



Original Article

Indian Diaspora Literature as Cultural Soft Power: Transnational Identity, Development Discourse, And Nation-Building in A Globalized World

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In the contemporary global order marked by intensified migration, cultural hybridity, and transnational exchange, Indian diaspora literature has emerged as a vital site for examining identity, development, and nation-building beyond economic paradigms. While the contribution of the Indian diaspora is often assessed through remittances, diplomacy, and global mobility, its cultural and ethical interventions articulated through literary narratives remain comparatively underexplored. This paper argues that Indian diaspora literature functions as a significant form of cultural soft power, preserving, reinterpreting, and transmitting Bharatiya civilizational values across global spaces, thereby contributing to the holistic development of India in a globalized world. Drawing upon interdisciplinary frameworks from diaspora theory, cultural memory studies, and postcolonial cultural analysis, the study examines select Indian diasporic narratives to explore how transnational identities are shaped through memory, nostalgia, hybridity, and ethical belonging. These texts represent India not merely as a geographical homeland left behind, but as a living cultural and moral reference that continues to inform values related to community, coexistence, spirituality, and resilience. In negotiating displacement and belonging, diasporic writers resist cultural homogenization and assert continuity with indigenous knowledge systems and collective traditions. The paper further situates Indian diaspora literature within the discourse of cultural diplomacy, demonstrating how literary narratives contribute to India's global image as a plural, ethically grounded, and culturally resilient nation. Aligned with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the study highlights the curricular relevance of diaspora literature in fostering cultural awareness, global citizenship, and value-based education. Ultimately, the paper redefines development as a culturally sustained and ethically informed process and positions Indian diaspora literature as an integral force in shaping India's symbolic presence, national imagination, and global engagement.

Keywords: Indian Diaspora Literature; Cultural Soft Power; Transnational Identity; Cultural Memory; Nation-Building; Bharat, Postcolonial Diaspora Studies; Cultural Diplomacy; Globalization and Development Discourse; National Education Policy (NEP) 2020; Intercultural Competence.

Introduction

In the contemporary era of globalization, migration has emerged as one of the defining experiences of modern humanity. The Indian diaspora, spread across continents through colonial histories, post-independence mobility, and global economic restructuring, constitutes one of the largest and most influential transnational communities in the world. While diaspora studies have frequently emphasized economic remittances, political lobbying, and diplomatic influence, the cultural and literary contributions of the Indian diaspora to nation-building remain insufficiently foregrounded in mainstream academic discourse. This paper contends that Indian diaspora literature plays a vital role in the cultural development and global representation of Bharat, functioning as a living archive of civilizational values, collective memory, and ethical continuity.

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