

RETHINKING "DIASPORA": A CASE STUDY OF INDIAN BENGALI DIASPORA IN UK

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Abstract

Diaspora is a Greek word meaning "to disperse". Diasporas are the individuals who reside outside their perceived homeland. This research paper deals with a case study of Indian Bengali Diaspora in UK. With this backdrop the main objectives of this study are to gain knowledge about the Indian diaspora in the world and in UK, to investigate the Indian Bengali diaspora since 1947 in UK, to analyse the Hindu Bengali diasporic life in UK, to assess the capacity of the Indian Bengali diaspora in the development activities in West Bengal and to discuss the problems faced by the UK-based Indian Bengali Diaspora. The research methodology includes three stages- the pre-field stage which includes the study of existing literature, the field stage which comprises of a pilot study of Indian Bengali diaspora in UK which is conducted through random sampling and the post-field stage which includes analysis and discussions. The pilot study was conducted in two areas. One is in Sussex and the other is in Devon. Total 30 participants were surveyed. The analysis suggested that the Indian Bengali diaspora contribute in uplifting educational, health and infrastructural sector in their homeland.

Keywords: Diaspora, Indian Bengali, partition, uplifting, infrastructural

Introduction: Diaspora is a Greek word meaning "to disperse". It refers to any movement of a large number of people of the same ethnic group from their homeland and their dissemination and resettlement in one or various countries. Diasporas are the individuals who reside outside their perceived homeland. They regard themselves or are regarded by others as members or potential members of the national community. Individuals living in the diaspora earn relatively higher income as compared to those earned by individuals living in the country of residence.

It is said that diaspora groups contribute phenomenally towards the development of less developed nations primarily through monetary remittances, investments and by building social networks. Such contributions by the diaspora have facilitated a shift in attitude and thinking regarding migration, from "brain drain" to "brain bank", "brain gain", "brain trust" and "brain circulation". This perspective has become more popular in recent years as opposed to the earlier view of "brain drain".

Review of Literature: During 1960s and 1970s social scientists studied the Indian community as one of the groups in a colonial plural and multi-cultural European society. In Great Britain the social scientists did several researches to understand Indian and Pakistan communities (Watson 1977, Kannan 1978). From 1990s onwards many publication on the Indian diaspora has appeared in scientific journal and books.

Research Objectives

Using Indian Bengali Diaspora as a case study the paper has the following objectives

- To gain knowledge about the Indian diaspora in the world and in UK
- To investigate the Indian Bengali diaspora since 1947 in UK
- To analyse the Hindu Bengali diasporic life in UK
- To assess the capacity of the Indian Bengali diaspora in the development activities in West Bengal
- To discuss the problems faced by the UK-based Indian Bengali Diaspora

Research Methodology It is a mixed method investigation. The research is a case study of Indian Bengali diaspora in UK. The study includes three stages. In the **pre-field stage**, the method included the study of existing literature about Indian diaspora in the world and India. Literature was also studied about Bengali diaspora in UK. The **field stage** comprised of a pilot study about Indian Bengali diaspora in UK which was conducted through random sampling. Survey in UK took place in September 2017. A range of methods were employed including focus group discussions, detailed open ended discussions, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The research in UK was conducted primarily among 30 Bengali diaspora. Wherever possible the researcher made contact with