

## **The Influence of Indian Diaspora on the Politics of the Host Country: the United States**

H. M. M. Sakunthala

Management Consultant/Lecturer, National Institute of Business Management, Colombo

The term 'diaspora' originally associates with the dispersion of Jews living amongst Gentiles. In the modern context, the definition of the term has expanded to give meaning to people living outside their homelands, but nevertheless, maintaining a relationship with them. Diasporas may either blend well with the host country or attempt to keep their distinctive cultures alive. Among the many diasporas in the world, the Indian diaspora by far has become a powerful community regardless of the host country they live in. The first Indians arrived in the United States in the beginning of the twentieth century. They experienced many racial hardships. At one point, Asians were banned from entering the United States with the Asian Exclusion League and later were prohibited to own lands with the Alien Land Law in 1913. Yet, in the modern times, the Indian diaspora stands as one of the strongest, most influential groups that create an impact in the 'multicultural melting pot' of America. They have risen from the grassroot level workers such as labourers to an academically, professionally, and economically powerful, well established group of people who are influential ethically and politically. There are more than one and a half million Indians living in the United States today, transforming the politics of their host country as time passes. This research attempts to find out whether the Indian diaspora has actually transformed from an insignificant group to a powerful group in the host country they live in, and how strongly their influence is felt in the host country. The research may pave the way to understanding the Sri Lankan diaspora's role in the homeland and the host country in the future.

**Key words:** diaspora, transformation, cultures and communities, homeland, host country