

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1682
ANSWERED ON-13/03/2025

ODISHA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH DIASPORA COMMUNITIES

1682. SHRI MANAS RANJAN MANGARAJ

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) The steps taken by the Ministry to engage with the Odia diaspora communities abroad, especially in promoting trade, investment, and cultural exchange;
- (b) The number of consulates or cultural centers in countries with significant Odia populations;
- (c) The initiatives taken to ensure that the concerns and interests of Odia expatriates are addressed effectively by the Ministry; and
- (d) Whether there are any plans to strengthen the relationship between Odisha and its diaspora to foster greater co-operation in economic and cultural sectors?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d) This Ministry does not maintain State-wise data of Indian diaspora community abroad nor details of engagement activities with diaspora from different Indian States including that from the state of Odisha. Indian diaspora abroad comprises of about 15.8 million Non Resident Indians (NRIs) and 19.5 million Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) spread across the globe and is one of the largest and most diverse overseas communities of any country. The Government of India has a robust mechanism for proactive engagement with the Indian diaspora abroad irrespective of the Indian state that they hail from. Such diaspora engagement policy of the Government of India is based on the following four “C”s- viz. Care, Connect, Celebrate and Contribute. Ministry has been implementing various schemes to engage with the Indian diaspora, and to leverage its expertise, resources and goodwill. These initiatives have strengthened India’s bond with its diaspora, and encouraged the diaspora members to actively partner India’s development in its march towards “Viksit Bharat”.

Government of India celebrated the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas jointly with the State Government of Odisha in January 2025 that witnessed participation of Indian Diaspora communities from all across the globe including those who trace their origins from Odisha. They participated in several activities that sought to promote India's national interests and facilitate investment and cultural exchanges between India and its large diaspora community from across the globe. A Joint Business Session co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Chief Minister of Odisha Shri Mohan Charan Majhi on the side-lines of the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was held on 08 January 2025. Members of the Indian Diaspora as also the Business community from the Odisha State

attended the event. The State Government of Odisha highlighted the investment opportunities in the State and urged the Indian diaspora involved in business activities to participate in the Invest Summit of Odisha that was scheduled to be held in end-January 2025.

Indian Missions/Posts abroad are also actively engaged with the Indian diaspora abroad from various Indian states including Odisha to celebrate and promote India's rich cultural heritage while fostering economic ties through trade and investment opportunities by organising several events to showcase India's development journey and to urge them to join such efforts.

Key schemes to engage with Indian diaspora by this Ministry include the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) that celebrates the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. During the PBD Conventions, eminent Indian diaspora members are conferred with the prestigious 'Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Awards' (PBSA). The Know India Programme of this Ministry seeks to familiarize the PIO youth (People of Indian Origin) with contemporary India, through a three week orientation programme and to connect them with the country of their origin. Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC) extends financial assistance to NRI/ PIO youth pursuing undergraduate education in India to promote India as a centre of higher education amongst the Indian diaspora besides promoting their welfare. This Ministry also engages with Indian nationals residing abroad through online portals like MADAD and e-Migrate, 24x7 Helplines and Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) for facilitating efficient and prompt redressal of grievances. Steps taken by this Ministry for Indian emigrant workers include schemes like the Pre- Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) that seeks to enhance the soft skills of the emigrant workers who are going abroad for employment in ECR countries and the Pravasi Bharatiya Beema Yojna (PBBY) that provides insurance coverage for ECR and ECNR Passport holders who proceed abroad for employment.

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) assists Overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency. The ICWF guidelines have been revised further to make them more broad-based and the scope of the welfare measures has been expanded to cover three key areas, namely, to assist overseas Indian nationals in distress situations, support community welfare activities, and improve consular services.

The active engagement of the Government of India with the Indian diaspora has resulted in the latter playing an important role in the growth and development of India besides promoting India's interests and further strengthening the ties between India and the adopted countries of the Indian diaspora. People of Indian origin have emerged to occupy prominent positions in politics, public administration, and international organisations in countries across the world. This has helped promote India's interests and its position on global platforms, thus benefiting both India and the respective countries of such leaders from the Indian diaspora. The Ministry strives to constantly uphold the momentum of India's engagement with its large and diverse diaspora across the globe to strengthen its relationship with the diaspora that, in turn, fosters greater cooperation in economic and cultural sectors.
