

Policy Framework For Indian Overseas Diaspora:

Notes for UPSC

The Policy framework to facilitate links among the Indian overseas diaspora has long been the aim of the the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA). The MOIA was the Ministry in charge of all matters relating to Overseas Indians, that consist of Persons of Indian Origin (PIO), Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizens of Indian (OCI). India's engagement with its overseas community has been mainstreamed with the establishment of MOIA. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs was merged with the Ministry of External Affairs on January 16th, 2016. The decision was made to streamline the process involving the Indian diaspora and prevent duplication of tasks, while addressing bureaucratic red tape.

What was done to establish a Policy Framework for the Indian Diaspora?

In accomplishing this mission, the Ministry was guided by the following principles in mind:

- Offering multi-faceted solutions to meet the varied expectations of the community of the Overseas Citizens of India.
- Keeping the strategic implications of engaging India's overseas diaspora in mind.
- The potential of the Indian diaspora community to bring in investments to their home nation was huge. Thus it was prudent to tap this potential not only in terms of financial benefits but also for the knowledge they would bring in social and cultural fields as well.
- Encouraging diaspora-centric initiatives in other states of India
- Increasing engagement in market-centric activities and collaborating with partners in the private sector.

To fulfill its mandate, the focus of the Ministry was on strengthening the institutions already in place. These institutions would play a key role in promoting a sustainable and mutually beneficial engagement between the Indians living overseas and the ones living in the home countries. Now that the MOIA has merged with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), it follows the same principles as above in framing a robust diaspora network

What were the Institutional Arrangements made by the MOIA?

The following institutional arrangements were established by the Ministry:

- The Prime Minister's Global Advisory Council(PMGAC), that serves as a high-level body to draw upon the talent of the best Overseas Indian minds wherever they might reside.

- The Indian Council of Overseas Employment (ICOE), advises the government on matters relating employment of Indian nationals in foreign lands.
- The Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), a not-for-profit trust in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), to serve as a one stop shop for economic engagement, investment and business.
- The India Development Foundation (IDF), a not-for-profit trust to serve as a credible single window to facilitate Diaspora philanthropy and lead Overseas Indian philanthropic capital into India's social development effort.
- The Global Indian Network of Knowledge (GlobalINK), a robust electronic platform to facilitate transfer of knowledge with the objective of leveraging the expertise, skills and experience of Overseas Indians.
- Overseas Indian Centres (OIC) at the Indian Missions in Washington and Abu Dhabi, to begin with, to serve as field formations on matters relating to Overseas Indians.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a day observed on 9 January every year by the Indian Government to celebrate to economic, social and cultural contributions of its overseas citizens. January 9th was the day when in 1915, Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from his stay in South Africa, this event would be a high watermark of the Indian Independence Struggle.

The decision to celebrate such contributions was taken by the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee under the recommendations of the Singhvi Committee of 2001, headed by L.M. Singhvi. In its report, the committee stated that high level corruptions within the Indian government and the resulting red tape had deteriorated the relations with the Indian overseas diaspora, thus arresting the cash flow that the community could bring in. The cash flow was necessary to maintain the Indian economy at that time. Accepting the findings of the committee, the Prime Minister announced the commemoration of "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" (PBD) on 9 January 2002.

The celebrations are marked by programs that recognise the contributions of NRI/PIO individuals of exceptional merit and those who have made excellent contributions in their respective fields.

The annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Program since 2003 has been organised in the following cities:

Venues of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)		
Year	Venue	State
2003	New Delhi	Delhi

2004	New Delhi	Delhi
2005	Mumbai	Maharashtra
2006	Hyderabad	Andra Pradesh (Now in Telangana)
2007	New Delhi	Delhi
2008	New Delhi	Delhi
2009	Chennai	Tamil Nadu
2010	New Delhi	Delhi
2011	New Delhi	Delhi
2012	Jaipur	Rajasthan
2013	Kochi	Kerala
2014	New Delhi	Delhi
2015	Gandhinagar	Gujarat
2017	Bangalore	Karnataka
2019	Varanasi	Uttar Pradesh
2020	New Delhi	Delhi

Relevant Questions Regarding Overseas Citizens of India

What is the difference between a Non Resident Indian and a Person of Indian Origin?

A Non Resident Indian is a citizen of India who is residing in a foreign nation but still holds an Indian passport, while a Person of Indian Origin is someone who was born overseas but whose parents or ancestors were legally the citizens of India.

Does India allow Dual Citizenship?

No, the Indian government does not facilitate dual citizenship anymore. It was the case in the 1950's when dual citizenship was allowed initially to facilitate the movement of people on both sides of the border following the partition of India, but was scrapped due to security concerns.