

# **Diaspora as Soft Power: A Case Study of Indian Diaspora in the US**

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## **Introduction**

In the recent scenario, there has arisen a concept, which has attracted the attention of many scholars, academicians, political scientists and foreign policy experts i.e. the soft power. One can see the term “soft power” very much used in newspapers, magazines and journals, etc. The word “soft power” used nowadays to define efforts by powerful figures and countries to shape others’ perceptions of them. In the ancient days, the great rulers like Alexander had understood that their reputation as well as their capacity to compel physically, would measure their power. In earlier times, it used to know as “reputation”, “image,” “face” or “prestige.”

Before going to study, diaspora as a soft power asset with a special focus on ID as a soft power it is important to understand first the concept of power and then the soft power. Nye (2011)<sup>1</sup> says about soft power, “the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion”. In simple words, soft power is a power of appeal and attraction, which has the ability to shape the preferences of others. The concept of soft power like any other power is very vital in the international relations or politics also.

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<sup>1</sup> Nye, J. (2011), *The Future of Power*, New York: Public Affairs.

The basis of India's soft power is its culture, secularism, spiritualism, music, dance, Bollywood, Yoga, Ayurveda, a tradition of good learning and most importantly the "Indian Diaspora (ID)" There are 25 million people of Indian origin living outside India. Therefore, India has second largest population not only in India; it has second largest population of Indian diaspora across the world as well. The overseas Indian community is a composition of diverse, heterogeneous and widespread global community representing different regions, languages, cultures and faiths and religions. They connected together due to their nostalgia about their mother India and its inherent values. These values very well represented by Indian Diasporic community in all the parts of the world. They know that they belong to a country having a very rich heritage and they do not have to bring a bad name to it. Overseas Indian Community is today amongst the best-educated and the most successful communities of the world. In every part of the world, the overseas Indian community is recognised and respected for its work ethos, discipline, non-interference and for successfully living in harmony with the local community, which appeals others. Therefore, in this paper an attempt has made to study and understand the potentiality of ID in projecting the soft power of India. How is diaspora working as a soft power asset or what are its underlying mechanisms that generate soft power?

The study of India's soft power and the role of diaspora in enhancing India's soft power are very important in the current scenario. As, almost every country is facing various security threats like, terrorism, external aggression, security threats from neighboring states, so it is very important for a country to enhance its power of attraction or cultural, ideological power. The hard power though is very important for any country but solely this power is not enough until and unless the soft power is not complimenting it. The soft power is equally important for India to enrich/improve its bilateral ties with different countries, to fulfill its national interests of becoming a global power and its quest for getting a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations Organization. The ID is playing a crucial role in fulfilling India's national interests by promoting India's culture worldwide.

### **Diaspora in India's Foreign Policy: From Nehruvian Era to Present Day Scenario**

During the colonial period, Indians transported to different parts of the world as British citizens of India. Therefore, customarily it was the responsibility of British GOI to look after its citizens spread in different parts of the world. However, they had no concern for the overseas Indians.

Rather Britishers themselves or their accomplices were the perpetrators who meted tortured overseas Indians. During the freedom struggle of India Indian nationalists like Gandhi, Gokhale, C.F. Andrews, etc. raised concerns over the well-being of overseas Indians. Due to their efforts, Indentureship ended in 1920.

Initially, after independence India's approach towards diaspora was typically of a hands-off approach or non-interventionist foreign policy towards diaspora. Pandit Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India gave statements on many occasions and advised the overseas Indians to adjust themselves in the host society and obtain the citizenship of country of their domicile. He also urged Indians to be loyal to the host society and help them in their fight against colonization and apartheid that is in a way he suggested Indians not to look back to the country of their origin. Even Indian leaders used to think that the problems which Indian community is facing in the countries of their adoption, are only because they are not completely integrating with the host society.

A paradigm shift came in India's diaspora policy when India adopted liberalist policies in 1990s, the focus was shifted towards its diasporic community and thereby, its policy towards them changed. Within the last decade, the GOI has shown significant interest in its diaspora as well as in diaspora policies. India for the first time recognised the potential of its diaspora for promotion of bilateral relations. The diaspora's ability to influence bilateral relations increased for two reasons. The First reason was India's optimism about bilateral relations amplified due to many favourable factors including the new economic policy. India's interest increased in its diaspora for three major factors: the first is, earlier India had a closed economy that did not encourage foreign contributions, businesses, or investments. However, with the liberalization of the economy in 1991, diasporic Indians became more useful as agents of trade, investment, and technology for India. Second, Indian foreign policy began to recognize the importance of the diaspora in industrialized countries, especially the United States, for public diplomacy. India had now realized very well that for seeking investments from the different developed countries like the US, it should have good diplomatic relation with that country and diaspora can be an effective public diplomacy tool as ID had made a good position in economy and knowledge sector of the US at that time. Only from the mid-1990s, the Indians in developed countries started placing at the high-level positions in multinational corporations. The general success of

the community in these developed countries like UK, the USA and Canada and thereby community's positive influence on the idea of Indian qualities led the GOI to take a more proactive approach towards its diaspora. The Indian American community also had more to gain after the liberalization of Indian economy. Earlier, there were limited instrumental gains for the Indian Americans since the two countries hardly believe they can be strategically important for each other. Thirdly, the size and economic power of the community increased tremendously during this period. The large community was educated too (Chatterjee 2014)<sup>2</sup>. One major factor was off course, the remittances sent by the diaspora, which survived India during Balance of Payments crisis at that time. There is another factor, which needs to be focused is the more India adopts liberalist policies, the more the relation of India with its diaspora gets better, especially with the diaspora in the liberalist countries like the US. The resumption of engagement with ID in 1990s resulted in major implications on internal as well as external political and economic processes for India. GOI has not paid much attention towards its diaspora as a soft power source and at practical level; very few initiatives have taken to consider diaspora and thereby to exploit them as a soft power source.

### **Role of Soft Power in India's Foreign Policy**

Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi was asked to justify Australia's signing of a deal to sell uranium to the country by his Australian counterpart Tony Abbott in his recent visit, in response, the Indian Prime Minister said, India threatens no one and —is the friend to many. This answer of Prime Minister was not merely a diplomatic nicety, but he chose this answer very carefully based on India's image at international level. It is an image, which is rare amongst great powers of India's size and strength, and will give Delhi a unique soft power advantage in the future multipolar world (Pethiyagoda 2014)<sup>3</sup>.

In the world, India has an image of comparatively non-violent, tolerant and pluralistic democracy with a non-threatening international influence. Its foreign policy also has the same traits as soft power like non-violence, democratic set up, cooperation, peaceful resolution of the disputes, friendly relations with other countries, no first use of the weapons or weapons used only to

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<sup>2</sup> Chatterjee, A. (2014), "The Catalyst? Indian Diaspora and India- Relations After the Cold War", *The West Bengal Political Science Review*, 17 (2): 241-249.

<sup>3</sup> Pethiyagoda, K. (2014), "India's Soft Power Advantage", [Online: web] Accessed 9 July 2015, URL: <http://www.aii.unimelb.edu.au/blog/india%E2%80%99s-soft-poweradvantage>.

retaliate, not to attack another country, not try to interrupt in others sovereignty, etc. The ID has also carried these traits and disseminated them in the foreign land. The ID is also peace loving, democratic, do not fight with others, and easily integrate with the host society, etc. These values of the Indian diasporic community further enhance the soft power of our country.

### **Diaspora Effect on the Soft Power of India in the United States**

The labor flow at the international level has dominated various academic discussions, as the labor flow is beneficial for both the sending and receiving countries. The migrants are beneficial for the host countries in the sense that they reduce labour costs and for the home countries in terms of remittances, which they send back to their homes. Within the field of international migration, the migration of the high skilled received more attention as apart from the remittances they are increasing the goodwill of the country of their origin, e.g. our Indian engineers in silicon valley by being successful, adding a lot of name and fame to its home country (Sahay 2009)<sup>4</sup>.

The ID is beneficial for the soft power of India in the United States as they have the power of attractive ideas through their position of wealth and education. One more reason for their being beneficial is that they are mostly skilled migrants and their level of education as well as income is very high. The aspiration for education has always been high in the psyche of Indian emigrants. In fact, it is the education only, through which ID has progressed to such a level. Knowledge is power and India known as knowledge superpower from the time immemorial. According to the High Level Committee Report, —The India, China and Greece were the most notable knowledge societies in ancient times (GOI 2002)<sup>5</sup>. Daya Kishan Thussu (2013)<sup>6</sup> also opines that India has provided a source of learning to the world and the ID is maintaining the same legacy. Indians are also source of learning for their fellows in the foreign land.

### **Soft Power Tools Used by ID for the Promotion of Bilateral Relations**

India is a global player in almost every sphere i.e. political, cultural and economic. The ID helps in identity creation, image projection, image cultivation, etc. Now the question, which arises, is

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<sup>4</sup> Sahay, A. (2009), *Indian Diaspora in the United States: Brain Drain or Gain?*, New York: Lexington Books.

<sup>5</sup> Government of India (2002), *High Level Committee Report on the Indian Diaspora*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.

<sup>6</sup> Thussu, D. K. (2013), *Communicating India's Soft Power: Buddha to Bollywood*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

how ID is projecting India's soft power. The most possible answer is that the ID, through the following tools and ways enhance or project the soft power of its country. The ID is not only a source of India's soft power but it is also an agent of India's soft power; the Indian expatriate community also disseminates i.e. the other soft power sources of India at world level. The ID is using India's other sources of soft power like culture, Ayurveda, Bollywood, Indian cuisine, knowledge, spirituality, etc. and luring the populace all over the world. A detail discussion on how the diaspora is acting as an agent of India's soft power, while using different sources of Indian soft power, can summarize, as follows:

**Culture:** The ID from the very beginning is conscious about their rich cultural heritage, knowing the fact that they are the inheritors of the world's oldest civilization. Therefore, they are naturally keen to maintain their cultural prestige as being part of such a rich legacy. This deep commitment to their cultural prestige has shown in numerous ways, and in every aspect of the ID. Probably there is no other diaspora across the globe, having such an extra-ordinary diversity. This diversity is visible in terms of linguistic, ethnic and religious groups. Therefore, the first generation diaspora always carries with them the rich traditions of harmonizing different values, beliefs, customs and practices.

**Knowledge:** The knowledge, which ID carries with them to the visiting countries especially, in case of professional migration or the post-colonial migration in the western developed countries, clearly indicates the claim of India to become a knowledge super power very soon in this twenty first century. India regarded, as a knowledge house and its engineers, doctors, scientists and software professionals have easy acceptability by the international community. Indian education boosted with high competitiveness, which shown in information technology sector where Indians like Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella have made their major contribution. Due to the knowledge competitiveness of Indians, India's soft power has also increased. Now Americans in Silicon Valley have equated the IITs (Indian Institute of Technology) to MIT and the Indian engineers and software developers, taken as synonymous with mathematical and scientific excellence of the western countries. India gains respect through such comparisons and compliments (Tharoor 2013).

**Yoga:** One of India's most important therapy of longevity i.e. yoga has now embraced by almost everyone in the world. It is no less than a cultural winning for India. It is also true that India has

not put much effort to propagate it at world level. It is through ID that people across the globe came to know about this Indian enchanted therapy. It has manifested by the fact that a large chunk of people of host countries practice yoga in Indian diasporic yoga centers. Purushothaman (2010)<sup>7</sup> states that Yoga has reached at global sphere and is rapidly becoming part and parcel of life style of the people in the West.

Though, much effort has not been put by previous governments for dissemination of Yoga at world level but it was only because of the efforts of present Indian government, the UN General Assembly adopted the Resolution, proclaiming June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. There are numerous yoga centers in the US where different types of Yoga and meditation styles practiced.

**Spiritualism:** Spirituality is in the top list of Indian soft power. It is the ultimate solace provider as the thrust of every human being is to reach to the ultimate truth. In other words, one can say that spirituality leads to completeness in human life. In India, many religions of the world took birth as well as it has always welcomed all the religions and provided space to all the religions to flourish on its soil and its tolerance towards all religions makes it attractive in the eyes of other countries of the world.

**Secularism:** India has also given a message to the western countries that secularism does not mean separation of religion and the state rather state should try to provide the environment where different religions can co-exist in harmony with each other. This is much needed condition as different countries and people are fighting wars on the name of religion only. Indians known for the values of love, peace and goodwill and its prime examples are Gautama Buddha, Mahavir, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. ID also known for the same values of love, peace and unity and due to these very qualities they are winning the hearts of the people of the host society and due to their humbleness and soberness, they have not considered as a security threat by the indigenous people or the other communities living with them in host society.

**Food:** The delicious Indian food is not less in contributing the soft power of India. It creates attraction for India every single time the foreigners taste the Indian food. Tharoor (2007)<sup>8</sup> says

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<sup>7</sup> Purushothaman, U. (2010), "Shifting Perceptions of Power: Soft Power and India's Foreign Policy", *Journal of Peace Studies*, 17 (2&3).

<sup>8</sup> Tharoor, S. (2012), *Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st century*, New Delhi: Penguin Books.

“Indian cuisine, spreading around the world, raises our culture higher in people’s reckoning; the way to foreigners’ hearts is through their plates. In England today, Indian curry houses employ more people than the iron and steel, coal and ship building industries combined”. The Indian food is famous in the United States too. Curry, Chicken Tikka Masala, Palak Paneer, Naan and samosas, Masala Dosa, Idli Sambar, Dokla, etc. are some of famous Indian dishes in America.

**Bollywood:** Indian films and TV daily soaps are popular in many countries Including the US Bollywood became popular abroad also because of ID. Indian diasporic people whether it is first, second, third or fourth generation are always attached with India and this strong bond is shown when one sees that Bollywood stars have the same fan following among the ID as they have here in India. Their movies liked by every generation of ID. For Indian Diaspora, Bollywood films are the most popular means of entertainment. The popularity of Indian movies reached to such an extent, that Indian films dub in local languages of different countries and shown there. The ID living overseas enjoys Bollywood movies through DVDs and by movie shows at Cinema halls. The Indian diasporic filmmakers like Mira Nayar and Deepa Mehta for making the movies on diasporic issues are famous and they received praise by the critics worldwide.

**Indian Fusions:** The Indian fusions whatever it is in Indian music, food, apparels, dance, etc. have an immense soft power potential. The famous western dancers and singers such as, Michael Jackson, Madonna, and Shakira have adopted elements of Indian dances or music in their performances. The efforts of Renowned figures like Pandit Ravi Shankar, the sitar player and composer is worth mentioning among those who have done much to popularize Indian instrumental music in the west.

Apart from these soft power sources, one cannot ignore the hard power sources like economic and political status of the Indo- Americans. Rather we can say that the hard power is essential to make soft power work. It is also true that without soft power, hard power cannot take long journey or exist for long. Soft power provides legitimacy to the hard power and hard power makes soft power practical. Both the powers are incomplete without each other. In this competitive world, possession of merely one kind of power would be very dangerous and it can never bring desired fruits for a country or a community like diaspora. The Indian diasporic community of the US holds a good political economic status in the US that is why, it has become



able to bring some fruitful results to some extent for India's international aspirations, and it has many more to come through its combination of hard and soft power.

### **Impact of ID's Soft Power on the Bilateral Relationship between India and the US**

Indian diasporic community in the US is transforming the historic hostile relations between the two countries. The relationship of India and the US in the historical time and their relationship now, it has clearly shown that India had not a very cordial relationship with the US. The US has always tilted towards Pakistan. After the end of the cold war, there has come a major change in the relations of the duos. When Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister of India in 1980s, his first visit to the US in 1985 had many positive impacts on bilateral relations and the marginal improvement in the bilateral relations came. India started identifying the Indian American diaspora as a potentially valuable connection between the two countries and this was one such impact of Rajiv Gandhi's visit (Chatterjee 2014).

There are two important reasons for the emergence of Indian-Americans as a prominent community. According to the latest US Census Bureau Report, there are about 1.6 million Indians in the US or 0.6 per cent of the total American population. The ID has emerged as a significant vote bank in US electoral politics, as the third largest Asian American group in the US after the Chinese and the Filipinos. Second, the Indian-Americans have become immensely rich, due to the computer and Internet revolution. With the increase in their numbers as well as their increased strength in economic power, the focus of the Indian community's lobby shifted from their own issues to the concerns of their mother country as now they are capable enough to stand for India's issues or problems. They are successful in doing so. There are several examples of Indian community's lobbying for India's interests in the US, which need to deal in detail.

**Immigration Laws:** The bimodal image of Indians in the US transformed in the 20th century and 1.5 million strong Indian-American communities has played the biggest role in changing the image of Indians. This transform originated in the changing immigration laws in favor of the Indians in 1965 immigration policy of the US. This immigration policy eliminated the earlier policy, which was in favor of migration of more numbers of Europeans. Due to this change, more number of Indians landed in the 1965 immigration policy. The US was in need of doctors, engineers and other professionals and nobody else were the most dedicated, passionate, honest

and hardworking than the Indians. America was very well aware of these qualities of the Indians. Therefore, Americans' need and Indians' goodwill or soft power forced them to transform their policy in favor of Indian immigrants. However, for the successful enactment of the immigration laws under 1965 immigration policy there was an enduring struggle of the ID leaders (Bagoria 2004)<sup>9</sup>.

With the efforts of the ID, the US Congress enacted various immigration laws under Immigration Act of 1965, 1990, etc. favoring the immigrants from Asia, especially the Indians. Due to these laws, Indians are the highest H1B visa recipients under which professionals or white collared jobs migrated from India to the US and their contribution in the image making and the soft power of India is worth noticeable.

### **Removal of Sanctions Imposed on India (after Nuclear Proliferation in 1998) By the NSG**

**Group:** India received the US enriched uranium supplied under a 30-year commercial contract for its Tarapur nuclear power plant project. For this the Indians agreed to bilateral and later International Atomic Energy inspections and safeguards which were designed to ensure that this sensitive material will not be diverted for non-authorized uses (Kux 1993)<sup>10</sup>. After the nuclear explosion by India in Pokhran in 1974, the supply of enriched uranium for Tarapur created a major problem between India and the United States. There is one more instance, which shows the impact of our diaspora's soft power on the US i.e. the removal of the sanctions, imposed by the NSG group on India after the nuclear proliferation, on the US recommendation. The reason behind the removal of sanctions was strong Indian lobby in the US. The National Federation of Indian American Association (NFIAA) lobbied and organized its members and put pressure on Congressmen and administration to relax the US policy over sanctions. Again, in 1998, when India conducted nuclear tests in Pokhran on 11 and 13 May, the sanctions were put up by the NSG. The Asian Indian community lobbied effectively with its caucus members for removal of sanctions placed on India after nuclear tests (Bagoria 2004). The US President Bill Clinton himself mentioned during his visit in India that we were under immense pressure of the Indian lobby to remove the sanctions.

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<sup>9</sup> Bagoria, Mukesh (2004), *Indian Diaspora in American Politics in the 1990s*, Ph.D Thesis, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.

<sup>10</sup> Kux, D. (1993), *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies (1941-1991)*, Washington. DC: National Defence University Press.

**Nuclear Deal:** The US Indian community's remarkable lobbying efforts were commendable in relation with the finalizing of the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Co-operation Agreement. The 123 agreement also known as the civil nuclear cooperation agreement finalized in July 2007 and signed in October 2008. With the signing of this deal India became a beneficiary of all those provisions, which reserved for the signatories of NPT (Non- Proliferation Treaty). The US justified this nuclear cooperation with India because of its immaculate non-proliferation record. The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) member states also took the same stance for India and allowed India's participation in international nuclear commerce and these states fully supported the Indo-. deal. This deal recognizes a strategic partnership between India and the United States, two of the world's largest democracies. This deal is good for India's development, offering it the opportunity to generate electricity from nuclear energy on a much greater scale.

**Business and Investments:** India had not very good business partnership with the US. Its major business partners were U.K and Russia. However, after the adoption of Liberalization, privatization and Globalization policies by the GOI in 1990s, a paradigm shift came in its business policies as well as in the section of its business partners. ID always see its benefit in the liberalized structure of India because the more India will be liberalized, the more comfortable will be the living of the ID in the liberal country like US. Because if the host and home countries' ideology will be the same, their relations will also be better and then the diasporic community would not have to face more hardships for their survival. The US has invested about \$ 9.3 billion in India between April 2000 and December 2010, which is about 7 percent of total equity investment inflows into India during this period, as reported by RBI. According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), in 2010, the US FDI in India was \$17.5 billion and Indian FDI in the US totaled \$10.8 billion. Indian investments into the US have more than doubled during the economic crisis ([www.ficci.com](http://www.ficci.com)).

**Outsourcing Issue:** Outsourcing is one of the recent issues between India and the US. The US outsources various jobs to India. India with its low wages and High-level English speaking skills is leading in outsourcing jobs for the US. Goldman, Sachs & Co. estimates that a majority of the 200,000 service jobs - most of them in Information technology - that had been shipped to the US foreign affiliates, over the past four years have gone to India. In the same time, they had received more than 287,000 temporary visa applications from Indians to work in the United States. The

lawmakers had proposed several bills in 2003 to limit the number of guest- worker visas. Senator Christopher Dodd (Democrat, Connecticut) and Representative Nancy Johnson (Republican) had sponsored a bill that required companies using so-called H-1B guest visas to prove Americans aren't available to fill a job before bringing in foreign workers. Some states, for example, Maryland, Washington, Connecticut, Missouri, New Jersey, etc. were also considering laws banning offshore outsourcing of government tech-services contracts (Schroeder 2003)<sup>11</sup>. To fight back, the GOI has been lobbying in the various states. The Asia Indians are also pressurizing the lawmakers not to let these bills pass.

### **India's Soft Power Aims in U.S.A while using Diaspora**

With the rise in the economic power of India, a new class has emerged i.e. the middle class, which is very progressive and very vital for the development of India because this class always aspires to go higher and raise the standard of its living. Therefore, this class is contributing in the upliftment of the economy of its country also and they take interest in enriching or exploiting their educational and economic assets through migration in the different parts of the world for the better life options. Of all countries, the United States has been of the greatest interest to them. The diaspora well placed to assist this process and benefit from it by being the counter party. The focus was on exploiting cultural assets, such as language, film and music, and economic assets, such as trade. Through its various assets, the ID made a good name in the soft power race. ID's soft power is a strategic asset for India. The soft power may not give direct results like hard power but it may prove beneficial in the long-run and in rare cases where there hard power can do nothing. Soft power will give results. The soft power is strategically important for any country. The India's soft power aims in US are also strategic in nature. As one knows that India is a developing country and in its development purpose it needs a lot of investment, energy, skill, technology, etc. India is an energy hungry country due to its huge population size (Mahalingam 2013)<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Schroeder, M. (2003), "India Aims to Calm US Outsourcing Fears", Wall Street Journal, Washington, 13 November 2003.

<sup>12</sup> M. Mahalingam (2013), "India's Diaspora Policy and Foreign Policy: An Overview", [Online: web] Accessed 9 July 2015, URL: <http://www.grfdt.com/PublicationDetails.aspx?Type=Articles&TabId=30>.

In order to meet these requirements or to fulfill the demands of energy sector India needs assistance from US. The US can fulfill India's energy requirements. ID can persuade the foreign policy experts of the US for these energy issues through lobbying. Though the US is the largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India accounting for more than 33 percent of the cumulative investments, but still this growth is not sufficient and is far below the potential, expectations, requirements as well as in terms of global comparisons, particularly of the US trade with and investments in China (Bagoria 2004). Therefore, an effective lobbying by the American ID is must to grab FDI from the US.

The National Knowledge Commission of India has estimated that country needs 1,500 universities but it has only 370 now. However, number of new institutions is being set up, both public and private; still there is a demand-supply hiatus in the education sector. To bridge the gap the government requires foreign universities to set up branch campuses and even India proposed a legislation to invite foreign universities for setting up branch campuses in India. The bill proposed under this legislation is The Foreign Education Providers Bill ([www.ficci.com](http://www.ficci.com)). The ID lobby should try to persuade the US government to collaborate with India and to make policies to smoothen the process of setting up of branch campuses. The East African Indian successful entrepreneurs who are key players in the global economy can be a springboard for India to play its role in the international trade. Many diasporic Indians are members of parliament in many countries who could be a liaison between their government and India (Dr. Mahalingam (2013)).

India has various domestic as well as global aspirations, which require large portions of foreign capital and acceptance. Among these aspirations, India also has nuclear ambitions. These kinds of global and domestic aspirations could make more acceptable to industrially and technologically advanced world's elites through the projection of soft power. The ID has already proved its potential by helping India in its bargain for nuclear issues with US, such as helping the passage of US-India nuclear fuel agreement, through their associations. The ID used varied strategies from directly lobbying Congressmen, various associations took initiative and lobbied for this specific aspiration of India, such as trade associations that might have earlier supported a Congressman's campaign by funding and then requested or persuaded them to support this act. The indirect methods includes holding seminars on the usefulness of the agreement as well as

informing the public-at-large about India's value to the US as a stable democracy in an unstable world and thereby making them aware how India can help the US in the proliferation of democracy in the world. At the time of foundation of the UN, permanent UNSC membership primarily warranted to those nations who have political-military power, and those who have a capacity to conduct and win—interstate war. Now the scenario has changed and the parameter for UNSC permanent membership should also shift from hard power to the soft power and India being a soft power should get a permanent seat.

## **Conclusion**

The study has focused on the role of soft power in the promotion and sometimes in the creation of the bilateral relationship among the countries, and the special focus is on the ID as soft power and its role in the promotion of the bilateral relationship between India and the US. From this study, it can conclude that soft power is an effective tool and it can very well utilize or channelize in the image making, promotion of bilateral as well as multilateral relations, seeking of public opinion and formulation of a global civil society. Diaspora is a significant player who can very well play the game of soft power for foreign policy outcomes. If diasporic community of a country has a strong position in terms of wealth, knowledge and political participation or influence in the host country, it can play a very proactive role in influencing various issues concerning the interest of the home country. The soft power has changed the perspectives regarding the power, which were more or less negative. Earlier the power (hard) was considered as something to control the other. It was generally perceived that coexistence of states is not possible so power (hard) is necessary to control the state in order to avoid conflicts and to maintain the world structure. The soft power has changed the earlier notions about the power. It has shown a hope that the coexistence of states is possible. The soft power based on cooperation not coercion or control.

Soft power concept is of great relevance in this modern globalized world. Soft power undoubtedly has become a very significant tool of foreign policy making of any country. Soft power is very significant in this nuclear world scenario. The soft power is no more a monopoly of America; the countries like India can also show their potential in the soft power race. The rich civilizational and cultural ethos of the ID penetrated into the American socio-cultural life. The gradual participation of the Indian community in the political sphere of the US strengthened the

Indian diasporic community. Both India and the US began to perceive ID as a two way beneficial for both the countries. The US also realized that their soft power also increases with immigration because the immigrants when return to their home countries, they also carry the American culture and disseminate or proliferate it, though not directly but indirectly. Therefore, the American culture through the diaspora attracts the people from different countries around the world wherever the diaspora moves.

The role of ID in disseminating India's culture in terms of cuisine, music, spiritualism and other Indian sources like Yoga, Ayurveda, Spiritualism, Bollywood, etc. is also equally proliferated by the ID and it is visible through number of Yoga centers, spiritual centers, Indian restaurants, fusion of Punjabi in pop songs, food, apparels, etc. ID therefore, has helped India in spreading India's culture. ID is also doing nation branding as well as working as non-governmental public diplomats and cultural diplomats. Indians will have to "sell" its soft power to the whole world for fulfilling its international aspirations no one other than India's diaspora is the best seller as they can add their own talents to it.

The major thing, which analysed while tracing India's soft power impact on bilateral relations of Indo- US, is that soft power of the diaspora has been used or channelized until now just to enhance the hard power. Due to this, the true essence of soft power diminished. India used to have a unique image not easily exercised to achieve desirable outcomes. Soft power can push or tamed by government in power. Therefore, countries need to be very cautious while formulating various policies and taking decisions. GOI also needs to be very choosy as well as careful while formulating the policies. India needs to analyse or look upon which policies of it are curtailing its soft power and it should properly visualize it and try to improve strategies, which are affecting its soft power. India has to be hopeful towards its soft power potential but it does not have to overvalue its soft power resources. India needs to spend on infrastructural development to alleviate poverty, to improve health issues, to ensure food security and education for all, to eradicate corruption, to ensure human rights to its citizens, to annihilate caste system and to eliminate all the social evils like rape, dowry system, etc. It also needs to tackle the Naxalite issue, North East issue, Kashmir conflict etc. as soon as possible because all these problems and issues are blots on the soft power of India.

The change in the perspective of Indians towards the diaspora definitely has relevance for India. As now, the diaspora community is respected for their being beneficial for both the country of residence as well as the country of origin. This community is welcomed in the home country with an open embrace whenever they land in their homeland. Therefore, in a way, this community feels good to see this kind of welcome and they always feel connected to their motherland. The diaspora community always has a passion to do something for its mother country, for its village or for its people. That is why this community is very active in philanthropy work, development work, etc. in India.

The paper gives a scope to think the relevance of soft power diplomacy in international relations for cooperation and coexistence of states in unequal power structure of the world system, for the fulfillment of aspirations of a country (in harmony with other countries of the world) and which do not harm other countries in any way. Because if the soft power would be used for fulfilling those interests, which can be harmful for other countries, the real meaning of soft power will be changed and it will also be a kind of hidden hard power or it will be like an iron hand under the velvet glove.