

# South Africa's new Indian migrants

For India-South Africa relations to take shape, we need to move beyond Gandhi and the Indian diaspora



EESHA KUNDURI &  
PRAGNA RUGUNANAM

Walking through the former Indian township of Lenasia (south of Johannesburg) in November 2017, we met a Nigerian migrant listening to a Hindi song. Curiosity led to a brief conversation and he told us that while he could not follow the lyrics of the song, he found the music enthralling. Within minutes of the conversation, we met the friend from whose phone the migrant had copied the song. He told us that he had arrived less than a decade ago from Surat and works at a mobile shop in Lenasia.

The close links between India and South Africa from the perspective of migration is well known. There is vast documentation of historical migrant streams – from the arrival of indentured labourers in Natal in 1860 to the arrival of Indian traders after 1880. Durban, in particular, is known to host one of the largest concentrations of the Indian diaspora. Data from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) show the population of Overseas Indians in South Africa in December 2018 to be over 1.5 million: 60,000 Non-Resident Indians and 15,00,000 Persons of Indian Origin.

The invitation to South African President Cyril Ramaphosa as the chief guest for India's Republic Day celebrations this year has put the spotlight on two important pillars of bilateral ties: Mahatma Gandhi's connection to South Africa, and a large Indian diaspora. President Ramaphosa's visit assumes significance as India celebrates the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi. In June last year, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's visit to South Africa honoured 25 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the 100th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela, and 125 years of the Pietermaritzburg train incident.

## Drivers of business

Little, however, is known about the new migrants to South Africa's shores, like the Gujarati migrant we



"Even as South African Indians grapple with the idea of India as their homeland, their idea of South Africa as 'home' has led to antagonism towards the new Indian migrants." Indian migrant traders in South Africa in 1913. ■ GETTY IMAGES

met in Lenasia. Why is the figure of the contemporary Indian migrant critical to consider, and should it be differentiated from an older diasporic Indian population in South Africa?

Post its democratic transition, South Africa witnessed an influx of migrants from developing countries such as Mozambique, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, and Lesotho, who came to the country in the hope of social and economic success. These migration streams are reflective of wider shifts in global migration trends, of South-South migration emerging rapidly as a viable alternative in comparison to the costs of migrating to the Global North, or as an intermediate step in further pursuit of migration to the Global North.

Indian migrants are driven to South Africa because of cultural relatedness and the presence of networks from the home country. In the Gauteng province, for instance, Indian migrants first arrive in areas with existing Indian concentrations, such as Fordsburg, Lenasia, and Laudium. Fordsburg is well known as one of the most vibrant places in Johannesburg, for its iconic Oriental Plaza and variety of street foods, ha-lal shops and Indian sweetmeats. New Indian migrants have set up businesses here alongside Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Egyptians. It is not uncommon to see Malawis assisting as cooks in *dhabas* (eateries) run by

Indian and Pakistani migrants. The migrants have been critical drivers of businesses and employment generation in these and various other neighbourhoods.

Raman (name changed), who hails from Mumbai, and runs a telecommunications business in South Africa, remarks about setting shop in Fordsburg: "I moved from India to Dubai for two years. When I was doing business in Dubai, most of my clients were based in South Africa. So then I said, fine, there is some potential in the country, and because people are buying so much from us, from Dubai, if I move to South Africa, it will be good exposure for me and for them to interact with me on a day-to-day basis... I have a more intimate relationship with them."

On the one hand, the influx of migrant groups has resulted in the exchange of ideas, goods and cultures at a micro neighbourhood/street level. The African migrant who listens to Bollywood songs in Lenasia symbolises this. On the other hand, not all is pleasant among the new Indian migrants and the South Africans of Indian origin. Even as South African Indians grapple with the idea of India as their homeland, their idea of South Africa as 'home' has given rise to antagonism towards the new Indian migrants. Furthermore, Indian migrant traders, alongside Chinese traders, have been at the receiving end of xenophobic attacks and violence. China Malls, the Oriental Plaza

and other trading spaces have witnessed violent burglaries and break-ins. Much of this is driven by hatred stemming from the perception that migrants are taking away the jobs of local South Africans.

The real story, however, is that migrants have made positive contributions to South Africa's economy and society. In fact, cities like Johannesburg are driven by migrants. Yet, this receives little attention in mainstream policy discourse or in bilateral/multilateral relationships.

## For robust relations

Recent developments signal some change. Speaking along the sidelines of the African Union Summit in Kigali, Rwanda, in March 2018, President Ramaphosa "urged South Africans to welcome and embrace foreign nationals from the [African] continent," arguing that movement of people allows for new opportunities for business and learning. More recently, at the informal meeting of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) leaders in Buenos Aires, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of the need for "smooth movement of labourers worldwide" in the context of managing labour relations in global value chains.

For India-South Africa relations to truly take shape in contemporary times, it is no longer enough to glorify the Indian diaspora or commemorate Gandhi's role in South Africa, which have been the two key highlights of top-level foreign visits and meetings thus far. Contemporary India and South Africa need to recognise and harness the potential of new migratory flows. Only then can we realise our true strength as allies in BRICS or IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa). The emphasis on skill development, South-South cooperation, and people-to-people contact, significant as it is, cannot be delinked from cross-border flows of people, who are rapidly transforming the employment and migration landscape in both countries. At the same time, free labour mobility on its own is not enough; we need measures to safeguard and uphold labour standards globally.

Eesha Kunduri is Research Associate, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, and Pragna Rugunanam is Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Johannesburg. Views are personal

# The hard power imperative

India needs to urgently modernise the armed forces



MANMOHAN BAHADUR

In a new programme called 'Insect Allies', launched by the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which is responsible for developing military technologies in the U.S., researchers have been asked to evolve insects that introduce genetically modified viruses into crops. This is being done ostensibly to address infections. One is yet to come across a more ingenious explanation for a lethal weapon system being developed. Imagine these insects being let loose in fields with their genes deviously modified? Is this agricultural warfare? The journal, *Science*, acknowledges that the programme "may be widely perceived as an effort to develop biological agents for hostile purposes". The DARPA has denied that this is its intention, but history has proven that noble human intentions have been overpowered by the lure of obtaining a technological advantage to enhance power.

## Developing hard power

No country calling itself a power can afford to lag behind its adversaries in the technology innovation cycle. China realised this early, and its advancements in weapons technology has been impressive. With research and development (R&D) allocation growing from \$13.4 billion in 1991 to \$377 billion in 2015 (20% of the world's R&D budget), China moved from an era of reverse engineering to creative adaptations and now to disruptive innovations, as seen in its J-20 stealth fighter and the hypersonic wave rider vehicle programmes. On mastering the latter, China would be able to strike any target in the world within an hour of the decision being taken. With such technological breakthroughs, and as part of its influence operations, it is no surprise that China is changing rules that govern geopolitical relations. Accordingly, it has moved from Deng Xiaoping's philosophy – 'hide your strength and bide your time' – to Xi Jinping's propagation of aggressive aggrandisement.

However, the narrative in Delhi is stuck on the mundane issues of third- and fourth-generation fighter programmes of Tejas and Rafale. India seems to hope for an environment sans war. Soft power processes such as the Wuhan summit and the waiver for India under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) are important but they are not substitutes for the hard power necessary to buttress nation-building. Chi-

na and the U.S. may be adversaries, but economic reasons will not let their rhetoric and mutual trade wars cross the rubicon. Cold calculations of national interest drive their decision-making, and collateral damage by way of broken promises and overlooked pledges of friendships with less powerful nations, India included, are plausible. Promises of friendships between unequals do not withstand the lure of economic give and take of the powerful engaged in a geo-economic tussle; it is a truism that while capability takes time to build, intentions can change overnight. It is time that India stands on its own with its indigenous hard power.

## Needed: An adequate budget and time

Hard power grows only if there is an adequate budget, and if time is given for acquiring intellectual property in the military. According to the World Bank, India's total investment in R&D has stayed static at 0.63% of the GDP for a 20-year period! More worrying is that three-fifth of this is in sectors other than defence. In the same period, China's R&D investment has gone up from 0.56% to 2.07% of its GDP. Reports state that the Indian Air Force has delayed payment to HAL and that the Defence Ministry has not paid military contractors. The scene thus appears grim vis-à-vis monies available for strengthening the war-waging potential of the services. Due to several false starts in arms acquisitions, 'India fatigue' pervades the defence manufacturing sector. The poor participation of major weapon manufacturers with their top-line products at the last two Aero India and DefExpo exhibitions is proof of this.

Military power does not come with purchase of sniper rifles, the emergency acquisition of which caused euphoria in some circles recently. It is also a given that not one election cycle but decades are needed to build military power, which is the life span of at least three governments. The rise of Japan's military in the early 19th century, Germany's military between 1920 and 1940, and China's military between 1980 and 2005 attest to decades-long commitment of focussed political and scientific attention and assured availability of adequate monies. With the strengthening of China-Pakistan relations, and the modernisation of their militaries, it is vital that India's 2019-20 Budget (as also the interim vote on account) addresses the need to urgently modernise the armed forces. Developing intellectual property through indigenous R&D is key to this endeavour. What India's polity needs is some serious bipartisan introspection and discussion, which will be in national interest.

Manmohan Bahadur, a retired Air Vice Marshal, is Additional Director General, Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi. Views are personal

## SINGLE FILE

# China's compromise

A new draft Bill seeks to address some of the West's concerns on forced technology transfers

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM



The 'Made in China 2025' industrial policy aims to transform China from a low-wage copycat manufacturing economy to a high-value generator. But Beijing's aspiration for global dominance in sectors including aerospace and aviation, robotics and artificial intelligence, 5G communications and self-driven cars has been dubbed a threat to the world order.

There have been concerns for a while now that Chinese joint ventures, in violation of World Trade Organisation rules, coerce investors to share proprietary intellectual property (IP) in return for access to lucrative domestic markets. For instance, a 2017 law required foreign automobile manufacturers to disclose sensitive technology regarding new energy vehicles, causing an uproar among investors. Authorities quickly backed down from such preconditions.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer's 2017 probe targeted precisely those sectors of Beijing's 2025 policy that it believed would impact national security. The investigation was triggered under the infamous Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act, which authorises unilateral retaliation against the unfair trade practices of other nations. As a consequence, the total amount of tariffs, effective and proposed, against China stood at \$517 billion in 2018. These are in addition to the punitive levies slapped in early 2018 against global steel and aluminium imports. In coordinated actions, the U.S. Justice and Commerce Departments have pursued Chinese state-owned firms and intelligence agents for economic espionage in the aerospace, aircraft engine and semiconductor technology arenas. Fujian Jinhua is at the centre of criminal litigation for alleged theft of trade secrets worth billions of dollars from U.S. firms. The company is the high-tech parallel to the Chinese telecom giant Huawei, which Washington and its allies have barred from bidding for 5G network contracts, seeing it as a national security threat.

The row over the loss of new energy vehicles technology by automobile firms, in return for access to the Chinese markets, is one of many areas where the EU and the U.S. found common cause. Along with Japan, they came together that year to counter the structural factors they believe fuel Beijing's forced IP transfers and other market distortions. But such joint efforts are unlikely to fructify, as the U.S. prefers unilateralism in pursuit of its 'America First' agenda. The flip side of disregarding multilateral rules is resorting to arbitrary action to serve political ends. The Section 301 tariffs, for example, are said to have been applied to ancillary industries in the supply chain. Similarly, import exemptions on Chinese goods have been allowed where Beijing is the sole supplier and denied if there are other exporters.

The U.S. and China have to find greater common ground for the smooth flow of two-way trade. China's new Bill promising to end forced technology transfers will hopefully be a step in this direction.

The writer is a Deputy Editor at The Hindu in Chennai



## FAQ

# Sedition and its discontents

The scope and limits of an old provision that many want repealed or amended

K. VENKATARAMANAN

## What does Section 124-A of the IPC say?

The section deals with the offence of sedition, a term that covers speech or writing, or any form of visible representation, which brings the government into hatred or contempt, or excites disaffection towards the government, or attempts to do so. It is punishable with three years in prison or a life term. "Disaffection", it says, includes disloyalty and feelings of enmity. However, it also says expressing disapproval of government measures or actions, with a view to getting them changed by lawful means, without promoting hatred or disaffection or contempt towards the government will not come under this section.

## What is its origin?

Sedition was introduced in the penal code in 1870, a

decade after the Indian Penal Code came into force. It was a colonial law directed against strong criticism of the British administration. Its most famous victims included Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi called it "the prince among the political sections of the IPC designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen".

## Is it constitutionally valid?

Two high courts had found it unconstitutional after independence, as it violated the freedom of speech and expression. The Constitution was amended to include 'public order' as one of the 'reasonable restrictions' on which free speech could be abridged by law. Thereafter, the Supreme Court, in *Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar* (1962) upheld its validity. At the same time, it limited its application to acts that involve "intention or tenden-

cy to create disorder" or incitement to violence. Thus, even strongly worded remarks, as long as they do not excite disloyalty and enmity, or incite violence, are not an offence under this section.

## Why the controversy now?

In recent times, the resort to this section is seen as disturbingly frequent. Activists, cartoonists and intellectuals have been arrested under this section, drawing criticism from liberals that it is being used to suppress dissent and silence critics. Authorities and the police who invoke this section defend the measure as a necessary step to prevent public disorder and anti-national activities. Jawaharlal Nehru University students and activists, Assamese scholar Hiren Gohain and Manipur journalist Kishorchandra Wangkhem are prominent among those booked in re-

cent days. Wangkhem has also been detained under the National Security Act.

## What is being done about it?

Liberals and rights activists have been demanding the scrapping of Section 124A from the statute books, arguing that it has no place in a democracy and that it is being invoked even in cases where there is no incitement to violence or tendency to create public disorder. It is argued that the provision is "overbroad", i.e., it defines the offence in wide terms threatening the liberty of citizens. The Law Commission released a consultation paper last year calling for a reconsideration of the section. It has pointed out that Britain abolished it more than a decade ago and raised the question whether a provision introduced by the British to put down the freedom struggle should continue to be law in India.

## FROM The Hindu. ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 24, 1969

## Platform tickets for cars

Motor vehicles driving into the Egmore railway station will soon have to buy platform tickets. The Southern Railway proposes to charge 50 paise for cars, taxis and autorickshaws, and Rs. 5 for buses. This is apart from the platform tickets that the occupants of the vehicles have to purchase, if they do not hold journey tickets. SRVS lorries and vehicles belonging to newspaper concerns and Government (both Central and State) will, however, be exempted from the levy. A Railway official said Howrah was the only other station in the country where the facility of driving into platforms was available, one Rupee being charged. Besides fetching some income, the new levy will relieve, to some extent, traffic congestion on the platforms, which had increased enormously in recent years. A drive-in counter has been put up to enable the motorists to get their tickets without having to stir from their seats.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 24, 1919

## Ongole Cattle.

In his observations on the report of the Ongole Cattle Show Association, Mr. G.A.D. Stuart, the Director of Agriculture, disbelieves the view that has of late been widely held that the export of Ongole cattle abroad has resulted in the serious depletion of the breed. "There were no signs of any deterioration in the breed," comments Mr. Stuart on the President's report. "As he there states," he continues, "the quality of the exhibits compared favourably with the previous shows, this being especially the case among the young bulls; so that extra prizes were given." "This fact," he jubilantly exclaims, "points to the falsity of the 'strong popular belief' in deterioration which the President mentions." Far from showing the falsity of the popular belief, the President's statement may be shown to emphasise the belief.

## CONCEPTUAL

# Circadian rhythm

BIOLOGY

This refers to the 24-hour cycle that influences the various physiological processes that take place within the human body. Among others, the circadian rhythm most commonly determines the hours that a human being is asleep or awake during a day. Other important things like the metabolic rate, body temperature, blood pressure, and the secretion of various hormones are also influenced by the circadian rhythm. It is believed that disturbances to the circadian rhythm, which is seen by some scientists as an adaptation to conditions prevalent on earth over a long period of time, due to changes in a person's lifestyle, for instance, can lead to adverse effects on the human body.

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