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**TRANSNATIONAL DYNAMICS AND NEW POLITICS OF  
ENGAGEMENT ROLE OF DIASPORAS IN SOUTH ASIAN  
CONFLICTS**

**Arsala Nizami**



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## **Abstract**

This paper is an attempt to understand the transnational links of and strategies adopted by diasporas in engaging with their homelands vis-à-vis policies adopted by homelands in engaging its diasporas. It undertakes case studies of four South Asian conflicts and analyses it through the lenses of above written parameters. South Asian conflicts taken for the same are: Sri Lankan conflict, Kashmir conflict, Afghanistan conflict and Khalistan conflict

Keeping the above premises in mind, this paper takes case studies of four conflicts and analyses the role of diasporas as conflict resolvers or perpetrators. Sikh diaspora groups backed the Khalistan movement through social, financial and political means. Afghanistan diaspora groups have been assisting the state in post conflict reconstruction. A major faction of Kashmiri diaspora groups is engaged in awareness campaigns, promoting online forums for discussions, brainstorming sessions, silent marches etc. to build peace in the region. A major faction of Tamil diasporas' approach to the conflict is to directly get involved by funding and supporting the LTTE in Sri Lanka. Therefore, differences in the approaches of different diaspora groups relating to their ethnic conflicts are apparent and need a detailed examination.

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Statement: All the views expressed in the paper are of the author(s).

# TRANSNATIONAL DYNAMICS AND NEW POLITICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROLE OF DIASPORAS IN SOUTH ASIAN CONFLICTS

**Arsala Nizami**

## Introduction

This paper attempts to throw light on the role of South Asian diaspora in engaging itself with some of the prominent conflicts of South Asia i.e. Kash-mir conflict, Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, Afghani-stan conflict and Khalistan movement. The trans-national links of diasporas can either be constructive or destructive depending upon (a) the orientation and interests of diaspora groups and (b) policies adopted by homeland governments in engaging their diasporas. The interplay of these two factors along with the involvement of certain other factors such as history, media, inter-net etc. shape diasporas' engagement in the home-land conflicts. Therefore, the objective of the paper is to assess the policies adopted by governments in engaging its diasporas to homelands' issues as also to simultaneously examine their diasporas' willingness and initiatives in engaging themselves constructively or destructively in homelands' con-flicts.

All the four case studies are diverse, and vary in terms of orientation, nature, manoeuvre, and im-pact. However, these have been brought together in this paper to understand and appraise the di-verse nature of diasporic involvement in different types of conflicts of South Asia. It is the nature and style of the involvement with the conflict that la-bels them either as apeace maker or a peace break-er in homeland conflicts.

This paper employs qualitative research method-ology, including primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources include literature review, pub-lished interviews, newspaper articles, reports and documents of government, NGOs, institutes etc. Primary sources include interviews and case stud-ies of diaspora groups and organisations.

## Understanding the Transnational Dynamics

Ever since the advent of globalisation and liberal-isation, diasporas have become important global actors. Homeland governments have changed their policy and have started to engage their dias-pora proactively. For instance, during Jawaharlal Nehru's era, Indian diaspora was not seen as a stakeholder in India. However, the perception of the successive governmentschanged post-liberali-sation and diaspora was engaged as an important development partner in economicterms since 1990s. The constitution of high level committee (HLC) on Indian diaspora by BharatiyaJanata Par-ty in 2000 and opening up of a new ministryi.e. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) made diaspora play a great-er role.

With the increasing realisation of diasporas' po-tential, the homelands worldwide have started various schemes to engage with their diaspora constructively. Diasporas reciprocate with philan-thropy, investments, remit-tances, post war recon-structions etc. In many cases, diasporas have also been seen as funding war crimes, propagating against the government in power at home and fi-nancing secessionist movements. However, it is a matter of perspectives that makes them resolver or spoiler. Diaspora's role is both fluid and subjek-tive; hence, they are viewed as peacemakers by some and as peace-breakers by others (Democrat-ic Progress Institute, 2014). Another important fact that needs com-prehension is that diaspora groups are replete with fac-tions having distinct, some-times contradictory views. Therefore, it is impera-tive to recognise the heterogene-ity of diaspora groups.

## Case Studies

## Sri Lankan Ethnic Conflict

### Background of the conflict

The roots of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict between Sinhalese and Lankan Tamils can be traced to the independence of the country. Post partition, the Sinhala dominated government adopted discriminatory policies towards the comparatively smaller group, Tamils. Enactment of Ceylon citizenship bill in 1948 was the first step in the chain of events that led to worsening of conditions. Other important milestones were 'Sinhala Only' language act, 1956, standardisation policy 1971 and Buddhism only religion act, 1972. Furthermore, there were recurrent cases of land colonisation by government in the name of various policies.

Not only did these acts and policies impact Tamils' education and employment opportunities, but threatened their very livelihood and sustenance. Tamils' retaliation through violence sparked a deadly ethnic conflict. In the 1970s, a militant group called LTTE was formed, who fought against the Sri Lankan government for a separate state of Eelam for Tamils. The LTTE was characterised by brutal murders, assassinations of government officials, killings of civilians and suicide bombings. Open war between Sinhalese and Tamils finally broke out in 1983. During late 1970s and 1980s, a coherent militarised Tamil insurgency that involved several insurgent organisations took form. These groups included the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), The people's liberation organisation for Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), the Eelam People's revolutionary liberation front (EPRLF), and the liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The LTTE secured dominance among these groups through massive violence and coercion. After dominating for several decades, the LTTE was finally disbanded by the government in 2009 that marked an end to the conflict.

### Role of Diaspora:

Sri Lankan diasporas constitute of Tamils and Sinhalese. However, the paper only looks at the role played by Tamil diaspora in their homeland conflict. Tamil diaspora community is settled along the length and breadth of the globe. Migrations in several waves after the independence of the country formed the commu-

nity overseas. However, migration on a massive scale occurred after the outbreak of open war in 1983 when Tamils started seeking asylum overseas to safeguard their lives.

The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora had been a critical element of the Tamil insurgency back home. Although there were many Tamil organisations voicing against state's atrocities, LTTE gained prominence over the years and spread its chapters to various countries. LTTE not only mobilised people and channelized and resources in Sri Lanka, but also realised its dreams of global mobilization through Tamil diaspora. LTTE built a strategy of pursuing Tamil diaspora from 1980s, which eventually linked worldwide Tamil diasporas to LTTE. Large Tamil diaspora communities are in Switzerland, Australia, Canada, UK, US and the Scandinavian countries, which used to send huge funds to LTTE (Christine, 2005).

The LTTE got popularity as they sent message to the overseas Tamils about the repression and exploitation of Tamils in Sri Lanka. According to Christine (2005), 'the LTTE portrayed themselves as the only legitimate voice of the Tamils and raised demands for having self-independence and creating their separate state of Eelam. Tamil diaspora was the backbone of LTTE's insurgency not only because it provided diplomatic support, but mainly because it provided financial support to the movement for creation of Eelam'. In addition, diaspora also helped them in getting deadly weapons with which they fought off the Government of Sri Lanka.

LTTE collaborated with a number of umbrella organisations such as : the Australian Federation of Tamil Associations, The Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations, The French Federation of Tamil Associations, The Tamil Coordinating Committee in Norway, Tamil Refugee Organisation, World Tamil Movement(WTM), Tamil , Canadian Tamil Youth Development, Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation etc.

World Tamil Movement (WTM), with its office in Germany and groups and other offices in many other countries, disseminates publications as per the official position and statements of the LTTE. Another key organization is the "Tamil Refugee Organisation" (TRO) in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. It supports re-

habilitation and reconstruction in the North and East of Sri Lanka. It has offices in many countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway and the US. These offices are closely linked with LTTE's civil administration through funding and expertise (Christine, 2005).

An important point to note is that Tamil diaspora group is not a homogenous group. While most of the members of the diaspora community supported and funded LTTE, there were several other factions within the group that did not support LTTE's militancy. These diasporas formed many cultural organisations, which concentrate on promotion of culture, rituals, traditions, Tamil language etc. Apart from cultural organisations, there are some welfare organisations also focusing on education, sports, health, orphans etc. Some of the cultural, welfare, socio-economic organisations are Tamil Elam Development organisation (TEEDOR) in Canada, Tamil Information Centre (TIC), Tamil re-habilitation Organisation Centre etc.

In May 2009, LTTE was destroyed and disbanded and the involvement of diaspora with the group was restricted. According to a report of International Crisis Group (2010), although the May 2009 defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had dramatically reduced the diaspora's influence, the majority of Tamils outside Sri Lanka continue to support a separate state.

In case of Sri Lanka, diaspora fought against the Sri Lankan Government sponsored inequality and violence. Government politics was obviously to keep diasporas at a distance and to minimise their participation as they were the backbone of the insurgency. However, Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora got involved and upheld the movement until the devastation of LTTE. Still, among diaspora groups, there are aspirations for a separate state.

## **Kashmir**

### **Background of the conflict**

Ever since partition of Indian subcontinent, there are many issues of contention between India and Pakistan. However, Kashmir issue occupies the most important

place as it is the bone of contention between the two belligerents. Both the countries are adamant on their positions over Kashmir, which makes the situation worse and peace process unfeasible. An armed conflict started in the region in 1987 as a result of proxy wars from Pakistan. According to Mitra (2012), 'The story of Kashmir became a story of an unrelenting and brutal proxy war between India (represented by its military and paramilitary forces for the protection of Kashmiris) and Pakistan (represented by the Pakistani border control forces and militant groups receiving direct and indirect support from Pakistan Intelligence Agencies)'.

Proxy wars have devastated the valley and have changed the characteristic of Kashmir conflict. Increasing terrorist acts not only destabilise the region and terrorise people, but also lead to huge deployment of Indian military forces. The conflict has taken thousands of lives in Kashmir. Every now and then there are bombings, military suppression, disappearances of youths, rapes, abduction, mutilation etc. Disappearances of young men and the incidents of rapes by military personnel have apparently increased manifold in the past two decades. Now the conflict is not just about territory, but has also acquired social, economic and political angles. Therefore, the conflict has not only affected their work, identity, education, health, environment, but their very survival.

### **Kashmiri diaspora**

Migrations started post partition of Indian subcontinent. Kashmiris from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as well as Indian Administered Kashmir migrated to western countries and formed what is known as Kashmiri diaspora. During 1970s and 1980s, most of migrations were to Gulf and in late 1980s and 1990s, skilled migrations were mostly to the developed world.

Kashmiri diaspora, as mentioned above, is a heterogeneous group of Kashmiri Muslims from Pakistan and Kashmiri Pundits as well as Kashmiri Muslims from Indian side. All these diaspora groups have formed alliances and organisations to put forward their respective causes. Diverse groups/organisations/committees have been formed such as World Kashmir Diaspora Alliance, Kashmir Overseas Association, All Party International

Kashmir Co-ordination Committee (APIK-CC), Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Kashmir Hindu Foundation, Kashmirawareness.org, Indo European Kashmir Forum, Indo-Canadian Kashmir forum, Indo-American Kashmir Forum and many others.

The missions and objectives of all the groups are different. Most of the organisations talk of building peace and promoting health, education and overall development in their respective parts of Kashmir. Organisations promote peace by conducting discussions, meetings, brainstorming sessions etc. However, there are some organisations that protest against India and demand for self-determination for Kashmiri people.

World Kashmir Diaspora Alliance emphasizes that its primary objective is to alleviate the sufferings due to longstanding conflict in Kashmir. The alliance engages in research and promote favourable public policy amongst political parties, NGOs, International Organisations, so as to help in re-shaping public policy within and outside Kashmir. They also propose to offer assistance to India, Pakistan and world community through sharing of ideas and meetings in order to reach an amicable, dignified and peaceful solution to Kashmir conflict (worldKashmir.org).

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front was founded in 1977 in Birmingham as a nationalist organisation. Its branches are spread in European countries, USA, Middle East, Indian administered Kashmir as well as Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. There are some organisations that, in disguise of peace and tranquillity, are actually taking funds from governments to advocate and promote the country's position. For example, Kashmiri American Council (KAC) was formed in 1990 by Ghulam Nabi Fai in the US. The organisation basically lobbies Congress interests regarding Kashmir, arranges campaigns, conferences and many other events. The organisation aims to raise the knowledge in the US about the struggle of the Kashmiri people for self-determination. However, Fai was arrested in Washington in 2011 on charges of being an Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agent. It was reported that 'Pakistani intelligence services have secretly spent millions of dollars through this group over the past twenty years to lobby Congress and the White house and funnel contributions to members of both parties (Washington post, 2011).

KAC holds 'Kashmir Peace Conference' every year in the US, where speakers from India and Pakistan are invited to give their opinions and suggestions on building peace in Kashmir. However, Justice Department of Washington stated that the speakers are already decided by Pakistan government to put forward arguments in favour of Pakistan (UStoday, 2011). There are many organisations formed by Kashmiri Pundits also. Kashmiri Overseas Association, is a socio-cultural organization in USA. The KOA's mission is to promote Pandit ethnic and socio-cultural heritage, celebrate religious festivals of importance; provide financial assistance to needy and deserving Kashmiri Pandit individuals, educational institutions, places of worship and shrines, both in the US and in India etc.

Another Hindu Kashmiri organisation is Kashmir Hindu Foundation (KHF), which focuses on helping under-privileged children in camps in India. Kashmiri Pundits have also created Kashmiri Cultural Center in USA. It's a centre of arts and culture. It's a window that shows Kashmiri art, cultural heritage, traditions, history of Pundits etc. Similarly, there is an organisation called Kashmiri Hindu Foundation which promotes Kashmiri culture through theatre, literature and related arts etc.

Kashmiri diaspora groups have formed political parties in UK. Through these parties, they lobby issues of Kashmir on an international podium. In 1990, All Party Kashmir group was formed in UK to get Kashmir issue discussed in the political arena of UK. In case of Kashmir diaspora, it is evident that both Indian Government and Pakistan government take interest in its diaspora. However, Indian government, for obvious reasons, doesn't support the organisations that demand self-determination of Jammu and Kashmir. However, the Pakistan government apparently support such organisations.

## **Afghanistan**

### **Conflict Background**

Afghanistan has seen turmoil and crisis since the invasion of Soviet Union in 1979. It was a decade long term and in 1989 Soviet Union finally withdrew from Afghanistan under the pressure of Afghanistan's resis-

tance forces, US and Pakistan. By 1992, communist government was completely out of Afghanistan. Soon after, Peshawar accord took place, which established Afghanistan as the Islamic State of Afghanistan. However, the new government was unsuccessful in controlling and managing country, which led the country's fall into the hands of a military group called Taliban, which ruled the country till the turn of the century.

Following the attacks on world trade centre on 9/11, the world's focus came on Afghanistan as Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of the attacks, had taken refuge in Afghanistan. The US attacked Afghanistan with the slogan of 'war on terror', which along with rooting out Taliban from Afghanistan's political spectrum, also devastated the country and its resources, economy, institutional infrastructures etc. Therefore, the country has been in crisis for the past 3 decades and the final nail in the Coffin was the US attack. Nevertheless, the country is now witnessing the phase of reconstruction and state building in which Afghan diaspora has contributed to a large extension.

### **Role of Diaspora**

Migrations are very common from Afghanistan because of thirty years of crisis. Most of these migrations are irregular to neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran. Afghanis have also migrated to US, UAE, Germany, Canada, European countries and Australia. Fatima (2014) asserts that 'the Bonn talks, which dealt with reconstruction of the torn state of Afghanistan post the US attack, included Afghan diaspora from various places. Four groups were present at the talks. These were: the Northern Alliance, Rome based delegation of the former king Zahir Shah, a Cyprus grouping of exiled intellectuals, supported by Iran and a Peshawar grouping, with its base among the Peshawar Pashtun refugees. These talks finally led to the formation of a transitional government in Kabul under the Bonn agreement, 2001. Diasporas not only helped in talks and policy formation for state, but also assumed further responsibilities of reconciling ethnic differences, institutional capacity building and addressing economic issues'.

Afghan diaspora has strong links with their homeland. The task of state-building was in the hands of international community. But, international actors involved

diasporas also in the process because of their strong ethnic relationship with homeland. In the reconciliation process, the diaspora played the role of mediator between the international actors and Afghans (Mon-sutti, 2008). Apart from playing the role of a mediator, Afghan diaspora are investing heavily in building infrastructure and communication services.

For Afghan nationals, remittances sent by their family members are an important source of sustenance. 'Remittances flow to Afghanistan in 2012 was around \$ 3, 204 million (16.3% of GDP). Diasporas in Europe, North America, New Zealand and Australia are major remittances sending countries' (Agha, .n.d). Apart from remittances, Philanthropy by Afghan diaspora are also a major source of living. There are many Afghan diaspora organisations that are engaged in Philanthropy such as Afghan4tomorrow, NaiQala association, Afghani-stan Human Rights Network (UK) etc. Afghan-4tomorrow is a US- based organisation which provides education, health and agricultural support in Afghanistan. Similarly, NaiQala association is a Switzerland based organisation with the main objective of providing education and health facilities to children.

Afghan diasporas are engaged in many infrastructure building projects. There are many professional clubs, women's associations, students' associations, diverse aid organisations etc. Apart from working on education and health issues of locals, Afghan diaspora are also involved in making the process of returnees from Iran and Pakistan smooth. Diaspora groups help them in giving seminars on agriculture, healthcare, construction etc., so as to make them comfortable in their country and enable them to find an employment (HWWI, 2007). In case of Afghanistan, it is observed that Afghanistan was devastated by thirty years of crisis. Diasporas were involved in setting up of transitional government by international committee. Currently, there is a democratically chosen government in Afghanistan, which supports the work of diaspora and promotes more such post-conflict reconstruction activities in the state.

### **Khalistan Conflict**

Background of the Sikh Separatist Movement

According to Fair (2005), the idea of a separate state

for Sikhs dates back to early 20th century. However, it hadn't become a serious concern for Indian state as well as for Sikhs until 1970s. Ever since partition, they were concerned for their identity as a separate group and feared absorption into Hinduism. A chain of events starting from 1970s led to serious demands of a separate state for Sikhs known as 'Khalistan.'

In late 1970s and early 1980s, some elements of Sikh society started militarising themselves. In 1984, a famous Sikh militancy leader, Jarnail Singh Bindranwale with some members of his group hid in Golden Temple. The then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi attacked all the militants in Golden Temple, which sent shock waves among Sikh communities in India as well as across globe. Soon after, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. This created agitation among Hindus, and an anti-Sikh riot started soon, which killed and displaced thousands of Sikhs. It is only after these chain of events that resentment amongst Sikhs grew and the demand for a separate state became apparent and strong.

### **Role of Diaspora**

Sikh emigration started even before the arrival of British to the sub-continent. However, massive outflow of Sikhs can be marked to the attack on Golden Temple, commonly known as operation Blue Star in 1984. Sikh diaspora, prior to 1984, was not very much involved in the political affairs of Punjab. But, Operation Blue Star was one event that drew attention of Sikh diaspora and aroused the suppressed sentiments of creating Khalistan. Actual political mobilisation started with the violence and riots against Sikh community post assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The diaspora contributed the movement through social, financial and diplomatic means. According to Dhillon (2007), Gurudwaras played an important role in uniting Sikhs worldwide. Gurudwaras are very important for Sikhs as it is not only a place which holds religious significance, but it also promotes Sikh culture and unites the community. Members of the community would meet in the Gurudwaras and hold meetings and discussions regarding the atrocities committed against Sikhs and how to overcome them and the obvious solution was to create a separate state called Khalistan. In Gurudwaras, there were heated debates between pro-

Khalistan and anti-Khalistan Sikhs. Dhillon (2007) asserts that Gurudwaras were also the sites for fund raising for the conflict and other humanitarian, social and cultural concerns.

C.C. Fair asserts that an important dimension of the Sikh insurgency was that it involved Pakistan also in its movement. Sikhs from Canada, US and UK arranged cadres to travel to Pakistan and received financial and military assistance Fair has provided 6 ways in which Diasporas mobilised the conflict. 'First is the use of Gurudwara as an institution or platform for raising funds, creating public awareness and physical space for discussions and debates. Second are remittances, which bind Diaspora with Punjab. Third is the rituals of going for pilgrimages and making connections with various Sikh communities and trying to mobilise people and making the bond stronger in various communities. Fourth is the convention of international meetings and fifth is Sikh groups and organisations. These organisations vary from being peaceful to military in orientations. Further-more, Sikh diaspora communities have also utilized print and electronic capital to spread the idea of Khalistan. 'Sikhs have also been quick to find ways of controlling knowledge produced about their faith, culture, and language to ensure knowledge production that is sympathetic to the Khalistan movement' (Fair, 2005).

However, Sikh movement couldn't survive the counter insurgency of India and ended in around 1999. In case of Khalistan, it is evident that Indian government is supportive of its diasporas generally. However, demands of self-determination were not entertained. Government's counter-insurgency was so strong that the movement couldn't survive for long.

### **Conflict resolver or spoiler: role of diaspora**

After looking at the case studies it is evident that the nature of diasporic involvement was different in all four cases. However, the common factor in all the case studies was that mass migrations of the groups occurred due to conflicts in their homeland. Yet, all diaspora groups employed different techniques in the homeland conflicts.

It is apparent that in Sri Lankan conflict and Khalistan

conflict, diaspora groups have majorly played the role of peace breaker. In the case of Sri Lanka, it is seen that diasporas aggravated the conflict by funding and supporting LTTE. But, there were certain factions of Sri Lankan Tamil groups that did not support LTTE and tried to build peace in the region by undertaking various cultural and welfare programs. Similarly, in case of Khalistan, it is seen that there was a faction who didn't support Khalistan movement. However, largely Sikh diaspora from Punjab supported the Khalistan movement and strengthened it ideologically as well as financially. In case of Kashmir, it is observed that most of the organisations are focusing on the promotion of welfare of their people through cultural and traditional practices. However, there are some organisations that promote either self-determination or merger with Pakistan. In case of Afghanistan, it is observed that diaspora is engaged in post-conflict reconstruction, remittances and philanthropy work. It was an important part of the Bonn agreement set up to promote democracy and peacebuilding in Afghanistan.

Role of the respective homeland governments is also important in changing the dynamics of trans-national linkages. In the case of Khalistan movement, the Indian government was successful in curbing the movement. Therefore, the diaspora is not seen active now on this particular issue. Similarly, Sri Lankan government also managed to disband the LTTE; hence, made the role of the diaspora limited. Although the desire for a separate state is still present among some factions of the Tamil diaspora, desire is not being materialised by these diasporas. Afghanistan government is supportive of its diaspora because of its positive role and impact.

To conclude, it is imperative to say that all four diaspora groups play important role in their homeland conflict, either as resolvers or as spoilers. But, it is simultaneously germane to understand that diasporas have only limited positive impact in resolving any conflict. Whereas their negative impact is much deeper and bigger because war criminals play an important role in fueling conflicts through the diasporas' funds.

## End Notes

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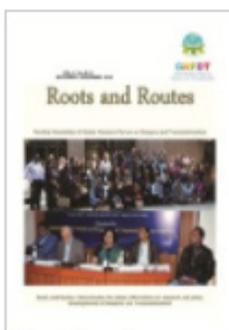
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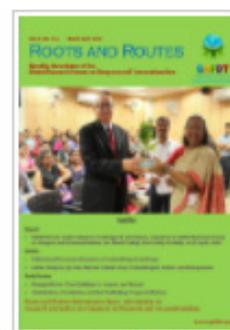
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March-April  
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*Roots and Routes* is a monthly newsletter of the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT). It is inclusive of articles, book reviews and news analysis, which help in disseminating latest information on research and policy development in Diaspora and Transnationalism. The newsletter enjoys readership of academicians, policy experts, diaspora think tanks etc.

The regular columns of the newsletter are :

1. **Article** : consisting of well researched articles of about 3000-4000 words on any aspect of diaspora, migration and transnationalism.
2. **Short commentaries** : consisting of short write ups of about 1500-2000 words based on opinion, description or explanation of any event or situation related to the above mentioned themes.
3. **News analysis** : consisting of analyzing current news in about 1000-1500 words
4. **Book reviews** : 1000-1500 words.

We are pleased to invite your contributions to the above mentioned sections. Please send your contributions to the editors of the newsletter at [editor@grfdt.com](mailto:editor@grfdt.com)

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**GRFDT**

Global Research Forum on  
Diaspora and Transnationalism

**Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) is a consortium of researchers and policy makers drawn from national and international universities, institutes and organizations. GRFDT is presently based in India and is shaping as the largest such group focusing specifically on the issues related to diaspora and transnationalism.**

**The GRFDT works as an academic and policy think tank by engaging national and international experts from academics, practitioners and policy makers in a broad range of areas such as migration policies, transnational linkages of development, human rights, culture, gender to mention a few. In the changing global environment of academic research and policy making, the role of GRFDT will be of immense help to the various stakeholders. Many developing countries cannot afford to miss the opportunity to harness the knowledge revolution of the present era. The engagement of diaspora with various platform need to be reassessed in the present context to engage them in the best possible manner for the development human societies by providing policy in-put at the national and global context.**