Chapter: 6

FRENCH AND INDIAN GOVERNMENTS' POLICIES TOWARDS PIOs

The French policy towards the colonial subject was governed by assimilation and association. During the nineteenth and twentieth century the colonial powers viewed their African and Asian subjects as children, as men not fully grown, whose destiny had to be guided by the presumably more advanced states of Europe. As a result the colonial government in the overseas department was governed in the pattern of a family relationship between Parent and child.¹

6:1.French Policy of Assimilation

The colonial policy of domination, subjection was replaced by a more humane form called Assimilation, which according to some other Historians is a De-nationalisation or foreignisation of the immigrants in the European overseas colonies.² In an article in Outre mer, M. Brevie discusses the history of colonisation and argue that: “At first it was based on the mere right of force coupled with the assertion of a moral and intellectual superiority, but in the nineteenth century colonisation attained the dignity of social idea and marked a separation from purely material interests by a revolutionary outburst in the form of the abolition of slavery”.³ Colonisation, according to Brevie, is still dynamic and not static. It continues to investigate its tendencies and seeks to define its aims and enunciate its principles.⁴ It has to face two rival theories, one of which asserts the equality of man, and the other the superiority of certain races [the Europeans]. The supporters of the first theory are confident that the races which are now adolescent can

² Alois Odar, a Slovenian Catholic theologian and philosopher.
³ M. Brevie, has spent half a lifetime in the French Colonial Service, mostly in West Africa, completed a prolonged term of service as Governor General.
eventually be completely assimilated. While those of the latter theory wish to place the inferior races in permanent subjection. M. Brevie accepts neither of these theories. He believes that it is only on the experience slowly acquired by prolonged contact of colonisers and colonised and from their mutual effort to understand each other, that the theory and practice of colonisation can be rightly based, he argued. The essential factor for success is that the differing races shall arrive at a method of tolerating each other without injury or hatred. Therefore, M. Brevie, explains that the social principles of the French civilization do not change by transfer to the colonies. It is the "milieu" that is different, and causes results which are frequently unexpected. Hence the necessity for deep investigation of each native people, their reflexes and ambitions in their own environment. Colonial administration must be experimental as well as scientific, but having collected the materials by investigation, it becomes an art demanding intuition.

6:1.1. M.D. Lewis

What does assimilation refers to? M. D. Lewis has drawn attention to the many definitions of assimilation in use:

(1) Assimilation as the dominant colonial policy of France, i.e. its dominant and continuing characteristics;

(2) Assimilation as the policy abandoned in favour of association;

(3) Assimilation as opposed to autonomy, i.e. integration versus devolution;

(4) Assimilation as a legalistic definition, i.e. representation in the mother of parliaments;

(5) Assimilation as civilization;

(6) Assimilation as representing racial equality as against British tendency to the colour bar;


6. Ibid. p.449.
(7) Assimilation as a highly centralized form of direct rule of colonies.\(^7\)

It is of course difficult to choose any one definition as the satisfactory one. Assimilation as practised in the four communes of Senegal, the only instance of its full-scale application in French tropical Africa, had the following distinctive features: political assimilation to the metropolitan country through the representation of Senegal in the Chambre des Députés; administrative assimilation by creating a Conseil- Général for Senegal modelled on the Conseils de Département of France, and by the establishment of municipal councils on the French model; the personal assimilation of Senegalese in the communes by according them the status of French citizens, though they were allowed to retain their statut personnel; the extension of French educational facilities as part of the French mission civilisatrice. This policy was abandoned not so much because men like Lyautey and Jules Harmand advocated Lugardian ideas\(^8\) about the relationship between the colonial power and African peoples, but because, to use Lewis's phrase, the French were not prepared to undertake the massive work of social transformation which alone could make it a reality.\(^9\)

6:1.2. Politique D'association

However, politique d'association, that succeeded assimilation policy certainly was not that advocated by Jules Harmand, where the colonial power would respect the manners, customs, and religion of the natives and follow a policy of mutual assistance rather than exploitation. It rather was one in which, while recognition was given to the impracticability of applying a full-scale policy of assimilation to African societies, a number of assimilation's characteristics were retained. First, the goal of creating French citizens out of Africans was not abandoned; it was just made more distant and much more difficult of achievement. Second, there was a high degree of administrative centralisation

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\(^8\) Lord Lugard, The Dual Mandate, who said that “The partition of Africa was, as we all recognize, due primarily to the economic necessity of increasing the supplies of raw materials and food to meet the needs of the industrialised nations of Europe”

on the mother country, which was not compatible with a true *politique d'association*. It was also clear and evidenced from the colonies that the French made little concession to indigenous political units in dividing up their African territories for administrative purposes. Third, the French civilizing mission was not abandoned, and though education might be sparse, it was modeled on the French system. Children spoke French from the day they entered school. No concession was made to teaching in the vernacular as in the British territories. Fourth, individual territories were not considered as having special characters, so that the same administrative organisation was imposed on them all. Unlike the British system of administration, Political officers were deliberately transferred from one territory to the other sometimes every other year, which gave them little or no time to learn the local language or ethnography. Thus, under the French system the one constant for the political officer could only be French culture, while for the British officer every encouragement was given to him to understand the local culture.\(^\text{10}\)

### 6.2. Education System

Professor Lucy Mair writing in 1962 about the status of the educated African in the French colonies remarked that: 'The assumption which governs the whole attitude of France towards native development is that French civilisation is necessarily the best and need only be presented to the intelligent African for him to adopt it. Once he has done so, no avenue is to be closed to him. If he proves himself capable of assimilating French education, he may enter any profession, may rise to the dignity of Under-Secretary for the colonies, and will be received as an equal by French society. This attitude towards the educated native arouses the bitter envy of his counterpart in neighbouring British colonies.\(^\text{11}\) Jean Daniel Meyer writes of his experiences in French Sudan in the Army colonial Medical Service before the Second World War: 'My colleague was a full-blooded Senegalese. He had studied medicine in France, attending the Bordeaux Naval School, and had the rank of lieutenant.' Fifth, the African colonies were considered economic extensions of the metropolitan country, and as Albert Sarraut insisted in his La

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Mise en Valeur nos colonies (Paris, 1923), that the colonies should provide assistance to France in the form of raw materials for her industry, and, in addition to this, troops in time of war, in return for which the African would benefit from French civilisation. In the 1958 referendum, out of the twelve French colonies in tropical Africa, eleven chose to remain associated with the new Fifth - de Gaulle's - Republic, within the frame of the Communiqué. By the end of 1960 all of them had become independent, the Communauté was quietly fading out, and the relations between France and her former African territories were, on the whole, far better than in 1958, with a de Gaulle achieving the status of Francophone African statesman.

6.2.1. L' Afrique Française

The influential French colonial journal, L'Afrique française, spoke in 1901 of the need to treat the African as a child. He was to be taught his duties, to accept French authority, and kept under control. For example, the French minister of colonies described the Congolese as a "people in their childhood, whose entire education the French must guide." One of the Minister's successors in the 1920's described the colonial subjects as "peuples enfants," who should be treated either as French minors or pupils. In this scheme of things France played - - in the words of Paul Reynaud, Minister of Colonies in 1931 - - the role of generous mother. French officials in the colonies had a similar view. Joost Van Vollenhoven, Governor General of French West Africa in 1917, described his subjects as children.

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16 Cited in Ibid.
6.2.2. White Men’s Burden

Marcel Olivier, a former governor general of Madagascar, was more explicit in declaring that colonisation "when worthy of its name establishes between the colonising country and the colonised peoples as relationship which can only be compared to that of mutual obligations and reciprocal services we find in a family between parents and children." Not surprisingly the metaphor of the colonised as a child even came from the lips of some African National leaders. In 1957 Leopold Sedar Senghor, Senegalese deputy in the French National Assembly, demanded both self-rule for the overseas territories and their membership within the French Union. He declared, "When children grow up in Africa they leave the hut of their parents and build next to it a hut of their own, but within the same compound." Other colonial powers equally conceived the colonized to be children. Primary education was given to a few and wholly in French, that was primarily meant for fifteen millions odd Africans parallel to the British concept of ‘Downward filtration Theory’ in India where few educated was to act as a torch bearer in the field of education who will teach the basic necessities like, mosquitoes bring mortal maladies, and that dirty water is dangerous; that children need clothing in winter, and that ploughs increase the yield of the land with less labour. This did not yield the expected result as a result it was withdrawn later in India, however was continued in Africa.

6.2.3. Academie Française

The Academie Française, for instance is theoretically, an administrative body of experts appointed to advise the government on linguistic matters which was effectively applied as a tool of civilising the local population in the overseas colonies. Even the most popular newspapers have a regular grammar column, and there have been quite serious proposals to punish public solecisms and barbarisms as misdemeanors, in the same class as traffic violations. Thus French have in short, a messianic attitude concerning their language which was strictly imposed on the colonial subject. The colonial education system was, in

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
all cases, grounded on this attitude: this was not a piece of colonial trickery but an overseas extension of a metropolitan policy going as far back as the sixteenth century. Whether in Indo-china or North Africa or anywhere else in the overseas colony, little was left for the local languages, which were expected to be eventually as thoroughly obliterated by French as Breton, Basque, or Provencal. French was taught not so much as a more efficient instrument of modern, wide-ranging communication: it was taught as the key to a new way of life, or even as a way of life in itself. It was used as a medium from the start and, finally, all other subjects were either tacitly (science, maths), or explicitly (history, geography) considered as ancillary to it. By the end of the colonial period, if one sifts out all the variations in administrative practices and doctrines, all the differences of backgrounds and personalities between the former French dependencies in Asia and Africa, the main common inheritance of several generations of so called assimilation policy remains this indoctrination in the French language, which can be suitably called forced assimilation. Today the word assimilation is rechristened as integration, “an old wine in a new bottle” adopted by the host on the emigrants populations.

6.2.3.1. Parent-Childs Relationship

A widely read textbook on Dutch East Indian history, published in 1919, explained that Holland could not yet grant its colony independence; to do so would be a mistake for "if a young child is allowed to stand on his own legs too soon, it will be easy for him to stumble and fall, or wander off the good path." The British attitude was well reflected in a speech delivered in 1924 by Lord Leverhulme, at a dinner in honor of Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria declared, "I am certain that the West African races have to be treated very much as one would treat children when they are immature and under-developed." The British rule in India was seen in a similar light. Philip Mason, a former

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23 Marcel Olivier, France and the Colonial Problem (Paris, 1938), 34.[w. b.cohen]
24 West Africa, July 26, 1924, quoted in Michael Crowder, West Africa Under Colonial Rule (Evanston, 1968), 20[ w b cohen,p. 428]
member of the Indian Civil Service, gave the second volume of his book on British administration in India the subtitle, *The Guardian*.\(^{25}\) Even men opposed to imperialism had the notion that the relationship between European and non-European powers ought to approximate that existing between parent and child.

The so called civilising mission was adopted not only by the French and British, perhaps it was the common attitude of the western world during that point of time. Woodrow Wilson, in setting up the League of Nations mandate system was clearly influenced by such a view which reads “To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war [World War I] have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the states which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the formance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant” Which implies the need for a "tutelage" by the "advanced nations" over "peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world."\(^{26}\)

The United Nations Charter continued this view in setting up a "trusteeship" for "non self-governing peoples." Convinced by the statement of the white men’s burden that their subjects were children, it was natural, according to the British and the French, that they should establish patterns of relationship between the coloniser and the colonised which would closely parallel those existing between parent and child or school and student in the metropole. The examples which will here be used for British methods of child-rearing and formal education are based on the experiences of the Victorian upper classes. These provided the personnel which originally established the pattern of imperial rule and although only a minority of Englishmen received an education conforming to the


Victorian idea. Nevertheless the patterns established by the upper classes of Victorian England became part of the dominant British educational ethos. The French examples are drawn from the patterns of child-rearing and education of the French bourgeoisie in the nineteenth and twentieth century's.

6.2.4. Subjugation of Traditional Institution

The French empire was administered by men coming from the middle classes who carried with them the French educational system and family values of the bourgeoisie. This group concept of the nature of the child and of the role of education became the dominant one in French society. Thus to the Frenchmen assimilation was synonymous with the civilising mission who reduced traditional chief to "mouthpieces and scapegoats" and elevated African who learned French and accepted French culture to an elite status which practiced power in the colonies and influence in France. General Gallieni addressed the Betsileo people of Madagascar that you will always be Bestiloce, but you will at the same time be Frenchmen. You should learn the French language; you should dress yourselves in French fabrics, renowned the whole world over for their good quality; you should above all become the devoted helpers of our French colonist, who have come among you to bring you wealth and civilization. The great emphasis given to with its competition spirit, loyalty, and team spirit were supposed to create that elusive quality which the colonial government described as "character."

Likewise, the colonial subject was put under stressful work routine especially to the newly assimilated populations, who in the course of time would become a faithful, loyal and discipline citizens of France. The education system was to produce a gentleman, a person capable of assuming an independent and dominant role in society. Since, the system of the colonial masters' family [French] was characterized by both the emotional and physical closeness of its members. Parents and schools did not seem fully to accept the differences between adult and child and they attempted to impose adult norms of behavior on the young. The French family and school were hostile to peer groups and they broke them down systematically. With the children living at home the parents had

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27 The transition from Medieval to Liberal education system, John Henry Newman's 'Idea of a University (1852-58) where he set forth the principles of Liberal education.
close supervision over them. In the schools there were no prefects through whom the teachers could indirectly rule the great mass of students. Rather, the interrelationship was direct, with no intermediary between teacher and pupil. Both the home and the school considered the absence of a strong peer group as an advantage since it facilitated the effort of both institutions in inculcating youth with the values of the family and school. Colonial parallels to this method of child-rearing were effectively applied. This child rearing was reflected in the colonial policy, where the colonial subjects were closely supervised under different French institutions like Schools.

Thus the colonial subject were taken as child who were to be taught how to speak, eat and drink, the supposed fulfillment of the white men’s burden. The closer physical relationship between French administrators and the colonial populations was achieved moreover intermarriage did occur and cohabitation was very frequent. In Senegal in the middle of the nineteenth century, Governors Blanchot and Faidherbe gave the example by living with African women.

The French opposition to youth peer groups was mirrored in the colonies by the lack of sympathy which colonial officials tended to have for indigenous institutions. This was clearly reflected in Réunion Island where Indian indentured workers were not allowed to openly practised their religion. Traditional dhotis were replaced by trousers. Many French officials wished to eradicate the political and social peculiarities of the colonial populations and pattern them after those existing in France. They wished to impose French norms overseas. In the French colonies indigenous societies and traditional chiefs were distrusted. A deliberate attempt was made to reduce the chiefs' powers and to create a direct relationship, without intermediaries, between the French administrator and his subjects. Governor General William Ponty declared the need to "suppress the great native Chiefs, who are always a barrier between the colonial master and the administered masses." Thus the interventionism of the French school and home found its parallels in

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29. Ibid. p. 430

French colonial rule. The goal of French rule was the evolution of the colonies to such an extent that they could become assimilated and made an integral part of France. The attainment of social and political maturity would not bring the colonial populations independence but would rather enable them to participate on an equal basis with metropolitan Frenchmen within the same political state.

6.3. French Economic Umbrella

The question of family attempts to control adult children was reflected in France attempt to set up an economic union with the former colonies called Franc zone. This was channelised through various regional organisations by sending well trained technical assistants and large amounts of foreign aid funds, and by including most of the former colonies in the French franc zone, whereby France has been able to retain a significant influence over its former empire. Moreover, the French have regarded their colonies too much in the light of mere markets for French exports. This policy would have been sometimes intolerable to colonies and it may even be said that natives would resist, in the light of the fact that the colonies are sparsely settled by the white Frenchmen. The result has therefore been not civilisation but stagnation. Therefore, France resorted to her colonies, "Buy either French goods or nothing," and the colonies inhabitants accept the second alternative or the latter. This system somehow stabilise the nascent economy of the decolonised states in Africa during the 20th century.

6.4. Office Colonial

The other interesting facets of the French policy towards the overseas colonies was the function under taken by the Office Colonial, is that of emigration and colonization, viz., to promote emigration to the colonies and to further the investment of French capital in colonial enterprise, which according to the French colonial administrators would help in civilising the native populations in the overseas colonies. It has been well said that the reason why Frenchmen do not emigrate to the colonies is that they are better off at home. If the wealth of France were being divided by a rapidly growing divisor i.e if the

population were increasing at a rapid rate, as in Germany, a large and constant stream of emigration would be in evidence, and this emigration would naturally turn toward the French colonies. But this is not the case. French colonies are suffering from the disinclination of the families at home to "divide the patrimony." Here again, the aid of the Office Colonial and of various private societies is invoked. The "Office" is charged with the duty of placing at the disposition of intending colonists all the information regarding the colonies of France, the economic opportunities which they offer and the qualifications necessary for success, which are obtainable, together with such other advice and assistance that lies within its power. This duty falls to the section of emigration and colonisation.

Emigration is largely promoted by the "Society for the assistance of Colonists," and by other associations which provide for the transportation of suitable families to the colonies and in some instances, furnish them with limited outfits. In his annual report, covering the first nine months of the existence of the office, the Director, M. Auricoste, records 417 persons, including women and children, whose emigration to the colonies was assisted in various ways. A large number of these were transported free of charge, while others received transportation at reduced rates. With many of the emigrants the usual expectations of an El Dorado in the new colonies were prevalent. Unlike the recruitment in India and other British and French Colonial recruitment agency, to the credit of the Colonial Office it should be reckoned that many ill-prepared, technically uneducated persons, entirely unsuited for colonial enterprises have been turned back by the counsel and advice of the officials in the section of emigration and colonisation. The demand of the colonies is for capitalists and mechanics, not for the untrained or the shiftless class.32

6.4.1. Subjection to Conversion

Subjection was profoundly replaced by conversion and later on by Europeanisation in other than religious matters. This is called by some sociologist as westernisation of the indigenous population. As Chailley-Bert Clearly pointed out, "assimilation was largely a product of the French Revolution. It was still conversion, but conversion to a civilization

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rather than to a religion. The broader aims of the new conversion led to a relative decline of the element of domination or subjection, which however was still present”. The Preamble to the Constitution contained principles inspired by the declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789. 'Every human being, without distinction of race, religion or beliefs, has inalienable and sacred rights'. In saying this Assembly solemnly condemned racial and religious intolerance.

Women were to be given equal rights with men, a principle which was not willingly accepted by all natives. The right to work, the right to form trade unions, the right to strike, the right to national protection, and the right to education were all laid down, but subject to conditions which have not yet all, been fulfilled. 'France and the overseas peoples constitute a Union founded on equal rights and duties without distinction of race or religion'; this recalled the spirit of the first Constitution but omitted the reference to free consent which would have allowed secession. 'The French Union is composed of nations and peoples who co-ordinate or pool their resources and energies to develop their respective civilisations, increase their prosperity and ensure their security'. This article recalled the plan of the native group but omitted the phrase 'who freely agree to co-ordinate'. 'France, faithful to her age-long mission, will lead the peoples in her charge towards freedom to administer their own affairs . . .'. This statement meant that France reserved the right to be the leader and it was approved by every professor of law in the Constituent Assembly, whether right wing or Communist, since they had all been schooled in Roman law.

The announcement of these principles must not be considered as a purely theoretical matter. It must be remembered that the men who made the Constitution of 1946 were Cartesians and egalitarians, like the men of 1789, and would not compromise on the declaration of rights, leaving it to the Government to restrict their practical application with equal conviction but their attitude implied the adoption of a new policy and was used by the natives as a basis for concrete demands. The extension of citizenship to all

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subjects of the French Union was the most important measure and one which conditioned all the others. Formerly there had been a fundamental distinction between citizens and non-citizens. The French subject or native of a protectorate who wished to become a citizen had to ask for naturalization, which meant giving up his existing rights. Article 80 of the Constitution, making use of the Lamine-Gueye law, stated that 'all the nationals of the overseas territories rank as citizens equally with French nationals of the mother country and overseas'. Henceforth there would be only one political citizenship corresponding to nationality but there remained a difference between citizenship of Metropolitan France, implying submission to the French civil code, and local citizenship obedient to local customs. Just as there were French citizens who were Catholics, Protestants, or Jews, so the Constitution recognised French citizens who were Muslims or Animists.\[34\]

Moreover, article 60 of the Constitution stated that 'the French Union is formed on one hand by the French Republic, comprising Metropolitan France and the departments and territories overseas, and on the other by the associated states and territories'. In international law there are therefore three kinds of communities which are members of the Union: the French Republic, the associated territories and the associated states. The old colonies which have become overseas departments and the other colonies, now called overseas territories, are incorporated into the Republic, following the assimilations' tradition of the Constitution of the Year III and that of 1848. They none of them figure in the French Union as independent units, like the associated States, and only appear as part of the mother country. The overseas departments include the old colonies of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana, and Reunion, which were assimilated de facto before being so de jure.\[35\]


\[35\] Ibid, p.499.
6.4.1. Retention of French administrative system

While recognition was given to the impracticability of applying a full-scale policy of assimilation to African societies, a number of assimilationist characteristics were retained. First, the goal of creating French citizens out of Africans was not abandoned; it was just made more distant and much more difficult of achievement. Second, there was a high degree of administrative centralisation on the mother country, which was not compatible with a true politique d'association. We have already seen that the French made little concession to indigenous political units in dividing up their African territories for administrative purposes. Third, the French civilising mission was not abandoned and though education might be sparse it was modeled on the French system. Children spoke French from the day they entered school. No concession was made to teaching in the vernacular as in the British territories. Fourth, individual territories were not considered as having special characters, so that the same administrative organization was imposed on them all. Political officers would be posted from one territory to the other sometimes every other year, which gave them little time to learn the local language or ethnography. On the other hand the British political officer remained in the same territory for a long period of time, and in the case of Nigeria, in the same region; and promotion depended in part on the ability of the political officers to learn indigenous languages. Thus under the French system the one constant for the political officer could only be French culture, while for the British officer every encouragement was given to him to understand the local culture. As a corollary the French did give some encouragement to the formation of a native élite, which was absorbed into the territorial and federal administrative services, albeit not on a very large scale.36

In his public address M. Marius Moutet, Minister of the Colonies, although its terms are a bit vague, seems to corroborate these views. The following is a translation from the speech, which was given at reception in honour of Paul Bert, one of the founders of the Indochina Union: “Across the sea as in our own départements, we have the problem of helping a new world. This is our work and there is no escaping it. The black peasants of

millet and ground nuts and the yellow cultivators of rice and hevea are akin to our own workingmen and to the men who cultivate the French soil. We place them all on a plane of moral equality, social justice and human brotherhood. These are not vain or traditional words I am speaking, but a policy I intend to carry out; I wish, with you, to define and to put into action a policy of economic liberation and cultural education of the masses. We, without sectarianism or partisan attitude, deny none of our republican or socialistic convictions, and after 30 years of political and social action in favor of the working masses, especially colonial, will take our role of civiliser and emancipator seriously. Our constant preoccupation will be the material, physical and moral needs of the men living in our colonial territories. I know that we will do nothing politically and will accomplish nothing socially, if we are not technically organized in France and in the colonies according to our popular front program. Our attention will go to that technical organisation. That is what the Minister, the responsible head of this department, wishes.  

Moreover, this was presented to the Chamber of Deputies on August 11, 1936, a "Bill opening an investigation in the colonies and territories under protectorate and mandate," in which it is stated that the colonial policy of the Republic "must go beyond the limits of purely material research and investigation in order to undertake an important task of renovating the French colonial system, in the sense of bettering the social and political conditions of the population of the colonies." As one of Giscard's foreign ministers, Louis de Guiringaud, put it, "Africans the only continent where France has the capacity to make a difference . . . the only one where she can still change the course of history with 500 men." In a later article, de Guiringaud remarked that "neither the size of [Africa's] population nor the scale of its economic problems are out of proportion to what France can devote to a long-term commitment abroad." Thus the assimilation, according to Wallace.G.Mills, was predicated or proclaimed on a presumption of the

38 Bill No. 1097
superiority of French culture and 'civilisation'. As part of France's 'mission civilisatrice', when confronted by 'barbarian' people, it was the duty of France to civilise them and turn them into Frenchmen.41

6.5. Assimilation to Association

Later on there was this opinion among the French policy makers that the relationship between the conqueror and the conquered, of white and black peoples, should be one of 'association', not one of identity and merging; it emphasised cooperation between the rulers and the ruled. Association was supposed to respect the cultural and political values and institutions of Africans; Africans could not and should not be turned into black French people. Like Dual Mandate, it was asserted that economic development was for the mutual advantage of both France and Africans. To some extent, especially after 1918, proponents referred approvingly to the British model of indirect rule and claimed the intention to rule more indirectly, retaining traditional custom and law. Actually, conquering administrators like Faidherbe, in Senegal, had done this much earlier and for many of the same reasons as the British—it was cheaper and provoked less resistance. However, in practice, implementation was always a bit superficial; at best, Africans and 'traditional' authorities were used only at the very bottom rung of the administration. They were subordinate cogs in the bureaucracy for carrying out policies which were developed by expatriate French officials with no real consultation with Africans.42

6.5.1. Department D'Outre Mer

Though association was officially adopted as policy for the French African colonies, the policy of assimilation still holds deeper roots in the mind and attitudes of administrators. As a result, implementation of association was often half-hearted without much effort to get to know African tradition and custom. At best, it was applied in the sparsely populated areas, especially in Islamic areas which in the scant sense of the term, non-interference, in religious matters and often little interference in other areas as well.


However, in most practice, French officials tended to implement French ways of doing things in administration and in law. The belief in the superiority of things French held by many, probably most, Frenchmen working in the colonial administrations meant that they would tend to promote things French. - Association did involve a much more authoritarian approach to governing in Africa up to 1944-45 and provided the rationale for withholding rights from Africans; an African press, trade unions and political activities were all suppressed up to 1945. However, after 1945 the approach was explicitly assimilationist; the African colonies were treated as an integral part of France—FrançO outre mer. Thus the PIOs in Reunion Island were completely assimilated in the French system through various political, educational and cultural institutions. Therefore every citizen be Indians origin, African, Chinese etc, in the colonies were given rights to elect representatives to the French parliament, to have a free press, trade unions and participate in political parties. Suddenly, all these things flourished; most trade unions and political parties aligned and affiliated themselves with similar organisations’ in France, with many of the same divisions between socialists, communists and moderates, thereby most of them were now assimilated.

This opportunity was seized by PIOs in La Réunion by participating in the electoral politics through which the identity assertion in La Réunion began. Among them mention may be made of Club Tamoul, founded by Dr. Axel Kichenin, and his role which was discussed in great detail in chapter 4. And today there are more than 30 Association in La Reunion in promoting Indian cultural values.

6.6. French Assimilation policy in Réunion

In 1946, the status of Réunion Island was transform from that of a colony to an overseas département. Over its history of three and a half centuries, successive waves of migrants have settled there, these made up of settlers, colonialists, slaves, indentured workers, merchants, majority from the Malabar and Coromandel Coast of India and few exception from Comoros Islands, China and Singapore. At present, its mixed multiethnic and multicultural population amounts to 800,000 inhabitants. This took place under the indentured system after the abolition of slavery in Reunion in 1848.
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Slavery, although in a modified form, if compared to what it was before, continued until 1848, when it was abolished by a law, but in reality it has never ceased while looking at the condition of the immigrants labourers, notwithstanding the existence of the convention of 1861, it has been carried on with the approbation of the French authorities.43

6.6.1. Segment of La Réunion Population

The population of the Island during the indentured period can be classified under the following category:

1). The Europeans and Creole whites of French extraction.

2). The coloured creoles who are the issue of the connections of the former with the slaves, or with their descendants.

3). Indian, Chinese and black African indentured workers.

In the meantime there were free migration from Pondicherry and some other places from India after a law was passed in 1861, which allowed any foreigner to take up employment there. This period mark indentured workers as a British Indian subject.44 Grierson, in his report also made the following remarks that “Efforts to obtain more labourers from Africa are being made at the present time. But the African labourers, though of far more powerful physique than the Indian, is recognized as greatly he is inferior in docility and intelligence. He can never, either, be induced to re-engage; and he enforces his demands for repatriation by clamours and disorders, beyond the resisting capacities of the employer and administration. The planting community, therefore, to a man prefer Indian labourer to African”.45

43 Consul Perry Report (confidential), Revenue and Agricultural department, January 1877.
44 Earlier they were recruited from the French settlement in India and there was no proper rules and regulation.
45 Grierson Report, para no.42. Revenue and Agricultural Department, Emigration Branch, April 1894. Pros No.1-17.
6.6.1.1. Free emigration

Every year several hundred Indians from the southern states followed by the Gujarati merchants left their home villages for Réunion. Between 1920 and 1940 their numbers steadily rose to several thousand and over. Some came to rejoin their families. In 1946, the laws and regulations concerning immigration into metropolitan France became applicable to Réunion, which had become an overseas French département. After 1947, i.e. India’s Independence from the British, Indian immigrations practically ceased.

6.6.1.2. Acculturation of PIOs

The contract workers had to express Christian attitudes to be more accepted—if accepted at all—by their employers and by the society at large. These measures only concerned the colonists. The ancient regime did not conceive of any civilising influence other than conversion to Christianity, itself a form of assimilation which was reflected in the attitude of the employers and the local priest. This trend was given a rational basis by the triumph of Cartesian’s with its emphasis on the individual, and the spread of the philosophical theory of the happy savage in the eighteenth century. In this way the administrative assimilation enforced on the white colonists was accompanied by a doctrine favouring the social and political assimilation of the natives. Thus the Colonial policy was mainly governed by three main ideas:

1) the idea of subjugation, always strong in the ranks of the central administration and among colonial governors, which led to complete domination of the natives;
2) the idea of assimilation which still had many supporters among politicians and white colonists but was only applied to a very limited extent by allowing small numbers of natives to become naturalized Frenchmen; was effectively applied in Reunion island and
3) The idea of autonomy which was apparently carried out when Tunisia and Morocco were made protectorates and retained their own rulers but only resulted

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in a system of administration more advantageous to the central Government than to the native Governments.\textsuperscript{48}

The colonial Governments disliked any check upon them. They were mainly advisory and the Government was not bound to take their advice. The only real de-centralisation was in Algeria, the Antilles, and Réunion Island where the councils voted the budget; the colonists considered that democratic ideas were not for export. Democratic rights were only given to the white colonists and limited as much as possible. The natives came under a special system known as the \textit{indighat}. The administration had powers of summary justice allowing it to impose sentences arbitrarily and without appeal. The temptation to come down on trouble-makers or to use justice for personal ends was strong. The number of convictions always increased at a time when the administration needed labour this was more evident in the case of La Réunion. The convicts were put in the \textit{Macadam} or \textit{atelier de discipline} and also the \textit{journey de r’emploi}.

6.6.1.3. Local dialect

The PIOs in Réunion no longer speak their mother tongue apart from a few phrases. They use Creole in their daily conversation be it in the family or commercial transaction. Most of them particularly the first three generation completed their higher studies from France in the 1960s and 1970s, and have entered the a noble profession, such as doctors, lawyers etc. also in the private sectors like accounts section and business or the public sector as administrator and teachers. However, their emotional bonding to their mother country is very strong which can be gauged from their daily life and their attachment to religious shrines and rivers in India. The forced assimilation adopted by the colonial master is also sometimes counterproductive as the younger generation began to consider the French religion as an oppressive force. But after the era of liberalisation when the movement of people from places of their migration to the mother country was considerably eased, the peoples of Indian Origin were trying to “get back to their roots” through an attempted re-appropriation of some salient aspects Indians cultures like

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid},p.488.
courses in the Sanskrit language, calligraphy, and most importantly importing of South Indian Brahmin to preside over the religious functions and ceremonies.

6.6.2. Impact of the French Policy on Indian Identity

Having undergone a process of veritable de-culturalisation through the assimilation process from the 1946 - 1980s, Indians in the Island are attempting to rediscover their roots. It is also learnt that during the early eighties the younger Indian generations are ashamed of their language and culture and most often they wanted to referred themselves as Tamoul, Mussalman, Malabars, rather than calling themselves collectively as Indians. The opening of Indian consulate in Réunion really boosted the morale of the Indian association, coupled with the onset of globalisation and free flow of media they began to look forward to their mother country, though few of them could speak Hindi, Tamil and Bhojpuri. This cultural renaissance or awakening or the search for identity is not an isolated issue for people of Indians alone, but the Chinese also followed in the same degree. The institutional mechanism of assimilation that was instated by the colonial masters via the department d’outre Mer, from French language and culture, to religion impacted the degree of integration into the social, economic and cultural sphere of metropolitan France and the West in general. Which on the one hand gave the PIOs the benefits an opening to the world but at the same time it was a tool imposes on them to gain access over the monopolies over different means of communication ranging from mass media to other commercial activities.

In his celebrated book, Jean Benoist, explain in details how the process of assimilation has operated without any interruption until the present day, and has induced the inhabitants of Reunion to overvalue French cultural models and standards, which are then taken as a benchmark and source for imitation, while also serving as a measure by which other cultures must be downgraded.49

6.7. Indian Government Policy towards PIOs

The Government of India was lukewarm to the issues of overseas Indians until she realised the economic potential of the Diaspora. On June 14, 1946, in his 'Foreword' to Our Countrymen Abroad by Dharam Yash Dev, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote ‘Ever since the National movement took shape in India the problem of our countrymen abroad has been with us, as indeed it must be. And so it will remain till that movement triumphs and brings freedom and independence to India’ and at the same time admits that "It is true that India has never forgotten her children abroad, but it is also true that she might have taken greater interest in them than she has done". However, the first discernible Nehru’s foreign policy towards overseas India appeared in 1927, when he was appointed the General Secretary of All India Congress Committee (AICC) he prepared a document entitled “A Foreign Policy of India” for the AICC. Here Nehru categorically outlined the policy of Indian National Congress (INC) regarding Indians settlers in other colonial countries, the role Indian wanted them to play in their country of adoption and the kind of support they could expect from India. He asks in the paper: “what is the position of Indians of foreign country today?” He answered to his query that the Indian overseas went as ‘a hireling of exploiter’ i.e. British government and he wanted this position to be changed. He suggested at another place that “an Indian who goes to other countries must co-operate with the people of that country and win for himself a position by friendship and service...The Indians should co-operate with Africans and help them, as far as possible and not claim a special position for them”.

6.7.1. Nehru Policy of Non-interference

Indian Independence in 1947 hardly brought any anticipated relief to the plight of overseas Indians in the British and French colonies. This was because Nehru believed that a proactive policy of the government towards its overseas children abroad may sent a wrong signal to the host countries and more so of Nehru’s policies of respect to national sovereignties, amicable international relations, non-interference into the affairs of other

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50 Secretary, Department of Indians Overseas, AICC.
nations under the banner of Nonaligned Movement (NAM). Representing diaspora interests through a strong diaspora policy implies that there is interference in local policy. Nehru was caught in a dilemma, because on the one hand he realised that Indians abroad had problems and needed help, but in regard to his anti-imperialist stand he did not want to get involved in the fate of the Indian diaspora. So, in the beginning, his “response was ambivalent since he was involved in the concerns of overseas Indians but did not want to infringe upon the sensitivities and sovereignties of other countries”. Moreover, the leaders of white settlers in Kenya and South Africa had seen Indian independence as a threat to British rule in Africa. They call Nehru a Hindu communist who wanted to replace European rule by Indians. Coupled with their propaganda about India’s sinister design on African colonies where Indians were in substantial number, and the image of Indian settlers in Africa as an exclusive community whose only interest in Africa was economic exploitation, made Indian leaders very sensitive on the question of Indian overseas.

In his address to the Lok Sabha, he (Nehru) said that India was interested in the destiny of its diaspora, because they share a mutual history with India. But he clarified that Indians overseas had previously been given the option to either vote for the Indian or another citizenship. Once they opted for the latter, then “we have no concern with them, [...] because politically they cease to be Indians”. In other words, Nehru was clear in enunciating his foreign policy goals that plainly stated that the Indians who had left their country of origin to seek employment abroad had to integrate with the local population, support their struggles for freedom, and even put their cause first.

It is the consistent policy of the Government that people of Indian origin who have taken foreign nationality should identify themselves with and integrate in the mainstream

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54 Group Captain IR Brigg, the conservative White settler leader in Kenya asserted about that they want to squeeze us out and make it an Indian colony. The Times (London, 4 August 1954) Cited in Ajay Dubey, 2003, in Sarva Daman singh and mahavir singh(ed) Indians Abroad.
56 Nehru, J. (1961). India's foreign policy; selected speeches, September 1946-April 1961. Delhi, Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Govt. of India,p.130
of social and political life in the country of their domicile. The government remains naturally alive to their interests and general welfare and encourages cultural contacts with them. As far as Indian citizens residing abroad are concerned, they are the responsibility of the Government of India.⁵⁷ He further said that “If you cannot be, and if you are not, friendly to the people of that country, come back to India and not spoil the fair name of India”.⁵⁸ Thus, Nehru had a very determined anti-imperialist stand. He recommended the Indian overseas community to accept the citizenship of the country they lived in and to assist the decolonisation process. At the same time, he considered Diaspora issues to be no longer the concern of the mother country. Therefore, he fervently appealed to all overseas Indians to merge to the host Country if not to return. So, that the basic tenets of the NAM principally is preserved, thus he decided not to assist the diaspora as he firmly believed this would amount to interfering in someone’s internal matters. Moreover, the period of India’s independence coincides with the height of the cold war. Thus overseas Indians became aliens like any other foreigners.

6.7.2. Janata Government

With the advent of Janata Government in 1977, some significant changes were envisaged like the rectification of laws that would permit overseas Indians to their motherland.⁵⁹ Indian nationalism was a unifying force for all Indians during the decolonisation period. The mutual struggle against colonial rule helped to create an Indian identity. After India gained independence, the Indians in India and Indians overseas had different problems to tackle though most of them were British subject till the mother country independence, though there are some exceptions. Nehru’s policy seems to have neglected the needs of the Indian diaspora since Nehru foreign policy was governed by his commitment to NAM. Therefore, this led Sunil Khilani to argue that, “Nehru believed that an Indian identity could emerge only within the territorial and institutional frame of a state”.⁶⁰ The sizeable presence of British capital in pre-independence India had done little to promote

development, its large presence in extractive industries, plantations, shipping, banking and insurance were geared to promoting colonial interests.\(^61\)

6.7.3. Indira Gandhi era

By the mid-1950s, India’s stature had begun to decline and 1962 was a low point in India’s international prestige. With Indira Gandhi, India re-emerged on the South-Asian strategic stage in the 1970s: India revealed its ability and willingness to grasp the opportunities of power politics in a regional context and in a way which distanced India from Nehru’s globalism and faith in the friendship of neighbours and great powers. This according to Kapur was the shift from that of Idealism to Realpolitik, Nehruvian to Indira Gandhi.\(^62\) The latter was evidenced under Indira Gandhi. Though she continued to follow Nehru’s foreign policy, however, in the realm of its policy towards the diaspora there was a shift in the paradigm. This was clearly evidenced after the Indo-China war 1962, when India’s isolation was exposed in Africa, Mrs. Gandhi, in her capacity as official delegate toured African countries in 1964. Though she continued to emphasis that Indians settled in Africa must identify themselves completely with the African people and make their fullest contribution to the societies in which they lived yet from her tour programme in Africa, besides her official engagements, she made it a point not to miss Indian settlers, leaders and members of the community though in certain location their number did not exceed even fifty.\(^63\)

Moreover, during the short period of Indira’s predecessor Lal Bahadur Shastri from 1964-66, India and Pakistan fought their second war, which profoundly affected Indira Gandhi’s foreign policy. The humiliation that began in 1962 war against China was now confirmed. India could no longer reply on the Soviet Union in terms of its National


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Defense. She demonstrated India's ambition as a regional power by rescuing the Bangladeshi from Pakistan menace 1972 and forcing the Pakistani military to surrender coupled with the "peaceful explosion" of a nuclear bomb in Pokhran 1974, India's nuclear capability was finally confirmed. Hence, India's nuclear potential was not only ascertained but was also proved that India was ready to combat any threat from its enemies on its own.

Indira Gandhi's believed that only a strong and powerful India can follow an independent foreign policy. Since colonialism was declining, her main concerns mainly consisted of India's position in South Asia in particular and the world at large. Thus, her foreign policy was not really directed towards the diaspora but rather to internal reforms though FDI were still restricted. To express it clearly, there were more important things for her in the world, parallel to her enforcement of socialist policies; she was reluctant towards private sector involvement, which is a potential field the Indian diaspora could have participated. She addressed private businessmen several times. On the one hand she tried to ensure that the Government of India was ready to assist their demands, but on the other hand she clearly stated that there is a need of intervention as long as poverty remains a major concern in India.

6.7.4. Liberalisation Era

While the Congress government's approach to Indian diaspora till Rajiv Gandhi era was cautious one. In 1980s, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi invited a few NRIs to come back to India to help in development of some core sectors including telecommunications. This was the first open door policy of Indian government towards its Diaspoas community. In 1990 the then Prime Minister, P.V.Narasimha Rao with his

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65 Subin Nijhawan, 'Why has the Indian Diaspora been shunned by successive Indian governments? p.12.
66 Her faith in socialism can be best displayed with the following quote from her speech at the All India Congress Committee on 31 December 1975: "So long as I live no power on earth could take the country away from its chosen path of socialism because socialism was the only way to abolish poverty". Cited in: Gandhi and Nigam (1984), p. 73[Gandhi, I. and R. K. Nigam (1984). Indira Gandhi's legacy to the Indian nation: economic development and the public sector. New Delhi, Documentation Centre for Corporate and Business Policy Research. ].
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Finance Minister (now the Prime Minister) Dr. Manmohan Singh initiated the liberalisation of Indian economy. Subsequently tariff was slashed and the Rupee was made convertible on the trade account. Thereafter the Rupee was also devalued. Then the Indian government organised the first-ever meet of parliamentarians of Indian origin at New Delhi in December 1998.

6.7.5. National Democratic Alliance

The most dramatic phase in Indian Government Diasporas policy towards the diasporas was felt with the advent of the BJP led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) dispensation at the centre. The government policy towards the Diasporas turned a volte face, the government now recognised that the technology transferred and the augmentation of the foreign exchange reserves were part of its new Industrial policy. This shift was clearly evident by 1999, when the Chennai Declaration of the BJP included: ‘We believe that the vast community of NRIs and PIOs also constitute a part of the great Indian Family. We should endeavour to continually strengthen their social, cultural, economic and emotional ties with their mother country. They are the rich reservoir of intellectual, managerial and entrepreneurial resources. The Government should devise innovative schemes to facilitate the investment of these resources for India’s all around development.

6.7.5.1. High Level Committee

Another remarkable step by the GOI was initiated by BJP led NDA dispensation in appointing of a High Level Indian Diaspora Committee chaired by Dr. L.M. Singhvi, in 2000 to look into the issues of NRIs and PIOs. The committee was mandated to make a comprehensive study of the global Indian diasporas and to recommend measures for a constructive relationship. The terms of Reference of the Committee were as follows:

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1. To review the status of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in the context of constitutional provisions, Laws and rules applicable to them both in India and the countries of their residence;

2. To study the characteristics, aspirations, attitudes, requirements, strengths, and weakness of the Indian diasporas and their expectation from India;

3. To study the role PIOs and NRIs may play in the economic, social and technological development of India;

4. To examine the current regime that governs the travel and stay of PIOs in India and investment by PIOs in India, and recommend measures to resolve the problems faced by NRIs in these areas;

5. To recommend a broad but flexible policy framework and country-specific plans for forging a mutually beneficial relationship with the region of PIOs and NRIs, and for facilitating their participation in India's economic development. 

The report was submitted on January 8, 2002. Some of the prominent recommendations are:

1. Offer of Dual citizenship to PIO/NRIs living in select countries (United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Western Europe, Singapore) under the rubric of the Citizenship Act.

2. Fee reduction in PIO Card scheme.

3. Celebration of 'Pravasi Bharatiya Divas' on January 9 (the day Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa) every year.

4. Setting up of a 'single window' organisation, a Pravasi Bhartiya Bhawan, to deal with the PIO/NRI issues

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The government has accepted most of these recommendations, including the celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

6.7.6. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs

Another remarkable policy was the formation of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA). The Congress led UPA government headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh, has fulfilled the demand of various PIOs by having a separate ministry titled Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in 2004. In his speech delivered at the PBD 2005, the Prime Minister further describes that the “Idea of India’ and ‘Indianness’... It used to be said of the British Empire, from whose yoke Gandhiji freed us that the sun would never set on it. If there is an empire today on which the sun truly cannot set, it is the empire of our minds, that of the children of Mother India, who live today in Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, and the Americas and indeed, on the icy reaches of Antarctica”. In January 2008, the government sets up a Prime Minister’s Global Advisory Council of People of Indian Origin at the Sixth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas at inaugural session in New Delhi.

Dr. Manmohan Singh said “An India Development Foundation to serve as a credible institutional mechanism to direct overseas Indian philanthropic propensities into human development efforts was planned”. This was primarily aimed to appeal to the overseas Indians and tap their mind by setting up a mechanism to canalise their donations into development projects and forming a think-tank. It would comprise those recognised as leaders in their fields not only in their countries of residence but also globally. In pursuance to this scheme Dr. Singh, at the inaugural session of the seventh PBD, announce that Overseas Indian Citizenship (OIC) card holder can practice their profession in India. This comes as a boon to the number of PIOs who had to undergo a cumbersome process of exams and re-registration if they wanted to practice in India. Dr. Singh said “The Overseas Indian Citizenship Scheme, which we had announced in 2006, has elicited an overwhelming response. I am, therefore, happy to announce that Henceforth OIC card holders who are qualified doctors, dentist, pharmacist, engineers, architect and chartered accountant will have the benefit of practicing their profession here in our country. Further

72 Sun never sets on this diaspora,’ The Hindu, January 8, 2005
73 “Plan to rope in overseas Indians” The Hindu, January 8, 2008.
details to operationalise this benefit are being worked out.  

This is aimed at improving cooperation between India and these economically more advanced countries in terms of investments and the exchange of skills and expertise.

6.7.6.1. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is the flagship event of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. It is celebrated in recognition and appreciation of the constructive, economic and philanthropic role played by the Indian Diaspora on the 9th January every year. The date has been chosen because it was on this day that Mahatma Gandhi, a Pravasi Bharatiya in South Africa for almost two decades, returned to India in 1915. Thus, the government organised three-day long celebrations commemorating the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in January 2003, then 2004 followed by the third in Mumbai January 2005 and fourth in Hyderabad in January 2006 and 2007 & 2008 in New Delhi, 2009 in Chennai.

In 2006, PBD, President A P J Abdul Kalam presented the award to 11 persons among which, Jean-Paul Virapoulle: A Senator in the French Senate and Mayor of Saint Andre, Réunion Island was one among them. The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards have been instituted to recognise and reward meritorious contributions made by NRIs and PIOs to further India's interests and causes. The nominations for the award are invited from countries where there are sizeable number of NRIs and PIOs.

6.7.6.1.1. Mini PBD

The first Mini-PBD was organised in New York in September 2007. Over 400 delegates belonging to the Indian American community and others had attended the event. The second Mini-PBD Convention titled ‘PBD Singapore’ under the tagline “Towards a Dynamic Diaspora” aimed at reaching out to the Indian Diaspora in the East Asia and Asia-Pacific region was held in Singapore from 9-11 October, 2008. The third Mini PBD

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75 http://www.oifc.in/news_july_051.asp
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will be held in September 19 at Hague in the Netherlands, Europe. This convention will help in enhancing Indo-European dialogue in the fields of economy and culture. It will also introduce the Indian diaspora to the trade and investment opportunities in the land of their ancestors.78 The decision to organise the event outside India is primarily aimed at reaching out to those large numbers of Indians in several regions who are not able to participate in the annual PBD held in India. It was jointly organized by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) with the support of the Government of Singapore. More than 700 delegates from 20 countries attended the conference.

In addition, MOIA has taken up other initiatives like: setting up Overseas Indian Centres; Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra; Awareness campaign on NRI marriages; Amendments to the Emigration Act, 1983; Reforming the Emigration System; E-Governance in Emigration Management; Pre-departure Orientation & Skill Upgradation for emigrant Workers; setting up an India Development Foundation to provide a credible institutional mechanism to direct the contribution of overseas Indian into human development efforts in India; an Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) for the benefit overseas Indian workers etc.

6.7.6.2. Dual Citizenship

In December 2003, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, passed the Citizenship Bill which allowed granting of dual citizenship, categorised as Overseas Citizens to People of Indian origin in sixteen countries only – namely, United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Cyprus, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.79

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6.7.6.2.1. Overseas Citizens of India

In pursuance a long and persistent demand for "dual citizenship" from overseas Indians in North America and the western world and in view of the Government's deep commitment towards fulfilling the aspirations and expectations of Overseas Indians, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had announced at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2005 held in Mumbai the grant of Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) to all PIOs where local laws permit "dual citizenship" in some form or the other except Pakistan and Bangladesh. The scheme has been in operation from December 2, 2005. OCI facilitate life-long visa-free travel to India and certain economic, educational and cultural benefits. This is not to be construed as 'dual citizenship' since it does not confer political rights. Any Overseas Indian applicant who is comfortable with his present citizenship status in the country of his residence can apply for OCI.\(^{80}\)

The decision of the Indian government India to grant dual citizenship to NRIsPIOs was one of the most pragmatic steps towards winning the confidence of the Indian Diasporas. The Indian Diaspora, now defining the overseas Indian community, has become very special to India. Whether it was the BJP-led NDA government that took the initiative, or the present Congress-led government that is passing it, the Indian Diaspora is being seen as an important international actor in the opinion of the foreign policy makers of playing greater role in the international affairs and of being recognised as an important economic factor. The importance of PIOs in India's economic development was also testify by the P.M. Dr. Manmohan Singh appealed to PIOs during the PBD conference that, 'India needs US $150 billion in investment in its infrastructure and that investment by dual Indian citizens could help fulfill that need...We are committed to make it attractive for you to invest in India.'\(^{81}\) This will benefit more than 22 million PIO's living outside India and brought them closer to India. This will also help to mobilize professional and financial resources of NRIsPIOs for India's development.


\(^{81}\)“Dual citizenship for NRIs who left after January 26, 1950,” The Hindu, January 8, 2005.
6.8. Major Government Initiatives

As mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs was established in May 2004 as the Ministry of Non-Resident Indian Affairs. It was rechristened as Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) in September 2004. The emigration division of the Ministry of Labour and Employment was attached to the new Ministry in December 2004. The NRI division of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) provides support to the MOIA and now functions as the Diaspora division in the Ministry. The Protector General of Emigrants administers the Emigration Act, 1983 looks after eight field offices of the protectors of emigrants located at Chandigarh, Chennai, Cochin, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram.82

6.8.1. Indo-NRI Chamber

In 1986, when a special approval committee was constituted within the Department of the Industrial development for the expeditious clearance of the industrial proposal of NRIs. Then in 1987, an Indo-NRI Chamber of Commerce and Culture was set up to promote the overseas Indian cases.83 So the question arises when the NRIs also placed their demand for a bailout plan of the Indian economy. They wanted the reforms to go all the way to protect their investments and use them efficiently. They felt that granting them Indian citizenship would make investing in India easier, as under the present rule they could not stay in India for more than 180 days.84 However, the guiding principles for acquiring the Indian citizenship are stated in the Constitution of India Article 5, 8 and Article 9 .The Indian Parliament passed the Citizenship Act of 1955. And Section 8 of the act explicitly states that Indians are not entitled to dual citizenship.

6.8.2. Liberalized policy framework for investment by NRIs

A section of financially powerful and politically well connected Indo-Americans has emerged during the last decade. They have effectively mobilised on issues ranging from

the nuclear tests in 1998 to Kargil, played a crucial role in generating a favourable climate of opinion in Congress and defeating anti-India legislation there, and lobbied effectively on other issues of concern to the Indian community. They have also demonstrated willingness to contribute financially to Indian causes, such as relief for the Orissa cyclone and the Latur and Gujarat earthquakes, higher technical education and innumerable charitable causes.” The report continues, “For the first time, India has a constituency in the US with real influence and status. The Indian community in the United States constitutes an invaluable asset in strengthening India’s relationship with the world’s only superpower.\textsuperscript{85} When India carried out a series of nuclear tests in 1998, American non-proliferation laws were automatically enforced and India was subject to both economic and military sanctions. Yet within a year legislators had given the Clinton Administration the authority to waive all the sanctions, this being done in a legislature where, as Hathaway states, knowledge about South Asia is still quite limited.\textsuperscript{86} The lobbying efforts of the Indian-American community were obviously significant in bringing about this shift in congressional attitude although other factors did play a role in revoking of the sanctions.\textsuperscript{87}

As mentioned above importance to investments by NRIs hold importance in the opinion of the foreign policy makers therefore Government has provided a liberalised policy framework for approval of NRI investments through both the automatic and the Government route. NRIs are permitted to invest up to 100 percent equity in the Real Estate and Civil Aviation sectors. Automatic approval is given by the RBI to all NRI proposals with their investment up to 100 percent for all items/activities except a few


\textsuperscript{87} Hathaway argues elsewhere that congressional pressures to continue the sale of food grains to Pakistan also led to a shift in congressional attitude. See Robert M. Hathaway, “Confrontation and Retreat: The U.S. Congress and the South Asian Nuclear Tests,” \textit{ArmsControl Today}, January/February 2000.see also, \textit{Amit Gupta} The Indian Diaspora’s Political Efforts in the United States,ORF Occasional Paper September 2004.
exceptions mentioned in Press Note 2 (2000 series) read with sector specific guidelines. Government approval is required for all proposals not qualifying under the Automatic Route. Proposals for conversion of NRI investment into repatriable equity are hitherto being considered by the FIPB for approval. 88

6.8.3. Major initiatives/incentives for NRIs and Foreign Direct Investment

The government took several steps in the area of foreign direct investment (FDI) in future pursuit of its already committed path of policy transparency and liberalisation in FDI. FDI up to 100 per cent is now permitted on the automatic route in all sectors/activities except: (a) activities requiring industrial license under the Industries Development and Regulation Act,(b) proposals where the foreign investor had an existing joint venture/technical collaboration /trademark agreement in the same field of activity, (c) proposal for acquisition of shares in an Indian company in the financial services sector & where SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulation, 1997 is attracted and (d) all proposals falling outside notified sectoral policy /caps or under sectors in which FDI is not permitted. Besides, many specific measures were also adopted by the government to encourage the NRIs/PIOs to invest in India such as in domestic airlines, in the development of township, housing, built up infrastructure and construction development projects, in basic and cellular telecom services, in FM Radio Broadcasting up to a maximum of 20 per cent, etc.

6.8.4. General permission to NRIs/PIOs

The Reserve Bank has granted general permission to NRIs/PIOs for undertaking direct investment in Indian Companies under the automatic route, purchase of shares under Portfolio Investment Schemes, investment in companies and proprietorship/ partnership concerns on non-repatriation basis and for remittances of current income. NRIs/PIOs do not have to seek specific permission for approved activities under these Schemes. The Reserve Bank of India has now further simplified financial transactions by NRIs/PIOs by granting general permissions to resident individuals, partnership/proprietorship concerns

to avail of interest bearing rupee loans from NRIs/PIOs out of funds remitted by them from abroad or out of funds held in their bank accounts in Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs on non repatriation basis, subject to certain conditions; one of them being that the rate of interest on such loans should not exceed Bank Rate plus two percentage points. Besides, RBI also simplified various other transactions such as transfer by way of gift shares held by them in Indian companies and to transfer by way of gift immovable property held by them in India, on all domestic public/private sector mutual funds, on placing deposits with Indian firms, for sale of shares acquired under direct investment Schemes on stock exchanges in India, for transfer of shares, by way of sale under private arrangement to another NRI or to a resident, and so on. 89

6.8.5. Direct Investment Opportunities

The government has also allowed the NRIs under The Following Condition

1. Investment under Automatic Route with repatriation benefits: NRIs can invest in shares/convertible debentures of Indian companies under the Automatic Route without obtaining Government or RBI permission except for a few sectors where FIPB permission is necessary, or where the investment can be made only up to a certain percentage of paid up capital.

2. Investment with Government approval: Investment not eligible under the Automatic Route, are considered by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), a high Powered inter-ministerial body under the chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, subject to sectoral limits/norms. These investments also enjoy full repatriation benefits.

3. Other Investments with repatriation benefits such as investment in units of domestic mutual funds, in bonds issued by public sector undertakings, purchase of shares of Public sector enterprises being disinvested by GOI, investment in government dated securities (other than bearer securities) or Treasury Bills, investments upto 100 percent equity

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without repatriation benefits, and other Investments by NRIs without repatriation benefits.

4. Investments up to 100 percent equity without repatriation benefits such as in capital contribution to any proprietary or partnership concern, new issues of shares/debentures of Indian companies.

5. Other investments by NRIs without repatriation benefits such as in Non-Convertible Debentures, money Market Mutual Funds, Deposits with companies, Commercial Papers.

Investment in a firm or a proprietary concern by NRIs

Besides, the above investment opportunities provided by the government of India to the NRIsPIOs there are also many more incentives for them such as their investment opportunities in the Special Economic Zones, residential status for tax purposes, several tax exemption from income tax such as income from investments made by NRIsPIOs out of deposits in under mentioned bank accounts, Non Resident External Rupee Account (NRE), Foreign Currency Non Resident Account (FCNR), which are totally exempted from tax. Besides, there were also tax exemption from wealth tax and gift tax. There is also certain Portfolio Investment Scheme for NRIs and some other investment opportunities. Certain incentives were also provided for them in loans and overdrafts, borrowing in Foreign Exchange by residents and some Non-Repatriable Borrowing in Rupees by Residents, Remittance of Rent, and other remittance facilities for NRIsPIOs such as in remittance of assets by NRIsPIOs, repatriation of sale proceeds of residential property purchased by NRIsPIOs out of foreign exchange, remittance of current income.

6.8.6. International Credit Cards

As mentioned earlier, one of the revolutionary steps taken to encourage NRIsPIOs to come and invest in India was the introduction of Overseas Citizens of India (OCI), and PIO cards. The Constitution of India does not allow holding Indian citizenship and citizenship of a foreign country simultaneously. Based on the recommendation of the High Level committee on Indian Diaspora, the Government of India decided to grant Overseas Citizens of India (OCI). The scheme is operational from December 2, 2005.
OCI has been introduced by statute as a new category of citizenship to facilitate life-long visa, free travel to India and certain economic, educational and cultural benefits. This is not to be construed as 'dual citizenship' since it does not confer political rights. Any Overseas Indian applicant who is comfortable with his present citizenship status in the country of his residence can apply for OCI. Till October 2006, about 65,000 OCI documents have been issued, mostly to overseas Indians in the USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand. Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) of certain category, as specified below, who migrated from India and acquired citizenship of a foreign country other than Pakistan and Bangladesh, are eligible for grant of OCI.

Registered OCIs shall be entitled to following benefits:

(i) Multiple entry, multi-purpose lifelong visa to visit India;

(ii) Exemption from registration with Police authorities for any length of stay in India;

(iii) Parity with NRIs in financial, economic and educational fields except in the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.

However, persons registered as OCI have not been given any voting rights, election to Lok Sabha / Rajya Sabha / Legislative Assembly / Council, holding Constitutional posts such as President, Vice President, Judge of Supreme Court / High Court etc. Any further benefits to OCIs will be notified by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) under section 7B (1) of the citizenship Act, 1955. A person registered as OCI for five years is eligible to apply for grant of Indian citizenship under section 5(1) (g) of the Citizenship Act, 1955 if he/she has been residing in India for one year out of the five years before making the application.

The Person of Indian Origin (PIO) Card Scheme holders are entitle to a wide range of economic, financial, educational and cultural benefits. The benefits envisaged under the scheme include:-

(i) No requirement of visa to visit India;
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(ii) No separate "Student Visa" or "Employment Visa" required for admission in colleges/institution or for taking up employment respectively;

(iii) No requirement to register with the Foreigners Registration Officer if continuous stay does not exceed 180 days. Registration is required to be done within a period of 30 days after expiry of 180 days; and

(iv) Parity with Non-Resident Indians in respect of facilities available to the latter in economic, financial, educational fields, etc. These facilities will include:

(a) Acquisition, holding, transfer and disposal of immovable properties in India except for agricultural/plantation properties;

(b) Admission of children in educational institution in India under the general category quota for NRIs—including medical/engineering colleges, IITs, IIMs etc.

(c) Various housing schemes of Life Insurance Corporation of India, State Government and other Government agencies;

(d) Special counters at the immigration check post for speedy clearance.

(v) All future benefits that would be extended to NRIs would also be made to PIO Card holders

(vi) They however cannot enjoy political rights in India.90

6.9. Other important schemes for NRIs/PIOs

Apart from the above mentioned schemes the GOI also introduce several schemes related to educational fields

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6.9.1. Scholarship programme for Diasporas’ children

The specific objective of the Scholarship Scheme is to make higher education in India accessible to the children of Overseas Indians and publicise India as an education hub. Through this scheme, it is hoped that the students selected for such scholarships would become brand ambassadors for India and its educational institutions. Under the proposed Scholarship Scheme, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) provides 100 scholarships to Indian students each year starting from 2006-07. The students are selected on the basis of an entrance test conducted by M/s Educational Consultants India Limited (Ed.CIL), an autonomous body under Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) with whom the Ministry is working on a partnership basis. Children from developing countries where there are no extant educational facilities or have less opportunities for higher studies and where there are large concentrations of the Diasporas are targeted. The scholarship amount provided in 2006-07 would cover approximately 60-70% of the tuition fees, depending on the courses selected. A record number of over 400 applications have been received from Overseas Indian students in 2008 for availing Government’s Scholarships for pursuing under graduate courses in India under the Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children.91

6.9.1.1. Know India Programme

The Know India Programme (KIP) is an on-going programme of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, which aims at associating closely the younger generation of the Indian Diaspora with India. It provides a unique forum for students and young professionals of Indian origin to share their views, expectations and experience and bond closely with contemporary India. This is a three weeks comprehensive orientation programme organised by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. Participants are expected to make full use of this time and the opportunities given by way of connection extensively with each segment in the programme.92

is implemented in partnership with a State Government and the logistics support of the Nehru Yuva Kendra and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). In 2008, three KIPs were organised. The 9th KIP was held from 7th to 28th September 2008 in partnership with the States of Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. The programme was attended by 33 participants from 10 countries. Thus it becomes clear that Indian Government policy towards its Diaspora is primarily guided by its economic interest rather than strong cultural ties.