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Non-recipient Indians

The Indian community abroad should be tapped for the sake of citizens so far left out of the development paradigm



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AS India moves ahead on the economic front, achieving between 8-9 per cent GDP growth per annum there can be a sense of satisfaction, a sense of confidence and a sense of, even, complacency. But even though India's development on the economic and industrial front is extremely encouraging, it does not extend to the 600 million people who are living in the rural areas, are dependent on agriculture and below the poverty line.

The basic challenges for India still lie ahead. Fortunately the country now has a strong economy which, over the next ten years, should see sustainable high rates of growth giving more opportunities for employment and development. But the challenges of education, health, women's empowerment, youth opportunities, skills development, poverty eradication, etc are huge problems which India still has to overcome. Over the last three years these issues with a special focus on rural development and rural reconstruction are receiving enormous atten-

tion at every level in central government, state governments, NGOs, business and industry.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas organised in New Delhi currently by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in collaboration with CII has given itself the stated objective of building partnership between the diaspora, the non resident Indian community, and India's social development. This is the theme of the three-day conference be-

their expertise, their experience, in bringing innovative solutions for India's challenges.

The focus is on innovation because if India goes about the process of social development in the normal, traditional ways it will take several decades to empower all the one billion plus people in the mainstream of India's social and economic life. Through innovative and creative solutions, through the use of information technology and

diaspora with India, the effort is to multiply the ways in which of India engages the diaspora and deepens the relationship. For example there is a huge expertise in the diaspora as well as willingness to help with the development of states from which the diaspora originate. They want to do something specific and sustainable for their home state. And, every state in the country is in need of inputs, support, ideas, etc for development. In this process, the social development agenda of India is getting support from outside India. Not just from the usual international agencies or multilateral institutions but from the 25 million strong non-resident Indian community who have resources and who can be of great assistance to India.

The task is huge and the range of challenges vast. Slow progress has been made in overcoming the problems of poverty and unemployment even though the economic growth process has achieved a new momentum. At this time it is becoming critical to speed up the process, to multiply the number of people who are above the poverty line and who are integrated into the mainstream of the national economy. The partnership with the diaspora is to achieve justice.

The writer is chief mentor, CII

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cause a new direction is being set in regard to the engagement of the diaspora with India. This conference is not about the usual focus on investment promotion. This conference goes far beyond in engaging the diaspora with the most difficult development challenges which India is tackling. A special emphasis is being given to a partnership with the diaspora in education, health, women's development, youth, etc so that the diaspora is involved with their ideas, their knowledge,

telecom services, for example, the ability of India to take a quantum jump forward, to leapfrog to a certain stage of development, could happen. And, this is where the diaspora come in. They have access to the best in the world technology and experiences in developing and developed countries so that the benefits of their experience can flow into India's development drive.

In setting this new direction, and adding this new dimension to the engagement of the