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Abstract

*Diaspora Studies have become an essential academic discipline nowadays as previously diaspora was just a scattered population who fled from their host countries due to economic reasons, threats, wars, political unrest, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and violence but it has become an asset for other nations due to the migration of intellectuals, Surgeons, IT Professionals, Lawyers, etc. and developed countries like the USA, Canada, Australia, UK, etc. have started the process of immigration and are inviting skilled labor from the globe which have caused brain drain in several countries and host countries are taking benefit of the educated diaspora similarly Pakistani diaspora have migrated to USA and are part of their system and essential stakeholder in foreign policy formulation process towards Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Nexus, Foreign Policy, Academic, Pakistani, Nuclear, Victim, Labor, Culture, Communities, Nostalgia

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### Title

#### Role of Pakistani Diaspora in US Foreign Policy

#### Abstract

*Diaspora Studies have become an essential academic discipline nowadays as previously diaspora was just a scattered population who fled from their host countries due to economic reasons, threats, wars, political unrest, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and violence but it has become an asset for other nations due to the migration of intellectuals, Surgeons, IT Professionals, Lawyers, etc. and developed countries like the USA, Canada, Australia, UK, etc. have started the process of immigration and are inviting skilled labor from the globe which have caused brain drain in several countries and host countries are taking benefit of the educated diaspora similarly Pakistani diaspora have migrated to USA and are part of their system and essential stakeholder in foreign policy formulation process towards Pakistan.*

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**Keywords:** [Diaspora](#), [Nexus](#), [Foreign Policy](#), [Academic](#), [Pakistani](#), [Nuclear](#), [Victim](#), [Labor](#), [Culture](#), [Communities](#), [Nostalgia](#)

#### Introduction:

##### Diaspora

Diaspora is the movement of a certain group of people from their original homeland to some other destination. It is also known as a community of people who share similar identity, religion, and culture and are living somewhere else and have left their ancestral land. Diaspora communities maintain political, emotional, and cultural ties back home, and through the same language, rituals, festivals, religion, and social networks they can reduce the feelings of nostalgia and try to be together.

Nowadays the world is technology so it is easy for diasporas to connect to their loved ones in the past it was not possible to have a facility like video calls and in this way, they connect to their own cultures and also impact other cultures (Berthomière, 2005) and economies as now diasporas also have economic and political importance as most of the countries engage their diasporas for cultural promotion, diplomacy and use them as an asset for their homeland.

As many brilliant minds are a part of the diaspora, for example, surgeons, IT Professionals, lawyers, and professors who have moved to different lands due to threats in their home country or economic reasons so the



new countries make vital use of them by using their services for their public by giving them jobs and deputing them where they feel the need as many countries where there is a shortage of skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled labor diasporas have filled in the positions for running the system of the state, for example, Canada (Van, 1998) is a cold country with less population and they are also not into having lots of babies so diaspora from other world is part of their workforce in every sector and industry which helps to run the state affairs so nowadays diaspora has got great political, social and economic significance and diaspora studies has become a famous academic discipline.

### Victim Diaspora

Many people around the globe who never wanted to leave their homelands had to flee to other countries due to wars and violence in the countries due to political and religious reasons if we go back to history we have numerous examples of where people had to leave due to oppression, for example, Jewish diaspora, African Diaspora, Armenian Diaspora, Shiia Diaspora who faced ethnic cleansing, genocide and violence so to protect their life they flee to different countries and claimed asylum due to threat of life in their home countries. There is a long history associated with these tribes related to political or religious differences which lead to animosity and genocide.

### Labor Diaspora

People who migrate to other nations due to poor economic conditions in their home countries especially due to low wages, unemployment, nepotism, and corruption are known as labor diaspora most popular examples are Filipino (Malik, 2008) overseas workers who mostly seen in the middle east and North America doing blue-collar jobs like cleaning, car washing, loading work etc and we see lots of Indian and Pakistani IT professionals who due to low wages in home countries migrate to USA, UK and Australia for working as software engineers and IT experts, other is African migrant workers who due to poverty and economic conditions of Africa moved to US and Middle east for work opportunities.

### Cultural Diaspora

This phenomenon refers to the communities that migrated from their homelands due to multiple issues like trade, violence, work, and political and economic conditions and are leading to protect their own culture in different lands which often leads to cultural hybridization (Nimer, 2002) which is a blend of both cultures. People try to maintain their own culture in different homelands by using their mother tongue at home, traveling,

remittances, and cultural practices. Examples of such diaspora are Jewish diaspora, African diaspora, Chinese diaspora, Pakistani diaspora, and Indian diaspora.

### Trade Diaspora

People who flee to other lands with their families for the purpose of trade and business are known as the trade diaspora. This group of people is an asset for international trading and due to them, new trading routes are explored along with the introduction of contemporary trading products. (Merz, 2008). This sort of business communication helps in maintaining healthy relationships among countries by benefiting both nations economically and exploring each other's culture and main diasporas include Chinese, Armenian, Indian, and Jewish which also explored trading routes in the past.

### Pakistani Diaspora

The trends of migration from Pakistan are not new as after the 1970s when there were political and economic disturbances started in Pakistan so many of the unskilled and semi-skilled started migrating to Middle Eastern countries like UAE, Saudia, Qatar, etc., and after that migration to the UK, USA, Canada, and Australia became a trend and many doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc. also started immigrating due to economic or security issues as we see that there are sectarian, provincial, security, and economic instability in Pakistan so due to these reasons educated class also started to move abroad and the problem of brain drain started in the country which is a different area of research that resulted in the polarization of country which created a gap of rich and poor (Lyon, 2011). Pakistanis are migrating abroad, and this trend is increasing day by day due to poverty, unemployment, security issues, corruption, inflation and political instability and lot of frustration can be seen in Pakistani youth, and many incidents are reported where people died while traveling illegally via naval routes to move abroad.

Pakistani Diaspora is a mix of sectarian and provincial segments starting from Shiia Diaspora, Sunni Diaspora, Punjabi Diaspora, Sindhi Diaspora, Balochi Diaspora, Pathan Diaspora, etc. and numerous ethnic and area-wise divisions are part of Pakistani Diaspora which is present all around the world mainly in Middle East, Europe and America and if a research is conducted every diaspora got its own dynamics (Rashid, 2017) and multiple reasons to migrate from the home country Pakistan. The majority of reasons will be life security or economic reasons and in today's world, many countries are now well aware of the Pakistani diaspora and their strengths and weaknesses, and many articles and books are published on the Pakistani Diaspora.

## Challenges Faced by Pakistani Diaspora in the USA

There are numerous challenges faced by the Pakistani Diaspora in the USA ranging from the type of Pakistani Diaspora and its particular challenges and it depends on the time in which they have migrated to the USA and on which visa they immigrated as the scenario related to the USA changed and divided into Pre 9/11 period and Post 9/11 period so first of all are the educated and skilled immigrants who moved to USA and rest are semi-skilled, unskilled or uneducated people migrating to the USA which faced challenges in Pre 9/11 period and their challenges doubled in the Post 9/11 era due to attacks and the wave of Islamophobia (Najam, 2007) effected more of uneducated diaspora or people with not legal documents in USA on the other hand educated and skilled class faced discrimination in offices as Muslims were blamed to be terrorist around the globe and especially women wearing scarfs were targeted, checking became severe on USA airports and many people have to wait for hours to get clearance.

The other issue was the politics and issues among the diaspora population themselves which was the same as used to back in the home country, for example, sectarian issues such as Shiia, Sunni, and Wahhabi diaspora have the same conflicts and separated mosques inside the USA (Nasr, 2006) also and on the other hand Punjabi or Pathan diaspora has same favoritism problem which is faced in Pakistan so due to these internal conflicts and rivalries their participation in US politics and foreign policy was always limited or affected as they need to come out of the back home mentality to have a unanimous Pakistani diaspora in USA.

Another was the strong feelings of nostalgia and identity crisis which were faced by most of the diaspora when I interviewed them mostly were depressed and were always myth to go back and settle down in their home country but due to jobs, children's education, or their business it was just a dream to go back and many were just thinking about it since years. The Pakistani diaspora in the USA faces several challenges, ranging from cultural and social to economic and political.

## USA- Pakistan Relations

USA-Pakistan relations can be called a "jigsaw puzzle" because it seemed that the relations kept changing since Pakistan came into existence as a separate nation on the world map. Initially, US- Pakistan relations were healthy and with the passage of time and with the change of political leaders on both sides the relations deteriorated. As we see India, China, and Afghanistan are the main key factors for the ups and downs in relations. The USA is a strong advocate of "capitalism" while the soviet union

was "communist" so these are opposing ideologies that led to the rivalry between the two superpowers in the past Pakistan being a newly emerging state needed to balance its relationship with both countries and India on the other side which is Pakistan's rival had been friends with the Soviet Union (Theodore, 2024) similarly Pakistan was in good terms with China and if we talk about the USA it needs a base from Pakistan initially to have a look at soviet unions secret missile systems but when leaders like socialist Bhutto came to the picture of relations changed as he was a staunch advocate of Pakistan being a nuclear state while US never wanted it and then after he was hanged the relations again went smooth but Afghan factor and the incident of 9/11 toppled the situation and again USA blamed Pakistan for providing safe heavens for terrorists and the wave of Islamophobia prevailed in the USA which again created misunderstandings. US exit from Afghanistan also led to the loss of US interests in Pakistan but still, there is facilitation and cooperation over public health trade, education programs, democracy, and Human Rights Programs.

## USA Foreign Policy towards Pakistan

USA always had a smart policy towards Pakistan and it has always secured its interests first being a capitalistic model it has seen its own strategic interests in supporting Pakistan and being a struggling nation Pakistan was in need of funds and it was in Pakistan's interest to be alliance of a super power to get a stability as a newly formed state so it was vice versa but changes and circumstances changed as we see China, India, Russia and Afghanistan are the nations due to which the US policies towards Pakistan is always changing despite of providing billions of dollars aid to Pakistan and using its bases US is still not satisfied with Pakistan's cooperation and is more inclined towards India (Rashid, 2017). As we can see from the start in the initial times when Pakistan came into existence, there was a rivalry going on between the Soviet Union and the USA so Pakistan was a country that got a lucrative strategic position, and due to that the US had smooth policies towards Pakistan and our Presidents often visit the USA and were welcomed with honor but when the nuclear program started in Pakistan, USA maintained a distance and went close to India so it was never a balanced policy and even Pakistan's military cooperated with USA in the war against terror and still after the killing of Usama- bin- Ladin in Abbottabad Pakistan by US forces and exit of USA forces from Afghanistan USA again is hesitant to keep a positive relation with Pakistan as its clear that in global politics most of the state keep the need-based relationship and the policies are a dependant of time and political circumstances going around the globe and similar can be understood when we talk about US foreign policy towards Pakistan

## Impact of Pakistani Diaspora on US Foreign Policy

There are multiple ways in which Pakistani Diaspora impacts US Foreign Policy as there are more than five lac Pakistanis residing in different states of the USA specifically in New

York, Chicago, Houston, and Washington DC. There are multiple lobbies and organizations working who hold influence in US Politics and Society, for example, the Pakistani American Political Action Committee which is responsible for advocating the rights of Pakistanis living in the United States and ensuring their participation in US politics (Nadeem, 2023) and this body also engages to educate Pakistanis to learn about the US political and electoral system and cast their vote to the candidate which suits to their community, its other goal is fundraising for US political parties and candidates who are aligned with the Pakistani community interests and goals. This organization also works to increase the political influence of the Pakistani community residing in the USA and encourage them to participate in the US political system.

Recently Ms. Sadaf Jaffer who holds a PhD from Harvard University served as Mayor of the USA and she is the first Pakistani to hold this position, more over this committee is involved in the collection of funds for causes and nominated candidates for elections. PAC is also involved in educational events including seminars, workshops, and conferences to create awareness among the community regarding the promotion of US-Pakistan relations and generate political awareness further it is responsible for connecting Pakistani American academia, policymakers, think tanks, and community leaders with US politicians and Policymakers to improve the image of Pakistan (Hilali, 2005) and eradicate the misunderstandings created due to ideologies like Islamophobia, this improves the US- Pakistan relations and promotes peace and ease for policymakers on both sides to keep balanced relations which also provides a sense of security to the diaspora in USA especially in the post 9/11 era.

## Conclusion

It has been observed that Pakistani people have started to migrate to Middle Eastern countries first due to economic reasons and the trend shifted to the UK and USA with the passage of time. Educated people and Businessmen started to migrate towards USA and with the passage of time the trend increased and mostly according to survey reports and research conducted by various institutes and universities mainly doctors,engineers,IT professionals,lawyers and businessmen started to move towards USA mainly in New York , Washington DC, Chicago ,Houston and California Eckstein, S. (2013) and

students who migrated for the purpose of study never went back home after getting jobs and getting married only few went back home and most of them again came back to USA and now approximately seven hundred thousand Pakistanis are residing in USA who are called 'Pakistani-Americans' and are mostly educated and hold at least Bachelor's degree (Lyon, 2011) and working for different sectors like health ,IT Industry, Engineering Industry ,Law Sector,Universities etc.. and are an asset to the US economy and who are not educated drive cabs or Uber to support themselves and their families so now the problem arises that why the trend of migration of Pakistani community is increasing day by day despite of having a troubled relationship among both countries and worsening of the situation after 9/11 incident secondly this has caused brain drain and degradation of economy in Pakistan who is already a struggling nation.

Much of the work has been done in this area and now diaspora studies and migration have become a whole academic discipline in which universities are preparing graduates who can serve society. The USA is a giant economy consisting of multiple states where people exist from multiple countries have migrated and still are migrating so it has become culturally diverse and this process in on its way forward while if a comparative analysis is done with Pakistan ,its has never been purely democratic or stable state,its initial years were prosperous but with the passage of time religious extremism ,military involvement ,nepotism,poverity and illiteracy have devastated the whole system and the disparity among rich and poor have increased and now the situation is like extremely rich or very poor so the educated middle class have suffocated and trend of migration has increased and USA has become attraction for educated middle east and students so now if I analyze the whole situation diaspora in USA is of multiple types as we have variants of Pakistani Diaspora who have divided them into same lobbies(Ward, 2024) and sect wise in USA which I will discuss in detail in my thesis and have same issues which they have back home but due to education their intensity is low as law in USA is strict and on the other hand Pakistan face loss of educated middle class consisting of doctors,engineers ,professors and lawyers who are social mobilizers for society so the quality of life and economy both are suffering and post 9/11 incidents have toppled the situation for Pakistani Diaspora in USA who have already migrated with dreams of success and wealth so with this positivism there are certain constraints and challenges of adaptation and mental health when one moved abroad so there is a gap in this area which need to be identified that its not only about emotions for Pakistani Diaspora to move to USA as there are numerous case studies who have been successful and many who regret coming to USA and went back home or

went to severe depression leading to suicides so analyzing the situation properly and working in this area is need of times as it has been observed that it has also become a business for lot of Pakistani immigration consultants who don't clear the whole picture and they are themselves not migration consultants who encash the temptation of thousands of Pakistani and wrongly brief them about "American dream" in which mostly people sell their lands and assets to move to USA who when have to do 'blue collar' jobs start abusing the consultants (Cox & Stokes [2023](#)) back home and when they have sold everything for coming to USA ,they cant go back home and they also feel shy from back home relatives who will make fun of them once they return back empty handed so their life become miserable due to certain realities in USA which are post 9/11 issues for Pakistani Muslims, Islamophobia ,discrimination ,unemployment ,racism and bullying which can seriously lead people to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and starting from the scratch in a new country can be really challenging as it's a total different environment which require unique energy ,skills and training which unfortunately is lacking in most of the Pakistani people so it s essential to identify the gap which is missing in the current literature that is the accurate analysis according to time and circumstances for Pakistani (Scott & Rosati [2023](#)) people for moving to

USA as it can be beneficial or it can also be disastrous so most of the cases are miscalculated and there are lots of case studies where people wasted lot of money for coming to USA with family and than went back home and some of them can't go back for years due to economic conditions and mental health(Ward ,2023) and named this migration as "Sweet Poison" or "Cage of Gold" who have snatched their homeland and relatives and if the situation is calculated properly looking at current foreign policies of both nations in case of migration decision making can be improved which can reduce the brain drain from Pakistan and help USA to grant visa to only those who are required to move to USA.

In this way, fake consultants will not be able to earn millions of rupees and via the arrival of required Pakistani nationals the US foreign policy (Panday,2023)will be flexible and accurate for Pakistan due to the presence of quality of diaspora who already are trying there best to promote a positive perception of Pakistanis and Muslims via the launch of institutes who helps in connecting US Policy makers andthink tanks with Pakistani Academia and think tanks abroad so that USA foreign policy towards Pakistan is in favor of both countries (Rojas, [2023](#)) the challenges, solutions, consequences, and suggestions will be an added asset to academia



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