

1. **THE SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE OF INDIA'S DIVERSE DIASPORA IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE GLOBE PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ADVANCING ITS INTERESTS. DISCUSS WITH EXAMPLES. (ANSWER IN 150 WORDS)**

**Approach:**

- Introduce by providing some data about the presence of a diverse Indian community in various parts of the globe.
- Explain how it plays a crucial role in advancing the interests of India with appropriate examples.
- Conclude accordingly.

**Answer:**

According to a Ministry of External Affairs report, there are **around 32 million NRIs and PIOs (including OCIs)** residing outside India, which comprise the world's largest overseas diaspora. India's large diaspora is distributed across **the Middle East, the United States of America, Australia, etc.**

This vast diaspora of India across the globe plays a crucial role in advancing its interests as follows:

- **Soft Power:** Diaspora acts as **cultural ambassadors** promoting Indian culture, cuisine, and values in their host countries. Their cultural engagement fosters cross-cultural understanding and helps showcase India's rich heritage on the global stage.
  - For example, **Diwali festival celebrations in Singapore and Malaysia** showcase Indian traditions, generating goodwill and interest.
- **Advocacy and Lobbying:** The Indian diaspora plays a significant role in building relationships with policymakers and presenting a compelling case for the policies aligned with India's interests.
  - For example, the campaign by Indian Americans played a role in the **India-USA civil nuclear deal**.
- **Remittances promoting the Indian economy:** Remittances sent by the diaspora significantly impact India's economy and contribute to India's overall gross domestic product (GDP).
  - For example, the inward remittances to India increased from \$111.22 billion in 2022 to **\$125 billion in 2023**, accounting for **3.4% of its GDP**, according to estimates released by the World Bank.
- **Knowledge Transfer and Innovation:** Many Indian diaspora members are highly skilled professionals who can act as bridges between India and their host countries in facilitating knowledge transfer and collaboration in various fields like science, technology, and business.
  - For example, **Indian Professional Without Borders** is a global network of Indian-origin professionals dedicated to fostering innovation, collaboration, and social impact, in sync with India's stride towards technological innovation.

However, there remain certain challenges in utilizing the potential influence of the Indian diaspora like the impact of the internal politics of the host country; challenges arising due to dual loyalties of the diaspora, brain drain etc.

In contemporary times, India's policy towards its diaspora evolved from '**indifference**' to '**active engagement**' following the recommendations of the **Singhvi Commission on the Indian Diaspora**. Leveraging the soft power and economic contributions of the diaspora while addressing the potential challenges will be crucial for fostering beneficial diplomatic relations with various countries.