



Session: Entertainment,

Ethnic, Media and The Diasporic Identity

**Address by Mr Shabana Azmi,
Actress and Rajya Sabha MP**

Hon'ble Sushma Swarajji, Dr Ved Pratap Vaidik, Mr Yash Chopra, Dignitaries on the Dais, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Walking down crowded Manhattan or driving through the arid Arabian Peninsula, sun-bathing in Seychelles, it is no longer startling to catch a snatch of a Hindi film song. Go to Russia and you are still asked about Raj Kapoor the moment anyone discovers you are an Indian. Amitabh Bachchan is voted the star of the Millennium and is mobbed in many parts of the world. *Shah Rukh Khan* draws a frenzied crowd at a Jakarta concert. Javed Akhtar recites his poetry at Oxford and Harvard Universities even as Zakir Hussain enralls an exuberant audience in Berlin. Amir Khan reaches the Oscar nomination with *Lagaan*. You have the legendary Kamal Hassan who is with us today, spreading the name of Indian artists all over the world with good value. An American university offers Indian films as a subject of postgraduate studies. Retrospectives, exhibitions, seminars about Indian films and entertainment are a regular occurrence on the international cultural calendar.

I personally have had the good fortune in the past twelve months, to have had two retrospectives – one at the New York film festival and several theatrical performances and international feature films and even teaching assignments by Ivy League universities. Indian entertainment is truly a global phenomenon today. With a population of over 1.1 billion, every sixth person in the world today is an Indian. It is not surprising that there are about 25 million people of Indian origin, spread across 120 countries in the world, 40 million from the subcontinent alone. Many of these migrants have strong familial links with the motherland, as has already been expressed by the previous speakers. Almost all of them have at least a few tenuous roots in the ancestral homes. Invariably, these roots go back to the food, language and culture. Most astrologers agree that communities retain their cultural specificities, in spite of alterations in time and space. In fact, ethnicity usually reasserts itself often aggressively, even as categorization aspires to overcome such barriers. So, it is not uncommon to see a little India or a little China town in most great cities around the world. Arguably, one of India's most valuable exports, entertainment, largely in the form of Indian cinema, is also the country's best brand ambassador along with information technology. Indian films are exported to about ten countries around the world, the biggest markets being the USA, UK and South Africa. The Middle East, South-East Asia, Australia increasingly and the Caribbean are some of the other important markets. On a first screen average, Indian, especially Hindi films, feature in the Weekly Top Ten in all these markets. From a mere 20 prints a decade ago, big films are released upward of 400 prints in the overseas markets today. Yet, our films have not made significant markets in crossing over to the mainstream in these markets. Much of this is because of poor marketing. Till recently, Indian films, except those by a handful of new-wave film-makers like Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Adhoor Gopalakrishnan, Shyam Benegal, Gautam Ghosh, etc., were hardly visible. Popular cinema was happy at catering to the traditional diaspora markets alone. Although I take Dr Vaidik's saying about diaspora not being a word that we should be using, in the same way, I think the word Bollywood is the word that we should not be using to categorize all of Indian cinema because I feel very strongly about that. We produce the largest number of films in the whole world; we produce

twice the number of films that Hollywood does and to categorize this huge, rich pluralistic culture of ours which expresses itself in Indian cinema, as Bollywood, really it is a deprecatory term and I think we should be the first people who should be resisting it although I can see that it has now got popular usage to describe all of Indian cinema. So, on diaspora I agree and on Bollywood I think we should push that and we should not use that because it is a deprecatory word. It seems to suggest that all of Indian cinema is just a copy of Hollywood.

The NRI is far more of a bundle of contradictions than the average urban middle-class Indian. In alien surroundings, but with better economic disposition, there is a heightened need for sticking on to Indian values and morale. Nothing reflects this more than many of the Indian films that are hits abroad. So, elaborate weddings and festivals, family feuds and foibles – chiffon and sheen, ornate havelis and picture postcard locales are the de rigeur in popular cinema these days. A synthetic sheen covers the whole of contemporary India and overseas Indians rejoice in a cinematic celebration of the wonder that is India. Underlying all of them, is often a stereotypical storyline of a good joint family. This always triumphs. Whether cinema reinforces the regress of social morale or merely reflects popular taste is a moot point. Many film-makers like Yash Chopra, Subhash Ghai, Karan Johar and Suraj Barjatia conscious of the large overseas markets for Indian films have been replicating the celluloid dream world and film after film with huge success.

Interestingly, another set of expatriate Indians like Mira Nair, Gurinder Chadda, and Deepa Mehta have been creating their own places. Their films aimed at a global audience are often laced with a dilemma of second-generation expatriates. There are at least a dozen Indian film-makers who live abroad and yet have not cut their creative umbilical cord with India. Directors like Manoj Naik Shamalan and Shekhar Kapoor have been making international films, but with Indian consciousness. A third breed of film-makers are ABCDs, American Born Confused Desis, a rather disparaging acronym to describe the whole bunch of young talented film-makers making films about second-generation expatriates. There is no denying that both at the popular level as well as the fringe, our films are slowly finding a global audience. What we need, however, is an aggressive marketing and positioning of these films to make a perceptible impact. Bhangra music is a good example of an Indian art form getting wider international acceptance. It is not surprising that some of these are re-imported into India. The immense popularity of our film stars abroad can be ascertained from the number of live shows being performed in many parts of the world. Thousands of eager fans pay upward of US\$100 to come to these song and dance extravaganzas. Similarly, almost all popular Indian TV channels are being shown at some of the other cable bouquets almost around the entire world.

A great fear often harboured in India is how technology and Western influence are undermining the Indian culture. I would beg to submit, to such xenophobes, that our culture and heritage is not so vulnerable that it can be trampled upon easily. In this digital age where communication is no longer an ordeal, an overarching pan-global Indianness is emerging, from food to fashion, films to literature. There is a distinct Indianness developing. This artistic expression may often seem superficially jingoistic or even totemic in its Indianness, but at least there is a conscious attempt that India as a culture can hold its own anywhere in the world. Our pluralistic, democratic and secular society is an ideal nursery for art. What we need to guard against are attempts at subverting the values which we have stood for, for centuries. The danger to this is not from any external sources, but from the extremists from our own nation. In the years to come, as our economy grows, our clout in the comity of nations will grow. The sheer size of the population makes India a major global influence. In fact, new technology has a very strange capability of simultaneously strengthening ethnicity and diversity. For the first time, expatriates from different countries and ethnic backgrounds are



getting together on the Internet and sharing values of their homeland. For example, there are more Greeks outside Greece, or Jews outside Israel. So, in the years to come, a virtual Greek nation can be created without consonance with a land map. Interestingly, the Greek word "Ethnots" describes a group of common origin, regardless of the place.

This is about a third of our GDP. Many of them have achieved exemplary success in their chosen field in their country of adoption. Yet somewhere something connects them back to the leanings in India. Entertainment, culture and media are the bridges between them, us and the rest of the world. This way we will not be limiting ourselves to interacting amongst people of Indian origin alone, but we will have the entire world as an audience. The word in Chinese for crisis also means opportunities. I think we need to turn the crisis into an opportunity and see that there is increasing globalization. We catch the bull by its horns and we see that it gives us tremendous opportunities because of the technology revolution and to see that Indian culture gets given to the world even as we absorb the best from everywhere.

Thank you very much.

Address by Mr Subhash Ghai, Chairman, Mukta Arts Ltd

Hon'ble Sushmaji, Mr Pawan Chopra, Dr Vaidik, Shabanaji and Yash Chopraji, Distinguished Guests on the dais, My Friends and Our Indian Global Family Members,

First of all, I would like to congratulate Sushmaji especially. If we, the film-makers, have done some bit of our contribution to bring cinema to the global map slowly, I would say, Sushmaji has played a big part to give Indian cinema a really meaningful existence. Because I remember that on the same FICCI platform four years back, it was Sushmaji who gave entertainment "industry" status. Since then, we have been more committed to her promise and every year, she is smiling and she is taking us ahead and ahead, which we were deprived of all through the 40 years. I really, from the core of my heart, on behalf of the industry, thank you, Sushmaji, and I am sure you will be with us all the time.

Yashji and Shabanaji have told you enough about the contribution of Indian cinema to reach and to unite the Indian culture and also to bring all Indians together – whether Indians staying abroad or here itself. But here I have something different to share with you, which is very interesting which I discovered. While coming, I thought about these and I noted down certain points which I would share with you.

The first is about the ethnic culture. I remember when I was four years old, I looked up my people and I was introduced a perspective that I am an Indian; I am a Punjabi; I speak Punjabi; she is my mother; he is my father; this is my culture; I have to speak only this much. Then, when I came to the age of 14, I realized that there are other cultures also and that this nation is a multi-cultured one. There are so many ethnic cultures – there are Tamilians, there are Bengalis, there are Gujaratis, etc. We have to respect them and we have to understand them. Then, when I went to the Film Institute of India at the age of 21, I saw, through world cinema, other cultures – the European culture, Japanese culture, Chinese culture, and the Russian culture. So, every time, I was discovering that there are so many cultures, apart from languages and religions. Every religion and culture is talking about one thing – the peace of mankind.

Even today, as a film-maker, when I write a film or think about a film, I think that it is our social responsibility to see as to how we can send signals of our culture to other people. It is not only to NRIs, people who are Indians staying abroad, that we have to send messages through our movies, but we have to send certain messages of our

culture to the cross-community too. So, we have to think beyond it. We think the people abroad or our brothers residing abroad are already preserving our cultures. What is happening is the outburst of knowledge. Because of the fastest technology of communication, we are receiving knowledge of every country and so many cultures. We are also not even able to understand which is right and which is wrong or who is right and who is wrong. That is why the whole fight is going on.

You can look at the media. What is media doing? Media is definitely playing a big role in growing economic unity or economic growth. If you also look at the shortcomings, they are also creating fights between the multi-cultures. Every ethnic culture is trying to preserve its own culture. But what is Indian culture? I would say the Indian culture, as we have been taught, is to absorb things or to accept things as they are. That is why, Indian culture belongs to 2,500 years. Europe has it for the last 800 years; America has it for the last 200 years. They have done the job. We are doing our job. Our biggest strength in Indian culture, whether we are Tamilian, Bengali or whatever, is that we grow with the sense of acceptance or we grow with the sense of patience; we grow with the sense of philosophy. Indian culture is a way of life. That is why we are absorbed everywhere. That is why, when all our brothers go out, they become achievers. It is because they can deal with mankind or human beings over there. That is why, we see that in spite of multi-culture, Indian ethnic culture means patience, emotional stability, sacrifice, hospitality, facing crisis, bringing spiritual and philosophical things when the time needs. We Indians are ethical people; we know that; we have been guided by our famous epics; we have certain values. All those values have told us to have mantras for the peace of the world. Our culture has taught us how to respect other people and co-exist and bring happiness.

It would not be out of place if I mention my film *Pardes or Taal*. This was the movie through which I wanted to express our Indian souls. When we have the American dreams and when we want to belong to their cultures, what are the problems that we face? By soul, we are different people. We are spiritual people. Our biggest strength is spirituality. India is a country of energies and spirituality, yoga and Ayurveda. Basically, we are the best and the strongest people in the world. That is exactly what we should take ahead. This is our strength and we should use it. Every kind of technology, communication, business or movie-making or cinema or any form of audio text or visuals, I personally feel this way. My company, Mukta Arts, is trying to set up an institute known as Whistling Woods. This will be opened within the next few years. Our main emphasis on the syllabus is that we must develop the aesthetic sense and the creative power in our students by telling them that they should bring souls in every creation, through technology. We can bring technology, but we have to bring soul out of it. India belongs to soul. You have that energy; you have that power. Using technology through mechanics and replicating Western cinema or Western products is not an achievement. Achievement is when we really bring our Indianness in it and you will see that you are creating a better product in competition of the world product. I hope that your blessings and your best wishes are there in the efforts that we are going to put in. Let us pray for the peace for the world and progress of Indian global family abroad.

Thank you.

Address by Mr Kamal Hassan, Rajkamal Films International

Hon'ble Minister, Smt Sushma Swarajji, Dr Ved Vaidik, Yash Chopraji, Subhashji, Shabanaji, Chopraji, My Friends and Audience,

Before we expound the qualities of our cultural heritage, what we have achieved, I think it is important that we all sit down together, in probably another seminar, a

briefly, a shorter and a more specific one, to decide what we are going to do. All that we have discussed here is what we already know – the numbers, the ethnic diversities, or cultures. When I hear the word culture, it is a very dubious word. I cannot use a broad spectrum and terminology. Culture is like fashion, which keeps on changing over the years; it has changed and it will change. Technology will bring about more change. Those who stick by it and say that it will never change, will be left behind or they will have to change. So, this is the order of the world. I am not talking about today; I am talking about yesterday and what will be tomorrow.

Right now, instead of going into terrain which does not pertain to my limited knowledge, I would say something about my industry which I know a little bit. I am still confused; I do not know what films will run. There is proof of that because whenever I am nervous, the pictures seem to do well and when I am over-confident, they do not seem to do well. So, I do not know, like everybody else.

With that confession, let me go forward to expound my theory – which is strictly mine and probably a few peers would agree with me. It is that we have to corporatize and vertically integrate in whatever form, whatever cultural technique that we use. We need not have to copy the West. We can think about how it will integrate into our – I have to use the famous word again – culture. But we have to formulate an idea – that some kind of a new shastra will have to be formed. We have to sit together and formulate it. I am sure, the learned members of the Ministry would sit down and formulate an idea. It has to be done. Before we talk of Indian cinema entering the world arena, we will have to first see whom we are catering to. When we are talking about the world cinema, we are talking about the world itself, not merely a culture. From what I have heard, except for Mr Vaidik, I got to feel confident that India is an English-speaking country. Here, we have a clear tool or a language tool to address the world with. It is 300-year-old exercise and we have perfected it. That is what we should look at as a tool of communication, apart from all the other technological gizmos that are available now.

Before that we will have to vertically integrate our industry. We know, we have been talking to the Hon'ble Minister about how we are trying and striving hard to do that. The retailer attitude will have to go away and we have to look at the broader spectrum of the business itself. We are doing it, we are doing it within the industry. We are trying to make it a better place. The terra firma is being readied for my brothers who have come from abroad; they have been kind enough. All those who are sitting in the chairs are not armchair commentators to comment how bad the Indian cinema is or how bad Indian culture is about. You are here, so you are willing to do something about it. If there is something bad, we will sit together, talk about it and correct it. If there is something good, let us make it even better.

Thank you.

**Address by Mr Vijay Singh,
Film-Maker, Silhouette Films (I), France**

Madam Minister, Senior Colleagues and Everyone,

I was really fascinated by what Ms Shabana Azmi said a while ago when she was referring to a section of NRIs. She spoke of them as a bunch of confused beings or contradictions. It is very interesting. It is not that I am defending or attacking back. I tried to unravel where does this appearance come from – whether they are confused or not is another point – is that somebody else thinks that it could be so. I have my own example. I did not go out of necessity – just destiny took me there by chance. But most people go out of necessity. When you are in the country, abroad is a dream – it could be a material dream or academic dream or aesthetic dream, that you want to go abroad,

you want to go somewhere far away, you want to make a living, you want to make a success story of yourself or you want to become a big professor or something. When you reach abroad, that is the sad part of it, that is the nodal point of this confusion, or I would call it a dual consciousness, is that home becomes a dream.

You actually go there to make a living. Once you reach there, you start realizing that, almost as though you were the top sheet that you take to sleep on, you just turn it the other way. You go aboard, which was a dream in your mind and when you reach abroad, you discover that the home is the dream. This is not confusion. These 20-million people and hundreds of millions of other nationalities in other countries are living in a state of dual consciousness. This consciousness needs to be understood. It is suffering, it is pain; it expresses itself and it is going to express itself over the century that we are starting now, in a more and more severe way because travel and communication are making this sort of a living, which is more generalized. In that sense, this kind of a consciousness is sadness, it expresses itself as a very new form of consciousness of history because it has not existed before. Call it NRI consciousness. Call it Israel consciousness. Call it the consciousness of expatriate, whatever nationality he belongs to. This consciousness is here to stay with us. This consciousness needs strides to express itself, it needs to give itself a form. A businessman gives it the form of an industry or some trade. He wants to come back home and do something. Whereas to an artist, history has shown in terms of the bundle of flowers of knowledge that we have, art is probably the best way of expressing it. Probably, writing is the best way than cinema, TV, Internet, etc. So, what I am trying to say is that on the one side this so-called NRI consciousness which is expressed by film-makers abroad, writers abroad, is going to come and stay with us.

Secondly, if you look at Bombay today, in a very impressive way there is a reverse tendency of this cinema trying to modernize itself. You cannot escape it because it is modernization; it is the fact that when I speak here today, the lights have not gone off; it is because the whole thing is quite strictly organized; the cultural show last night was there. It is the way we are modernizing it. What is actually modernizing it? There is no time to discuss that. There is a time abroad and there is a time here. We live in a notion of cyclical time abroad; and the West lives in a notion of linear time and the two times are coming together. All I am trying to say is that there is a tendency in our cinema today to look westwards and the West has certainly things to give. There is a tendency of our own cinema, of our own alienated distance, exile consciousness abroad which are trying to create another kind of cinema. I would really think that it will be a great success for a lovely occasion like this where all of us talk like big families. When the two come together, probably it creates foundation, maybe, for film funds. I am told my friend is trying to create one such. I think, it will go a long way, over the decade to come, if he could also have the resources of encouraging this kind of a talent which has come.

I have been to 50 countries where the small film that I made called *Jaya Ganga* was shown. Everywhere, people said that it was difficult to get Indian films. It raises much larger questions. I think cinema can reach them. But it is limited to our own people; to our own sections. When I was staying in England, 80 out of the 90 halls that we played in, people asked me where could they get Yash Chopra's films, where could they get *Taal*. It is because it was not accessible. But they marginalized audiences for it; I think, there is a way of enlarging it. Because I think, our cinema does not only deserve us; it could be a better cinema, which goes beyond us. Actually, Hollywood can take over the world, and so can Bombay. But we need to open-mindedly discuss these issues.

Thank you very much.

Address by Mr Chander M Rai, CEO, *India Today*, USA

Hon'ble Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is important for us to have a strong international identity; it is important for us to feel good about ourselves and our achievements. However, it is equally important to know, to study what the rest of the world thinks about us and what we need to do to change these perceptions.

Talking of perceptions, you may have heard the story of two cows. In traditional capitalism, you have two cows. You sell one to buy a bull. Your herd multiplies and the economy grows. In Enron, venture capitalism, you had two cows. You sell them to a publicly-listed company with fake letters of intent and you claimed that you have six cows. Then, you send out a beautifully-worded press release and the public buys your bull. In the Japanese corporation, you have two cows you have redesigned so that they are one-tenth the size of an ordinary cow and produce twenty times the milk. In a British corporation, what happens unfortunately is this. Unfortunately, both the cows are mad. And you have heard the mad-cow strategies. In a Chinese corporation, it is quite interesting because you have two cows and there are 300 people milking them. They claim high proven productivity and arrest the new journalist who reported the figures. As far as India is concerned, I am not going to tell you what the story says.

Unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, the perception of India in many parts of the world is not very flattering. People think of us as a great nation with a great culture with enormous manpower and talent. But there is very little will and very little cooperation to get things done. It is sad that there is lack of strategy and implementation, which are well known. The question, according to me, that we need to address is how Indian ethnic media can help to change these perceptions in any country where Indians are living and how this media can help to voice effectively the issues confronting the diaspora in the country of migration, including discrimination against a number of us. Therefore, I am going to talk today about my personal experiences in three countries where I lived for a fairly long time; and to share some thoughts on how we can improve our standing in the world community.

In North America where I live now, we have almost 250 Indian publications in English and in other Indian languages, but with the exception of a very few, most of them are of a very low standard. They are actually produced poorly and people get a wrong impression about our country. In contrast, what one daily Chinese newspaper called *The World Journal*, according to Reuters report, has distributed nationwide, not only in one of the largest minority newspapers in the US, but also it is one of the top 25 US newspapers at par with the other journals.

India has now moved from page 29 in major western newspapers to the business sections of these newspapers and occasionally to page 1. But, unfortunately, a lot of things have been written about us and they are not very encouraging. For example, *The New York Times* had India on the front page recently, but the headlines read as follows: India clips behind China, once its close economic rival; India forced behind as China steps up economic growth. The story quotes Jaideep Mukherjee, an Asia analyst, and I quote: You look around; the rest is disaster. One million people are not going to be programming computers or making films for that matter. They are going to be making shoes and cars and serving coffee. Moving on to Japan, where I was a student many years ago, there is a contrast in the perception of India; only 10,000 Indians in the country; there is no Indian ethnic publication or even an Indian journalist in the country. The PTI correspondent in Japan died a few years ago and he was not replaced. *The Hindu* correspondent also died and there was no replacement. Yet, in Japan, the

perception about India is a wonderful one. This is partly because our Ambassador in Japan has been working towards this. He has given 64 lectures in the last one year about Indo-Japanese relations and he has written a book about India. In my opinion, we should be thinking more about "large Ambassadors", rather than "Ambassadors-at-Large".

Coming closer to home, I worked in Dubai for about nine years and I found that although the population there is predominantly Indians, although Indians are working in the media there and holding high positions, the perception there about India is not very laudable and secondly it is a bit myopic because people in UAE from India tend to have a view which is related to their hometowns and home cities rather than having a view which is about India as a country. From all this, I would like to submit three suggestions. The first one is this. Let us start one Indian newspaper that can be printed from different centres in the world, a newspaper that is directed towards the young and to attempt to rekindle the interest in India among these people. Secondly, we should try and work out a system by which India is perceived in a better light by the mainstream media. Here, I think the 120 offices of the Indian missions abroad can play a major role. We have these wonderful IFS officers who are the ones who can really do a fantastic job for us in promoting India. Finally, each one of us needs to project India and each one of us has to consider himself as an Ambassador for the country. My suggestion is that we should look at bringing the world to India and at taking India to the world. According to me, the world is ready for India, but I am not sure whether we are ready for the world.

Thank you.

Address by Mr K S Sarma, CEO, Prasar Bharti

I will introduce myself. There is a need for it because I am not a famous person like film personalities; I am an anonymous civil servant. I am the Chief Executive of the newly-started Broadcasting Corporation of India, that is called, Prasar Bharti. It was earlier known as Doordarshan and All India Radio. This Corporation is now vested with the Board for its management. We have become an autonomous corporation, so long as we have the permission of our Minister to say so, because we are a fledgling corporation and we need Government's help enormously. It is because out of our Rs.2,000 crore, Government gives us Rs.1,300 crore and we raise Rs.700 crore. So, we need to have tremendous interaction with the Government. Without its support, we cannot survive.

Having said that, ladies and gentlemen, first it was cinema; second it is print media; now, it is the turn of TV and radio. As you know, we are one of the biggest, next only to China, in terms of its size. Before I place a few facts before you, so that some of the questions that you may like to pose may be answered, I would like to respond to the earlier speakers' view about India and its image. I have worked for about nine years in this sector and in these nine years, the constant refrain has been the onslaught that takes place on our culture and we had to respond to this on various fora and I ventured to make a story at the UN forum and I narrate that to you in two minutes before I place the facts before you.

The story goes like this. Three Heads of States – the Prime Minister of India, the Prime Minister of UK and the President of USA – were given a boon by God. As it would happen, when US is involved, the President of the USA said, whatever you would do God, first let us televise it all over the world. So, a few billions of people were watching this programme where God told these three Heads of States, I give you one boon and ask for it. The first turn came to the Prime Minister of India. Clever and intelligent as always, he said, culturally, spiritually, we feel that we are the best in the world. But

materially, we are not like these people – neither the British nor the American. So, God, grant me that boon when materially I will match them. God was very kind. He said that he asked a very right question; it will take about 25 years from now and you will have it. The Prime Minister was disappointed; he was about to shed tears saying that I am not likely to be the PM up to that time certainly and I am not likely even to be alive. Therefore, God, this is unfair. God said, you have asked for a boon and I have given it.

Then, the turn came to the British PM. Per force he had to ask more or less the same question. He positioned himself in the middle and said that slightly spiritually and culturally I am less than these people on the left are and materially less than the Americans are. So, God, give me boon to equal both of them and I will be grateful. So, God said, you shall have it but it will take 75 years. Then, the British PM started rolling on the floor and said that this is most unfair; you cannot do this to me. But God said, that is how it is; you have asked for a boon and I have given it.

The turn now came to the US President. He said, you know God, these guys already admitted that materially we are the best. Spiritually, I agree to some extent that we are not as good as these people. Why don't you grant me that boon that spiritually and culturally we are as good as the guys on the left, the Indians.

Ladies and gentlemen, the story goes like this. It appears, God started crying! The President asked what happened and what is wrong. God seems to have said, my dear, you have asked for a boon; I cannot fulfil in my lifetime! So, that is the response that I would like to give to the image, the predecessor has said about India.

Having said that, there are a few facts I will put across. We, in Prasar Bharti, are very keen to interact with you, in a large way. I inform you that we have had a high-level committee. I am sure most of you are aware of this. It was on the Indian diaspora as such under the chairmanship of Dr L M Singhvi. One of its important recommendations in this area is that internationally in the field of media between the local media and the diasporic media with increased linkages. That is very important. We, in Prasar Bharti, both from radio and DD, are willing to establish these linkages to the extent that we can and you also come forward and tell us how we can establish these linkages. I strongly believe that broadcasting and telecasting are cultures squarely founded on technologies. Though we are gaining strength in the area of technology, we tend to believe that you have access to better technology. So, I request that you may kindly bring that experience with you and establish linkages with us both on the field of radio and DD. We are here to cooperate with you.

The second point is when the private satellite channels arrived in our country, breaking the monopoly of DD as they say, because we tend to believe that we are different from them; we are public broadcasters, we cater to our viewers more as citizens, rather than as simply consumers. However, they have made a cut in our revenues no doubt; they were not very successful with the English serials like the *Bold and the Beautiful* or *Santa Barbara*. But they were very popular elsewhere. Most of the channels saw the writing on the wall and successfully converted themselves into local language channels delivering popular local contents, based on Indian culture and traditions, or at least, their interpretation of Indian culture and tradition.

I would like to remind you that all the channels are popular today in our country, namely CNBC, MTV or other channels; they have all had their first platform in DD only.

The other point is that our international services both on Radio and DD should be known. One of the speakers said that we lack aggressive publicity, which is what we need. Prasar Bharti is trying to do that. We have 72 hours of broadcasting in 16 foreign languages through radio and I am sure, many of you do not even know about it because we have not had that kind of publicity that we ought to have made. We

broadcast through radio, in 11 languages to more than 100 countries. DD India channel can be seen in most of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, USA and Canada. We attempt to project the wonder that is India, and act as a link of foreign nationals and to the large Indian diaspora living in those countries. These external services disseminate the varied art and cultural mosaic of India and stimulate interests in our socio-economic milieu. This is another piece of information that I wanted to give you.

The last one is this. We have also taken to satellite broadcasting on radio through world space. I am placing these facts before you so that you will come to know the areas in which these linkages can be established with Prasar Bharti and it can be worked to our mutual advantage. Prasar Bharti is in the process of organizing a workshop for journalists, media persons from all the Indian diaspora where such interest exists, in India, in collaboration with PTI and UNI so that the nitty-gritty of all these linkages can be worked out.

These are some of the points. We have, in the stalls of AIR and DD in Pragati Maidan, placed some of our most cherished programmes and some of them are readily available for purchase, some are available on order within 24 hours. I would like you to kindly go through them and see what best can be done to establish these linkages. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Address by Mr Afsana Kareem Amarsy, Co-President, Primesco Inc, Canada

Hon'ble Minister, Ms Sushma Swaraj, Distinguished Guests and Film-makers,

It is a great pleasure and an honour to be here today. When I first came to India, four years ago, I felt like completion of a long journey. My great grandfathers left India 120 years ago and settled in Madagascar. Born and raised in Madagascar, my schooling eventually took me to London, Paris and Boston, where finally I settled down with my husband in Canada. Our company specializes in producing large formats and distributing large format films as well as developing large format films from the world. Today, we have produced seven films on Imax. Let me explain to you – the Imax technology is a bit different from the normal technology. What is important in Imax is that the screen is about 8 floors of a building. You can imagine the eight floors, how big it would be. Clarity and songs are extremely important in Imax. Our latest project was released six months ago.

All the times, even after having been to country after country and the languages that I have learnt, there was something left in my heart always and dissatisfaction was also there. But when I came to India, I realized now it is the time for me to show India to the world in a different way. So, what I have done is in this film *India Kingdom after Tiger* I have exhibited India in a different way to the rest of the world. So, many parts of the world feel that India is not what it is; India is full of cultures, geography, history, etc. All this, I am trying to show in the film. I hope that we have made justice to its candour. Today, we are working to strengthen educational ties with India by developing a spectacular Imax complex in New Delhi, where *India Kingdom after Tiger* would be a permanent destination exhibit. This will be a world-class theatre and an exhibition hall aimed at both tourists and residents, to showcase the beauty of India through our film as well as the latest in Indian multimedia animation and film production. It will be a premium facility designed not only to promote tourism and education, but also to provide a showcase in which Indian films can find a large audience, composed of both domestic partners and potential foreign buyers. We are moving steadily on this project every day and we hope that with your help and encouragement, we can achieve this dream.



I have realized that coming to India, after 120 years of my family crisscrossing the globe, was not the end of my journey but only the beginning. India has opened new vistas and opportunities for me and has allowed me to continue to explore my deep love for this country. I fully agree with what Mr Yashwant Sinha said yesterday during his speech that we people who being away from India for a long time, are different; we think differently; we speak different languages, but there is one thing that we are all Hindustanis at the end of the day.

Address by Mr Devendra Maulloo, General Manager, MFDC, Mauritius

Hon'ble Minister, Ms Sushma Swaraj, Distinguished Panellists, and Friends,

It is my very humble pleasure today to address you. In fact, I had prepared a very nice paper. For long, I am one of the first people to get to have interaction with Mr Sumeet Gupta and I had prepared a very interesting paper. The abstracts of it are being given in the document. From what we just heard till now, I am going to make some very broad reflections of my own experience in Mauritius. I am General Manager of Mauritius Film Development Corporation and a media man for the past 15 years. I am very proud to be here today because I have been looking forward to it for so many years. I can say very proudly that – I told you before – I look upon you as an inspiration because whenever I am being called to talk about the film industry – of course, I know the Indian film industry very well – I always refer to you. Why should it be so? It is because Mauritius has been known for the past 25 years and I am again proud of being associated with the Indian film industry. Since 1974, people from Bollywood always come to our shores. Just to tell you my duties, I am the authority to decide whether a film is to be shot or not in our country. Last year, just before I left Mauritius, I processed, in the year 2002, 150 requests for film shooting and I approved 110 film shootings from abroad and 35 came from India. This is wonderful. We have been interacting with the film industry for so many years.

Mauritius is very interesting. Mauritius is a kind of a cultural pot, as we say, you walk on the streets; wherever you go, you will hear Hindi songs and movies. As my dear friend from the India *Today International* said, it is the living one of culture and I think, no other place is there in the world; we are next to India. We have heard many of the Indian Prime Ministers referring to it as Chhota Bharat. Perhaps, it is true. This is again a fact where you have different cultures, but still we are able to maintain our Indianness, as we have been hearing for the past three days. These are facts, but I cannot go deep into the facts.

I now move on to the second part that I want to tell you today. It is about sanctions. Madam, with all humbleness this audience wants to know this. Do you want us to be passive customers of Indian products or do you want us to be considered as active partners of the product? This is a very interesting question and we need to consider this. We also have something and we can share with you because on our side, people want to invest in films and want to make films; we want them to be seen in New Zealand or Canada or Fiji or anywhere else. This is a very important issue where we need to address ourselves.

There is one more thing. I have been interacting with so many people. Of course, we are multilingual people. I can speak Hindi, too. We have been interacting with so many people and one day, one gentleman came to me and asked me: What about prime time Indian films on our TV? This was a problem because we think that the prime time is meant for a larger audience of English or French. Then, I looked forward to Bombay and other friends. I asked them, why not start some such stations like that? I could not find any, with good opportunity. There was another gentleman whose name is Vijay Soni. He lives in UK. He came down to Mauritius and started a very interesting project which

is called, Video Visuals Ltd. It is accepted today also. Video Visual Ltd is a reality. Accept that link, all kinds of Indian languages based films, etc. we have now reinvented prime time with *Kaun Banega Karorepati*, on Sunday at 8 o'clock. This is wonderful. Even all those very nice serials in Hindi, or other Indian languages like Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, etc. are telecast and now we have got French subtitles. Going further on that, having told about Video Visuals, it has to go to other Islands, to Madagascar, etc. They are showing Indian films subtitled in their languages. This is interesting. This is a kind of an answer to what somebody can do if he wants to make the diaspora group do something.

My last point is about operations. If you go through my paper, I have given a lot of things. I have got something very interesting about the Frankofone model, the French model. This model is a kind of an operational system, that is vivid, dynamic, structured, where any person in any part of the diaspora can speak in any language. You can go to that Council, which I am proposing, the Council of International Media for Indian Entertainment and Exchange. You can go to that and this could act as a mirror. You can be encouraged, from there, you can tell the world what is your reach.

Thank you very much.

**Address by Mr Suresh Rohin,
Director of Photography, Eastman Films, Canada**

Hon'ble Minister, Distinguished Guests,

I have four suggestions to make; this is a better time to make it because we have the Hon'ble Minister here to listen to us. I am not going to talk about how Indian movies are, etc. Indian Movies and Indian entertainment industry would talk for itself and the world knows about it. One thing is that we have outbeaten China because for the past two days, I was tired of hearing China. People have talked so much saying that China has done this and that, but one thing that they did not do is that they could not outbeat us when it comes to entertainment industry, with our movies.

Number-wise, we may make more movies than Hollywood. But viewership-wise, we are number two. Hollywood movies have more viewership, but Indian movies have less. Not only Indians, all kinds of people watch Indian movies. I am not going to talk about anything else. There are certain things that need to be looked into. There is a lot of money to be made with the Indian and overseas film industry. There is one thing that needs to be done – I want to propose it here. Primarily, there is a need to sign a co-production treaty with India and Canada. That treaty has to be signed because if it is signed, then there will be a lot of money that can be outsourced to India. I am now doing a JV with a company called Prasad Productions. I was talking to my auditor in Madras and he said, you go to any Indian Minister and tell him about outsourcing and software, and their antenna will go up. So, I am emphasizing the word “outsourcing” because there are ways by which a lot of money can be made. If the co-production treaty is signed, it helps us to bring foreign post-productions in India. What is going to be there in post-production? The digital media helps us to do the final touch here in India because in India, we get – I do not want to use the term cheap labour – the inexpensive expertise. India has all the potential equipment that is equivalent to Hollywood. But what we lack is some intensive programme which the Indian Government has to give. We need more technological achievements. That is why we are here. What the Indian Government has to do now? It has to form a delegation and send them abroad and tell the world that we are here and we are competitive; we are as good as people in Hollywood, and so, bring your production to our country. I am here and I can guide the Indian Government because we do have contacts. I am willing to help. If the Indian Government is willing to form a delegation, it can go and knock at all the doors. Why does the Indian Government do so? As a private person if anybody goes

and knocks at any door, they are not going to listen to you. Because there are many factors involved, but if the Indian Government is involved by sending the delegation to all these companies, there will be a lot of money to be made. The Indian entertainment industry has a lot of opportunity to make more money than the IT industry.

I want to touch on the ethnic media. India has the better opportunity other than all the developed countries. Ethnic media is one that India can make use of. Ethnic media is aimed towards all the ethnic people living in different countries. For example, the Canadian Government had spent a lot of money in promoting ethnic media. But, unfortunately, the Indian ethnic producers are producing a very bad quality production. It is not because they cannot, but because they do not have any resources. Unfortunately, India does not have any big companies to sponsor these programmes. There is no revenue out of it. The ethnic producer cannot do work voluntarily all the time. Through this ethnic media, the Indian Government can help the upcoming younger generation. Particularly, I want to point out one thing here. My friend and my producer Ms Afsana is sitting here. I am really proud of her because she is a second-generation Indian living abroad. She has kids who are third generation. Do you know what Afsana does? She makes sure that her kids speak only Gujarati at home. The kids who were born and brought up here in India do not want to speak their own mother tongue, but do you know what she asked me a few years ago? She asked me whether I could find a baby-sitter who could speak only Gujarati and whether I can bring some one from India. I am proud of people like her and there are a lot of people like her all over India. How can we help them? We can help them with an ethnic media. For that, the Indian Government has to make sure that they create a library of different cultural programmes. They do not have to spend any extra money on these kinds of programmes because they have DD, Indian Film Corporation in their hands. They can make a library of these things. They have to only compile all these different cultural programmes and they have to make sure that these are accessible to all the different ethnic producers. They have to insist through their corporate offices all over the world that these ethnic producers broadcast these programmes. You can say now that there is satellite TV all over the place, and these people have access. But there is another point where the Indian Government can make money out of ethnic media, that is, by promoting tourism. It is because the ethnic media programmes are not only watched by ethnic people, but it is also being watched by a lot of mainstream people. When you project India on the local ethnic channels, the local people get to watch how beautiful India is and the Indian tourism gets promoted without any spending of money. For example, if Canada has to do the same thing in India, they have to shell money out of their pocket, but where India has the opportunity, they do not do. They do not have to spend a penny on anything, but they have to make use of the opportunities that is in front of them.

Thirdly, I want to talk about Indian PR. When I say this, it is going to hurt a lot of people. There are two kinds of journalism in the world. One is investigate the fact and leave the judgement to the audience. There is a second kind of journalism. The journalist himself finds out the facts and expresses his personal opinion in such a way that it hits hard and the audience, whether he is seeing it, viewing it or hearing it, takes his sword in his hand and like a typical Indian hero, does stir and starts fighting. My kind of journalism is the second one. What happens is that Indian PR is very poor and I am very sorry to say this. Most of you living in India do not get to see both sides of the media coverage.

I am going to point out one small incident. When the Indian Parliament was attacked, the coverage that was given, I am not quite sure whether it was the Indian media or the Indian Government was very, very poor. My heart was bleeding. I was trying to contact the PMO. My mail got bounced. I have evidence here to that. I had then accessed with the Canadian media and I made sure that the Canadian media portrayed how hard it was. Something bad happened, but as politicians, people and the media, should have seen how to make good out of the bad.

Another thing is how do you counteract terrorism or what happened there? What the Indian media should have done? Fortunately, nothing bad happened and we curbed everything. In order to curb terrorism, we have to educate the Indian people as to what they should have done. That act could also have been a successful one. What kind of devastated impact it would have had on the country? If ordinary citizens and the future generation kids learn all these things, automatically they will be against terrorism and they will know what is going on within the country. This needs to be done and the Indian PRs have to wake up; they have to do a better job because our neighbouring country is doing a better job than India and they are out-beating us. We may be stronger than anybody else, but unfortunately the Indian PR system, in my opinion, is zero. Please wake up.

My fourth point is this. I do not want to take too much time. Yesterday, Mr Kabir Bedi put it very well – when any Indian immigrant goes out of the country, we say it is a brain-drain. Now, there is a time; we have to make it up. There is a brain-gain now because there are a lot of second-generation kids; I had my education in Canada; I did my cinematography there; there are a lot of second-generation kids who went to universities with me; they are all longing to come back; they want to do something for this country. But they do not know where to go; there is not proper protocol for them to come back here. A friend of mine who is an architect wants to come here. He was born in Guyana. He is an excellent guy. His speciality is designing airports. The Swiss Government hired him. He wants to come back to India and do something for free. But unfortunately there is no proper guidance for these people. This is the right time; we are at the right conference. You have to make sure that there is proper protocol and proper guidance for these people to come back here. Then, there will be no more brain-drain, and there will be brain-gain. So, we have to do something about it.

Another thing is this. I really applaud the people who made arrangements for this. Though we have migrated out of India for various reasons, they have not forgotten us and we have not forgotten our country. The main thing is this – for us, as NRIs, we have a major problem, that is, bringing back our kids is not an easy task. For example, if my kid grows up in Canada, she is neither Indian nor Canadian. Any Indian kid that is coming out of North America, is branded as ABCDs – American Born Confused Desi. They are neither Indian, nor American, nor Canadian. When they come back here, they are out of place. These kids are poor kids and we have to do more for those kids. Please continue to do this work and think about our future generation; make them loyal to our country. The only way you can make them loyal to this country is by way of ethnic media.

Thank you very much.

**Address by Mr C B Patel,
Editor & Publisher, Asian Business Publications Ltd, London, UK**

Hon'ble Minister and Distinguished Friends,

I am glad that we are here; we are talking about the "stretched time." I cannot tell you about the time management or the time control of the audience. I am glad that this is an entertainment hall. It must give priority to the entertainment section. I am the only print media here. I will have to provide some entertainment because for the first one-and-a-half hours, people were silent. Maybe, today is the death anniversary of an important leader and so, the audience was so quiet; the speakers were speaking and one or two were dozing off also. I am not going to take more time. The lady next to me, Ms Afsana, was the first speaker who took only five minutes. She said she would take only two minutes, but took five minutes, according to my clock. So, I am going to take only four-and-a-half minutes.

Each NRI would have at least spent some 1,500 pounds. They came here because they wanted to come; they came with love. This travel agent which I mentioned now, telephoned people and he was giving maximum discount; he said, we love India; we came with love. I tell you that today we have the debate between Indians in India and the Indians abroad. It is not two-dimensional or three-dimensional. It will benefit Indians in overseas countries and also, it would benefit Indians in this country. It would also benefit the whole world at large because we have so much contribution to make. I am also very clear that the media's role is dependent on the place and time. I know the role of the media overseas. I am very scared what the media will write tomorrow morning. Today, one web site says, Mahendra Choudury flays Pravasi Bharatiya Divas celebrations. That poor fellow did not say that. He did grumble about one or two points. Tomorrow, I think there will be two major items. When Advaniji was speaking, Lady Nagpal got up and asked a question. I can assure you, tomorrow's paper will twist it and it will not be put in the proper context. That is the job of the media because they want to make a pound or two. But I am worried that they might even ask about the gentleman who made a very brief intervention now and who spoke earlier on the debate in the main hall. Look, this happens. This was a bold, very imaginative initiative which will have long-term ramifications for Indians abroad. I must compliment - everybody has to be complimented. I must compliment Dr Singhvi and his Committee, Mr J C Sharma, FICCI and, above all, the Indian Government itself. They have invested so much time, energy and resources. Please clap for them, if you so like it. I believe that they have done a wonderful job. It is for us together - Indians here and Indians abroad - to make sure that the investment is not wasted.

I will go in to some shortcomings that are here. I have been here for the last three days. Normally, the media person is a shy person. People have talked about something and we have to accept. There is a large gathering; when we have such a large gathering, there is bound to be shortcomings. I also know that so many people came and came very late also. People grumble about question-and-answer session; people grumble about having more interaction also. Why I am saying is this. You can make a note of this. When you plan for the next time, you can give more time. Because ultimately if we are nice in having such a big hall, if we make a mistake about technology - about electricity somebody was mentioning - then life is miserable. This is a question of logistics also.

I left India about 43 years ago. You must accept the fact, whether you are indentured labour or otherwise, as the gentleman from Guyana spoke yesterday, the mother has to be very courageous and strong to go abroad. Indentured labour also requires some sort of courage. People who went voluntarily, have sacrificed a lot. I believe that all of them, without any exception, were ambitious, hard working and prepared to take courage and they paid the price for the success. Somebody said very vividly why should they look back to India. I think we have lived outside and have enjoyed the benefits of a decent civilized society. I live in England and I am proud to be British, and proud to be of Indian origin, I am also proud to be a Hindu. I will come to that in a minute. People here grumble because there is a lot of lack of accountability, good governance and transparency. Except for Rahul Bajaj, nobody mentioned about the wonderful word corruption. In dictionary, there is no word corruption and so, we do not know about corruption. Or, corruption is everywhere and so potent that we cannot even notice it. That is actually an affront to our integrity and that is a big obstacle for our future. People are complaining; I am complaining. It is because I have got a stake in this society. That is why, if anybody complains, it is because they care for you. So, do not give them too much importance. Media friends might be available here. Unless there is constructive criticism, there is no scope for advancement or progress. People also talked about culture, confusion, contemporary India, etc. Madam Minister, there was a programme in England for one hour. Somebody came from London; in six weeks she wanted to make a programme. She did get a chance from BBC, that Indians abroad live in a time

capsule; we carry the cultural baggage, etc. If she becomes a pundit in six weeks or six months, then God bless the world for it. But the overseas Indians are proud of their possessions, very valuable ones of culture, heritage, etc. Do you know why they value them? They have a choice. They can become Anglicized. People value because that is the one reason why in America or in England, Indians are the achievers; they are very efficient, competent; they are the lowest number in prisons in their countries. It is partly because of our culture and a sense of shame too.

I believe that dual citizenship is a drybone. It is not my preference. I believe that it has its own minus and plus points. But if we talk about dual citizenship in the countries which are little or less developed, both as democracies and societies, then the Indian people who live there, will be under tremendous pressure too.

Some people come here and talk about historical things. I think, history is a past thing. Though future is a mystery, it is in our hands. I believe that in this conference, we should not be concerned too much about Indians living in developed economies or matured democracies. We should be concerned about people living in Fiji or South Africa, Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam. There may be only 3-4-5 million people.

I think, this Conference must be very clear, totally without any hesitation it should be saying that the problem of Fijian Indians is the problem of Indian Indians. That is the only way to behave honourably.

There was a nice picture called *Seema* in the olden days and there was a song called *Kahan Ja Raha Hai Tu Jane Wale*. Please listen to that song and listen to the wordings, whether you are in New Delhi or anywhere else. People like me are sometimes asked this question. Day after tomorrow, I will go to my village in Bhadan; I will go the Shiv Mandir as also to the local Durga, where my father used to take Chaddar every year. I will go to Baroda and in Shiapur, there is a mosque. My father became a Sanyasi in 1960 and he expired as a Sanyasi later on. But in 1969, there were riots in Baroda. He was able to stand with his Trishul in front of the mosque. That mosque is still there. Do not blame us of being communal or anything. We, the overseas Indians, have more sense of fairness. I am proud to be British, as I said earlier and proud to be Indian and Hindu too, and proud to be able to respect all other religions because I am a Hindu; there is nothing wrong with it. Do not underestimate. I spend four or more hours everyday to look at the media from India. That is part of my business and I make a pound or two out of it. I think, the reporting in the English media, by some of the Convent-educated or in some of the so-called secularist journalists requires me to think a lot about India's future.

Thank you very much for giving me a chance. I believe that time has come to forget the past. Ultimately, all the NRIs who went abroad worry about only day to day. But they have a long view, the bold vision, they are able to work hard and their inner strength out of their culture and heritage is there. God bless us all.

Thank you very much. Jai Hind.

**Address by Ms Sumita Chakraborty Brooms,
Senior Producer, National Broadcasting Network,
West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago**

Hon'ble Minister Mrs Sushma Swarajji, Distinguished Co-Chairs, Panellists, Fellow-panellists, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good afternoon to you all and Namaskar. I represent Trinidad & Tobago, a twin island republic in the Caribbean Sea more than 10,000 miles away from here, where



some 600,000 people of Indian origin have made their homes over the past 160 years. This is a fact which is a very well-kept secret. When people think about West Indies, people think of an African country, but there are 600,000 people of Indian origin in that tiny country, a twin island republic. I do look forward to the opportunity of telling you about a bit of paradise during our less formal encounters over the most eventful and historic week end for which I would like to thank the organizers.

I shall now attempt to raise a few salient points here in this august forum which are of concern to us in T&T, as a substantial community of the people of Indian origin. First, I must give you a small idea of who we are. The total population of T&T is about 1.3 million. I think, Delhi's population is much larger than that. Some 6,00,000 of its citizens are of Indian origin, resulting in a slight edge over the other major ethnic group which, of course, is of African origin. T&T is a peaceful and stable democracy following the Westminster system of Government. Traditionally, the political sphere was under the control of the people of African origin for 30-plus years, while the Indo-Trinidadian concentrated its energies on agriculture and on small trade. At the same time, it also invested very heavily on educating his children which has yielded great dividends today. In 1995, political power shifted to the Indian ethnic group when Mr Basudev Pandey assumed the Prime Ministership of T&T. His party is now occupying the opposition bench once again, unfortunately. But Indo-Trinidadian is very firmly entrenched in the political landscape of T&T today. He now occupies the centre stage in that arena of whatever party he belongs to.

In T&T, English is lingua franca. The country's major revenue sources are oil and natural gas. It also has a very sophisticated industrial base with a highly literate populace. In every sense of the term, T&T is the very hub of the Caribbean. It is also located strategically between North and South America which makes it the natural gateway to America, the geopolitical significance of which can hardly be overlooked. The significant presence of PIOs in Trinidad has left an indelible mark on the Indian culture both in terms of assimilation and preservation. In terms of assimilation, its acceptance among other things of all other coexisting religions and intermarriages has made a very substantial contribution to what may be called "Trinidadian culture", that is, Chutney and Carnival. Indian culture today has become a dominant part of the Trinidadian way of life. In terms of preservation of Indian culture, one is not surprised when Indian culture and religious organizations talk about exporting Indian culture to India very soon. As it is said, the Indian culture has been frozen in a time capsule, since the first Indian indentured labourer arrived in Trinidad way back in 1845. So, some of you will visit and see our practices – religious and rituals being performed, how it was done in remote villages of Bihar and UP, 150 years ago. So, the culture in my adopted homeland has both the dynamism and the resilience of what is typical of Indian culture. It is easy to detect two prominent features of Indian culture in T&T. They are distinctness and adaptability.

To summarize, I shall now make a few points which require immediate focus and attention. There is an urgent need for greater networking of T&T and India. Our economy is very vibrant because its revenue bases are oil and natural gas, yielding a high capital income. T&T is the industrial hub of the Caribbean region. There are endless business opportunities with major MNCs operating there. PIOs control the retail sector. Indians also control the largest non-oil market share in the distributed trade sector. T&T is seen as the most important country in the region with a very advanced, sophisticated communication, marketing and distribution network. Due to the geopolitical positioning of T&T, the Indian diaspora can play a very important role in the relationship firstly between India and T&T and then, within the wider Indian diasporic community, located globally. As a 6,00,000-strong community, PIOs in T&T constitute one of the most significant groups in the world. As such, this group desires to come closer to its kith and kin in India and abroad. We also need help from the rest of the Indian diaspora on many

issues, politics being one of them. India Inc. has become more assertive in recent years. India has now come of age. This stark reality has had a very positive and profound effect on the PIOs in T&T. I remember only a little over a decade ago when Trinidadian Indian will hide his roti in public. Today, roti is a national dish, favoured and relished by all Trinidadians and Tobagonians. In fact, there are chain stores called hot shops. That is one example. There are six Indian registrations transmitting 24 hours a day. For a small country of that size of population, having six Indian radio stations, is wonderful. I work for one of the networks of TV and radio. I also recall that it was not so long ago, that a Trini-Indian as we call, was ashamed of wearing Indian dress at public functions, unless it was outside of religious occasions or wedding ceremony; they were the only places where you could see people wearing, what I am wearing, which I always wear. I do not wear anything else, but Indian clothes. But people were ashamed. Today, designer kurta-pyjamas for both men and women and expensive sarees make the fashion statement of the day at cocktail parties as well as other formal and official functions. A lot of the credit for this has to go to Bollywood, which is hugely popular, not only with Indians, but also with non-Indians. So, happily I do not have to crave for company any longer. Other people are also looking like me. Today, Diwali is the national festival and it is observed over a month-long period. Other festivals such as Id-ul-Fitr are also celebrated nationally. So, in sum, I can say, out of many, one people, one nation; that is T&T. It is most incredible when one realizes that such a strong affinity towards Indian culture exists after such a long time and at such a faraway place, that too, with almost total absence of the language of the original indentured Indian, that is, of course, Hindi. It is an emotional bond, in my opinion, longing to identify with mother India and its rich cultural heritage. It gives Trinidadian-Indian diaspora, a sense of his place under the Sun. This is, indeed, the umbilical cord that can never be severed, proving once again the truism. You can take an Indian out of India, but you can never take the India out of him.

Thank you all for your very kind attention.

**Address by Dr Ashakant Nimbark,
Professor and Chair, Sociology Department,
Dowling College, New York, USA**

Hon'ble Minister, Esteemed Colleagues and Friends,

As if to answer a paradoxical question by a Pravasi who goes to an antique store, asks, what is new, I, a sociological media analyst, realizing that media is a mirror of any community such as NRI, would glance through the mushrooming print media, listen to the NRI radio full of advertisements, watch NRI TV – the old wine in a new bottle – view NRI movies such as *American Desi*, *The Monsoon Wedding* and make a choice of being briefly self-critical, honest and transparent rather than self-congratulatory and repetitious in elaborating the virtues of our media in performing the function of informing, entertaining and networking as superb, and this media covers as the best in the world. I would rather observe the three NRI obsessions, profusely reflected in NRI media. One, ambivalent racial identity. Two, spiritualized materialism and three, retrogressively revived religiosity. First, while toying with the idea of brown is beautiful, sustained by the success stories of Miss World context, the media image of NRI shows us wanting to be as wise as possible, aesthetically and socio-politically, by skipping, ignoring all other shades, black or yellow and bypassing all other groups. This tendency comes out in the matrimonial advertisements, stressing complexion, caste and connections. Second is spiritual materiality. While singing the songs of their glorious traditions and spiritual values, NRIs seem to be making money, more money, purchasing pure gold and diamonds and gregariously graduating from ownership of Nissan to Honda to Lexus to BMW and aiming for Rolls Royce, building fortune here in America by earning in dollars and spending in rupees, acquiring real estate there and here and well-insured properties for their wellbeing in their life and building temples, more

lavish temples abroad and back home, and being more religious, mixing computers with horoscopes, and doing more pooja while abroad than back home, for their wellbeing in their next life.

Number three is retrogressive right-wing tendencies. While being highly skilled, well-educated and well off, the NRI media still reflects a retrogressive tendency of one step forward and two steps backward. They are over-dichotomized. We, the brown desis versus they, the white Pravasi by skipping the rest of the world. The NRI media hardly covers a crisis in Africa or a turmoil in Latin America or the Caribbean for that matter or problems of the rest of Asia. Certainly, it is a far cry from global village. Ours is not really an example of a global media. The excessive advertisement of electronic gadgets, next to the price-list of poojas and contributions, 1,001 dollars for sitting next to the Swamy and 101 dollars for sitting 10 ft away from the Swamy, etc. This is the combination of money and pooja. Building yet another temple – the networking functions of NRI media, the matrimonials reveal the revival of caste, sub-caste. These media-generated matrimonials present another paradox, too. True, they are useful, urgency-based and fruitful but also extremely retrogressive. During my skeptical moments, I am tempted to a hypothesis that a content analysis of matrimonial advertisement should be quickly compared with the advertisements of old-car sales. The old-car sale advertisement and the matrimonial advertisement sound the same. One says, newly built engine, new tyres, new conditions and newly painted. The other one says, 51, but looks young, only one marriage, recently and innocently divorced. In my moment, I immediately made a comparison of the old-car sales advertisement and the matrimonial advertisement and it does not sound too good for either. The retrogressive tendency in the matrimonial advertisement includes many patriarchal authorities, connections, especially soliciting correspondence complete with full-length photographs, authentic horoscopes from the parents, not from the people. Decent weddings mean dowry. This neither signifies the lofty tradition of community over individual nor a genuinely open one, but something akin to half-way house of media merchandizing – merchandizing the human being.

Finally, what I found is that while singing the songs, these three things come out as so profuse in our media. So, what do we do about it? My recommendation, very briefly, is this. The NRI media should come of age. Let us work towards three goals. One is it should be truly global, multicultural and forward-looking. Then, it will be wishfully lampooning our political and religious tradition, instead of guarding them with rigidity and uptightness. Finally, they should be able to empower the readers, listeners and the viewers instead of leading them to stifled words. What I really find extremely unforgivable is the combination of revived religiosity which is based on wrong assumption. If the Western society is religious, then we should be even more secular. The assumption is that by being more religious, we will be safer from the drugs, from alcohol, etc. But we do not realize that the American society, the Western society is extremely religious.

Thank you.

Address by Mr Fakir Hassen, Freelance Journalist, South Africa

As a former radio announcer, I will honour the time constraint. Exactly a century ago, there was a great man from Gujarat who came to South Africa. He came three years after Mahatma Gandhi who is the Father of the Nation. The other man who came exactly a century ago was one Ahmad Hassen Behra. We still consider him a great man; he did not father any country. But he is the father of just eleven children, and, of course, my father was the eldest. But for the last 50 years, after seeing Hindi movies, my Hindi today is far better than Gujarati. I hardly speak Gujarati. I have had the privilege of working for over 30 years now in the print and electronic media, TV, Radio and newspapers. I am also the INS' African correspondent.

The situation in South Africa is hardly different from what we have heard from other colleagues. I would like to agree with the distinguished panel here today. Many of them have raised the issue. The Minister said about the concept of partnership and joint ventures. There lies the resolution with the diaspora. Already in South Africa we have PIOs who are partnering in movie making. Your movie people are coming there to shoot things. We have had my distinguished colleague here. In fact, Shah Rukh Khan has been behind the Miss India Worldwide contest which took place for the first time in the African continent. Things like that have changed the attitude within the Indian community, as my colleague from the Caribbean mentioned. We have the same situation with the Indian community - denial of our culture, of our lifestyle, food, etc. in my generation, when I was youth. Now, there is a reversal of that; and we need support from India and the rest of the diaspora to continue that. We have colleagues reviving the languages which our children do not speak. The media plays a critical role in that, especially radio. I have had the privilege of starting twenty years ago, the first FM station in India. We had it then and we still have it going. The medium is English. We broadcast in English; it plays music in Hindi, Urdu, Telugu, Gujarati and Tamil. So, we probably have the most unique Indian station in the world.

In the print media, we have INS. Somebody alluded to this. INS is doing work across the world, trying to print a final copy here, which can either be shifted to the diaspora. Even electronically these days, it can be printed out. That sort of effort should be there. Whether it is INS or others, they need support. That is something that I would recommend. In terms of linguistic differences in South Africa not only within the Indian community, but also in the entire South African community, we have problems similar to what our colleagues from the Doordarshan mentioned. We have problems of languages. Finally, I want to say that JVs must be there. Madam, I strongly agree with you; it is what the future should be like in terms of support for the diaspora. Bollywood has made - I know, Shabanaji we have had arguments about this and so with Amitabh. We should not call it Bollywood. It has played such a big role. Before I flew here, a week here, there was a concept called Bollywood, now or never in South Africa, in Durban. Amitabh Bachchan, Hrithik Roshan, Shah Rukh Khan, and four actresses were there and 50,000 Indian spectators were there in the stadium. The only other occasion when we see such a crowd there in South Africa is when they play cricket, Rugby or soccer taking place. If it is soccer, you would see only Indian faces, it is mainly black. If it is Rugby, you will see only white faces, but not Indian faces. If it is cricket of course, we even have the Indian flags. The point that I am trying to make is that Bollywood played a very significant role in the survival of this in South Africa. There is one area where we, in South Africa as Indians, are fighting about cultural identity. Are we South Africans first? I would personally say yes, we are. But we must not deny our cultural roots. The mark of being South African first and having a South Africanness amongst us, and at the same time having Indian roots, is a thing for which we need support in whichever recommendations that you have been making.

Thank you.

Address by Dr Rudd Chander,

Hon'ble Minister, Chairman,

My father went from here to Surinam and from Surinam we went to Holland. Till now, we speak our language, which is Bhojpuri.

I am going to tell you a story which is a very unique story. It is an interesting story. Nowadays, one of the most important strategies that any ethnic religious group uses in clarifying the distorted images and creating an appropriate understanding among them is communication. It can use the legitimized audio-visual media in the form of



films, radio and various forms of print media. OHM has become such a media, broadcasting channels in Holland on natural level, radio and Internet. In Holland, we are 150,000 Indians living. It is one of the biggest groups in the European continent living in Holland. OHM is part of the compartmentalized public media in the Netherlands with complete subsidy by the Dutch Government. There is also a Muslim media, a Jew media, a Catholic media, a liberal media; that is totally the public media and so we have our own Board of Directors and our own budget. That is a unique one. The main aim of our media is the integration of Hindu culture in the Dutch society by providing information to viewers and listeners about rich Indian heritage and spirituality. By doing so, we are recognizing and recollecting the Hindu community in three essential points, creating a linkage and integration between Indians, NRIs and PIOs and the Dutch communities not on the policy of forced assimilation. Secondly, translating, explaining the essential Indian traditional norms and values to the Dutch people and especially to the youth who face the Western individualism in their way of living in a multicultural society. It offers different points of view in understanding the social and ethical issues. There is a growing interest in the Indian spiritual programme. OHM produces programmes on Upanishads, Bhagavadgita. It also covers the problems such as environment, pollution, AIDS, cloning, and transplantation. We last made a drama about "Is it possible to marry according to the Hindu religion of girls" because the divorce percentage is one. The boy or a girl is departing after one or two years. It is a big problem and so we are trying to see how we can accustom our culture to the needs of the people in the Netherlands. On "producing programmes on Indian diaspora in various countries", OHM realizes that there are transnational linkages and the Indian diaspora is changing the status of the universal Hindu Indian culture in different countries. We have produced films on Indians in Fiji, Mauritius, South Africa and the four countries in the Caribbean. Lastly, we made a film *Life of Tulsidas*, which was subsidized by half a million dollars by the Dutch Government. We also made a programme about Indians in Surinam. We called it a *Land of Rama*. What we think very important is that how we can work together, very different countries. It could be Fiji or South Africa, but people are making films. We can work in co-production to make films which are interesting for broad audience in the Western Europe.

Thank you.

Address by Mr Hasmukh Shah, President, US-India Enterprises Inc, USA

Hon'ble Minister, Yash Chopraji, Subhash Ghajji, another Chopraji,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity. Coming to the two-day conference, I can imagine, there are two words which we are discussing. One is creating awareness of the country's capabilities and opportunities and another is creating a good image of the country.

So far as the awareness and image building are concerned, if we concentrate on these two things, we will win the world. Coming to image building, we have to be assertive, positive and always talk about positive things of the country. Our company has a publication division called the *Business Times*. In *Business Times*, we always say about the positive things about India and that is the reason today why the American Government, the Canadian Government, the business houses know what is India's capability. We do not say that in India, there is poverty; there is corruption, etc. I do not want to mention that word, though somebody had mentioned it. But still there is the other side of the coin: that India has the great potentiality. It is a big market for the world and I think, we, the NRIs, should be proud of it that we had the opportunity to pay our debts to our country by doing something good for the nation. That would also create a good impression for us so that we do not become second- or third-class citizens in the country of our adoption. I am in America for the last 35 years and I know

if we want to create a better image for ourselves, then India has to be strong both economically and militarily. It is the duty of every NRI to support it so that India becomes better and so we will be better. That is the first point.

The second one is on awareness. Today, despite India being such a strong country, many people do not know about this. This is in the Western world, but I am not aware of its capability. I will give you one example. My neighbour, who is an Indian and who is here for the last 5-6 years, does not know what is Uttaranchal or where is Uttaranchal. The other day, I was meeting the Chief Minister of Uttaranchal, Mr N D Tiwari, and he was very proud of it. I told him that Uttaranchal has a great potentiality. Even Indians do not know about Uttaranchal. How do you expect the Americans to know it? So, we have to create continuously an image creation, awareness of the country's potentialities. I will give you another example. Developed countries like Canada use the help of our publication to promote Canadian business interests in America, because the Canadian Government realizes business chances of promoting India's interests in India. They wanted to know how. When we did it, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Industry Minister were pleased with it. Anyway, what I will like to say is this, awareness and image creation are the two things which will lead India into the 21st Century and we must all play our role in this.

Thank you.