

Conclusions and Recommendations



he High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora has spent considerable time and thought in recommending multifarious ways in which India can increase her connectivity with the Indian Diaspora all over the world. An early and complete approval of the considered recommendations of the Committee is the quickest way to show our Diaspora that India means business in the matter of engaging it in a long-term mutually beneficial interaction.

- 38.2. The Committee also requests a time bound consideration of the report of the Committee, and an in-principle acceptance of its recommendations. A time-bound and in-principle acceptance by the Government of the recommendations of this High Level Committee would send the right signals to our Diaspora about our seriousness and high priority in interacting with them. As many of our recommendations are original and novel attempts to engage the Diaspora, a sufficient preparation time is needed to translate them into ground reality by the year 2003.

Interim Recommendations

- 38.3. The Committee has already submitted three interim reports to the Government for its consideration. They relate to:
- i. The PIO Card Scheme
 - ii. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
 - iii. Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards
- 38.4. It was represented to the Committee by a very large cross-section of the Diaspora that the fee for a PIO card is not commensurate with its benefits. The Committee is satisfied that the representation of so many members of our Diaspora merits consideration and that a reduction in the fee structure of the PIO Card should be made. ... (Vide para 24.27)
- 38.5. The Committee feels that the constructive role played by the Diaspora, its achievements and goodwill towards India should be celebrated and recognised in an appropriate manner. Accordingly, the Committee recommends the observance of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas each year on a suitable day in January. ... (Vide para 25.17)

- 38.6. The Bharat Samman Awards were first instituted as part of India's 50th Independence anniversary celebrations and also notified in the Gazette of India by Notification Number 1/1/98-Public dated January 26, 1998. But the scheme was never operationalised. The Committee recommends the establishment of a slightly modified scheme entitled the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards, with a maximum of 25 annual awardees.

...(Vide para 26.19)

Consular and Other Issues

Improvements at Airports

- 38.7. To ensure that Diaspora members feel welcomed on their arrival in India and also recall warmly their visits, a friendlier reception at their point of entry; easier procedures for immigration and customs clearances that are marked by courteous service are essential. Surveillance cameras and recording equipment should be installed at all important points in the airports to video-tape and maintain a close watch on the conduct of officials whose duty involves dealing with the public. The conduct of these officials in the immigration, customs and security areas should be monitored by an independent agency. If the officials and passengers are aware that their interactions are being taped and monitored, the results would be salutary, in terms of deterring discourteous, obstructive or corrupt behaviour.

...(Vide para 27.6)

- 38.8. There is scope for improving the facilities, hygiene and cleanliness inside airports. Setting up of transport and accredited hotel facilities close to the airports by well-reputed organisations or individuals should be encouraged.

...(Vide para 27.6)

Regulatory Requirements of the Government

- 38.9. Dissemination of information regarding the Government's requirements for NRIs/PIOs should be greatly improved so that they are not subjected to avoidable inconvenience. This would be of particular relevance in cases such as the need to obtain a Tax Clearance Certificate prior to departure from India, if the period of stay in the country exceeds 120 days, and the requirement to report to the relevant FRRO if the duration of their visit exceeds 180 days. Our diplomatic and consular offices should be asked to publicise such requirements in their visitors' reception rooms and on their web sites. Printed slips with this kind of information should be handed over to them along with their visas. Similar information should be available on incoming flights to India.

...(Vide para 27.8 and 27.9)

Welfare of Indian Women married to NRIs/PIOs

38.10. The Committee was told by large sections of the Diaspora about the need to prevent abuse of Indian women married to NRIs/PIOs. We strongly recommend that a special cell should be created in the proposed new organisation to handle Diaspora issues with the mandate to assist in the provision of free legal counselling for the families of girls contemplating marriage to NRIs/PIOs. Such families should be advised to check the voter or alien registration card of such NRIs/PIOs, their social security number and tax returns for the preceding three years. The bridegroom should be asked to give them an affidavit stating his current marital status. That document should be attached to the application for marriage registration. This should be a mandatory prerequisite to the issuance of a marriage registration certificate. This procedure would considerably bring down cases of misinformation and fraudulent marriages. The Committee has drawn strength from the Supreme Court decision in the case of Smt. Neeraja Saraph vs. Shri Jayant Saraph, where the court had suggested the need to consider legislation safeguarding the interests of women. It had suggested three specific provisions, namely,

- (1). No marriage between an NRI and an Indian woman, which has taken place in India, may be annulled by a foreign court.
- (2). Provision may be made for adequate alimony to the wife in the property of the husband both in India and abroad.
- (3). The decree granted by Indian courts may be made executable in foreign courts both on the principle of comity and by entering into reciprocal agreements like section 4A of the Civil Procedure Code which makes a foreign decree executable as it would have been a decree passed by that court.

...(Vide para 27.14)

Problems of Overseas Indian Labour

38.11. The Committee recommends that measures to address the problems of our overseas blue-collar workers should be implemented at the earliest possible. These are:

- (a) Establishing a welfare fund for repatriated overseas workers in distress;
- (b) Negotiating a Standard Labour Export Agreement' with the host countries;
- (c) Monitoring and supervision of both the employment contracts, and the conditions of our overseas workers by our Missions;
- (d) Launching compulsory insurance schemes covering the risks faced by our overseas workers;
- (e) Establishing mechanisms for pre-departure counselling and the provision of legal assistance locally, instituting training programmes for human resource development and skills upgradation;

- (f) The Committee recommended that the Member-Secretary of the proposed central Organisation, who will deal with these matters, should elaborate further on legislative and administrative measures to be taken to ensure that these concerns are fully and satisfactorily addressed. This would be in addition to his/her functions as the central nodal point in addressing the specific problems related to overseas blue-collar workers and liaising with the concerned Government departments at the central and State level, our Missions abroad and the workers themselves.

...(Vide para 3.30)

Culture

- 38.12. There is a vast divergence in the needs of the different segments of the Diaspora in the field of culture. We must, therefore, adopt balanced and coordinated approach in responding to those needs. After its careful examination of successful cultural centres in other countries, the Committee recommends the adoption of the British Council model for the larger demographic centres and where there are Missions of considerable size. The *Alliance Francaise* model should be used for centres concentrating on the dissemination of Indian languages, and which are not located in the capital cities of the world.

...(Vide para 28.36)

- 38.13. Special measures should be designed to recognise and highlight the achievements of India's French and Dutch speaking Diaspora. Mechanisms such as Eminent Persons Group and bilateral consultations should be utilized to give a higher profile to the Indian Diaspora in countries with sizeable concentrations of diasporic Indians. Cultural interaction should be increased between India and the Diaspora in Reunion and Guadeloupe.

...(Vide para 28.43)

- 38.14. We recommend strongly that the younger members of the Diaspora should be assisted in strengthening their cultural heritage and keeping alive their ancestral language.

...(Vide para 28.39)

- 38.15. The Committee reiterates its belief that culture can impact widely and vitally in strengthening the linkages between India and her Diaspora. Culture is non-invasive. It cuts across the divisions of societal levels, creeds, religions and races. It has the potential of bridging the gap between citizens of the host country and the resident Indian community.

...(Vide para 28.47)

Economic Development (Investment, International Trade, Industrial Development and Tourism)

- 38.16. The Committee noted that while there may be different perceptions about foreign direct investment in certain sectors or by certain countries, there is a general consensus in India that investment by Non-Resident Indians and Persons of Indian origin is desirable, as they are our own kith and kin.

Special measures should be devised to facilitate the involvement of the Diaspora with India in this sector. ... (Vide para 29.31)

38.17. The Committee met a large number of internationally renowned experts, of Indian origin who are well positioned in management and financial institutions. Some of them are among the world's top consultants in business strategy. They are willing to provide assistance in upgrading skills in management and finance to Indian corporations, as well as to our management institutions. Since a number of Indian Diaspora professionals are working in senior positions in manufacturing industry, they can be helpful in promoting India as an important destination for out-sourcing. Suitable mechanisms should be devised to avail of such expertise. ... (Vide para 29.4)

38.18. The liberalization of the Indian economy since 1991 has opened up opportunities for investment in India. The PIOs working in MNCs have played a useful role in encouraging their corporations to explore India as an investment destination. The acceleration of our economic reform process would definitely create a favourable climate where PIOs can play an active role in generating investments. ... (Vide para 29.36)

38.19. Government should also consider setting up Special Economic Zones, exclusively for projects to be set up by NRIs/PIOs. The Diaspora could be involved in the development of such zones. A dedicated single-window setup, which would provide consultancy services for overseas Indian investors and be a liaison point for getting various clearances is imperative for the success of this measure. ... [Vide para 29.38 (iv) & (v)]

38.20. The Diaspora creates demand by specialized consumption and by demonstration. The diasporic community has often helped to create a breakthrough for new Indian products and companies. The commercial success of Indian films abroad also indirectly helps promote Indian fashion and Indian products. Indian textiles and fashion designers, Indian herbal cosmetics, products and jewellery are mainly known abroad due to the presence of a large Diaspora. There is immense potential in involving the Diaspora in developing and popularizing brand image recognition of Indian goods in selected commodities like leather garments. An appropriate programme to leverage this trend should be devised ... (Vide para 29.26)

38.21 The Committee feels that we have not yet fully availed ourselves of the full fund of goodwill for India and the expertise that exists in the Indian Diaspora. These could easily and cost-effectively be translated into concrete benefits for India's trade promotion efforts. The networking enjoyed by the Diaspora in their respective countries of settlement would be a major resource in India's efforts to enter those markets or to attract investments. ... (Vide para 29.30)

38.22. The Committee noted that some Indian banks have already made special arrangements to facilitate payments in rupees against incoming foreign exchange remittances of labour force in the Gulf region. The Committee feels that similar arrangements should be replicated for the Diaspora in other countries also.

...(Vide para 29.56)

38.23. The Committee also noted the high incidence of frauds in the bank accounts of the NRIs/PIOs. It recommends that the instructions of the Reserve Bank of India in this regard should be strictly adhered to by all branches of commercial banks in letter as well as in spirit. NRI deposits should be made directly by the NRIs concerned either in person, through bank transfers or through post/courier. A more foolproof Power of Attorney system should be developed. A fast-track mechanism should be instituted by India to resolve disputes concerning fraudulent transactions.

...(Vide para 29.56)

38.24. It was represented to the Committee that NRIs have grievances regarding their investments in shares and debentures. These basically revolve around delays and procedural lapses. The Committee notes that at present SEBI does not even entertain complaints regarding non-listed companies. A fast track mechanism to address such complaints should be put in place.

...(Vide para 29.63)

38.25. The Government should consider issuing special infrastructure bonds for attracting NRI/PIO investments on the lines of the Israel Bonds. We could usefully adopt several laudable features of the Israel Bonds Scheme.

...(Vide para 29.49)

38.26. Extending fiscal incentives, such as reducing corporate tax rates to levels at or below competitive international levels, removing restrictions on repatriation of profits and eliminating needless licensing requirements would be extremely useful in attracting investment.

...(Vide para 29.64)

38.27. The Diaspora can make a significant contribution to the growth of tourism in India. PIOs make frequent visits to their home state or to visit their relatives. There should be greater focus on promoting tourism among 2nd generation PIOs. Special tour packages, pilgrim packages and other packages tailor-made for this section of the Diaspora should be developed and publicised. The proven expertise and strengths of the Diaspora in the hotel, motel and travel sectors can be utilized for development of similar infrastructure in India.

...(Vide para 29.65)

38.28. Leading banks and credit card companies which have a substantial clientele among the Indian Diaspora should be encouraged to issue an India Credit Card, which could be made available to

the Diaspora through their own offices or through Indian banks abroad. Purchases and other transactions through the India Credit card should be linked to some national development project. A token sum (say \$ 1) could go to that project for every purchase or transaction. This would encourage the Diaspora's participation in and identification with India's economy.

...(Vide para 29.68)

Education

38.29. This is a field where there is a large reservoir of highly qualified people. PIOs are in senior academic positions in almost every academic institution in countries like the USA, Canada and the UK. A number of them are willing to volunteer their time and expertise to impart to institutions in India. There is a crying need for the development of suitable mechanisms to leverage this extraordinary resource.

...(Vide para 30.26)

38.30. Special programmes should be developed, both at school and university level, to cater to the needs of various age groups in all segments of the Diaspora. Concerted efforts should be made to introduce India Studies in universities with a sizeable Indian Diaspora. India should provide visiting faculty members for such India studies programmes, as well as invite faculty members from those universities to spend some time in Indian universities. Diaspora studies should also be encouraged in consultation with Indian universities. Some works of the authors of Indian origin should be included in the syllabus of Indian universities. Efforts to achieve recognition of Indian qualifications should be stepped up. Exchange programmes that help provide a cross-cultural exposure to Indian and Diaspora students should be implemented.

...(Vide para 30.9 to 30.23)

Health

38.31. The PIOs have distinguished themselves in the field of medicine and healthcare in the countries of their settlement. They are also amongst the most well off sections of the Indian community. Given the fact that they have skills, money and are now in senior positions in universities and hospitals, it should be possible to attract significant investments from them in the field of health care and medical research. The Committee has made several recommendations in this sector.

...(Vide para 31.19)

38.32. While the primary and, to an extent, secondary health sectors have been largely with the Government in India, tertiary healthcare has not received the required attention owing to the constraints on Government resources. Tertiary healthcare is highly resource-intensive, as it requires high-tech equipment and diagnostic facilities. The Indian Diaspora can contribute not only to its expansion and improvement but also to its dispersal across the country.

...(Vide para 31.33)

38.33. To facilitate and promote the utilisation of the expertise of PIO doctors abroad, we should develop an institutional mechanism for interaction between the scientists of Indian origin and scientific organisations in India. Sustained linkages must be encouraged between them. The areas for their involvement could be infant mortality; AIDS prevention and management; TB; microbial infection; burns management; improving trauma management, disaster management; diabetes; cancer; cardiographic conditions; mechanism of the ageing process, etc. Although many Indian scientists are actively engaged in various kinds of health-related research, more needs to be done in the cutting edge of research, specially in the areas of microbial infection; diabetes; cancer; cardiographic conditions and the mechanism of the ageing process. Research projects relating to women and children would also deserve special attention.

... (Vide para 31.33)

38.34. Hospitals and other healthcare institutions are currently treated in India as “industries”. They should be accorded the status of “infrastructure”. This is likely to give a boost to NRI/PIO investment in the health sector. A number of specific measures which could attract NRI/PIO investment in the health sector, include: (i) Allotment of land at reasonably moderate or subsidized rates without conditionality, such as provision of free treatment (ii) Charging lower tariff rates for water, electricity, etc.; (iii) Establishing a suitable Government mechanism for single-window clearance of medical projects undertaken by NRIs/PIOs by creating an investor-friendly environment and acting as a facilitator for investment; (iv) A review of the existing structure of import duties on medical equipment, with a view to reducing them to a flat rate of 5%; (v) Joint consultations and collaboration between various stake holders, namely, the NRIs/PIOs, the Indian private sector and the Government, in framing health policies; and (vi) Encouragement of the activities of alumni associations connected with different healthcare institutions in India.

...(Vide para 31.33)

Media

38.35. The media has a great potential for promoting increased engagement with the Indian Diaspora. Specific recommendations to activate this area of interaction should be implemented at the earliest.

- i. The relevant department of the Indian government should facilitate the establishment of contacts between Indian media and those in countries with a diasporic presence. Indian media should be encouraged to increase linkages with its counterparts.

...[Vide para 32.29 (ii)]

- ii. A database of ethnic media should be created and maintained specially for countries with a sizeable Indian diasporic presence. This should include print media, radio stations and TV stations and networks.

...[Vide para 32.29 (i)]

- iii. India should promote the dissemination of national, regional and international news at low cost to members of the ethnic media in countries with a sizeable PIO population.
- iv. Increased facilities should be provided on a high priority basis to interested PIOs for studies in the field of media in countries with a large Indian Diaspora. The Committee feels that media personnel can contribute greatly to the betterment of India's image abroad in their own countries and, by a trickle down effect, they can improve the perception of India in other countries as well. Given the importance of media in projecting abroad a revitalised image of India, the Committee recommends that, as a concrete measure, the number of seats being provided to media students from the Diaspora in reputed schools of journalism like the Indian Institute of Mass Communication should be doubled. This would allow a much larger number of such students from countries with a high concentration of PIOs to avail themselves of these facilities.

....[Vide para 32.29 (iv)]

- v. The Committee also endorses the idea that a regular biennial meeting of the diasporic media should be held to increase interactions between Indian media and its counterparts from the Diaspora. The ethnic media from abroad should be invited to attend these meetings at their own expense, while local hospitality limited to a lunch or dinner could be hosted by the Indian media. Such annual meetings could be interlinked with the programmes of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, or be scheduled around the investiture ceremony for Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards.

...[Vide para 32.29 (iii)]

Science and Technology

38.36. The recommendations of the Committee are founded on the belief that distinguished PIOs abroad are willing to contribute to their country of origin. They have already demonstrated their goodwill with any number of concrete actions. They have also assisted in elevating the international profile and reputation of India's premier S&T institutions and our talented scientists. Our recommendations encompass new avenues and frameworks to network with foreign-based Scientists and Technologists of Indian Origin (STIOs) to further consolidate and deepen India's excellence in Science, as well as demonstrate India's appreciation for their invaluable contribution.

...(Vide para 33.8)

38.37. Programmes should be developed on the pattern of TOKTEN to facilitate involvement of Diaspora scientists and leverage their knowledge, skills and technology to Indian scientists.

...(Vide para 33.6)

38.38. Suitable projects should be identified for implementation in specific developed countries. Joint teams of scientists from India and the Diaspora should be asked to work on projects on high national priority. The outcomes of such research should be made available to other developing countries. Areas of work could include contraception methods, renewable sources of energy and finding non-drug alternatives to various diseases. This idea would attract the participation of the experienced, semi retired as well as young research students.

...(Vide para 33.8)

38.39. Research projects should, where possible be subcontracted to India from the developed countries. Such projects should be in the cutting edge of technology.

...(Vide para 33.8)

38.40. Eminent scientists should be involved in co-supervision of doctorate or research students in India. They could also undertake joint research projects.

... (Vide para 33.8)

Philanthropy

38.41. The Committee observed that PIOs/NRIs were eager to donate generously for worthy development causes in India. It further noted that the adverse experiences of many members of the Indian Diaspora in sending donations to India, had led to their diverting subsequent investments to other destinations. The Committee found that a plethora of rules and regulations, indifference and even hostility of the government machinery frustrated the efforts of genuine PIO/NRI philanthropists. The best remedy was to devise a transparent, fair and fast track mechanisms for processing clearances.

...(Vide para 34.60)

a) Single point for contact with the Diaspora should be accorded the highest priority.

...(Vide para 37.57)

b) The proposed organisation should be allowed to form a foundation to receive charitable and philanthropic donations. It should be allowed to generate funds through sponsorships from private individuals and corporations.

...(Vide para 37.78)

c) The Committee recommends the early simplification of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976, to enable India to receive more remittances from PIOs for philanthropic activities. Donations from PIOs/NRIs should be placed either under an automatic route or under a Fast Track Mechanism, on the condition that these should be only for secular and developmental purposes and should be for PIO cardholders only.

...(Vide para 34.52)

- d) At the State level, the offices to be created for dealing with the Diaspora must be empowered to deal with harassment cases and also be able to process efficiently PIO/NRI applications for donations and assist in the implementation of such projects.
...(Vide para 34.56)
- e) The list of educational and health institutions eligible for automatic registration without enquiry should be expanded and updated in order to provide an additional stimulus to the health and educational services sector in India.
- f) Exemption of customs duty on all donated materials, especially for national emergencies, should be immediately effected.
- g) Income tax exemptions on donations by overseas Indians from their incomes in India for developmental/ secular/ educational/ medical purposes should be raised to 100%.
- h) The provision that foreign contributions can be received in only one designated bank account and cannot be transferred to other parts of the country should be liberalised. Registered NGOs should have the facility to transfer their funds for their activities anywhere in the country with only a reporting requirement to the RBI/ Ministry of Home Affairs.
- i) Programmes to encourage idealistic PIO/NRI students, who wish to come to India for voluntary work, should be institutionalized.
- j) To enable donation of services, such as those of skilled doctors, scientists, teachers, architects, lawyers and engineers, a special fast track mechanism for recognition of degrees and qualifications should be instituted through the concerned bodies.

...(Vide paras 34.51 to 34.66)

Pravasi Bharatiya Bhavan

38.42. The idea of setting up a Pravasi Bharatiya Bhavan, initiated three decades ago, has yet to be operationalised. It is an idea whose time has come. This Bhavan is intended to commemorate the trials and tribulations, the achievements and successes of the Indian Diaspora. It would, when established, symbolise the spirit and soul of India and her Diaspora, and be a recognition of the universal aspiration of the Diaspora to retain its cultural identity and civilisational ethos. It would house archives, a library and a permanent exhibition of the Diaspora. To provide a sense of involvement to the Diaspora in its construction, a competition to elicit the most appropriate design for the Bhavan has been recommended by us, in which architects from India and the Diaspora would be eligible to participate.

...(Vide para 35.5)

Dual citizenship

38.43. The Committee recommends that dual citizenship should be permitted within the rubric of Citizenship Act, 1955. Sections 9, 10 and 12 of the Citizenship Act, 1955 should be suitably amended for this purpose.

...(Vide para 36.61)

The Committee has further recommended in its Report that only citizens of countries specified in the Schedule (to be appended) will be eligible for dual citizenship and that citizens of other countries (including those of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, for example, regarding which some apprehensions have been expressed) would not be eligible for India's dual citizenship. The Committee has also made it clear that the dual citizenship recommended by it would not be automatic, that it would be confined to persons who were or were entitled to become citizens of India, as well as their children and grandchildren if they have taken the citizenship of the countries to be specified in the Schedule. A provision analogous to Section 12 of British Nationality Act, 1981 may be included in The Citizenship Act and should be substituted under the caption "Renunciation and Resumption of Citizenship". The provision which the Committee recommends is patterned on the British Nationality Act, 1981 and may read as follows:-

Renunciation

- (1) If any Indian citizen of full age and capacity makes in the prescribed manner a declaration of renunciation of Indian citizenship, then, subject to provisions of this Section, the Central Government shall cause the declaration to be registered.
- (2) On the registration of a declaration made in pursuance of this Section, the person who made it shall cease to be an Indian citizen.

Provided that a declaration made by a person in pursuance of this Section shall not be registered and shall not be given effect unless the Central Government is satisfied that the person who made it will after the registration have or acquire some citizenship or nationality other than Indian citizenship; and if that person does not have any such citizenship or nationality on the date of registration or does not acquire some such citizenship or nationality within one year from that date, he shall be, and be deemed to have remained, an Indian citizen notwithstanding the registration.

...(Vide para 36.61)

Resumption

- (1) Subject to the provisions of sub section (2), a person who has ceased to be an Indian citizen as a result of a declaration of renunciation on or after the date of the commencement of the Constitution shall be entitled, on an application for registration for dual citizenship of India, to be registered as such a dual citizen if:

- (a) he is of full capacity; and
 - (b) his renunciation of Indian citizenship was necessary to enable him to retain or acquire the citizenship or nationality of any one of the countries specified in the Second Schedule.
- (2) Any person who was or was entitled to be an Indian citizen at the time of the commencement of the Constitution of India and who has acquired the citizenship of any of the countries specified in the Second Schedule as well as the children and grand children of such person shall be entitled to avail of the benefit of resumption of his Indian citizenship in the capacity of a dual citizen of India.
 - (3) If a person of full capacity who has ceased to be an Indian citizen as a result of a declaration of renunciation (for whatever reason made) and has acquired the citizenship of any of the countries specified in the Second Schedule makes an application for his registration as a dual citizen of India, the Central Government may, if it thinks fit, cause him to be registered as such a citizen.”
 - (4) That dual citizenship of India and a dual citizen of India may be defined in the Act. The Committee recommends that the language of Section 12 may be adopted for the purpose of providing for the “conferment of all or any of the rights of a citizen of India as may be provided under the rules to be framed on the citizens of any country specified in the Schedule to the Act.” The language of Section 12(2) may be expressly borrowed for the purpose of *non obstante* and overriding operation of the clause providing for dual citizenship. The Committee is of the opinion that the provision for Commonwealth citizenship may be reviewed either to put some living substance in Sections 11 and 12 of the Citizenship Act or to substitute those provisions by new provisions relating to the Indian Diaspora in the countries of the Commonwealth as specified in the First Schedule and in the countries to be specified in the Second Schedule.
 - (5) That those who hold PIO cards should be allowed to avail themselves of the provisions for naturalization after two years of obtaining the card, and those who acquire dual citizenship should be allowed to become naturalized citizens after one year. This relaxation should be particularly applicable to senior citizens of Indian origin who may wish to return to India in the evening of their lives and may wish to spend the rest of their lives in India.
 - (6) That it may be provided by a proviso to the proposed new Section that those who have acquired dual citizenship, shall not be entitled to exercise electoral franchise and shall not be inducted into civil services or the defence or paramilitary forces except by a special order of the Central Government. It may also be provided in the proviso that they shall not be entitled to any other employment in the service of the States and the Union except by a special order of the Central Government.

- (7) That a provision should be made for framing of rules in respect of all matters relating to dual citizenship including the form and fee to be prescribed for an application to be made for dual citizenship. The prescribed form should ask for full and faithful disclosure of previous Indian and other passports, record of employment, residence, electoral registration in India and all foreign countries and such other particulars as the Central Government may consider appropriate. A provision should be made for the issue of dual citizenship passports, prescribed fee therefore, and stamping of both foreign nationality passport and Indian Dual Nationality passport at the time of entry and exit.

...(Vide para 36.61)

Future Organisational Structure

38.44. The Committee is convinced that the Indian Diaspora covering virtually every part of the globe is an important factor in India's external relations with a large number of countries. It is also a valuable asset and has great potential to play an important role in the multifaceted development of India. Indian public opinion is also concerned with the well being of India's kith and kin abroad. The Diaspora can play an important role in making India a knowledge super power. It is also an important resource in presenting India in the proper perspective to the opinion-builders and decision-makers in the various countries of its location. A coherent policy and a streamlined, single contact point organisation is absolutely necessary for this purpose.

38.45. The Committee has held wide-ranging consultations with every segment of the Diaspora in its tours to 20 countries. The most fervent plea made by every section of the Diaspora was to provide for a single-window mechanism for its interaction with India. It was repeatedly stressed that the single most discouraging factor in engagement with India was our multilayered bureaucracy. Establishment of a well-funded, well-staffed, empowered and dedicated organisation is, therefore, a *sine qua non* for effective engagement of the diverse, 20 million strong Indian Diaspora. Counterpart setups in the States of India should complement such an organisation. It should have a grievance redressal mechanism. Problems faced by NRIs in the Gulf region should merit special consideration by this organisation. Detailed recommendations pertaining to the new organisational structure have been made in Chapter 37 of our Report.

...(Vide paras 37.57 to 37.80)

38.46. After examining various models in India as well as abroad the Committee has come to the conclusion that an autonomous empowered organisation structured on the pattern of the Planning Commission would be the most appropriate set up for the purpose. In order to ensure effective coordination and authority, the organisation should have the Prime Minister as its Chairman. It should have a Deputy Chairman with Cabinet rank and five Members including a Member-Secretary who should be a serving or retired Indian Foreign Service officer. The Deputy Chairman and the Members should be full time and of great eminence in their respective fields. Members of the

Diaspora should be eligible for appointment as Members of the new organisation provided they are willing to be based in India for a substantial part of each year of their tenure. In the interest of continuity, all important functionaries should have a tenure of five years. The functionaries of the organisation's secretariat should be on deputation from the Government, academia or the private sector. A detailed organisational chart of the proposed new organisation has been attached to Chapter 37.

...(Vide paras 37.57 to 37.65)

38.47. The Committee has also recommended to the Government the creation of a databank of the NRIs/PIOs worldwide to facilitate their interaction with India.

...(Vide paras 37.74; 37.75)

Standing Committee of Parliament

38.48. A Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Indian Diaspora should be constituted. It should have in it, members with an interest in Diaspora affairs. This Committee could also act as a focal point for interaction with Parliamentarians of Indian Origin in other countries. Such exchanges are essential in order to bring about greater understanding and amity between them. Facilities and courses to introduce interested Diaspora members to our Parliamentary procedures and practices would be another way to reach out to influential levels of the Diaspora. Biennial conventions of PIO Parliamentarians should also be encouraged.

...(Vide para 37.67)

Increased Cooperation

38.49. The Indian Diaspora in various countries has acquired substantial financial success. It has already started becoming active at all levels in the political arena. Some PIOs even hold the highest elective offices in their adopted homelands. Organisations for increasing political awareness have been established in many countries by members of the local Diaspora. The Indian community can, therefore, be expected to play an increasingly important role in the politics of each of its host countries.

38.50. It would be useful to increase greater political interaction with the countries which have large populations of the Indian Diaspora.

- i. There should be greater frequency of political high level visits and exchanges of parliamentary delegations with such countries. Bilateral interactions with their governments should be intensified.
- ii. Higher priority should be accorded to cultural exchanges with them.

- iii. Projects under the ITEC programme should be increased for these countries, both in their scope and funding.
- iv. Special measures should be initiated to develop trade and give greater economic content to our relations with these countries.
- v. Facilitating the opening and functioning of diplomatic missions by the countries with large groups of PIOs through exchange of land or buildings on a reciprocal basis, should be considered.
- vi. An increase in the numbers of seats being made available to students from these countries in the FSI, ICWA etc. should be considered. The ICWA should also include Diaspora related topics, courses and seminars in its programmes.
- vii. In addition to the institution of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards, the achievements of the Diaspora members should be recognised by naming roads, libraries, schools etc. after them in their ancestral home villages or districts.

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