India and Commonwealth

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ABSTRACT

The Republic of India, Capital city New Delhi lying across the Tropic of Cancer, comprises most of the Indian subcontinent. Inclusion of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal and the Afghanistan and China in the north, Sea. Neighboring Pakistan, Afghanistan and China in the north, following Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar (formerly Burma). Palk Strait separates it from Sri Lanka in the south. Became member in year 1947, having population of 1,28,73,88,909 (as on 10-01-2015) with population density (per sq. km): 376 and official language Hindi and English. Composed of Geographical area 32,87,263 sq km, Coastline of 7,520 km, Indian Rupee as currency and Time Zone of GMT Plus 5.5hr.

I. INTRODUCTION

Likewise Commonwealth India is a member of Indian Ocean Rim Association, Non-Aligned Movement, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, united Nations and World Trade Organization. Largest member state of commonwealth with nearly 60% of total population of the association, fourth largest contributor to the Commonwealth budgets and programmers providing the largest number of technical experts engaged by the Commonwealth Fund of Technical Cooperation Extending assistance to developing Commonwealth countries after the UK.

Being member of key Commonwealth bodies, including the Steering Committee on commonwealth connects India to the Standing Committee on Commonwealth India to the Standing Committee on Terrorism, Commonwealth Advisory Board on Sports, Grants Committee of Commonwealth Foundation as well as the Executive and Accreditation Committees of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Board of Governors.

The Commonwealth of Nations, commonly known as the Commonwealth (formerly the British commonwealth), is an intergovernmental organization of 53 member states that were mostly territories of the former British Empire. The Commonwealth operates by intergovernmental consensus of the member states, organized through the Commonwealth Secretariat, and non-governmental organizations, organized through the Commonwealth Foundation.

The Commonwealth countries, across all six inhabited continents estimates population of 2.328 billion, near a third of the world population, of which 1.26 billion live in India and combined of 94% live in Asia and Africa. After India, the next largest Commonwealth countries by population are Pakistan (180 million), Nigeria (170 million), Bangladesh (156 million), the United Kingdom (63 million) and South Africa (52 million). Smallest member is Tuvalu with about 10,000 people.

Covering land area is about 3,15,00,000 km² (1,22,00,000 sq m), or about 21% of the total world land area and spans all the continents. The three largest commonwealth nation by area are Canada at 99,84,670 km² (38,55,100 sq m), Australia at 76,17,930 km² (29,41,300 sq m), and India at 32,87,263 km² (12,69,219 sq m). The Commonwealth members have a combined gross domestic product of over $ 9 trillion, 78% of which is accounted for by the four largest economies: United Kingdom ($ 2.4 trillion), Canada ($ 1.8 trillion), India ($1.8 trillion) and Australia ($ 1.5 trillion).

The commonwealth’s objectives were first outlined in the 1971 Singapore Declaration, which committed the Commonwealth to the institution of world peace, promotion of representative democracy and individual liberty, the pursuit of equality and opposition to racism, the fight against poverty, ignorance, and disease, and free trade. To these were added opposition to discrimination on the basis of gender by the Lusaka Declaration of 1979, and environmental sustainability by the Langkwi Declaration in 1989. These objectives were reinforced by the Harare Declaration in 1991.

The Commonwealth’s current highest priority aims are on the promotion of democracy and development, as outlined in the 2003 Aso Rock Declaration, which built on those in Singapore and Harare and clarified their terms of reference, stating, “We are committed to democracy, good governance, human rights, gender equality, and a more equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization. “The Commonwealth website lists its areas of work as: Democracy, Economics, Education, Gender, Governance, Human rights, Law, Small States, Sport, Sustainability, and Youth. Through as separate voluntary fund, Commonwealth governments support the Commonwealth Youth Programme, a division of the Secretariat with offices in Gulu (Uganda), Lusaka (Zambia), Chandigarh

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India), Georgetown (Guyana) and Honiara (Solomon Islands).

Commonwealth countries share many links outside government, with over a hundred Commonwealth-wide non-governmental organizations, notably for sport, culture, education, law and charity. The Association of Commonwealth Universities is an important vehicle for academic links, particularly through scholarships, principally the other Commonwealth countries. There are also many non-official associations that bring together individuals who work within the spheres of law and government, such as Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The Commonwealth, games, a multi-sport event, is held every four years; the 2010 Commonwealth Games were held in New Delhi, India and the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, and the 2018 Commonwealth Games will be on Gold Coast, Australia. As well as the usual athletic disciplines, as at the Summer Olympic Games, the games include sports particularly popular in the commonwealth, such as bowls, netball, and rugby. Started in 1930 as the empire Games, the games were founded on the Olympic model of amateurism, but were deliberately designed to be “the Friendly Games”, with the goal of promoting relations between Commonwealth countries and celebrating their shared sporting and cultural heritage.

II. INDIA IN COMMONWEALTH

Since the London Declaration of 1949, which established the modern Commonwealth, India has held a pivotal position in this voluntary association of 54 independent sovereign states. It was India’s decision in 1948, as a newly independent Republic, to remain in the Commonwealth which influenced other Asian and African countries to join the organization and which opened the era of the modern Commonwealth. Since then, it was firmly established that joining the commonwealth no longer necessarily involved continued allegiance to the British Crown. At the same time the word ‘British’ was dropped from the association’s title to reflect the Commonwealth’s changing character.

India is the largest member state of the Commonwealth, with nearly 60% of the total population of the association. It is the fourth largest contributor to the commonwealth budgets and programmers. It provide the largest number of technical experts engaged by the Commonwealth fund for Technical Corporation extending assistance to developing Commonwealth countries after the UK.

India is a member of key commonwealth bodies, including the Steering Committee on commonwealth Connects, the Standing Committee on Terrorism, Commonwealth Advisory Board on Sports, Grants Committee of Commonwealth Foundation as well as the Executive and Accreditation Committees of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Board of Governors.

India’s activism within the Commonwealth and supportiveness of its initiatives represents an important opportunity to dispel any notation of a distance arising between a rising India and its erstwhile constituency. Composing a voluntary contribution to the CFTC had steadily increased from £1991 (€ 4,00,000) to £7,20,000 in 1998 and remained stable thereafter till 2004-05, increased contribution to £ 8,00,000 in 2005-06 and £ 8,50,000 in 2006-07. Thereafter, Contribution has increased by £50,000 each year and reached GBP 1 million in 2009-10 which has since been maintained. This however still remains in overall terms, a small proportion of the approximate GBP 29 million Fund as well as relatively small as compared to contributions by UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Sustaining a comparatively large number of long-term experts to various Commonwealth Fund for technical cooperation CFTC Programmers, which is the largest proportion of CFTC experts provided by any developing country in the Commonwealth and second only to the United kingdom. The contribution made by Indian experts in various fields is greatly appreciated by the beneficiary states and provides an excellent example of South-South cooperation.

Being third largest contributor to the budget of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) India accounts for the two- third of the Commonwealth youth population in Asia which totals 600 million. It hosts one of the four CYP regional centers in Chandigarh as ‘Centre of Excellence’, many of the CYP pilot projects are initiated in India. Through partnerships with the private sector, a technology Empowerment Center in India has been established, which offers affordable course in programming and e-commerce. Also Assessing contribution for CYP year 2013-14 is GBP 119,138, the budget of the Commonwealth Secretariat for the year 2013-14 is GBP 3 million.

The 2010 Commonwealth Youth Leaders Conference was held in Chandigarh on 16 December, 2010 with the participation of about 40 delegates from all regions of the Commonwealth. The conference was inaugurated by Shivraj Patil, the Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh. Deputy Secretary General Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba, who oversees Youth Affairs at the Commonwealth Secretariat, gave the keynote address. The delegates voted to elect the chair and deputy-chair of the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus. Noelyn Wagapu from Solomon Islands and Rebecca Solomon from Vanuatu were elected as chair and vice-chair respectively of the Commonwealth youth Caucus.

Hosting the Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers on 4-7 January 2010 in new Delhi. Smt. Mira Kumar, Speaker of Lok Sabha, who is an Acting Regional representative from Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Union, was nominated as delegate to General Assembly for the period 2009-12 during the CPA conference in Arusha, Tanzania. Smt. Mira Kumar presided over the 57th CPA Conference held in London from 21-28 July 2011.
Government of India hosted the meeting of Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Board in New Delhi in 2002, Following this meeting CLGF’s Good Practice Scheme was launched and supported by UK DFID. Three states – Gujurat, Kerala and Maharashtra were selected for the programme which provides technical skills exchanges between Indian local government practitioners and their counterparts in the other Commonwealth Countries, particularly UK. India will host the 8th Commonwealth Local Government conference in New Delhi in 2015.

Attainment of India in Commonwealth:

- Kamlesh Sharma of India became Commonwealth Secretary- General in 2008, and Professor Asha Kanwar was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth of Learning in 2012.
- India has been competing in the Commonwealth Games since 1934, and has won 438 medals (155 gold 155 silver and 128 bronze).
- India had won One Commonwealth Short Story Prize, Four Commonwealth Short Story competition, seven Commonwealth Writer’s Prize: Best Book (overall winners-2, listed regions-5), Seven Commonwealth Writer’s Prize: Best First Book (overall winners-2, Listed regions-5) awards.
- Scholarships and fellowships are awarded by India to citizens of other Commonwealth countries under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.
- This country hosts a national chapter of the commonwealth Human Ecology.
- The country hosted 2nd PAN Commonwealth Veterinary Conferences at Bangalore, India. 22-27 February 1998 “Animal Health and Production in Rural Areas, the Essential Role of Woman at all Levels”.
- The commonwealth Human Rights Initiative established its HQ in New Delhi in 1993, host to the Commonwealth Youth Programme Asia Centre in Chandigarh and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum’s Project Office, Asia, in Mumbai.
- Over half of the Commonwealth’s two billion citizens are Indian.

III. CONCLUSION

The Commonwealth is a unique international organization with the bulk of its membership coming from 32 Small States. There is a great degree of genuine appreciation among these States for India as the largest and a vibrant democracy and for the high-tech advancement and economic progress India has achieved in the past decade and a half. At the same time, contacts with this large member of Small States are few and far-between. India does not have resident Missions in 23 Commonwealth States, Unlike the UN where these States find more options in terms of rich donor countries like Japan and Germany, the commonwealth provides a useful and unique platform for India to capitals on this sense of goodwill. Given India’s broader global engagement, the Commonwealth will continue to be a useful vehicle for projecting our global aspirations. India’s activism within the Commonwealth and supportiveness of its initiatives represents an important opportunity to dispel any notion of a distance arising between a rising India and its erstwhile constituency.

REFERENCES