International Relations · GS - II

Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian Diaspora in South- East Asia in this context

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2017	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Trade and investment; cultural links; remittances; skilled professionals; people-to-people relations; regional cooperation

Model Answer

Introduction

The Indian diaspora in Southeast Asia has historical roots in migration, trade, colonial-era labour movements and modern professional mobility. It contributes to economic activity, cultural exchange and India's regional relationships.

Economic Contributions

- **Trade and entrepreneurship:** Indian-origin business communities participate in commerce, manufacturing, finance, retail and services.
- **Investment:** Diaspora networks facilitate business partnerships and connect Indian firms with Southeast Asian markets.
- **Professional expertise:** Skilled Indians contribute to information technology, healthcare, education and management.
- **Remittances and employment:** Migrant workers support households and contribute to economic activity in host countries and India.

- **Tourism and services:** Cultural and family connections encourage tourism, hospitality and cross-border commercial links.

Social and Cultural Contributions

- **Cultural continuity:** Indian communities preserve languages, festivals, cuisine, religious traditions and artistic practices.
- **Cultural exchange:** Shared traditions and local adaptations enrich multicultural societies.
- **Education:** Universities, professional networks and community institutions promote learning and exchange.
- **People-to-people ties:** Diaspora links deepen mutual understanding between India and Southeast Asian societies.

Challenges

Diaspora communities may face integration difficulties, discrimination, labour exploitation or uncertainty during political and economic crises. Their contributions depend on the protection of rights and constructive engagement with host societies.

Way Forward

India should strengthen consular support, educational and cultural exchanges, business networks and cooperation with ASEAN countries while respecting host-country laws and local sensitivities.

Conclusion

The Indian diaspora is an important bridge between India and Southeast Asia. Its economic networks, cultural contributions and professional expertise can deepen regional cooperation and strengthen India's engagement with ASEAN.

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