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Korean Diaspora in India in the Context of Korean Investment: An Overview

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Abstract:

Korean diaspora plays a key factor to enhance India-Korea economic and trade relationship. The present study has identified four features of the Korean diaspora in India: Firstly, the growth in the size of the population of the Korean diaspora in India is driven by the growth in Korean investment in India. Secondly, based on the characteristics of Korean companies forming industrial clusters led by large companies' investment in India, a significant concentration of the Korean diaspora also appeals in the main industrial clusters across India. Thirdly, the main group of Korean diasporas is primarily composed of working and business communities. And fourthly, which had been driven by economic rational choice to disperse to India.

Although Korean diaspora in India has grown to a certain extent, compared to the Korean investment-driven diaspora in other major late-mover advantage countries, the Korean diaspora in India is the least sufficient. To enhance India-Korea economic and trade relations, India and Korea need to review their immigration policies, enhance the people-to-people exchange, and join hands to build a platform to accelerate Koreans to disperse to India.

Keywords: Korean Diaspora; Korean Investment; India; Korea; Economic and Trade Relations

1. Introduction

Koreans¹ have a long history of dispersing abroad. Against the background of economic globalization, Koreans continue to expand their diaspora driven by rational economic choices (Bergsten, C. F., Choi, I., & Ch'oe, I. B. (Eds.) 2003)². India, as a major developing country, is an important investment destination for Korean companies. In such a context, Koreans, who are expatriates of Korean companies, or businesspersons searching for opportunities, disperse to India along with Korean companies investing in India. The population of the Korean diaspora has been growing to a considerable size and forming a certain degree of agglomeration.

¹ Korea could refer to either South Korea or North Korea. In this Study, Korea is used to refer to South Korea or the Republic of Korea (RoK), while Koreans refer to South Koreans. In the case of Korea and North Korea combined, a bracket would be added following the word Korea, such as Korea (South & North), or Koreans (South & North).

² Bergsten, C. F., Choi, I., & Ch'oe, I. B. (Eds.). (2003). *The Korean diaspora in the world economy* (Vol. 15). Peterson Institute.



Korean expatriates and businesspersons are operators or front-line practitioners of Korean companies in India, who are one of the key factors for the success of Korean companies investing in India. The development of India-Korea relations (especially India-Korea economic and trade relations) is closely related to the performance of Korean companies in India, so, the Korean diaspora in India is an important factor for the development of India-Korea economic and trade relations. Therefore, studying the Korean diaspora in India is an important part of understanding India-Korea relations. Based on the above understanding, the current study aims to make a comprehensive study of Korean diaspora in India.

2. Review of Literature:

Diaspora Studies is a complicated subject. Due to the numerous levels and theories involved in its research, if it is regarded as a special subject, it will even give people the feeling as in the story of *Blind Men and the Elephant*. Each scholar will differ greatly due to their concern about diaspora issues and the different methods and theories they use, so it is difficult to make a unified definition of the whole diaspora research (DeWind, J. 2020)³.

However, international diaspora research has become a common subject in the academia and there would certainly be some basic theories. According to Li Ming-Huan, the theories of diaspora 'could be roughly divided into three orientations: the theory of economic rational choice that emphasizes market orientation; The conflict theory of civilization which pays attention to political connotation; The theory of trans-nationalism that emphasizes the trend toward globalization (Li M.H. 2010)⁴. The theory of economic rational choice provides theoretical support for the understanding of the driving force of Korean diaspora in India. In the economic rational choice of a person, diaspora is a 'business' (Salt, J., & Stein, J. 1997)⁵ or a 'family business' (Herman, E. 2006)⁶, which is the result of the person, or his/her family's weighing of the cost and benefit of his/her human recourse investment. Choi In-Bom's research shows us a relatively comprehensive map of the distribution of the Korean diaspora in the world. In 2001, Korean diaspora was mainly distributed in the United States (38%), China (33%), Japan (11%), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (9%) and Canada (2%), accounting for 93% of the total Korean diaspora population (Choi, I. 2003)⁷. Yoon In-Jin focuses on the Korean diaspora In China, CIS, Japan, the United States and Canada from three aspects of immigration, settlement

³ DeWind, J. (2020). *Blind Men and the Elephant: One View of the Field of Migration Studies*. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 8, 1-16.

⁴ Li M.H. (2010). *A Reflection on Contemporary Western International Migration Theory* (Doctoral dissertation)

⁵ Salt, J., & Stein, J. (1997). Migration as A Business: The Case of Trafficking. *International Migration*, 35(4), 467-494.

⁶ Herman, E. (2006). Migration as A Family Business: The Role of Personal Networks in the Mobility Phase of Migration. *International Migration*, 44(4), 191-23.

⁷ Choi, I. (2003). Korean Diaspora in the Making: Its Current Status and Impact on the Korean Economy. *The Korean Diaspora in the World Economy*, 9, 2. Retrieved from https://www.piie.com/publications/chapters_preview/365/2ie3586.pdf



and adaptation, summarizing the commonalities of Korean diaspora among the mentioned countries or regions (Yoon, I. J. 2006)⁸. Scholars who study the Korean diaspora focus on the key countries or regions where most Koreans live. The proportion of the Korean diaspora in India is relatively small and seems to be insignificant, which does not appear in the discussion of researchers. Korean diaspora in India is small in scale and highly correlated with Korean investment in India. Therefore, studies on the Korean diaspora in India are scattered among those on Korean companies in India. For example, Kim Hyeong-Deug studied the cultural adaptability training of Korean managers sent to India through the cross-cultural management theory (Kim, H. D. 2021)⁹. Park Keun-Hyung conducted an empirical study on the correlation between the living environment characteristics and thinking mode characteristics in India and the impact of the expatriates and their families on the operating results of the invested companies (Park, K. H. 2020)¹⁰. In addition, academia has also studied the life stories of non-committed Korean war prisoners settled in India (Kim, K. H. 2004)¹¹, the difficult situation of Korean missionaries in India (Lee, J. H. 2019)¹², and the Korean youth who escaped from 'Hell Joseon' (Korean Hell) from the perspective of sociocultural experience or identity (Lee, M. Y. 2019)¹³. Scholars' research on Korean diaspora in the Philippines also provides some meaningful ideas and references for the current Study and provides some information for data adjustment for the comparison of the current study (Miralao, V. A. 2007)¹⁴. However, in general, previous studies have focused on specific areas or minority groups in India, a systematic study on Korean diaspora in India seems to not appeal in the academia. The research in this Study can be regarded as a supplement on this aspect.

3. Research Objectives:

The study attempt to give an overview of the diaspora of Korea in India by answering the following questions:

i) What are the features of Korean investment in India?

⁸ Yoon, I. J. (2006, October). Understanding the Korean Diaspora from Comparative Perspectives. In *Asia Culture Forum* (pp. 1-21). Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/reader/51179970>

⁹ Kim, H. D. (2021). Determinants of Organizational Commitment in Emerging Market: Korean Expatriates in India. *European Journal of Economics and Business Studies*, 5(1), 116-125. Retrieved from https://revistia.com/files/articles/ejes_v5_i1_19/Kim.pdf

¹⁰ Park, K. H. (2020). A study of the Influence of Living Environment on Expatriate Satisfaction, Performance & Sequential investment of the Korean FDI Investors in Developing Countries (Doctoral dissertation).

¹¹ Kim, K. H. (2004). The Life Story of Noncommitted Korean War Prisoners Settled in India. *Journal of India Studies*, 9(1), 83-115.

¹² Lee, J. H. (2019). Missionary Deportation Problems in India and Seeking Strategies for Effective Mission. *Mission and Theology*, 47, 41-76.

¹³ Lee, M. Y. (2019). 'Escape from Hell-Joseon': A Study of Korean Long-term Travelers in India. *Korean Anthropology Review*, 3, 45-78.

¹⁴ Miralao, V. A. (2007). *Understanding the Korean diaspora to the Philippines*. Retrieved from <https://www.pssc.org.ph/wp-content/pssc-archives/Philippine%20Migration%20Research%20Network/Exploring%20Transnational%20Communities%20in%20the%20Philippines/Understanding%20the%20Korean%20Diaspora%20in%20the%20Philippines.pdf>



- ii) What are the features of the Korean diaspora in India and their relevance to Korean investment in India?
- iii) What is the main group consisting of the Korean diaspora?
- iv) What is the driving force to make Koreans disperse to India?
- v) In the context of Korean investment in India, is the density of the Korean diaspora in India sufficient?

4. Research Methodology

The main research methods of the present study are quantitative analysis, investigation analysis and comparative analysis. Firstly, this Study uses firsthand data to analyze the features of Korean investment and Korean diaspora in India and then tries to find out the relations between the two. Secondly, this study analyzes the available firsthand data along with the Indian immigration policy to find out the classification of occupations in the Korean diaspora in India and to identify the major groups of it. Thirdly, this Study conducts a small simple survey through interviews and online resources with thirteen Koreans to illustrate the driving force behind the dispersing of Koreans to India; Fourthly, this Study constructs an Index of Diaspora Power against investment for several countries to conduct a comparative analysis, to get a general idea of the density of Korean diaspora in the context of Korean investment in India.

4.1 Survey Tools:

Interview Schedule, and Survey Schedule, which have been administered online.

4.2 Sample Designing and Sample Size:

A questions list (see [Table 1](#)) is guided during the interview, and based on it the interviewee would extend the corresponding topics to grasp more details information.

Table 1 : Interview Questions List to Koreans Diaspora in India

Topic	Main Questions
Visa	What kind of Visa do you hold? Which type of visa does the majority of Korean diaspora apply for? Any special types of Visas do the Korean diaspora hold in India, such as Medical Visas, Conference Visas, Official Visas, or Project Visas? Do you have any idea?
Groups & Data	What are the main groups consisting of the Koreans diaspora in India? Do you have any idea of its population?
Dispersion Purpose	What makes you choose to live in India?
Permanent Stay	Have you attained a permanent residency? Will you seek a permanent stay in India? Why?
Cross-border Travel	How often do you go back to Korea in a year? Why so?

A sample of 9 working and business Koreans who has/had dispersed to India has been conducted interviewed. Out of which, 6 is businessperson, 2 is expatriate, and 1 is official (see [Table 2](#)).



Table 2 : Interview of Korean Diaspora in India

Item No.	Date of Interview*	Address*	Interviewee	Occupation	Years of Stay in India
TLSe2021_02	2021.6.7 & 2023.3.5	Seoul	Mrs. Om	Business, Education & Cultural	14
TLDe2021_04	2021.6.8	Gurgoan	Mrs. Lee	Business, Hotel	5
TLDe2021_06	2021.6.12	Jeju	Mr. Young	Business, Restaurant	6
TLDe2021_09	2021.7.3	New Delhi	Mr. Oh	Business, Trade & Incubator	5
TLDe2021_10	2021.7.26	Gurgoan	Mr. Jeong	Business, Startup	6
TLDe2022_18	2022.3.20	Gurgoan	Mrs. Kim	Business, Trade & Hotel	8
TLDe2021_03	2021.6.6	Noida	Mr. Lee	Expatriate	3
TLSe2021_05	2021.6.10	Seoul	Mr. Kim	Expatriate	2
TLSe2021_01	2021.6.5	Guangzhou	Mrs. Song	Official	8

*Note: the interviews were conducted in the form of E-mail, telephone, or social software chatting. During the interviews, the author lived in Guangzhou, China, the address refers to the interviewee location during the interview.

A sample of 7 Korean businessmen who have/had dispersed to India has been reported online (see Table 3).

Table 3 : Stories of Korean Businessmen in India Online

Item No.	Interviewer /Interviewee	Update / Loading Date	Occupation /Accessed Link
OLDe2021_02	Kotra Reporter	2021.3.18	Representative of A company in NCR
	Mr. Park	2022.3.6	https://inkconnect.tistory.com/134
OLDe2021_03	Kotra Reporter	2021.3.18	Representative of B company in NCR
	Mr. Kim	2022.3.6	https://inkconnect.tistory.com/134
OLBa2022_04	Choi Ki-Yeong	2020.2.6	Representative of Auur in Bangalore
	Mr. Kim	2022.3.6	https://inkconnect.tistory.com/132
OLBa2020_06	Choi Ki-Yeong	2020.2.10	Representative of GoPizza in Bangalore
	Mr. Lim	2022.3.6	https://inkconnect.tistory.com/133
OLMu2019_07	Kotra Reporter	2019.12.29	Representative of inBody in Mumbai
	Mr. Ho	2022.3.6	https://dream.kotra.or.kr/kotranews/cms/news/actionKotraBoardDetail.do?SITE_NO=3&MENU_ID=130&CONTENTS_NO=1&bbsGbn=246&bbsSn=246&pNttSn=179707
OLDe2020_09	Kosma Reporter	2020.3.8	Representative of Focustek in Gurgoan
	Mr. Park	2022.12.5	https://www.kosma.in/%EB%8B%A4%EC%9A%B4%EB%A1%9C%EB%93%9C
OLCh2010_22	Niranjara Ramesh	2010.5.19	Representative of a construction company in Chennai
	Mr. Shin	2022.3.5	https://www.livemint.com/Politics/rmbtf0t81y6HoVSm08XXRJ/A-little-bit-of-Korea-in-Chennai.html

5. Data Collection Method:

Most of the data in this study is collected through Indian and Korean authorities, such as Korea Export & Import Bank (Koreaexim)¹⁵, Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (Kotra)¹⁶,

¹⁵ Koreaexim. *Statistics of Foreign Direct Investment*. Retrieved from <https://stats.koreaexim.go.kr/en/enMain.do>



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea (MoFA, RoK. 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021a)¹⁷, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Government of India (DPIIT, GoI. 2021)¹⁸, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (MoT, GoI. 2009-2019)¹⁹. Some other data is collected through articles published in newspapers or blogs online, or through interviews. Some data is also collected through journal articles by other researchers.

6. Concept of Korean Diaspora in India:

Diaspora is an ancient Greek word used to refer to migration and colonization. In different contexts and periods, it is used in different meanings. In contemporary international immigration study, 'the concept of a diaspora is a way of understanding migration, cultural differences, identity politics, and so on', which 'refers to a dispersion of people of a common national origin or of common beliefs living in exile'. 'An even broader definition would simply refer to people of one country dispersed into other countries. These contemporary definitions of a diaspora especially refer to one phenomenon: cross-border migration' (Choi, I. 2003)²⁰.

The current study uses the Korean diaspora in the sense of its contemporary definition to refer to Korean dispersion into India who shares a common national origin or beliefs. In this context, the term 'Korean diaspora', 'Korean migrants' or 'Korean overseas' could be substituted for each other.

Koreans also tend to use 'overseas compatriots' (재외동포) to denote all Koreans living overseas. The definition of overseas compatriots by the Korean government is not very strict, as it tends to include all Koreans living abroad, regardless of their nationality, including Korean citizens, former Korean passport holders, and non-Korean passport holders of Korean (South & North) descent (MoFA, RoK. 2021b)²¹. In other words, it encompasses all 'Koreans' residing overseas. In this study, the term of 'Korean overseas compatriots' is also replaceable by 'Korean diaspora'.

¹⁶ Kotra. *Trade Information Rooms*. Retrieved from <https://www.kotra.or.kr/subList/20000018754>

¹⁷ MoFA, RoK. (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021a) *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021*. Retrieved from https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do and, MoFA, RoK, *Definition and Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots*. Retrieved from https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/wpge/m_21507/contents.do

¹⁸ DPIIT, GoI. (2021). *Quarterly Fact Sheet: Fact Sheet on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from April 2000 to March 2021, (Updated up to MARCH, 2021)*. Retrieved from https://dpiit.gov.in/sites/default/files/FDI_Factsheet_March%2C21.pdf

¹⁹ MoT, GoI. (2009-2019). *India Tourism Statistics 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019*. Retrieved from <https://tourism.gov.in/market-research-and-statistics>

²⁰ Choi, I. (2003). Korean diaspora in the making: Its current status and impact on the Korean economy. *The Korean diaspora in the world economy*, P.10.

²¹ MoFA, RoK. (2021b). *Definition and Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots*. Retrieved from https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/wpge/m_21507/contents.do

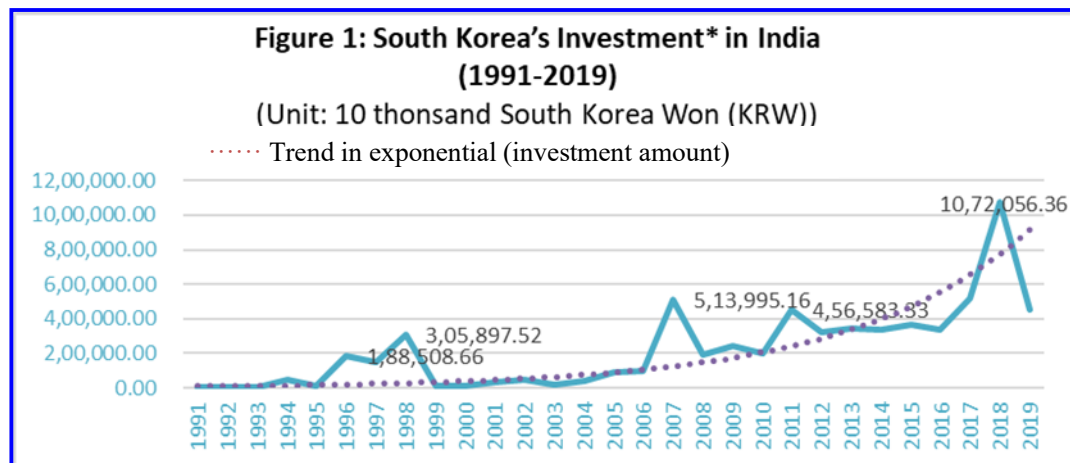


The Survey of MoFA, RoK counts Korean overseas compatriots in India through the data of Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs) or Foreigners Regional Officers (FROs) in India (MoFA, RoK. 2021a)²². According to the requirements of the FRRO/FRO of Bureau of Immigration India, foreigners who stay in India for more than 180 days in a calendar year need to register with the relevant FRRO/FRO (MHA, GoI. 2018)²³. These foreigners have a status of 'residency'. Conversely, foreigners who stay in India for less than 180 days in a calendar year can be referred to as short-term visitors. Based on the Korean government's definition of overseas compatriots, the registration requirements for foreign residents by FRRO/FRO, and the method of counting Korean overseas compatriots in India by MoFA, RoK, this Study gives a definition of Korean diaspora in India as bellow:

Korean diaspora in India used to refer the community of Korean overseas compatriots who stay in India for more than 180 days in a calendar year.

7. Data Analysis and Its Findings

7.1 The Features of Korean investment in India



* Note: the data shows the investment amount of reported Korean companies invest in India. Source : Koreaexim. Retrieved from <https://stats.koreaexim.go.kr/en/enMain.do>

Firstly, Korean investment in India is growing rapidly (see [Figure 1](#)), which started a significant boost from 1996 to 1998, then grew steadily from 1997 to 2017, and showed a significant peak in 2018. Although, in terms of accumulation of investment amount, Korea's FDI flows into India are growing rapidly, in terms of its share in total FDI flows into India, it decreased from a top five position in 1999 to a fourteenth position in 2014. Korea's share in total FDI flows into India was

²² MoFA, RoK. (2021a). *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2021*, P.106-111. Retrieved from https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do

²³ MHA, GoI. (2018). *Regulation Applicable to Foreigners in India*, retrieved from https://www.mha.gov.in/PDF_Other/Annex%20II_01022018.pdf



13% in 1999 (Seshadri, V. 2016)²⁴, however, it decreased to 0.92% from April 2000 to March 2020 (DPIIT, GoI. 2021)²⁵.

Secondly, Korean investment in India is dominated by large companies, which have formed industrial clusters in India. From 1980 to the first half of 2018, the amount of investment declared by Korean large companies in India was USD 6.3 billion, while medium and small companies only declared a USD 820 million investment amount, accounting for only 13% of investment amount by large companies (see Table 4). Moreover, Korean medium and small companies mostly entered the India market along with large companies to provide services or supply goods to them (Jung, H. B. et al. 2016)²⁶. Korean investment in India is centered around three major companies: Samsung Electronics, Hyundai Motor, and LG Electronics, forming industrial clusters. As shown in Table 5, Korean companies in India are mainly located in National Capital Region (NCR), Chennai region, Bangalore region, Mumbai, and Pune region, together accounting for 97.9% of the number of Korean companies in India.

Table 4: Korean Investment in India (1980-1st half of 2018)

(Unit: number, million USD)

Size of Company	No. of Companies	No. of Acceptances	Accepted Amount	Proportion in invested amount
Large	332	1,117	6,322	87.1%
Medium and Small	458	1,562	823	11.3%
Other	261	558	117	1.6%
In Total	1,051	3,267	7,262	100%

Source: Koreaexim. Retrieved from <https://496.koreaexim.go.kr/en/enMain.do>

Table 5: Clusters Dominated by Korean Large Companies and Korean Diaspora Population in India (Unit: number)

Major Large Companies	Type of Cluster	Area of Cluster	No. of Companies	Population of Korean Diaspora
Samsung Electronics, LG Electronics	Home Application & Electronic	Noida & Greater Noida	322*	3,566*
Company Headquarters	Headquarters Economy	South Delhi & Gurgaon		
Hyundai Motor, Samsung Electronics	Vehicle, Home Application & Electronic	Chennai	112	4,246

²⁴ Seshadri, V. (2016). *India-Korea CEPA: An Appraisal of Progress* (No. id: 8697). P.22. Retrieved from <https://ris.org.in/en/node/412>

²⁵ DPIIT, GoI. (2021). *Quarterly Fact Sheet: Fact Sheet on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from April 2000 to March, 2021, (Updated up to MARCH, 2021)*. P.6. Retrieved from https://dpiit.gov.in/sites/default/files/FDI_Factsheet_March,21.pdf

²⁶ Jung, H. B. Kim, B. S. Chung, W. H. Hong, S. W. Kang, J. H. Jung, K. S. Choi, M. Y. & Kim, Y. K. (2016). Research for Korean Start-Ups and Small-Medium Companies to Enter India Market. *KIEP Research Paper*, 16(02). P.111.

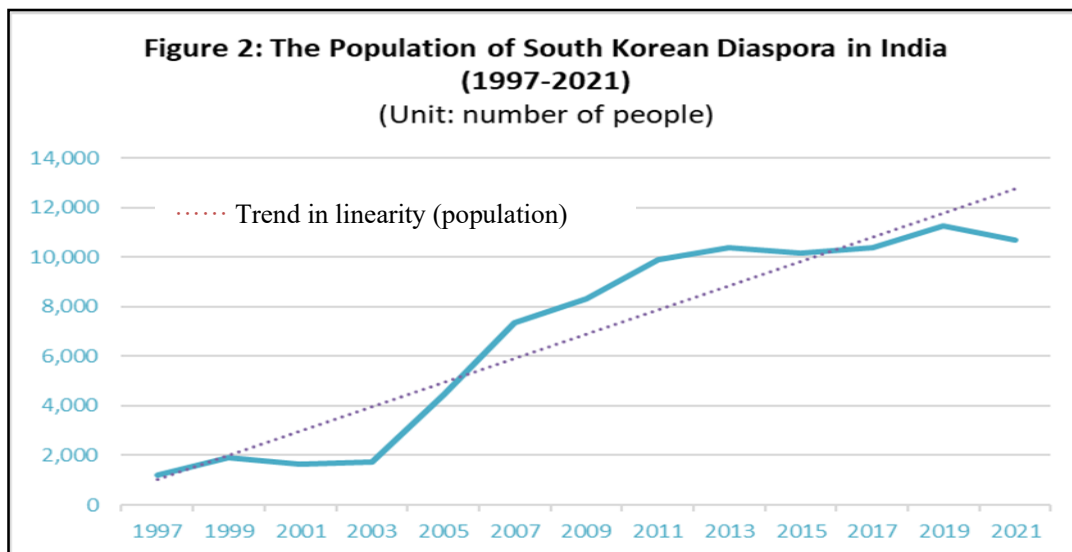


LG Electronics	Home Application & Electronic	Pune	46	488
Finance and Logistic Companies	Finance and Logistic Companies	Mumbai		200
R&D Centers	R&D Centers	Bangalore	39	1,092
In Total (Percentage)			530 (97.9%)	10,674 (89.9%)

* Note: The diaspora population of NCR in total. Resource: KOTRA Trade Centers in India Branches (till October 2021). MoFA, RoK. (2021a). *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2021*, P.106-111. Retrieved from https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do

7.2 The Features of Korean Diaspora and Their Relevance to Korean investment in India:

Koreans dispersed to India presenting similar features to Korean investment in India. Firstly, the growth in the size of the population of the Korean diaspora in India is in line with the growth in Korean investment in India, as shown in [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 2](#). Looking at the population of the Korean diaspora in India, began to increase significantly in 1996, along with a small wave of investment in India led by Korean big companies, such as Hyundai Motor (Park, Y. M. & Lee, J. K. 2019)²⁷, Samsung Electronics, and LG Electronics (Economychosun. 2011)²⁸ (also see [Figure 1](#)). During this period, 1,229 Koreans entered India for long-term residence (see [Figure 2](#)). After a certain period of accumulation, Korean companies formed another investment peak in 2007 (see [Figure 1](#)).



Source: MoFA, RoK. (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021a), *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021*. Retrieved from https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do

²⁷ Park, Y. M. & Lee, J. K. (2019). A Study on the Economic Status of India and Strategies of Korean Companies to Enter the Indian Market. *The Korean Journal of Area Studies*, 37(2), 153-176. P.159.

²⁸ Economychosun. (2011). LG Electronics Dominates Home Appliance Market, Samsung is Chasing after LG with Mobile Phones, updated 1 June 2011. Retrieved from https://economychosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/06/01/2011060100006.html



Correspondingly, in 2008, the population of the Korean diaspora in India increased to 8,337 and continued to steadily grow, finally reaching a number between 10,000 and 11,000 (see [Figure 2](#)). This may indicate that the Korean diaspora was driven by Korean investment in India.

Secondly, based on the characteristics of Korean companies forming industrial clusters led by large companies' investment in India, a significant concentration of Korean diaspora in the industrial clusters had appealed, as shown in [Table 5](#). In the major industrial clusters, the Korean diaspora accounted for 89.9% of the total dispersion population in India. This again may indicate that the Korean diaspora in India was driven by Korean investment, and the locations where the Korean diaspora settled down overlapped with the areas of industry clusters formed by Korean companies.

Taking the region of Chennai with the highest concentration of Korean diaspora as an example, in 2021, there were 4,246 Koreans residing locally, accounting for 39.8% of the total population of the Korean diaspora (see [Table 5](#)). This is highly related to Chennai's Hyundai Motor's industry cluster along with Samsung Electronics and its relevant supply factories. A famous Little Korean village has been formed by the Korean diaspora near the Hyundai Motor factory in Chennai, gaining some notoriety in India. According to Indian media reports, the Korean community in Chennai is the largest foreign community, with a population of 1,500-3,000 in 2010 ([Niranjana Ramesh. 2010](#))²⁹, reaching 3,000-4,000 in 2013 ([Swetha Kannan. 2013](#))³⁰, and exceeding 6,000 in 2017 ([Sanchairi Pai. 2017](#))³¹. One possible factor of the population of the Korean diaspora reported by the news is higher than that of the MoFA, RoK's statistics is the presence of some short-term visitors. According to India Chennai Korean Association (iCKoa), around 1,000 Korean single expatriates were living in Sriperumbudur in Chennai in 2010. They were usually sent abroad for 6-12 months, while other non-single employees brought their families and generally lived in Chennai for more than three years. The rapid growth of the population of the Korean diaspora was mainly attributed to these non-single employees, who brought their wives and children to live in Chennai. In addition, among the Koreans in Chennai, 90% of them were related to Hyundai Motor Company, either directly employed by Hyundai Motor or working for other companies in Hyundai Motor's supply chain. A small number of Koreans also worked for Samsung Electronics, LG Electronics, and Lotte Confectionery ([Niranjana Ramesh. 2010](#))³².

²⁹ Niranjana Ramesh. (2010). *A Little Bit of Korea in Chennai*, updated 19 May 2010. Retrieved from <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/rmbtf0t81y6HoVSm08XXRJ/A-little-bit-of-Korea-in-Chennai.html>

³⁰ Swetha Kannan. (2013). *Seoul Searching in Chennai*, updated 24 July 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/seoul-searching-in-chennai/article23028944.ece>

³¹ Sanchairi Pai. (2017). *Searching for the S(e)oul: The Little-Known Story of Chennai's Connection with Korea*, updated 27 February 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.thebetterindia.com/89171/chennai-connection-korea-seoul-history-hyundai/>

³² Niranjana Ramesh. (2010). *A Little Bit of Korea in Chennai*, updated 19 May 2010. Retrieved from



In the village of Thandalam near Sriperumbudur, a distinct Korean residential community has emerged, as evidenced by Korean-style banners directing Koreans to markets, hardware stores, restaurants, and serviced apartments (Niranjana Ramesh. 2010)³³. Thandalam is a real Little Korea village in Chennai, with the highest density of Korean residents found in this village as per iCkoa website data from 2016, accounting for 14% of the total Korean households in Chennai (iCkoa. 2016)³⁴. The Korean community in Chennai has convenient accesses to comprehensive living services, including various shops, restaurants, and apartments, as well as Korean churches and Korean students training institutions. In 2010, the Madras Korean Church had 400 Korean members, and there were 800 Korean children attending international schools in Chennai. It is reported that a Korean mother even established a dance training institution to attract these Korean children (Niranjana Ramesh. 2010)³⁵.

7.3 The Main Group of Korean Diaspora:

From the highly correlated relationship between the Korean diaspora and Korean investment in India, it is reasonable to infer that the main groups of the Korean diaspora are primarily composed of working and associated groups. For instance, many of the Korean diasporas in Chennai mentioned above are expatriates directly employed by Hyundai Motor or other Korean companies. Non-single employees typically bring their families to India, forming a larger Korean community. The formation of such a community further generates a Korean business circle, attracting other Koreans to seek jobs and business opportunities in Chennai, leading to a further expansion of the Korean diaspora community. The groups of workers and businesspersons, along with their families, are collectively referred to as 'the working and business groups' in this Study, which are the main group of Korean diasporas in India.

Although accurate data on the population size of the Korean working and business groups are unavailable, the study could infer, from several aspects of the data, that the working and business groups constitute the vast majority of the Korean diaspora. Firstly, according to data provided by MoFA, RoK in 2021, all Korean diaspora in India possessed Korean passports, among whom only 20 individuals obtained permanent residency in India, while the remaining 10,653 individuals were non-permanent residents. Of these non-permanent residents, 171 were international students, and 10,482 were classified as general non-permanent residents (MoFA, RoK. 2021a)³⁶.

<https://www.livemint.com/Politics/rmbtf0t81y6HoVSm08XXRJ/A-little-bit-of-Korea-in-Chennai.html>

³³ Niranjana Ramesh. (2010). *A Little Bit of Korea in Cheinnai*, updated 19 May 2010. Retrieved from

<https://www.livemint.com/Politics/rmbtf0t81y6HoVSm08XXRJ/A-little-bit-of-Korea-in-Chennai.html>

³⁴ iCkoa. (2016). *The Settlement Map of Koreans in Chennai*, updated 13 April 2016. Retrieved from

<https://www.ickoa.org/residency>

³⁵ Niranjana Ramesh. (2010). *A Little Bit of Korea in Cheinnai*, updated 19 May 2010. Retrieved from

<https://www.livemint.com/Politics/rmbtf0t81y6HoVSm08XXRJ/A-little-bit-of-Korea-in-Chennai.html>

³⁶ MoFA, RoK. (2021a). *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2021*, P.106-111. Retrieved from



According to the regulations of the MHA, GoI, 'all foreigners visiting India on long term (more than 180 days) Student Visa, Medical Visa, Research Visa, Employment Visa, Missionary Visa, and Project Visa are required to themselves registered with the FRRO/FRO concerned having jurisdiction over the place where the foreigner intends to stay, within 14 days of arrival. However, all Business Visa holders are required to register themselves with the FRRO/FOR concerned in case the aggregate stay in India on Business Visa exceeds 180 days during a calendar year' (MHA, GoI. 2018)³⁷. Given that general non-permanent residents are mostly Koreans who have already registered with FRRO/FRO, they can be classified into several types of visa holders mention above (Medical Visa, Research Visa, Employment Visa, Missionary Visa, Project Visa, and Business Visa) who have stayed for more than 180 days. Among these visa types, the proportions of Medical Visa and Research Visa (MoT, GoI. 2019, 2013)³⁸ holders are extremely small (see Table 6). And Korean missionaries (Missionary Visa (MoT, GoI. 2019)³⁹ holders) faced difficulties in India and found it difficult to obtain valid visas, often facing the risk of expulsion, so it could reasonably infer that the proportion of Missionary Visa holders is also insignificant (also see Table 6). As a result, most Korean general non-permanent residents remaining are Employment Visa, Project Visa, and Business Visa holders who are classified into the category of Business & Professional visits (others are Film Visa, Conference Visa, and Official Visa holders which are not in the FRRO/FRO registration requirements if the stays are less than 180 days) (MoT, GoI. 2019)⁴⁰, who are mainly composed of working and business groups of the Korean diaspora.

Recorded data from 2009 to 2019 shows that the proportion of Business & Professional visitors among those visiting India from Korea each year is between 43.1% and 53.3%, followed by the categories of Leisure Holiday & Recreation, and Visiting Friends & Relatives (27.5-52.12%) (see Table 6). If Film Visa, Conference Visa, and Official Visa holders are in a small proportion (which is quite possible according to our survey⁴¹ in Table 2), then from this data, it shows that Business & Professional visitors and their family members (included in Leisure Holiday & Recreation, and

https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do

³⁷ MHA, GoI. (2018). *Regulation Applicable to Foreigners in India*, retrieved from https://www.mha.gov.in/PDF_Other/Annex%20II_01022018.pdf

³⁸ MoT, GoI classifies Research Visa holders and Student Visa holders either in the category of Education or Other in its visit statistics. See: MoT, GoI. (2019). *India Tourism Statistics 2019*. P.45. Retrieved from <https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-04/India%20Tourism%20Statistics%202019.pdf>
Also See: MoT, GoI. (2013). *India Tourism Statistics 2013*. P.38. Retrieved from https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-04/IndiaTourismStatics2013_1.pdf

³⁹ MoT, GoI classifies Missionary Visa holders in the category of Other in its visit statistics. See: MoT, GoI. (2019). *India Tourism Statistics 2019*. P.45. Retrieved from <https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-04/India%20Tourism%20Statistics%202019.pdf>

⁴⁰ MoT, GoI. (2019). *India Tourism Statistics 2019*. P.45. Retrieved from <https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-04/India%20Tourism%20Statistics%202019.pdf>

⁴¹ The authors in Guangzhou conducted Interviews with nine Korean diaspora respectively through E-mails, phone calls, social software chatting while the interviewees were in different places in different date according to Table 2.



Visiting Friends & Relatives categories) account for probably at least half of the visits from Korea to India. From Table 6, a conclusion could be made that, in the years for which data are available, the number of visits to India in the category of Business & Professional is about five times (4.68-6.60 times) that of the number of the Korean diasporas in India. Based on our survey⁴² in Table 2, the cost of frequent visits to India is much higher than that of long-term stay in India, and additional time costs and inconveniences must be borne as well in case of frequent visits. Korean diaspora generally chooses to travel between India and Korea 2-3 times a year. If the Korean diaspora traveled to and from India and Korea an average of twice a year, then it accounts for 2/5 of the visits to India by these Business & Professional visitors, while the other 3/5 of them is short-term visitors. Therefore, the Korean diaspora who engaged in work and business holds a significant share even among the number of visits to India.

Table 6: Population of Korean Diaspora in India and Visits of Koreans to India
(Unit: number, percentage)

Year	No. of Korean Diaspora	No. of visits	Business and Professional	Leisure Holiday & Recreation	Visiting Friends & Relatives	Medical Treatment	Education	Indian Diaspora	Others
2009	8,337	70,485							
2010		95,587	43.1%	19.9%	12.4%	0.1%	0%		14%
2011	9,887	108,680	53.3%	21.8%	5.7%	0.1%	0%		11%
2012		109,469	49.0%	25.3%	5.5%	0.1%	0%		20%
2013	10,397	112,619	43.2%	35.1%	4.7%	0.1%	4.1%		12.8%
2014		106,870							
2015	10,178	102,993							
2016		111,076	46.18%	45.18%		0%		5.61%	3.03%
2017	10,390	142,383	41.07%	52.12%		0%		4.37%	2.44%
2018		150,536	46.8%	46.6%		0.3%		4.2%	0.7%
2019	11,273	149,445	49.79%	37.12%		0%		2.06%	11.03%

Notes: The column left blank means either the data in the column is not available, or it changes the way of classification.

Source: MoFA, RoK. (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021a). *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021*. Retrieved from https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do

MoT, GoI. (2009-2019). *India Tourism Statistics 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019*. Retrieved from <https://tourism.gov.in/market-research-and-statistics>

7.4 The Driven Force Making Koreans to Disperse to India

Since the majority of the Korean diaspora belongs to working and business groups, this study focuses on the driving force making these groups to disperse to India. This Study uses the theory of economic rational choice and a small sample survey to explain the driving force.

⁴² The authors in Guangzhou conducted Interviews with nine Korean diaspora respectively through E-mails, phone calls, social software chatting while the interviewees were in different places in different date according to Table 2.



Firstly, the current Study conducted a small simple survey with nine Koreans who have or had lived for a long time in India, either working or doing their own business (see [Table 2](#)). And also some information online regarding seven Korean businessmen' stories in India were collected (see [Table 3](#)). Out of the combined sixteen Koreans, thirteen are businesspersons, two are expatriates and one is an officer. All the businesspersons alleged that they came to India for better business opportunities⁴³. And the two expatriates were sent to India for better paid off and promotion opportunities in the future. All the interviewees expressed several common observations⁴⁴:

- 1) The majority of the Korean diaspora belongs to working and business groups, although no one could give clear data.
- 2) India is the "next China" for economic growth, manufacturing base, and huge domestic market, while Korea is an economy that could not generate many opportunities anymore. So, Koreans dispersed to India to search for economic opportunities.
- 3) Koreans dispersed to India not for obtaining a permanent stay but for a better economic income. They would probably come back to Korea or move to other advanced countries after leaving India.

According to Li Ming-Huan, the theories of western diaspora 'can be roughly divided into three orientations: the theory of economic rational choice that emphasizes market orientation; the conflict theory of civilization which pays attention to political connotation; the theory of transnationalism that emphasizes the trend toward globalization in the making of diaspora (Li M.H. 2010)⁴⁵. The theory of economic rational choice provides theoretical support for this Study to explain the driving force of the Korean diaspora in India. As an economically rational choice, diaspora is a 'business' (Salt, J. & Stein, J. 1997)⁴⁶, or a 'family business' (Herman, E. 2006)⁴⁷, which is the result of individuals or families weighing the cost and benefit of the investment of their human resources. In our simple survey, all Koreans who lived in India are for better economic opportunities. Since the majority of the Korea diaspora in India belongs to the working and business groups, it could highly refer that economic rational choice is the driving force for them to disperse to India.

⁴³ The authors in Guangzhou conducted Interviews with nine Korean diasporas respectively through E-mails, phone calls, and social software chatting while the interviewees were in different places on different dates according to [Table 2](#). And the survey objects who were interviewed by the mentioned reporters respectively updated on different dates according to [Table 5](#).

⁴⁴ The authors in Guangzhou conducted Interviews with nine Korean diasporas respectively through E-mails, phone calls, and social software chatting while the interviewees were in different places on different dates according to [Table 2](#).

⁴⁵ Li M.H. (2010). *A Reflection on Contemporary Western International Migration Theory* (Doctoral dissertation)

⁴⁶ Salt, J. & Stein, J. (1997). Migration as A Business: The Case of Trafficking. *International migration*, 35(4), 467-494

⁴⁷ Herman, E. (2006). Migration as A Family Business: The Role of Personal Networks in the Mobility Phase of Migration. *International migration*, 44(4), 191-230



7.5 The Density of Korean Diaspora in India:

In the context of Korean investment in India, is the density of the Korean diaspora in India sufficient? If compared to the large scale of the Korean diaspora in the world, then it is quite clear that the population of the Korean diaspora in India is insignificant. According to statistics from MoFA, RoK, in 2021, there was over 73 million Korean diasporas, mainly concentrated in Northeast Asia (43%), North America (39%), and Europe (9%) (MoFA, RoK. 2021a)⁴⁸. Among all countries where Koreans have dispersed overseas, India ranks 25th, lagging all the countries listed in Table 6, that is, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Mexico (MoFA, RoK. 2021c)⁴⁹. Kim Eung-Gi, a Korean scholar researching India, believes that Korea has too few diasporas in India compared to other Asian countries. Compared to India's potential, Koreans' dispersion efforts towards India are quite insufficient (Kim Yeung-Ki. 2022)⁵⁰.

It should be noticed that the Korean diaspora in India is mainly composed of the working and business groups, which are driven by Korean investment led by big companies, therefore the situation of the Korean diaspora in India is quite different from some top 25 countries (MoFA, RoK. 2021c)⁵¹ attracting Koreans, such as Japan, the United States, Canada, Singapore, and other developed countries in Europe and Oceania, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, and some South American countries, where Korean diaspora appeal in different characteristics in their historical context (Bergsten, C. F. etl. (Eds.) 2003)⁵². However, the rest of the top 25 countries (China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Mexico) shares significant commonalities with India in their Korean diaspora: firstly, they all are developing countries as main destinations of Korean investment due to their late-mover advantage; secondly, Koreans disperse to these countries are mainly driven by economic rational choice led by Korean investment. The infrastructure and life quality in these countries are commonly not as good as that of Korea, so the main purpose for Koreans to disperse to these countries is not for a permanent stay, but for economic opportunities. So, it is reasonable to infer that its main groups of the diaspora are also working and business groups. However, some differences within these commonalities could be easily identified as well, which would be elaborated on later. To make an effective and easy comparison with other countries sharing

⁴⁸ MoFA, RoK. (2021a). *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2021*, P.106-111. Retrieved from https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do

⁴⁹ MoFA, RoK. (2021c). *The Countries Where Most Koreans Live*. Retrieved from https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/wpge/m_21509/contents.do

⁵⁰ Kim Yeung-Ki. (2022). *Overseas Koreans Living in India*, updated 2 February 2022. Retrieved from <https://blog.naver.com/ykim57/222658294465>

⁵¹ MoFA, RoK. (2021c). *The Countries Where Most Koreans Live*. Retrieved from https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/wpge/m_21509/contents.do

⁵² Bergsten, C. F., Choi, I. & Ch'oe, I. B. (Eds.). (2003). *The Korean Diaspora in The World Economy* (Vol. 15). Peterson Institute.



commonalities with India in the Korean diaspora, this Study constructed a Diaspora Power Index (DPI), which is defined as

Diaspora Power Index = number of general non-permanent residents / cumulative investment amount,

to measure Koreans' dispersion efforts towards specific countries driven by investment. The larger the value of the DPI, the stronger Koreans' dispersion efforts towards that country driven by investment, inversely a smaller value indicates insufficient efforts.

Table 7: The Comparison of Diaspora Power Index of Korea Diaspora

(Unit: number, 100 million KRW, person/100 million KRW)

Country	No. of general non-permanent residents*	Accumulated investment amount**	Diaspora Power Index	Significance of other diaspora groups
China (Mainland)	269,947	7,118	38	Chinese Koreans
Vietnam	122,713	2,549	48 ↑ ***	
The Philippines	79,876	451	177 ↓ ***	missionary group****
Thailand	16,660	271	61	
Indonesia	27,895	1,154	24	
Malaysia	11,494	548	21	
Mexico	7,169	603	12 ↑	permanent residents
India	9,503	643	15	

Notes:

* The category of general non-permanent consist various of group of diaspora except from permanent residents, international students and foreign passport holders with Korea (Korea & North Korea) origin. And the number of general non-permanent residents is calculated on the overage of the survey data in 2015, 2017 and 2019, given by MoFA, RoK. Firstly, the data in 2021 is not considered because it might be unrepresentative due to Co-vid 19 Pandemic, which makes international travelling in disorder. Secondly, the data earlier than 2015 and other year between 2015 and 2019 is not considered because the relevant data is unavailable.

** The accumulated investment amount is taken from the accumulation during 2009 to 2019 given by Koreaexim.

*** The symbol of '↑' indicates that the value should be adjusted upward, while the symbol of '↓' indicates inversely.

**** The number of missionary people is included in the number of non-permanent residents.

Source: MoFA, RoK. (2021c). *Definition and Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots*. Retrieved from

https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/wpge/m_21507/contents.do and

MoFA, RoK. (2015, 2017, 2019). *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2015, 2017, 2019*. Retrieved from

https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do

Koreaexim. Retrieved from <https://stats.koreaexim.go.kr/en/enMain.do>

The comparison results are shown in Table 7: The values of DPI from the largest to the smallest are the Philippines (177), Thailand (61), Vietnam (48), China (38), Indonesia (24), Malaysia (21), India (15), and Mexico (12).



The value of DPI in the Philippines shows a significant high compared to all other countries. In the context of the Philippines, apart from working and business groups, missionary group is another significant group in the Korean diaspora. Due to the friendly environment of religion and English-speaking education, lots of Koreans are dispersed to the Philippines, and by whom a diverse and larger diaspora community has been formed (Miralao, V. A. 2007)⁵³. Accordingly, the DPI value of the Philippines should be reduced to make a sound comparison. In the case of China, the value of DPI, however, should be increased, because there is a large number (2.15 million in 2021 (MoFA, RoK. 2021a)⁵⁴) of Chinese Koreans living in China which consists of a huge human resource database for the utility of Korean investment in China, so that the number of Korean expatriates could be reduced significantly. The value of the DPI of Mexico should be increased more than 70% ideally due to a significant number of permanent residents (5,328 in 2021 (MoFA, RoK. 2021a)⁵⁵), by more than 70% of the number of general non-permanent residents. In a word, the DPI value of the Philippines might decrease, but as it has been already in a high score of 177, it can't decrease to less than 15 (India's value). And after a reasonable increase of 70%, the DPI value of Mexico would go up to more than 20, becoming more than the DPI value of India. Therefore, India ranks the lowest in the value of DPI after careful investigation, legging behind all the compared countries.

What are the reasons that India has not attracted enough density of Korean diaspora against Korean investment in India? One possibility is that the investment flows into India are dominated by big companies, which does not require too many Korean expatriates compared to the case of small and medium companies' investment. Another reason might be that the living conditions and cultural environment in India for Koreans are not as comfortable as those of China and Southeast Asian countries' so India is not a prior destination for Koreans to search for economic opportunities. Moreover, India and Mexico seem to be two faraway places for Koreans. The distance from Korea to Mexico is farther than the distance from Korea to India, however, Mexico has a large number of permanent Korean residents while India just has a few (20 in 2021), this might indicate that the immigration policy in India is not so friendly comparing that of Mexico so that it could not attract enough density of Korean diaspora. Further research on the reasons has been left by this Study.

⁵³ Miralao, V. A. (2007). *Understanding the Korean diaspora to the Philippines*. Retrieved from <https://www.pssc.org.ph/wp-content/pssc-archives/Philippine%20Migration%20Research%20Network/Exploring%20Transnational%20Communities%20in%20the%20Philippines/Understanding%20the%20Korean%20Diaspora%20in%20the%20Philippines.pdf>

⁵⁴ MoFA, RoK. (2021a). *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2021*, P.66-75. Retrieved from https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do

⁵⁵ MoFA, RoK. (2021a). *The Status of Korean Overseas Compatriots 2021*, P.157. Retrieved from https://www.okf.or.kr/portal/info/pg_knt.do



8. Conclusion

By conducting quantitative analyses based on firsthand data provided by Indian and Korean authorities, surveying interviews and online reports, along with the support of the theory of economic rational choice and other previous research, the current Study identifies four features of Korean diaspora in India: Firstly, the growth in the size of the population of Korean diaspora in India is driven by the growth in Korean investment in India. Secondly, based on the characteristics of Korean companies forming industrial clusters led by large companies' investment in India, a significant concentration of Korean diaspora also appeals in the industrial clusters mainly in NCR, Chennai, Bangalore, Pune, and Mumbai, India. Thirdly, the main groups of the Korean diaspora are primarily composed of working and business communities, the so-called 'working and business groups', and fourthly, which had been driven by an economic rational choice to disperse to India.

By constructing a Diaspora Power Index to measure Koreans' dispersion efforts towards specific countries driven by investment, along with the supplements of other previous research, this Study finds that, although Korean diaspora in India has grown to a certain extent along with Korean investment in India, compared to Korean investment-driven diaspora to other seven major late-mover advantage countries which are considered as main destinations of Korean investment, Korean investment-driven diaspora in India is the least sufficient, lagging much behind than Korean diaspora in the Philippines, Vietnam, China, Thailand, and slightly behind than that in Indonesia and Malaysia, and even behind than that in Mexico. The reasons might be either Korean Investment is too dominated by big companies, or Indian living conditions and cultural environment are not so attractive to Koreans, or the immigration policy of the India government is not so friendly.

9. Suggestions:

The current study provides the reader with an overall picture of the Korean diaspora in India in the context of Korean investment in India. Research in detail, especially on the reasons behind the insufficient of Korean diaspora in India, has been left blank by this Study. Further research needs to be conducted.

However, this Study shows the importance to accelerate the dispersion of South Koreans to India, if both India and Korea would like to enhance their economic and trade relations. More small and medium companies from Korea need to move to India to make a more complete investment ecosystem, especially those independent small and medium companies. And the people-to-people exchange between the two countries needs to be enhanced to make Indians and Koreans understand each other more, to make India not an aligned place for Koreans. In addition, the



India government could improve its immigration policy to attract Koreans to live in India and even to obtain permanent residency, which would drive the Korean diaspora to make more contributions to Indian society. Indian and Korean authorities could join hands to build a platform along with some institutions as a bridge for attracting more Korean investment and the Korean diaspora in India.

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