

## **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN CHINESE AND INDIAN DIASPORA IN SINGAPORE: A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

India and China have entertained immense regional influence across Asia due to their economic exchange, historical and cultural linkages. Over the past decade both (India & China) have become major economic partners in Singapore. They have established long-lasting ties through investment, trade, economic aid, people to people ties and diplomacy with the region. Diaspora indirectly structure a nation's foreign policy without using force or hard power and that is why they are called as soft power operatives.

Pondering over the case of Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese and Indian settlers have been connected to the region and their society since time immemorial. It is demonstrated historically that both India and China have played a pivotal role in swaying culture and various other areas in Singapore and Southeast Asia. India's bond with Singapore has also been apparent since ancient times. India has been a foundation of motivation for art, religion and architecture for present day ASEAN countries. Rising trends such as global markets and political participations are to be noted in this age of information. This has headed countries to hire more labourers who are non-natives, containing the diaspora community. Although, Ethnic Chinese are minorities in Southeast Asian countries, despite of that they are leading local markets. In Malaysia, Chinese owned businesses cover 70% market capitalization. In Indonesia, though Chinese are 1 percent in total population but they grip a massive part of the private economy. In Philippines, they occupy 1% of the population and control 60% private economy. Apart from remuneration this paper will also foreground the other engagements of Chinese diaspora in terms of socio-cultural ties. Chinese diaspora is deeply rooted of their traditional culture and carry this linkage to most of the Southeast Asian nations. On the other hand, the Indian diaspora approach gained a boost since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided to celebrate Regional 'Pravasi Bhartiya Divas' in 2018 at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore. There is an outpouring in activities for establishing connection with Indians in abroad, particularly with respect to ASEAN. Currently, Indian diaspora in Singapore do not have equality in population numbers. Indian community's existence roughly comprises about 8% to 9% (2017 figures) in Malaysia and Singapore. The

paper will also shed light on how both Indian and Chinese diaspora play a crucial role for the development of Singapore.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, ASEAN, FDI, BRI, GDP, Z score and T test etc.

## **INTRODUCTION**

As far as the definition of Diaspora is concerned, we may consider the Jewish context of emigration from their homeland due to persecution and expulsion. The term ‘Diaspora’ derives from a Greek word which means “to *scatter* about”. It also indicates the population from its original homeland. In a nutshell, Diaspora stands for a huge number of people with a same heritage or homeland who relocated to various places for different purposes all over the world. Even this specific historical sense is still used. Notably, Diaspora has been applied with the similar experiences in the field of geography as well. The concept of Diaspora is applied aptly for the interpretation of geographical concept of emigration and settlement of people beyond the borders of the homeland. Remembering the cultural uniqueness in the host society is another significant parameter of the idea of Diaspora.

It’s cognizant to all that developing countries like India and China are the largest populated country across the world. So both countries are facing many problems in various spheres of their life due to population explosion. Poverty, unemployment, poor health condition, illiteracy etc. are prevailed in both countries due to population explosion .That’s why, they are migrating to developed countries such as Singapore, Australia, America, Canada, and Britain and so on for overcoming their existing problems. In such way, Diaspora plays a significant role in the origin of new countries like Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada and so on. Thus, in present scenario, in Singapore too Diaspora is the most discussed issue in the age of globalization.

Thus the host countries arrange all the facilities for the emigrants which they search continuously to fulfill their needs .These facilities are hope of economic prosperity ,surety of job, high quality of life style, world class education and of course, favorable geomorphological conditions etc. Thus like other countries of emigrants, Singapore offers many facilities which draw the attention of people from many developing countries to migrate there for the years. That is why, Singapore has been appeared as a diaspora country in the world especially for china and India. Chinese Singaporeans account for 76.2% of the country’s present population which make them the largest migrated population in Singapore. Notably, Chinese are involved in different sectors such as employment, education and economics in Singapore. Similarly, Indian Singaporeans constitute 7.4% of the country’s citizens. They choose Singapore for education and economic purposes.

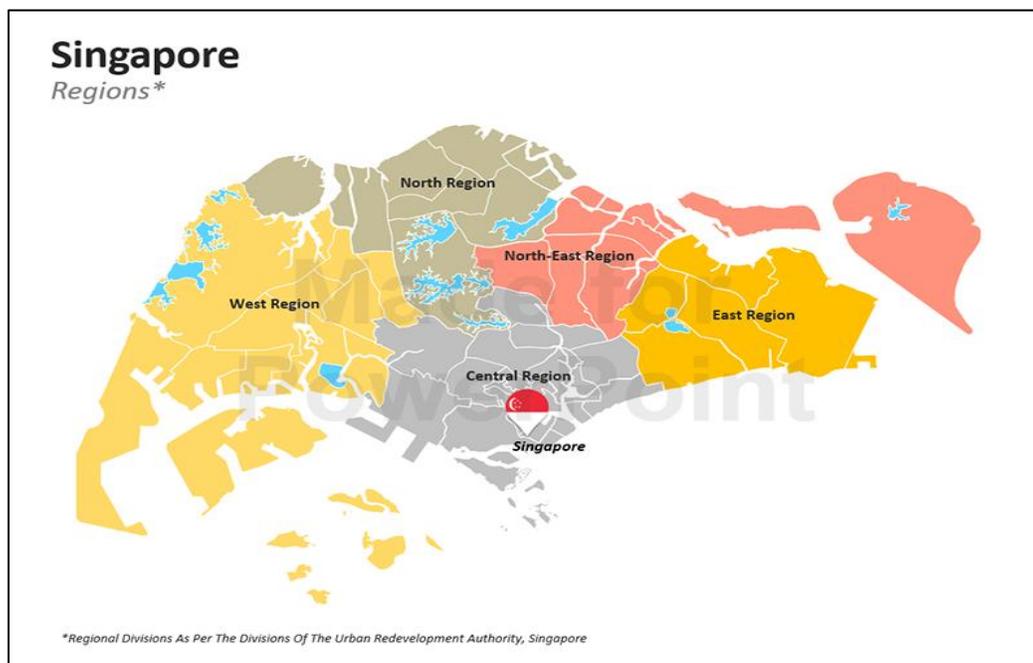
Hence, intensive researches for making Singapore a diaspora nation by overseas Indians and Chinese under the premise of Diaspora Studies in geographical perspectives.

### **1. Study Area**

The scope of this study is to examine between Chinese and Indian diaspora in Singapore. However, officially the Republic of Singapore is often considered as the Lion city, the Garden city and the Red Dot. It lies one degree (137km) north of equator, south of the southern tip of continental Asia and peninsular Malaysia. Singapore territory contains of a diamond designed main island along with 62 other Islands. Since independence, extensive land reclamation has augmented its total size by 23%.

In 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles established colonial Singapore as a trading post of the east India Company after setting up of the British ray. The island were included to Britain and thereby became part of its strait settlements in 1826. Notably, Singapore is a transport hub and global commerce finance as well.

Singapore capital= Singapore city, Total area= 719.1 km. sq, Total Population =5,610, 00 (2015), Population density =19,910 sq. mi, Currency =Singapore Dollar, Per capita income =\$82,762, HDI =0.912 very high



Notes: Not to scale

Moreover it is observed that maximum number of people migrate Singapore from India as well as China. Since, as a researcher it is very difficult task to survey all the migrants. The present study cover standard number of migrants from both countries and trying to reach the fundamental objectives of this study.

## **2. Aims and Objectives of the Study**

Every study /research has some specific aim and objectives. The present study has articulated some of the objectives which help to reach the major aim of this study. However, the objectives are as follows:

- To find out the socio economic causes that force the people to migrate in Singapore and problems faced by them.
- To examine the socio economic attributes of the emigrants which determine the characteristics of their social and economic life.
- To find out the role of Diaspora in Singapore, the overall development of the areas concerned.
- To know the desirability or otherwise of the measures to curb the acts of Diaspora in Singapore.

## **3. Significance of the Study**

Since both countries are large populated in the world, hence there are vast differences between two countries in terms of socio economic conditions. Notwithstanding, there are huge similarities found between both countries. Indian and Chinese generally migrate to Singapore for business, education, economic purposes etc. Most of the Indian people migrate to Singapore for several purposes such as education, job purpose, etc. In the same way, Chinese people prefer to go to Singapore for business purposes, education, etc. Many scholars conducted several study on various areas between China and India.

A number of research has been done between China and India in various fields. Some of the past studies are as follows: In his study 'the Chinese and Indian Diasporas in New Zealand' Bernau (2005) wanted to investigate identity formation among New Zealanders from ethnic minorities, rather than to promote erudition on any particular history. Applying this form of reference, it makes sense to draw comparison among ethnic groups to develop the wider picture of what it means to be a born and bred New Zealander. A comparative study by Agarwal (2017) examined India and China's engagement with their respective diaspora, emphasizing the Chinese and Indian governments that are varied in their arrangements with its diaspora. Both diaspora are sources of economic remittances and social remittances .A study 'Chinese Diaspora: a study of

Amy Tan's 'The Joy Luck Club' conducted by Loktongbam (n.d.) depicted the experiences encountered by the Chinese diaspora in America. And it also brought to the fore how they are victims of alienation, cultural crisis and identity crisis. In his study 'International student mobility and Chinese diaspora community involvement across England' Bin (2014) pointed up the role of Chinese students to improve and change the Chinese diaspora community across England. Study by Sinha, Kent and Shomali (2007) 'Comparative analysis of FDI in China and India' attempted to theorize what lessons emerging markets that are laggards in attracting FDI, such as India, can learn from leader countries in attracting FDI, such as China in the Global economy. Another study by Duan (2011) 'The changing representation of Chinese diaspora in New Zealand print media' investigated news reporting of the Chinese diaspora in the New Zealand Print media over the past decade. It also further exposed distinctions between the mainstream and Chinese language newspapers in view of diasporic identity creation.

However, it is manifested that a single study has not been found especially on "Comparative analysis between Chinese and Indian Diaspora in Singapore: A geographical Perspective". Therefore, this study is one of the unique studies which is going to compare the Chinese and Indian diaspora in Singapore.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

Research methodology is a fundamental part of any research. It works as the significant component of the research process. Therefore research should be undertaken with some sort of zeal to search something new, to add knowledge to the existing field for identifying the research gaps.

The research work will be grounded on both primary and secondary data. The Primary source will be collected from field survey and a sample survey would be conducted in different areas of Singapore. Stratified random sampling method will be applied for gathering the relevant data. Apart from this, Secondary data is to be collected from various published and unpublished government agencies i.e. census of India, survey of India statistical handbook govt. of Singapore. Even Various statistical techniques such as Z score, correlation, regression, co-efficient of correlation, student T test will also be applied.

#### **India in revamping diaspora relations:**

ASEAN-India ties was a kind of sign of progress and it took place when Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi hosted the heads of 10 nations of ASEAN as special guests on the Republic Day Parade at Delhi on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2017.

Indian overseas community in Southeast Asia and Singapore are national resources that are not fully utilised back home, unlike China's outlook towards its own diaspora in ASEAN. For successfully engaging Indian diaspora in Southeast Asia, Delhi has to fill out the breaches. Hence it is essential to view at both sides of the coin. Hitherto, the Indian government has acknowledged the outcome of the Indian diaspora in different forums like Pravasi Bhartiya Divas, India-ASEAN groupings etc. These forums bring forth the challenges encountered by the diaspora.

### **Delineating statelessness**

The predicament of stateless people of Indian origin is to be considered when it comes to Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. The 'xenophobic' attitude of some Southeast Asian nations makes it complicated for these stateless Indians. The Indian government did not impart any kind of assistance to these deserted persons and the host nations are not agreed to take them without proper paperwork. Because of this, a huge degree of mistrust among Indian stateless persons towards the Indian government is prevailed.

Notwithstanding, few Southeast Asian nations are trying to obliterate the phenomena of 'statelessness'. This is observed in the case of Malaysia where the count of stateless people of Indian origin has lessened from 40,000+ in 2009 to 12,400 in 2014. However, Myanmar is expected to have 400,000+ stateless people who are of Indian descent (2012 figures). This dismal figure must be brought to the fore by the Indian government. Essential steps need to be taken i.e. new records a census survey, new as well as less rigorous norms on dual citizenship.

### **Impact to the host countries' economies**

The ethnic Chinese in Singapore inhabit the tertiary sectors of commerce and service. These sectors include teachers, technician, bankers, skilled engineers and construction workers. The inundation of more Chinese goods and investments has generated many jobs in Singapore. This new environment has built up the way for Beijing to have deep integration with ASEAN.

Economy of Singapore are getting benefitted from Chinese diaspora through capital and business skills. Chinese diaspora are contributing to an increase in Singapore and ASEAN's GDP, exports and average income levels.

Chinese firms offer jobs to ethnic Chinese over locals while investing in BRI along the Southeast Asian partner countries. Therefore, the indigenous Chinese community is penchant to criticism from Southeast Asians if the former are seen to benefit disproportionately. Those Local Chinese living in Southeast Asia afraid that the rising resistance to China's BRI project would threaten their own interests.

Officials from Beijing seek the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia to play a constructive role in attaining BRI. The political conflict of the past, is still hanging heavily in the minds of native Southeast Asia. China being cautious of the intricate history with Singapore and Southeast Asia avoid triggering anti-Chinese sentiments that could sway the Chinese diaspora.

**India and China impact the diaspora in Singapore and Southeast Asia:**

A country needs economic and military power for attaining great power position in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Significantly, Soft power is attaining in substance in the international ground. Power for sharing ideas, persuasion, cultural interaction and people-to-people contacts are some elements of soft power. Recently, India’s step to globalise ‘Yoga’ as an Indian fitness mantra is considered as a soft power strategy. On the other hand, China has used its soft power potential through initiatives i.e. building Confucius Institutes and investing in BRI project which also has a cultural component.

Southeast Asia is a central region where India and China are delving into soft power strategies. Overseas Chinese and Indians are becoming promoters of their respective home countries in the region. Foreign policies of both the India & China have heightened their diaspora policy to extraordinary levels but the question comes in our mind that between two countries which country is leading. Cultural inter-penetrations have made it at ease for countries to augment their soft power attitude and a country’s diaspora constitutes an enormous source of ‘soft power’.

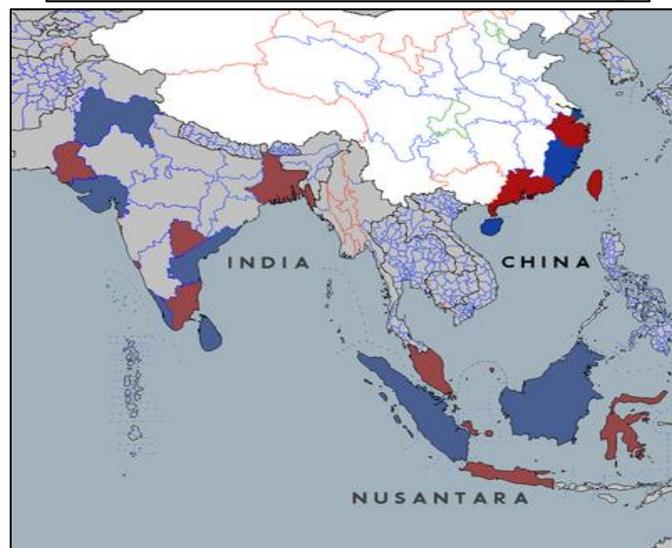
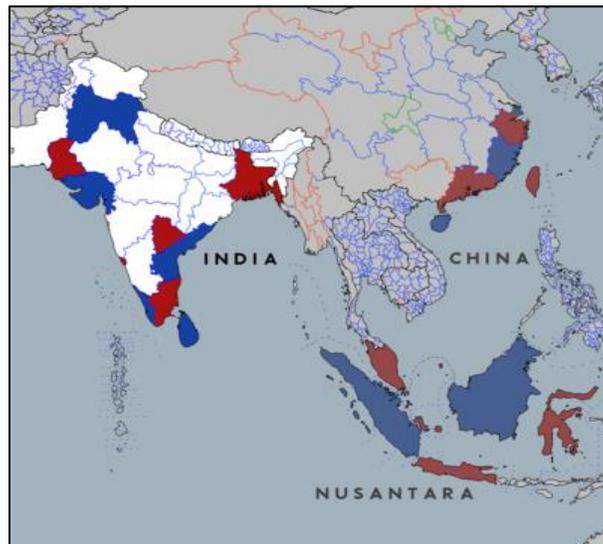
**Population Profile of Singapore Indian Dialect Groups (Residential population; Singaporeans and permanent residents)**

<b>Ethno background</b>	<b>Linguistic</b>	<b>Ancestral Home</b>	<b>2010 census</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Tamil		Tamilnadu, Pondicherry	188,591	54.18 %
Malayali		Kerala, Lakshadweep	26348	7.57 %
Punjabi		Punjab	18624	5.35 %
Guajarati		Gujarat	4124	1.18 %
Sinhalese		Srilanka	3971	1.14 %
Telegu, Bengali, Hindi, Other		Andhra Pradesh, Telangana , Bengal	3140	0.90 %
			348,119	100 %

Singaporean Indians are classified in terms of the respective ethno linguistic backgrounds in the Indian subcontinent, or 'dialect group'. Most of the Indians in Singapore are connected to southern India and Sri Lanka, with large groups from north India and west India. These are generally the descendants of both free and indentured immigrants from India during the 19th and early half of the 20th century.

The Singapore census classified 237,473 Singaporeans and 110,646 permanent residents into a number of 'dialect' groups in 2010. However, in these groups Sikhs as a religious group is incorporated rather than a linguistic group. Sikhs were also viewed as a separate 'dialect' category (comprising mainly Hindu Punjabis). In the following table the 2010 census data mingles the 'Sikh' (12,952) and 'Punjabi' (5,672) category under 'Punjabi' with their absolute and relative numbers.

Singapore's Indian community is featured by an ethnic Tamil majority (54.18%) and a huge number of small groups. Ethnic Tamils and Singapore comprise both Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils. Malayalees in South India comprise the second largest community, account for 7.57% of the Indian population. Tamils and Malayalees are two leading south Indian communities in Singapore, considering two-thirds of the Indian population. In the meantime, the three foremost Indian groups in Singapore (the Punjabi, Gujarati, and Sindhi communities) comprise 7.67% Indians there. The rest of the 29.68% comprises various lesser groups from South India (such as the Telugus and Kannadigas), East India (such as the Bengalis) and North India (Hindustanis).



**Source:** The Wikipedia, compiled by author. These map depicts the ancestral homelands (Ethno-linguistic backgrounds) of the majority of Chinese and Indian Singaporeans Diaspora.

**Population profile of Singapore Chinese subgroups**

Group	Province	1990	2000	2010
Hoklo	Fujian, Taiwan	896,080	1028490	1118,817
Teochew	Guangdong	466,020	526,200	562,139
Cantonese	Hong Kong,	327,870	385,630	408,517

	Guangdong			
Hakka	Taiwan, Fujian	155,980	198,440	232,1914
Hainese	Hainan	148,740	167,590	177,541
Foochow	Fujian	36,490	46,890	54,233
Henghua	Fujian	19,990	23,540	25,549
Shanghaies	Shanghai	17,310	21,550	22,053
Other	Various	50,150	91,150	175,661

The Singaporeans of Chinese lineage are classified in terms of their particular familial origins in China or dialect/language-speaking group. Majority of them are derived from the southeastern coast of China especially from Fujian, Guangdong and Hainan. The Hoklo and Cantonese comprise more than three-quarters of the Singaporean Chinese population. The Hakka, Henghuas, Foochows and other groups stands for most of the remainder. Generally, these are the progenies of the free and indentured immigrants from southern part of China in the 19th and early 20th century. They are typically identified as "native' Singaporean Chinese". The 1990s and early 21st century Singapore got influenced by a third wave of migration from many portions of China.

### CONCLUSION

India's historical and cultural associations impact the good relationship with Southeast Asia and Singapore, determined to involve with the developing economy of India and setting up economic partnership and diaspora ties. ASEAN has re-structured the grouping's policies for Chinese diaspora who are the main players in economic and cultural activities. Obliteration of unfair laws and regional influences has facilitated the engagement of Chinese diaspora for the nation building. Hence, the ethnic Chinese present in Singapore are happy to be influenced in the region that is in China's favour.

On the other hand, ASEAN policies safeguard for its citizens, give a threat to the diaspora. These incorporate decline in employment numbers along with 'Bhumiputra' policies. It might ensues turmoil in India-Singapore ties. But India also need a plan for the results from such situations.

India's focus on policy reform for amplifying the number of flights functioning between India and Singapore (per week), working block concrete welfare funding organizations to help the diaspora, augmenting the number of youth programmes through educational and scholarship perks for Indian students in Singapore, making 24-hour hotline services for Indian communities,

commercializing Indian art and culture through new mobile applications. Hence, this paper comes to the conclusion that future diaspora ties with India look progressive with better speed, skill and space.

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