issues related to Indian workers. It is a not-for-profit trust promoting contributions to flagship programmes in India and the India Development Foundation for Overseas Indians. The library of Kendra is major repository of material related to Indian diaspora including books written by NRIs and POIs in many different languages (Chaudhary, 2017 & MEA, 2017i).

Bharat Ko Jaaniye Online Quiz, a programme organised by NDA II government soon after the announcement by PM Modi during the thirteenth PBD convention at Gandhinagar on 8 January 2015 in order to strengthen engagement with young NRIs and POI and to encourage them to know more about the country of their origin an online Bharat ko Jaaniye quiz was organised for diaspora aged between eighteen to thirty-five years. This online quiz saw young overseas Indians participation from more than ninety-six nations and ten persons were invited to participate in final round from each category of NRIs and POIs. The three winners from each category were given medals by the PM (MEA, 2017e). At the fifteenth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention at Varanasi PM Modi argued that “I consider NRIs India's brand ambassadors. They are the symbols of our capacities and capabilities and PIO are in leadership roles in countries such as Mauritius, Portugal and Ireland” (India Post, 2019). Therefore, to facilitate the diaspora GoI introduced Students Registration Portal (SRP), government introduce the portal for the registration of Indian students abroad basically to contact them in times of crisis, ministry launched the portal in July 2015 (MEA, 2017f). Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention and Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (RPBD) initiatives by GoI. Whereby, ministry organises RPBD time to time in foreign countries to connect
with Indian Diaspora in particular regions. It is organised mainly to familiarise the diaspora with programmes of the government, their policies, address their concerns and enable them to contribute in the development and growth of India. The 8th RPBD held in London and 9th was held in California (MEA, 2017g). PBD Conference was organised to have dialogues with the Indian diaspora, a series of conferences were held in November 2016 each conference saw participation of ten overseas Indians and was chaired by Sushma Swaraj (external affairs minister). From 21–23 January 2019, fifteenth PBD was organised in Varanasi (MEA, 2018).

The NDA II government also deals with the marital issues of Indian nationals married to OIs. GoI established a separate scheme to deal with marital issues of Indians abroad under the Ministry of External Affairs which covered marital issues of Indian national marrying NRIs and POIs. Indians missions abroad were getting number of cases therefore through this scheme it is providing assistance to Indian national. In dealing with issues such as what legal procedure to be followed regarding filing cases and summons, and helping in impounding passports of offenders. Under this scheme ministry is providing legal and financial help to Indian women marrying NRIs and POIs through NGOs and Lawyers empanelled abroad with mission. Till now it has provided assistance to hundred and twenty-seven ladies in thirteen countries (MEA, 2017h; MEA, 2019a). while dealing with these issues’ government is proactively working in addressing the concerns of diaspora the Ministry of external affairs also established Indian Development Foundation of overseas Indians (IDF-OI) to connect with Diaspora, is a not-for-profit trust to enable the NRIs and POIs to send contributions for the implementation of development and social projects in India. This scheme channelized contribution for various programmes launched by government of India such as social development projects, Swachh Bharat Mission, clean Ganga, construction of toilets. However, it was shut down 31 March 2018 (MEA, 2018a).

IV. Conclusion

Indian diaspora will continue to play a major role in India’s soft power diplomacy. Diaspora has become a major source in the recent years for channelizing engagement and getting investment from their host countries. Indian community abroad has built a good image and are big working force in many countries, the Indian American lobby is the second largest powerful force after the Jewish lobby in USA. Tulsi Gabbard Indian origin US citizen and Hindu lawmaker in the US Congress has already shown interest for contesting election for the president on 3rd November 2020 and pledged to remove Donald Trump (current US president) from power, if she succeeds India will see the first Hindu president of USA. The Indian diaspora has played major role in supporting India during many crisis’s such Kargil war, and in withdrawing Burton amendment in the year 1999 which was expected to cut development aid to India by the US. The Indian community was a big pressure group that worked for India and pressed US for civil-nuclear cooperation with India. PM Modi’s decision to address diaspora has united diaspora and connected the diaspora to the mainstream. The diaspora has played an important role in India’s soft power diplomacy, PM Modi has passionately promoted India’s soft in attaining distinct strategic goals. Therefore, the recognition of 21 June as International Yoga day by the world community is an example of rising soft power of India.

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