



## **Role of Indian Diaspora in Senegal: An Appraisal**

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### **Abstract**

*The Indian diaspora in Senegal has emerged as an important contributor to the country's economic, social, and cultural landscape. This study examines both historical trajectories and contemporary experiences of the Indian community in Senegal, focusing on their multifaceted contributions and the challenges they encounter. Drawing on a review of existing scholarly literature and qualitative interviews with community members, the research highlights the diaspora's active engagement in sectors such as trade, manufacturing, and services. In addition to their economic role, members of the diaspora have enriched Senegalese cultural and social life through the creation of religious, educational, and cultural institutions. Despite these contributions, the community continues to face structural challenges, including experiences of discrimination, linguistic barriers, and limited access to broader socio-political networks. The paper concludes with policy recommendations aimed at fostering greater inclusion and empowerment of the Indian diaspora within Senegalese society.*

**Keywords:** Indian diaspora, Senegal, trade, culture, inclusion, empowerment, policy implications.

### **Introduction**

The Indian diaspora in Senegal has evolved through a complex interplay of historical migration trajectories and intercultural exchanges. Its origins can be traced to multiple waves of migration, shaped by factors such as mercantile networks, colonial-era movements, and economic imperatives. These dynamics have contributed to the establishment of a distinct yet integrated Indian presence within Senegalese society, marked by processes of cultural adaptation and mutual influence.

The migration of Indians to Africa, including present-day Senegal, has historical antecedents dating back to ancient trade routes that facilitated early commercial and cultural interactions. During the colonial era, this movement intensified, with a significant number of Indians arriving as indentured labourers and merchants. These migrants played a pivotal role in the economic development of their host societies by establishing trade networks and entrepreneurial ventures. In the aftermath of India's independence, a new wave of migration emerged, comprising skilled professionals, technicians, and businesspersons who sought economic and professional opportunities across various African nations. This post-colonial

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migration contributed to the consolidation and diversification of the Indian diaspora in Senegal, reinforcing their socio-economic integration into the national fabric ( Dubey, 2016 ).

The Indian diaspora in Senegal is a significant community that has been present in the country since the early 20th century. According to the Indian High Commission in Senegal, there are currently around 9,000 people of Indian origin living in Senegal, primarily in the capital city of Dakar (Taneja, 2018). The Indian community in Senegal is diverse, including both long-time residents and recent immigrants, and comprises various ethnic and linguistic groups from different regions of India (Singh, 2019). The relationship between the Indian and Senegalese diasporas has been positive, and they continue to play an important role in promoting cooperation and understanding between the two countries. According to the 2019 estimates from the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, there were approximately 3,000 to 4,000 persons of Indian origin living in Senegal. It is important to note that these numbers may vary depending on the sources and methods used to estimate the Indian diaspora in Senegal.

The Indian diaspora in Senegal has played a vital role in fostering the bilateral relationship between India and Senegal. As noted by Singh (2019), the Indian community has been active in various sectors of the Senegalese economy, including trade, education, and healthcare, and has contributed to the country's socio-economic development. Indian businesses in Senegal are involved in sectors such as textiles, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals, and have established strong trade ties with local partners (Taneja, 2018). Moreover, the Indian community in Senegal has also set up educational and cultural institutions, such as the Indian Cultural Centre in Dakar, which promotes cultural exchange and strengthens people-to-people ties between the two countries (Singh, 2019).

The Indian government has recognized the importance of the Indian diaspora in Senegal and has actively engaged with the community to enhance bilateral relations. In 2018, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs organized the first-ever regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Overseas Indian Day) in Dakar, which brought together members of the Indian diaspora in West Africa to discuss their role in promoting India-Senegal ties (MEA, 2018). The event highlighted the contributions of the Indian community in Senegal and provided a platform for networking and collaboration among Indian and Senegalese businesses and organizations. Furthermore, Senegal is important for India due to its strategic location, political stability, and growing economy. Senegal is strategically located on the west coast of Africa, making it an important gateway to the rest of the African continent. Senegal's strategic location also makes it a hub for trade, investment, and business activities in the region. Apart from that, it is known for its political stability and democratic governance, making it a reliable partner for India in the region. Senegal is also a member of various international organizations, including the United Nations, the African Union, and the World Trade Organization.

### **Statement of Problem**

The Indian diaspora has a significant presence in various parts of the world, including Senegal. The Indian diaspora in Senegal has a long history and has made significant contributions to the economic, cultural, and social development of both India and Senegal. However, despite the diaspora's growing importance, there is limited research on the role of the Indian diaspora in Senegal.

Therefore, the problem statement for studying the role of the Indian diaspora in Senegal could be: There is a lack of understanding of the Indian diaspora's role in Senegal's economic, cultural, and social development, and a need to explore the diaspora's transnational connections and contributions to both India and Senegal. This research aims to fill the gap in the literature and provide insight into the diaspora's influence on the relationship between India and Senegal. By understanding the diaspora's role, policymakers and stakeholders can develop strategies to maximize the diaspora's potential and further enhance India-Senegal relations.

This study aims to investigate the historical and cultural linkages between India and Senegal that have facilitated the emergence and expansion of the Indian diaspora in Senegal. It seeks to analyze the economic engagements of this diaspora, focusing on their roles in investment, entrepreneurship, and employment generation. Additionally, the research explores the broader social and cultural influence of the Indian community in Senegal, including their participation in community development initiatives, charitable endeavours, intercultural interactions, and the preservation of cultural heritage. The study further assesses the key challenges and opportunities encountered by the Indian diaspora, particularly in relation to social integration, instances of discrimination, and the scope for deeper collaboration with Senegalese society. Based on these insights, the research intends to offer policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the diaspora's contributions and strengthening India-Senegal bilateral relations.

### **Methodology**

This is a broad and comprehensive study of the Indian diaspora in Senegal. The present study is based on secondary data collected from books, research journals, magazines, research institute responses, governmental reports, newspaper articles etc. Primary sources like official publications documents press releases, and official statements have also been used to substantiate various ideas and arguments. The study is based on descriptive and analytical analysis, and qualitative and deductive methods.

The Indian diaspora in Senegal faces several challenges that limit its ability to contribute fully to the country's development and enhance the overall bilateral relationship between India and Senegal. Some of the key problems faced by the Indian diaspora in Senegal include limited opportunities for economic engagement, lack of cultural awareness and understanding, limited access to education and training, and inadequate consular services. These challenges hinder the Indian diaspora's ability to play a more significant role in strengthening the relationship between India and Senegal and realizing its full potential as a bridge between the two countries. The present research paper revolves around the question of the Indian diaspora in Senegal and how does it impact Senegalese society and economy?

### **Significance and Scope of the Study**

The study on the Indian diaspora in Senegal is limited, but there are some studies that provide insights into the historical, cultural, economic, and social aspects of the Indian diaspora's presence in Senegal. Kumar (2018) provides a comprehensive analysis of India-Senegal relations, including a study of cultural and economic ties. The author notes that India and Senegal have had long-standing historical and cultural ties, and that these ties have contributed to the establishment and growth of the Indian diaspora in Senegal. The study also highlights the potential for the Indian diaspora to contribute to the economic development of Senegal, particularly in the areas of trade and investment. Ghosh (2019) discusses the role of the Indian diaspora in Africa, with a focus on the opportunities for collaboration between India and Senegal. The author notes that the Indian diaspora has been involved in various economic activities in Senegal, such as investments, entrepreneurship, and job creation. The study

emphasizes the potential for the Indian diaspora to contribute to Senegal's economic growth and development, particularly through increased collaboration between Indian and Senegalese businesses. Sarkar (2021) provides a case study of the Indian diaspora in Senegal, focusing on their role in Senegalese society and economy. The study notes that the Indian diaspora in Senegal is relatively small but has a significant impact on the local economy, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, and entrepreneurship. The study also highlights the social and cultural contributions of the Indian diaspora, including their involvement in community service and cultural preservation. Sinha (2020) examines the Indian diaspora's presence in Senegal from an exploratory perspective. The study highlights the challenges faced by the Indian diaspora, including discrimination and cultural barriers, as well as their contributions to Senegalese society, particularly in the areas of education and healthcare. The study emphasizes the need for greater collaboration between Indian and Senegalese communities to improve the Indian diaspora's integration into Senegalese society.

### **Theoretical Framework**

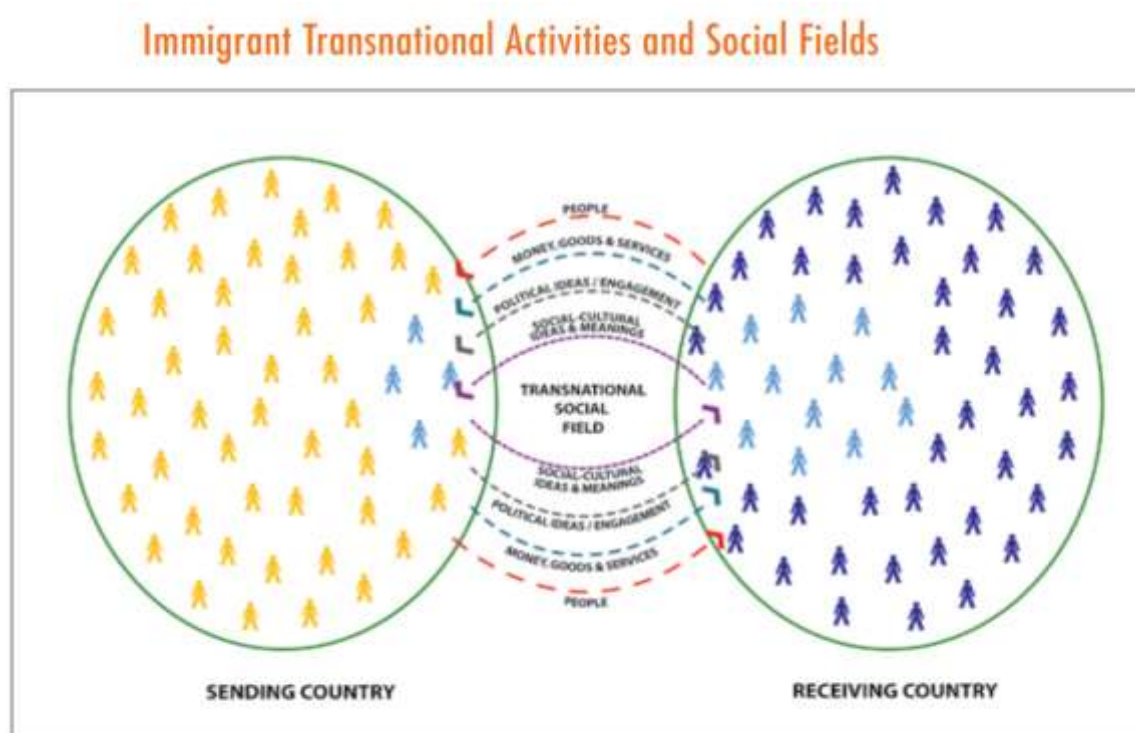
The theoretical framework of transnationalism provides a valuable lens for understanding the cultural practices of the Indian diaspora in Senegal. According to Levitt and Schiller (2004), transnationalism recognizes that migrants often maintain ties with their country of origin while also engaging with their new host country. In the case of the Indian diaspora in Senegal, this framework can be used to analyze how members of the community navigate their transnational identities and negotiate their cultural and economic ties between India and Senegal. The interconnectedness and fluidity of social, economic, and cultural processes that transcend national borders. Transnationalism recognizes that diaspora communities often maintain ties with their country of origin while also engaging with their new host country. Example: "The Indian diaspora in Senegal can be analyzed using the theoretical framework of transnationalism, which recognizes that migrants often maintain ties with their country of origin while also engaging with their new host country" (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

The transnationalism theoretical framework emphasizes the idea that migrants maintain social, cultural, economic, and political ties with their home country while simultaneously adapting to the host country's cultural and social environment (Schiller & Fouron, 1999). The Transnationalism framework is particularly relevant to the Indian diaspora in Senegal because it highlights the diaspora's ability to maintain strong connections with India while also contributing to the social, cultural, and economic development of Senegal. It allows for the analysis of the various dimensions of the Indian diaspora's role in Senegal. For example, economically, the Indian diaspora plays a significant role in promoting economic ties between India and Senegal. Many Indian businesses operate in Senegal, providing employment opportunities and contributing to the local economy. Similarly, the diaspora facilitates trade between India and Senegal, acting as a conduit for trade and investment.

Culturally, the Indian diaspora in Senegal contributes to the promotion of Indian culture and traditions. They establish various cultural associations and organizations, such as the Indian Association of Senegal and the Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture in Dakar, which promote Indian culture, language, and values. The diaspora also participates in cultural events and festivals, contributing to the cultural diversity of Senegal. Socially, the Indian diaspora in Senegal contributes to the development of social infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, and community centres. They also participate in philanthropic activities, providing aid and support to the local community. Therefore, the Transnationalism framework is best suited for studying the role of the Indian diaspora in Senegal because it highlights the diaspora's ability to maintain

strong connections with India while also contributing to the social, cultural, and economic development of Senegal.

According to Portes (1998), social capital is the social networks, relationships, and trust that facilitate economic and social exchange. Social capital can be particularly important for diaspora communities, as they often rely on their networks for support and assistance. In the case of the Indian diaspora in Senegal, this framework can be used to analyze the role of social capital in facilitating economic and cultural exchange between the two countries, as well as the challenges and opportunities that arise from these networks. Example: "The theoretical framework of social capital can be applied to analyzing the role of the Indian diaspora in Senegal, as social networks, relationships, and trust are important for facilitating economic and social exchange between diaspora communities and their host country" (Portes, 1998).



**Fig.1, Immigrants' Transnational Activities and Social Fields**

Source: Alvaro Lima (September 17, 2010). Transnationalism: A New Mode of Immigrant Integration. The Mauricio Gastón Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125

### Drivers of India and Senegal's Relationship

India and Senegal have had diplomatic relations since the latter's independence in 1960 (Jain, 2018). The bilateral relationship between the two countries has been driven by several factors, including trade, culture, and geopolitical interests. Trade has been a significant driver of India-Senegal relations, with the two countries seeking to expand their economic ties. In 2019, the total trade between India and Senegal was worth \$290 million, with India exporting pharmaceuticals, textiles, and machinery to Senegal, while Senegal exported raw cashew nuts, fertilizer, and seafood to India (Embassy of India Dakar, 2021). Historical records indicate a long-standing preference in Senegal for Indian textiles, particularly indigo-dyed cottons, which were valued for their quality and aesthetic appeal. This historical trade forged early material cultural connections predating formal diplomatic ties (Modi, 2020).

Cultural ties have also played a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between India and Senegal. The two countries have engaged in several cultural exchange programs, including the establishment of the Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture in Dakar, Senegal, in 2008 (Jain, 2018). Cultural cooperation often aligns with the broader framework of South-South cooperation, emphasizing solidarity, shared developmental aspirations, and mutual learning rather than a hierarchical donor-recipient model. The popularity of Indian cultural products, coupled with India's developmental assistance in areas like human resource development, contributes to a positive perception of India in Senegal, fostering a "benign narrative of shared political and economic interests" (South Asia@LSE, 2016).

Geopolitical interests have also been a factor driving the India-Senegal relationship. Senegal is a member of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, making it an important player in the region. India has sought to strengthen its ties with African countries in recent years as part of its "Africa Policy," which aims to enhance political, economic, and cultural cooperation between India and African nations (Singh, 2020). Bilateral Cultural Exchange Programs, such as the one covering 2022-2026, facilitate reciprocal visits of artists, cultural troupes, and exhibitions, promoting mutual appreciation of performing arts and visual culture. The participation of Senegalese cultural troupes in Indian festivals (e.g., Surajkund International Crafts Mela) and Indian artists performing in Senegal exemplifies this exchange (MEA, 2025).

### **The Expectations of India and Senegal From Their Bilateral Relationship**

India and Senegal have high expectations from their bilateral relationship. Both countries seek to strengthen their economic, cultural, and geopolitical ties to achieve mutual benefits. In terms of economic expectations, India seeks to expand its trade relations with Senegal by exploring new sectors and enhancing investment opportunities. India has expressed its interest in investing in Senegal's infrastructure, energy, and agriculture sectors, which can help in creating job opportunities and promoting economic growth in Senegal (Embassy of India Dakar, 2021). Senegal, on the other hand, expects to benefit from India's expertise in technology and pharmaceuticals, and also aims to increase its exports to India. Senegal's exports to India primarily consist of raw cashew nuts, and the country seeks to diversify its exports to include other products such as textiles, seafood, and handicrafts (Embassy of Senegal in India, 2021). Culturally, both India and Senegal expect to deepen their cultural ties through exchange programs and collaborations. The Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture in Dakar, Senegal, which promotes Indian culture and language, is a symbol of the strong cultural ties between the two countries (Jain, 2018).

Geopolitically, India and Senegal aim to strengthen their cooperation on international issues, particularly on issues related to the United Nations, climate change, and terrorism. India has extended its support to Senegal in various international forums, advocating for the interests of developing countries, while Senegal supports India's bid for permanent membership in the UN Security Council (Embassy of Senegal in India, 2021).

### **Discussion**

#### **Economic Activities and Contributions of the Indian Diaspora in Senegal**

The Indian diaspora in Senegal is involved in a range of economic activities, including trade, manufacturing, and services (Rao, 2008). One study found that Indian-owned businesses accounted for a significant portion of the formal sector in Senegal, particularly in industries such as textiles, food processing, and printing (Sow, 2015). These businesses provide

employment opportunities for both Indians and Senegalese and contribute to the country's economy through taxes and investments (Rao, 2008).

Furthermore, the Indian diaspora in Senegal has played a key role in promoting trade between India and Senegal. Many Indian-owned businesses in Senegal serve as a link between Indian suppliers and Senegalese consumers, importing goods such as textiles, electronics, and food products from India (Sow, 2015). This has contributed to the growth of trade between the two countries, which has increased significantly in recent years (Embassy of India, Dakar, n.d.). Overall, the economic activities and contributions of the Indian diaspora in Senegal are significant and have helped to strengthen the economic ties between India and Senegal.

India has indeed been exploring opportunities to enhance energy cooperation with Senegal, given the West African country's significant oil and gas reserves. In recent years, India has been investing in Senegal's energy sector, particularly in the areas of oil exploration and renewable energy. In 2019, India's state-run oil company, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), signed a pact with Senegal's national oil company, Petrosen, to explore opportunities for oil and gas exploration in the West African country (Business Standard, 2019). This agreement is expected to facilitate greater cooperation between the two countries in the field of hydrocarbons and strengthen India's energy security.

Senegal has been investing in solar energy in recent years as a way to increase access to electricity and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The government has set ambitious targets for increasing the percentage of renewable energy in the country's overall energy mix, and many international organizations and private companies are involved in developing and financing solar projects in Senegal.

Furthermore, India has also been investing in renewable energy projects in Senegal. In 2019, India's EXIM Bank provided a \$35 million line of credit to Senegal for the construction of a 29.5 MW solar power plant in the country (Economic Times, 2019). The project, which was executed by an Indian company, Jakson Engineers, is expected to provide clean energy to around 226,500 people in Senegal and contribute to the country's goal of achieving 30% renewable energy by 2025.

The Indian diaspora in Senegal has played a significant role in contributing to the country's energy security through their involvement in various energy projects and programs. Their contributions have not only helped to provide access to clean energy but also supported the development of local capacity and expertise in the energy sector.

One notable example is the contribution of the Indian company, Azure Power, in the development of Senegal's first large-scale solar power plant, the Senergy 2 project. The project, which was commissioned in 2019, has a capacity of 20 MW and is expected to provide clean energy to around 160,000 households in Senegal (Azure Power, 2019). Furthermore, the Indian diaspora in Senegal has also been involved in providing technical expertise and training to local communities in the energy sector. This has helped to build local capacity and contribute to the long-term sustainability of energy projects in the country. Apart from that, the Indian diaspora can facilitate business ties between Indian and Senegalese companies in the energy sector. They can help Indian companies navigate the local business environment and establish partnerships with local companies in the energy sector.

The Indian diaspora in Senegal can encourage investment in the energy sector by promoting opportunities for investment in renewable energy projects, such as solar power, and advocating for policies that promote investment in the energy sector.

### **The Social and Cultural Impact of the Indian Diaspora in Senegal**

The Indian diaspora in Senegal has also had a significant social and cultural impact on the country. One way in which they have contributed to the cultural landscape of Senegal is

The Indian community in Senegal actively celebrates Indian festivals (e.g., Diwali, Holi, Navratri), which not only maintain their cultural identity but also offer opportunities for Senegalese individuals to engage with Indian traditions and customs. This informal interaction complements official cultural initiatives (MEA, 2025). Indian classical dance and music have been popular in Senegal, with many Senegalese artists incorporating elements of Indian culture into their own work. In addition, there have been several cultural events and festivals organized by both countries to celebrate their shared heritage. In 2018, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations organized a cultural festival in Dakar featuring Indian classical music and dance, performed by both Indian and Senegalese artists trained in these traditions, attracting public and media attention (ICCR, 2018). In 2020, the Embassy of Senegal in India held a virtual exhibition titled Indo-Senegalese Artistic Dialogue, featuring works by artists from both countries engaged in a cultural exchange program. The exhibition promoted cross-cultural understanding by highlighting artistic convergences and distinctions (Embassy of Senegal in India, 2020). Moreover, the Indian diaspora in Senegal has formed close social networks within their own community and with other communities in Senegal (Rao, 2008). These networks provide a sense of community and support for Indians living in Senegal, as well as facilitate cultural exchange and promote intercultural understanding between Indians and Senegalese.

However, there have also been some tensions between the Indian community and other communities in Senegal, particularly around issues such as land ownership and business competition (Sow, 2015). Some Senegalese have criticized the Indian community for not integrating fully into Senegalese society and for maintaining a separate social and cultural identity. However, the social and cultural impact of the Indian diaspora in Senegal is complex and multifaceted, with both positive and negative aspects.

India's expertise in information technology, space research, and biotechnology has positioned it as a key partner for Senegal, which seeks support in building its digital infrastructure, e-governance systems, and telemedicine services (MEA, 2021).

Dr. Kumar, who previously worked for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), has been involved in helping Senegal develop its space capabilities, including building its first-ever satellite, known as the Senegalese Earth Observation Microsatellite (SEOM). The SEOM is expected to be launched into space in the near future and will be used for remote sensing and other applications. His work in Senegal has been recognized by both the Indian and Senegalese governments, and he has been awarded the Order of Merit by the President of Senegal for his contributions to the development of space technology in the country.

### **Challenges Faced by the Indian Diaspora in Senegal**

The Indian diaspora in Senegal faces a number of challenges, both economic and social. One of the main economic challenges is the difficulty of doing business in Senegal, which can be characterized by high levels of bureaucracy and corruption (Sow, 2015). This can make it



difficult for Indian-owned businesses to obtain permits, licenses, and other necessary documentation, which can hinder their ability to operate and grow.

Another challenge faced by the Indian diaspora in Senegal is discrimination and racism. Indians in Senegal have been subject to discrimination and xenophobia, with some Senegalese viewing them as outsiders who do not fully integrate into Senegalese society (Rao, 2008). This can manifest in a range of ways, such as difficulties in finding housing or facing harassment in public.

In addition to these economic and social challenges, the Indian diaspora in Senegal also faces cultural challenges. Maintaining a connection to Indian culture and traditions can be difficult in a country where the dominant culture is very different, and there can be pressure to assimilate fully into Senegalese culture (Rao, 2008). Therefore, the challenges faced by the Indian diaspora in Senegal are complex and multifaceted, and require a nuanced understanding of the social, economic, and cultural factors at play.

### **Opportunities in Senegal**

The Indian diaspora in Senegal also faces several opportunities that have arisen from their presence in the country. One of the primary opportunities is in the field of business, as Indian entrepreneurs have been able to tap into the growing Senegalese economy and establish successful enterprises (Sow, 2015). Indian-owned businesses in Senegal operate in a range of sectors, including agriculture, textiles, and technology, and have made significant contributions to the country's economic development.

Another opportunity that the Indian diaspora in Senegal has is in the field of education. Many Indian families in Senegal prioritize education and have established schools and educational institutions that cater to both Indian and Senegalese students (Rao, 2008). These institutions provide access to quality education and promote cross-cultural understanding between Indians and Senegalese.

In addition to these economic and educational opportunities, the Indian diaspora in Senegal has also been able to promote cultural exchange and contribute to the country's cultural diversity (Rao, 2008). By sharing their traditions and customs, Indians in Senegal have been able to broaden the cultural horizons of the Senegalese people and promote intercultural understanding. However, the Indian diaspora in Senegal faces several opportunities, including in business, education, and culture, that can contribute to both their own success and the development of the country as a whole. Additionally, the Indian diaspora in Senegal can promote sustainable development by advocating for policies and initiatives that promote the use of renewable energy and encourage energy efficiency. They can also organize events and awareness campaigns to promote sustainable development in the local community.

India and Senegal, being vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, can work together in addressing the issue by sharing technical expertise and collaborating in international forums. As per the report by the World Bank, climate change will have significant impacts on Senegal, including increasing temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and rising sea levels, which will affect agricultural production, food security, and coastal areas (World Bank, 2021). Similarly, India also faces climate change impacts, such as erratic rainfall, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise, which threaten its food and water security and sustainable development (Climate Action Tracker, 2021).

India can provide technical expertise to Senegal in areas such as renewable energy, water management, and sustainable agriculture, which are critical for adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change. For example, India has made significant progress in renewable energy, with a target of achieving 450 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030 (Government of India, 2021). Senegal can learn from India's experience in renewable energy and explore the potential for renewable energy deployment in its own context.

India and Senegal can also collaborate in international forums such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to promote global action on climate change. Both countries have been active in the UNFCCC negotiations and have made commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. India has committed to reducing the emission intensity of its GDP by 33-35% by 2030 from 2005 levels and to achieving 40% of its installed power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030 (Government of India, 2021). Senegal has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 7.2% by 2030 (NDC Partnership, 2021). By working together in international forums, India and Senegal can advocate for stronger global action on climate change and promote the interests of vulnerable countries.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

There are several implications for policy and practice that arise from the experiences of the Indian diaspora in Senegal. One of the primary policy implications is the need to address the challenges faced by Indian-owned businesses in Senegal, particularly in relation to bureaucratic and regulatory barriers (Sow, 2015). Policies that streamline business processes and reduce corruption can help to support the growth and success of Indian entrepreneurs in the country.

Another policy implication is the need to address discrimination and promote intercultural understanding between Indians and Senegalese. Policies that promote diversity and inclusion can help to create an environment in which the Indian diaspora can fully participate in Senegalese society (Rao, 2008). Additionally, policies that support cultural exchange and education can help to promote cross-cultural understanding and contribute to the development of a multicultural society in Senegal.

In terms of practice, there is a need for Indian diaspora organizations in Senegal to provide support and resources to members of the community who are facing challenges. These organizations can help to provide assistance with navigating bureaucracy and accessing resources, as well as promoting cultural exchange and providing educational opportunities (Rao, 2008).

Overall, policies and practices that support the economic, social, and cultural integration of the Indian diaspora in Senegal can contribute to the success of both the community and the country as a whole. Here are some policy recommendations for improving the role and impact of the Indian diaspora in Senegal and enhancing the overall bilateral relations between India and Senegal with relevant citations:

**Strengthening Cultural Ties:** According to a report by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, India has been promoting cultural exchange programs with Senegal since the early 1990s. However, there is still room for improvement. The report suggests that Indian cultural organizations should work closely with the Indian diaspora in Senegal to organize more cultural events and festivals to promote Indian culture in Senegal (ICCR, 2016).

**Economic Engagement:** India and Senegal have already signed several agreements to promote economic cooperation, including a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and a Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of trade and investment. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) suggests that the Indian diaspora can play a crucial role in facilitating business connections between India and Senegal (CII, 2019). Senegal is one of India's important trading partners in Africa, and India has been providing technical and financial assistance to Senegal in various sectors, including agriculture, and healthcare.

According to a report by the Ministry of External Affairs of India, the Indian community in Senegal has been involved in the development and implementation of various energy projects in the country, including solar power projects and rural electrification programs (MEA, 2019).

**Education and Training:** The Indian diaspora in Senegal holds strategic potential in facilitating access to educational opportunities for Senegalese students by leveraging their transnational networks and familiarity with both Indian and local educational systems. This engagement aligns with India's broader Africa policy, which emphasizes capacity building and human resource development over large-scale infrastructure projects, distinguishing its approach from that of other global actors such as China (Filijović & Babić, 2022; Alam & Gupta, 2014). As part of this strategy, the Government of India has introduced various scholarship and training programs aimed at African students, including the India-Africa Scholarship Scheme, which provides financial support for higher education in Indian institutions (MEA, 2022). By actively identifying and mentoring promising students, the Indian diaspora can serve as a vital link in enhancing educational collaboration and strengthening India Senegal ties.

**Consular Services:** The Indian diaspora in Senegal can play a critical role in providing consular services to the Indian community in Senegal. According to the Indian embassy in Senegal, the Indian diaspora can approach the embassy for passport renewal, visa applications, and other legal services. The embassy also conducts regular consular camps to provide services to the Indian community (Embassy of India, Dakar).

**Strengthening People-to-People Ties:** People-to-people ties can be strengthened through various activities, including cultural events, sports tournaments, and community service activities. The Indian diaspora in Senegal can play a critical role in organizing such activities. For example, the Indian Association of Dakar organizes cultural events and sports tournaments to promote Indian culture and build bridges between the Indian and Senegalese communities (Indian Association of Dakar).

Therefore, by promoting cultural exchange, facilitating economic engagement, promoting education and training, providing consular services, and building people-to-people ties, the Indian diaspora in Senegal can help in enhancing the overall relationship between India and Senegal. From a policy perspective, the Senegalese government can take several steps to further strengthen the ties between the two countries and promote the role of the Indian diaspora in the country's development. Policy measures may include incentivizing Indian entrepreneurs in the SME sector through financial and regulatory support, streamlining business registration processes in Senegal, encouraging diaspora-led philanthropy with tax benefits, and promoting Indo-Senegalese cultural exchange through joint events and festivals.

## Limitations and Future Research Directions

While there is a growing body of literature on the Indian diaspora in Senegal, there are still several limitations and gaps in the research that need to be addressed. One of the primary limitations is the lack of quantitative data on the demographic, economic, and social characteristics of the Indian diaspora in Senegal (Rao, 2008). Future research could focus on collecting and analyzing this data to gain a better understanding of the community and its contributions to Senegalese society. Another limitation is the focus on the experiences of Indian entrepreneurs in Senegal, which leaves out other members of the Indian diaspora community (Sow, 2015). Future research could explore the experiences of Indian professionals, students, and families in Senegal, as well as their interactions with the broader Senegalese society.

In addition, there is a need to explore the role of gender in the experiences of the Indian diaspora in Senegal. While some research has been conducted on the experiences of Indian women in West Africa more broadly, there is a lack of research specific to the Indian diaspora in Senegal (Shah, 2012). Future research could explore the challenges and opportunities faced by Indian women in Senegal, as well as their contributions to the community. Overall, there is a need for more comprehensive and nuanced research on the Indian diaspora in Senegal, which can help to inform policies and practices that support the community and promote its integration into Senegalese society.

## Conclusion

Despite the small size of the Indian community in Senegal, it has made significant contributions to the country's economy and society. The Indian community is well-respected and has a positive image in Senegal. India and Senegal share a long history of cultural and economic ties, and the Indian community in Senegal plays an important role in strengthening these ties.

In conclusion, the Indian diaspora in Senegal plays a significant role in strengthening the relationship between India and Senegal. Their contribution to the Senegalese economy and society, as well as their efforts to promote cultural exchange and people-to-people ties, have helped to deepen the bilateral relationship between the two countries. India and Senegal can collaborate and learn from each other in areas such as renewable energy, water management, and sustainable agriculture to address the impacts of climate change. They can also work together in international forums to promote global action on climate change and advocate for the interests of vulnerable countries.

Apart from that, India and Senegal can work together to promote regional security and stability in West Africa. India can provide training and support to Senegal in the areas of defence and security, and both countries can cooperate in counter-terrorism efforts.

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