



POLICY OPTIONS OF COUNTRIES OF
ORIGIN IN ENCOURAGING DIASPORA
PARTICIPATION:
THE ISSUE OF DUAL & MULTIPLE CITIZENSHIPS

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Main Focus

- With growing understanding of benefits from skills, knowledge and resources of diaspora, many countries of origin are framing policies that encourage circulation of their diaspora between host and origin countries.
 - These range from economic incentives to offering dual and multiple citizenships (DMC)
 - This presentation focuses the role of DMC in encouraging diaspora participation in home country economy and society
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Complexity of Diaspora

- Diaspora of an origin country does not represent a homogenous identity
- Diasporas could be marked by ethnic, political or class divide
- Diaspora community may have opposing views on a single issue regarding country of origin (CO).

Therefore, diaspora identities can be extremely complex

Diaspora defined loosely

- Transnational group of emigrants who may or may not have citizenship of host countries but maintain varying degrees of economic, social, political and emotional ties with its CO.
- Integration of global economy and advances in communication technology have increasingly allowed people to pursue professional and personal lives in more than one country simultaneously
- This made the participation of diaspora populations potentially more relevant development of CO creating space for DMC.

State of DMCs Globally

- Many countries have in recent years changed their citizenship laws to allow some kind of dual and multiple citizenships
- In 2007 89 countries allowed some form of DMCs.

Europe	28
Africa	11
Asia	16
Oceania	13
North America	11
South America	09

Why Favour DMC?

- Benefit from improved economic and social status of a section of diaspora
 - Exploring new trade opportunities with the host country of diaspora
 - Encourage diaspora investment in COI
 - Encourage transfer of skill, knowledge and technology
 - Encourage travel and tourism
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Experiences from India, Bangladesh and the Philippines

- Size of diaspora: India 25m, BD 6m, Ph 8m
 - Offering of partial, close to or full citizenship rights
 - In 1978 Bangladesh offered citizenship to diaspora of selected developed countries.
 - In 2003 the Philippines full political and economic rights to all members of its diaspora
 - In 2005 India introduced law close to dual citizenship that offers equal economic rights to its diaspora (Overseas Citizenship of India)
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Policy Incentives

- India:** Allowing property purchase; right to open repatriable bank account; special diaspora bonds, tax incentives
- **Bangladesh:** special incentive to purchase denationalised industries; special housing projects; diaspora bonds; tax exemption on remittance
- **The Philippines:** Along with similar incentives like India and Bangladesh it proactively encourages its diaspora to take up dual citizenship through its local government units and embassies

Policy Outcome

- **India:** Targetted policies along with growth in national economy helped attract large scale investment by members of its diaspora in areas such as airlines, electronic media, IT, deposits etc.
 - **Bangladesh:** Inspite of attractive policies as well as citizenship rights, medium scale has taken place, large scale investment is yet to be experienced. Witnessed temporary and circular movements of professionals. Private sector playing a catalytic role.
 - **The Philippines:** It also experienced a growth of IT and diaspora philanthropy (hospitals, roads)
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Lessons Learnt

- Offer of DMC on its own does not enhance diaspora contribution but such initiative eases regulations and increase efficiency once members of diaspora invest.
 - Though diaspora population are often interested in linking with development initiatives in COs they may choose different forms of engagement based on their capacity.
 - Proactive policies of COs such as DMCs are important but if overall investment climate is not good then incentives alone would not produce desired results
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Recommendations

- Development of country specific compilation of data of dual citizens and their type of participation in COs
- Bilateral or multilateral agreements between COIs and host countries to avoid double taxation.
- Advocacy for removing legal and institutional barriers that hinder diaspora participation in the development of their COs.
- Due considerations must be given for demands of full citizenship rights of diaspora communities