

CHAPTER-5

NDA Government on Good Governance in Multicultural Context of India (1998 - 2004)

5.1 NDA Coalition Government -

NDA (National Democratic Alliance) is a centre-right coalition of Political parties in India. In the year of 1998, it was led by the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) with the thirteen constituted Political parties. By early 1999, NDA government lost it's majority after the AIADMK (All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) withdrew it's support. President Kocheril Raman Narayan dissolved the parliament and called the fresh election. Public anger against the smaller parties that jeopardised the NDA coalition and the wave of support for the Vajpayee government in the aftermath of the Kargil war, gave the BJP a larger presence in the Lok Sabha. The NDA won a decisive majority with the support of new constituents such as- Janta Dal and DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) .

NDA with it's 24 political parties allies came into power and completed it's full office term from 1999 to 2004. And then a question was raised, whether a New Pattern in Indian Governance was emerging ? The NDA manifestos for elections have been – *'Vote for a stable Government and an able Prime Minister' (1998)*, *'For a Proud, Prosperious India: An Agenda' (1999)*, and *'An Agenda for Development, Good Governance, Peace and Harmony' (2004)*.

In the years of 1998-2004, during the NDA government's rule, Vajpayee's establishment fixed its vision on the *idea of New India* with the package of hopes and

aspirations. The idea of New India initiated by Vajpayee government was the vision to bring the ideal of good governance in Indian society. However, Good governance is not a vague concept, it can be measured using some identifiable parameters. For Example - Corruption has not been given as an indicator since it is generally believed that all the elements of Good Governance would automatically eliminate Corruption. The BJP report has taken perception of corruption as an indicator and has rated the Left Front Government high. But the categorisation is interesting and well substantiated. The categorisation of different models of Governance as Congress, BJP, Left Front and Regional Parties may be observable. While there are characteristics that help identify and separate one model from the others, there is a lot of overlap. The government is in a state of continuity, kept more so by the bureaucracy that does not change with change '*Political Masters*'. Like the Congress Governments are characterised by Socialism and Populism, with an inconsistent Economic policy, the Government- reports says ¹. I was said in a government report that- the NDA Government shares certain Gandhian Socialist-values, but applies and achieves them through more consistent and market-friendly economic policies. The Left Front (including the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and other left parties) follows a stated Marxist ideology that places the state at the commanding heights of the economy and focuses on worker's rights and equality of outcomes for all. Regional parties are described as being more representative of the socio-economic make-up and responsive to particular needs of their states. They are hence more populist and less ideological in their approach, the report says ².

At the national level, the Congress and NDA's models of Governance have been delineated and dissected in the context of performance. There is actually an ideological difference based on performance or focus since there is not much difference in style of functioning of the two parties when in power. They used the same bureaucracy, the same logic and even their decisions were incremental.

The NDA though had taken some path-breaking decisions such as four-'laning' of National highways, Rural roads, Tele-communication. In terms of streamlining administration through reforms, both the national parties were equally silent.

However, NDA produced a National Agenda for Government in March, 1998 and Vajpayee government worked on this basis. NDA government's 1999 manifesto

declaration consisted that "The NDA is a representative of both national interests and regional aspirations the NDA is- the mirror-image of our nation's unity in multifaceted diversity, rich pluralism, and federalism. Democratic Decentralization to ensure effective participation of all for the sake of effective and transparent government, TDPS programmes, Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana, Ayodhya issue, Jammu and Kashmir issue regarding Article 370, North-Eastern issues and so on, were the issues of concern in NDA government, having the idea to make New India while ensuring Good Governance in a Multicultural society of India³.

5.2 NDA on Good Governance in Multicultural Context during 1998- 2004 -

NDA (National Democratic Alliance) managed an **idea of 'New India'**, a package of Hopes and Aspirations. This was not a total rejection of '**Congress idea of India'** but was the fact to bring the old vision in tune with new realities. NDA government advocated a different sense of India's image.

As Vajpayee government expanded the process of the '**Economic Liberalizations'** initiated by the previous P.V. Narsimha Rao government (1991-1996). Leading the vision to make the ideal of 'Good Governance' as propounded in the 2004 elections "**An Agenda for Development, Good Governance, Peace and Harmony**", NDA government took a very steps towards fulfillment of it. Observers of Developmental Studies have called India as a democratic developmental state, which has adopted a different strategy of overall development. It became interesting for these scholars to study about that-whether the success to a Democratic system and overall development in a particular country, may come at the same time 1. However, Japan was the exception, where democratic success and the overall development took place together. Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)- led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government influenced India's domestic politics from 1998 to 2004. It was also pointed-out that the core norms constituting the BJP's ideological basis precipitated lasting changes in the nature and functioning of India's domestic politics ⁴.

The ground reality of Indian democracy is that, Good Governance is means for the common people as the governance, which may provide the solutions to their food, water, shelter, health and education problems.

Keeping this reality in the 'National Agenda for Governance' NDA government worked in every sphere of Indian democracy, during its first completed office term 1999 to 2004.

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) implemented in April 1999, during the rule of NDA government, included a chapter on ***“Implementation, Delivery Mechanism and Institutional Development”***. The issues of Decentralization in development planning, Accountability of the *Implementing Agencies and Evolution of Programmes*, were raised.

After this the *Tenth Five Year plan (2002-2007)*, defined the ***“Governance as the management of all such processes that - in any society defines the environment which permits the individuals to raise their capability levels and provide opportunities to realize their potential and enlarge the set of available choices. And such processes covers the political, social and economic aspects of human life”***.

Such as focusing on the Governance Reforms, Administrative Reforms, Judicial Reforms, Police and Civil-Services Reforms and the most Electoral Reforms with the campaign ***“India to be ruled by Indians”*** etc., were seen as the steps towards the Good Governance by NDA government, during its office 1998-2004.

The Lok Sabha Election's Agenda of NDA government “for development, Good Governance, Peace and Harmony” included the NDA government's such Principles to see India as a developed Nation, has been defined as following-

1. India as the Food-factory of the world.
2. India as the Global-manufacturing hub.
3. India as the Service-provider to the world.
4. India as the centre of the Knowledge-economy.
5. India as the Global-tourism destination.
6. India as the Global-healthcare destination.
7. India as the Higher-education destination.

Such guiding- principles of NDA government shows the government's side to Good Governance⁵.

A. Economic Sphere -

NDA government expanded the process of 'Economic liberalisation' initiated by the **P.V. Narasimha Rao government** (1991- 1996). Privatisation of the most state corporations, including the **Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited** also initiated by the Vajpayee government, before the coalition of NDA.

Vajpayee government was responsible for the establishment of special Export - Processing Zones, Information Technology and Industrial Parks, across the country to bolster Industrial Production and Exports. NDA government in its Agenda for Lok Sabha Election:2004, consisted the "**Behatar Bazar Plan**" to enhance Trade and Commercial sectors with the balanced development plans.

NDA government during 1998 - 2004, launched the National Highway Development Project, initiating its first phase as named '**Golden Quadrilateral**' (**GQ**). NDA was the government to encourage the Foreign - Investment, especially from Europe and United States.

The most surprising initiative by NDA government was, to pass the "**Responsibility and Budget Management Act**" (**FRBMA**). This Act established the 2008, as the target year by which India's fiscal deficit would be eliminated. This step by NDA government was seen as one step towards Good Governance by economic reforms in the country. Later UPA government worked on it with its extent of 2009.

Under criticism for doing "**too little, too late**" in response to a severe drought in Rajasthan and Gujarat in the north-west, Prime Minister Mr. Vajpayee appeals to the nation for charitable donations to help the region in a televised address on 23rd April 1999.

Mr. Jaswant Singh (The Minister of Finance), while presenting the Interim Budget of 2004-05, under the premiership of Mr. Vajpayee, declared that -

"The country's macro-economic situation is better than it has ever been in the last fifty years. Internationally, too, there is now much greater, and a much more widespread recognition that India is progressing in all spheres of national endeavour, that it has evolved into a stable economy, with assured growth, and enhanced national prosperity. We have a vision for a resurgent India. This Government has consistently placed the citizens' well being at the core of its responsibilities. Our adherence to "**Panch- priorities**" remains. The objectives of the life-time concerns of our

citizens, (1). *Enhanced Employment and Eradication of Poverty*, (2). *A Second Green Revolution in Agriculture*, (3). *Infrastructure- development*, (4). *Fiscal Consolidation*, (5). *Greater Manufacturing-sector Efficiency*”, are our solemn commitments. India must be amongst the leading economies of the world, that simply put is our national destiny; to be in service of the country’s destiny is the Government’s honour and its bounden duty. From this directly flow our national economic objectives. Management of the economy is a continuing responsibility, governance can neither pause nor cease, and measures to fully consolidate, and continuously enhance the growth momentum must always be adopted in time. Only in that manner can we realise the vision of economic and social progress that we have cherished since independence”⁶.

B. Foreign Arena -

The period between the years of 1998 to 2004, could be considered as the watershed in the history of the *Indian foreign Service (IFC)*. Developments in International politics marked many changes. As first coalition government, the National Democratic Alliance took the power at the Centre, led by the Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee. That was the time when Indian Foreign Service had to adjust to profound changes in International Relations. The government of India was subjected to political uncertainties. NDA government became responsible for taking some concrete steps for the sake of improving training and working conditions of the Foreign Services⁷

Foreign-policy and Security- orientations of the Vajpayee government, were different from the previous governments. NDA government advocated a different sense on India’s image among the world-countries. While affirming the commitment to the principle of ‘Secularism’ in general terms. The emphasis of NDA government, was to recast the image of India’s ‘Pluralism’ within the framework of an assertive Hindu-ethos.

1. Initiatives on Relations of India with the other countries-

NDA government improved foreign relations of India with the World-countries. During 1998 to 2004, there were many steps of the government, taken with the purpose to make good relations for the economical development as well as national security of the country, with the other countries of the world.

NDA government had to deal with a long history of poor-relations of India, with the USA, China and Pakistan since the previous government. Like - Pakistan's claim to be a home-land for the Muslims of the sub-continent, directly contradicted the assumption made by Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru and INC (Indian National Congress) that -***“India could accommodate all religious groups in a secular state”*** or Ideological rivalry and competing territorial claims have fused in the dispute over Kashmir ⁸.

NDA improved the ties with China, while boosting the trade and seeking the resolution of the territorial disputes through dialogue. In the NDA-era, India established the strategic and military cooperation with Israel to fighting with terrorism.

In the year of 1999, NDA government's Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee travelled to Pakistan on the occasion of inaugural of ***Delhi Lahore Bus Service***. NDA government got credit to make regular road link between India and Pakistan for the first time since 1947. Prime Ministers of the two countries, Mr. Vajpayee and Mr. Nawaz Sharif issued the ***'Lahore declaration'***. This declaration consisted that the both countries would resolve the bilateral disputes through dialogue and would boost the trade. After the Lahore summit, in the year of 2001, Pakistani President and Vajpayee signed the ***Agra Summit***.

In the year of 2003, Vajpayee declared in the Parliament that “he was making the final initiative to make peace with Pakistan”. And overshadowed the considerable improvement in relations and ceasefire between Indian forces and militant groups in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

In the year of 2000, American President Bill Clinton came in India. With the visit of the American President, NDA government initiated the end of the Cold war era distant relationship. This initiated the expansion of the trade and strategic relations and cooperation between U.S. and India. As after the 11th September, 2001 attack on Pentagon and World Trade centre, India provided much strategic assistance to the U.S. in its war against the Taliban and Al – Qaeda ⁹.

In ***the Election Manifesto of 1998***, NDA has asserted that -“In the recent past we have seen a tendency to bend under pressure. This arises as much out of ignorance of our rightful place and role in world affairs as also from a loss of National self-

confidence and resolve. A Nation as large and capable as ourselves must make its' impact felt on the world arena. A BJP government will demand a premier position for the country in all global fora" ¹⁰.

C. National Security -

Internal Security, the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the part of North-East, has been remain the most-issues before India, relating to National-security. NDA government also has taken some initiative for it. For Example- the Kargil war, Pokharan -2nd Nuclear tests, terrorism, bilateral relations with other countries, Internal conflicts, border security etc. has been the most issues of concern in the NDA era during 1998 to 2004, for the National security purpose ¹¹.

On 24 February, 1999, A review of national security was ordered, after an expert committee's report on the incursion of Pakistani-backed forces into Kashmir in mid-1999 exposed serious shortcomings. The *Subramanyam Committee* recommends a new "*national security planning and decision-making structure for India in the nuclear age*". Fresh clashes are reported in late February along the Line of Control between Indian and Pakistani- administered Kashmir.

1. To declare India as a Nuclear Weapons' state-

In the field of National security, NDA government took the radically important decision, to conduct advanced nuclear weapons tests in the year of 1998, of Indian devices and declared India a *Nuclear Weapons State*.

It was the time when NDA government decided to pull back the India from its' general policy-orientations towards *Comprehensive and Non-discriminatory Disarmament*. And to calibrate its' Disarmament-policies through mechanisms of bilateral discussions and within the conceptual framework of arms-control rather than disarmament.

In *Kargil War* (1999) NDA government launched '*Operation Vijay*' on LOC and after the Kargil War, NDA government established the "*Defence Intelligence*

Agency” to provide better military intelligence and monitor India’s border with Pakistan.

In response of the Indian Parliament attack of December, 2001 by Lashkar-e-taiba and Jaish-e-mohammed, NDA government promulgated the *Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA)* in the year of 2002, an anti - terrorism law. Although it was criticised as compromising the civil liberties and encouraging profiling of the Indian Muslim community. And became issue to questioning on the NDA government’s multicultural attitude.

D. Food Security -

During the years of 1999 to 2000, NDA government faced the conflicting issues related to food security. The government have to take decisions regarding such issues, in the form of programmes and policies. In July, 2003, a reduction in the *Rate of interest for Crop loans* by public sector, *Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)* etc., were seen as steps of the NDA government on the path of Good Governance. The most of them as may defined as following –

New Strategy to Double Food - Protection -

This one was considered by the policy analysts as the one of the most bold initiative by the NDA government, during its office. This government launched a Regionally differentiated Strategy, based on Agro - climate Regional Planning, taking into account the Agronomic, Climatic and Environmental – conditions to realize the full potential of growth in every region, narrow down regional and crop imbalances to accelerate the growth in every region and thus to ensure food and nutritional security. The plan is to double the Food production and make India *‘Hunger Free’* in ten years ¹².

Foodgrains quantity Doubled under TDPS -

The quantity of foodgrains being distributed to the *BPL (Below Poverty Line)* selection of the population under the *TDPS (Targeted Public Distribution System)* has been doubled from 10 kg. per family per month to 20 kg. per family per month at 50 percent of the economic cost. The scheme, with its focus on the poor, benefit about 33 crore people belonging to the poorer section of the society.

E. Allocation for 'R & D' Raised -

In the year of 2000, NDA government decided to raise the allocation for Research and Development in science and technology to 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) gradually in next five years.

F. Export House Status to Tourism -

NDA government took decision to accord Export House Status to Tourism. With this Tourism and Travel Industry have got the benefit of Special Import Licence, waiver of Bank guarantee for exports, exemption of Income Tax for reinvestment in tourism projects. The Department of Tourism (DTP) has been clubbed with the Department of Culture (DTC) to ensure coordinated approach for the promotion of Tourism and Promotion or Projection of rich Indian Heritage and Culture. Domestic Tourism was seen as the most part to be developed, for India to be a good tourist-destination.

G. Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana -

NDA government having the ideal of "*Shelter for All*" initiated the programme named as "Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana" in 2000- 2001. This aimed at the objective to achieve sustainable human development at village level.

H. Antodaya Anna Yojana -

The scheme was launched by NDA government in December 2000. It covered the 1.5 crore families of Below the Poverty Line (BPL) in the year of 2004. This remained a highly successful programme. It directly addressed the *Poverty - alleviation* and *Nutritional - adequacy*. This programme also concentrated on the tribal states or districts and regimes in belt areas. Issue of the "*Antyodaya Ration Card*" also given to the Antyodaya families for the targeted development. This was one of the initiative of NDA, towards ensuring Good Governance.

I. Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana -

NDA government got concern that the-Poverty and disease are interlinked or Specialty hospitals in the private sector remain beyond the reach of many of citizens.

Mr. Vajpayee announced to establishment of six hospitals, in the Government sector, on the pattern of *All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)*.

This planning was under the '*Pradhanmantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana*' and later six hospitals with facilities like AIIMS, one each in the States of Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Uttaranchal were established. Under this 'Pradhanmantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana', one medical college each in the six States of Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal also has been upgraded to the level of AIIMS.

J. Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme -

In the year of 2003 this scheme was launched by NDA in context of ensuring Social Justice. This aimed at to Create an enabling environment to ensure equal opportunities, equity, social justice and empowerment of persons with disabilities.

K. Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana -

This was the Scholarship programme to encourage student to take up research careers in the areas of basic sciences, engineering and medicine. During its' office term of 1998 tp 2004, NDA government kept it ongoing. As it is an on- going National Program of Fellowship in Basic Sciences, initiated and funded by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, to attract exceptionally highly motivated students for pursuing basic science courses and research career in science. The objective of the program is to identify students with talent and aptitude for research; help them realize their academic potential, encourage them to take up research careers in Science, and ensure the growth of the best scientific minds for research and development in the country ¹³.

L. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) -

It launched by then Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 25 December in 2000 with the purpose of Rural Development, Good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected villages. As *Assam Tribune* (Newspaper) has reported that this scheme has started to change the lifestyle of many villagers, as it has resulted to make new

roads and to upgrade certain inter village-routes in Manipur. In order to implement of this scheme then Central government developed the '*Online Management & Monitoring System*' (OMMS), to identify targets and monitor progress in order to development of this scheme.

M. Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana -

On 25 September 2001, NDA government launched this scheme for development of the Rural Self Employment, Providing additional wages, food security, alongside creation of durable community assets in rural areas. This was one of the step of the NDA government towards Good Governance.

N. National Highway development Project-

The National Highways Development Project was initiated in the year of 1998, under the leadership of then Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Such project was for upgrade, rehabilitate and widen major highways in India to a higher standard. This project was managed by the *National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)* under the *Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways*, in order to boost economic development of the country. As economic development is the flip side of the inclusive growth, and inclusive growth is one of the element of a Good Governance.

O. Social Development-

Education, health, food-security, Population-control, Women's Empowerment, Care of the disabled and Senior-citizens or Children and Youth, and so on, were the most issues before the NDA government, to be resolved and need to be developed. As such issues makes half of criteria for a Governance to be 'Good' or 'Bad'. The various policies and programmes by the NDA government (1998 -2004), included such issues with the purpose to sustainable development of the country. For example- Antodaya Anna Yojana, Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, Dendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme etc.

P. Infrastructure-

NDA government in its National Agenda for Government of 2004, considered Infrastructural-development as one of the basis for fulfillment of its ideal of Good Governance. Like- Rural-development (Rural Sanitation, Drinking Water), Roads and Railway reforms, Ports and Shipping, Airports and Civil Aviation, Telecom and IT .And initiated many new policies for fulfillment of this purpose, for example- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, National Highway Development Programme etc.

5.3 The Issues in NDA government regarding Multicultural context during 1998- 2004 -

The 1999's decade witnessed a lot of transformation in the political and social realm of the Indian society. The Indian state changed its strategy and took steps towards a more liberal state. The spread of egalitarian political values and the opportunities provided by Indian democracy, under the economic reforms of 1991. NDA was the first coalition government, hold the office in the centre in 1998, that was the time of transformation in the political, economical arenas of the country, replacing a long time ruling political party.

So, during its first completed office term, 1998 to 2004, NDA government had to face the questions on treatment towards the multicultural aspect of the country. NDA was claimed to have the ideologies of the RSS (Rashtriya Sevak Sangha) and VHP (Vishva Hindu Parishad), both organization were of the view of staunch Hinduism. NDA got their support in its coalition. Thatswhy, the questions raised by the opposition political parties on the government's multicultural perspective during its office term from 1998- 2004. The BJP- led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was overseen by party notable Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, whose widespread personal popularity helped to keep the BJP in power. For example, NDA was claimed by the opposition that-“It is essentially the Jan Sangh, with deep convictions about Hindus, playing the dominant role in Indian politics, which came to power”. But some of the policies and programmes an some decisions taken on some issues regarding multicultural aspect of the country, NDA partial succeed in represent its' soft attitude for the diversity of the country The most issues regarding multicultural context of India, in era of NDA government were as defined following-

A. The issue of Personal Laws -

In India is one of such major aspect where Indian Constitution overlooks multicultural concerns. Unlike polity based on separate Personal Laws in India, is guided by certain primary beliefs . And these beliefs harm a certain sections, these are-

1. Primacy to Religion over Secular-Principles- The system of Personal Laws gave sanctity to providing primacy to religion in the public sphere of the country¹⁴.

2. Primacy to Community Rights over Individual-Rights - A system based on Personal Laws, is guided by the rights of the community (Cultural, Religious) to be governed by their own laws. Either the state or the majority community will have no right to interfere in community matters. The ideal of such system is '*Community in Peril*'. This goes against Individual rights as the members are often to toes the community's line.

Personal Laws in India has been one of the most controversial issues before the Parliament and the Judiciary of the country. Independent Indian opted for a model of separate Personal Laws for each of it's religious community. Generally Personal Laws includes the issue of – Marriage, Divorce, Maintenance, Guardianship, Adoption and Succession. Under it each community is given autonomous powers to demarcate it's membership. Indian Succession Act, 1925 guarantees the equal rights to daughter and son.

There are two Personal Laws as defined by the Constitution of India as- Hindu Personal Laws and the Muslim Personal Laws. Parsis, Christians, Jains, Buddhist follows the Hindu Personal Laws, whether Muslim follows their specific Personal Laws, based on the *Shariat or Quran*¹⁵.

B. Uniform Civil Code -

Uniform Civil Code was the purposal to replace the Personal Laws, based on scriptures and customs of religious communities, with a common set of principles, governing every citizen of India. **Article 44** of the Indian Constitution, declares it's implementation as the duty of the state. Apart being an important issue regarding '*Secularism*', it became as one of most controversial issue , questioning on it. "*Shah Bano Case*" of 1985 is considered as the starter to point out the secularist nature of

Indian democracy. The Bano case made a politicized issue on the Identity Politics, by means of attacking specific religious minorities v/s protecting it's cultural identity 18. Then BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party) supported it.

C. Reconciliation with Pakistan -

Then Prime Minister Mr. Vajpayee, undertook the '*bus-diplomacy*' with arch-enemy Pakistan the '*Lahore-bus service*'. This step was taken mainly for the people who were separated during the partition of the country. This was the reflection of welfarist nature of the present government.

D. Article 370 -

Article 370, has been the controversial issue before the Congress government regarding it's abolishment, but it remained unresolved. Then after coming in the power, NDA government became responsible to refuse the abolishment of such Article 370, which gives a separate status to Jammu & Kashmir. Such decision reflects multicultural attitude of NDA government.

E. Immigration Issues -

India has one of the world's most diverse and complex migration histories. Since the 19th century, ethnic Indians have established communities on every continent. An illegal immigrant in India, is a person residing in the country without an official permission as prescribed by relevant Indian law. Those who are explicitly granted refugee status do not fall under this category 15. 2001 India Census Gives information about Migrants but not exclusively Illegal Immigrants. Per 2001 Census Bangladeshi form the largest group of migrants in India followed by Pakistan.

For example, Illegal immigration from Bangladesh has been part of political discourse in the North Eastern region. India has from time to time raised this issue. It actively pursued this issue with General Ershad and later with Begum Khaleda Zia when she visited India in 1992. Since Bangladesh refuses to accept that the Bangladeshis are illegally migrating; India decided to fence the border⁴ and has adopted push back policy, which sometimes has resulted in tension in the border. The magnitude of this issue, ambivalence of political parties and complete denial on the part off Bangladesh government made the then Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee in 2001 to

announce that the BJP government is contemplating to provide work permit of all the illegal immigrants in India admitting the difficulties in deporting them because of legal and constitutional hurdles. In 2003 a crisis erupted when 213 nomadic people especially the snake charmers from Bangladesh were stranded in no-man's land and Dhaka refused to take them back. This led to border tension and a bilateral political crisis as both India and Bangladesh refused to own these people creating a humanitarian crisis. Finally these people were mysteriously made to vanish from the no-man land as a face saving measure. To deal with the issue in 2003 the BJP government introduced Amendment to the Citizenship Act which for the first time defined 'illegal migrants' by inserting clause b to section 2 of **Citizenship Act 1956**¹⁶.

F. Pravasi Bhartiya Samman -

In the year of 2003, NDA government launched the 'Pravasi Bharatiya Samman' (honouring of non - resident Indians) and also started plans to establish an 'Overseas Citizenship' of India to enable *NRI's (Non Resident Indians)*, moving towards its aim to ensure Good Governance in Multicultural context of India.

G. Fund for Pilgrims-

The funding for the *Haj Pilgrimage to Mecca*, by Indian Muslim Pilgrims remained growing during the office term of NDA government (1998-2004). This step of NDA government was its soft attitude for Minority community of the country.

Through the stand on such issues during its' regime of 1998 to 2004, NDA government got partial success in represent its' multicultural attitude towards the diversity of the country ¹⁷.

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