

# The Socio-Cultural Distance between Korea and India: A bridge too far?

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24-25 Oct. 2013, New Delhi

Korea Labor Institute

*12<sup>th</sup> India-Korea Dialogue: Forty  
Years of India-Korea Diplomatic  
Relations and Roadmap for a More  
Intensified Partnership*



# Contents

- Several snapshots of India or Indians in Korea
- Some facts about cross-border movement of persons
- A way for bridging the distance

# Indian Authors in Korea: surprisingly few and limited

- Bhagavadgita: Ghandi, Sri Sankaracharya
- Ramayana: R.K. Narayan, C. Rajagopalachari, not Valmiki's original Sanskrit text
- Kalidasa's Meghaduta, Sakuntala
- Mahabharata: Sanskrit text being translated by Gyeongsook Park, 5 volumes completed
  
- Buddhist Sutras: from Ancient Chinese → retranslated from Pali
  
- Ghandi, Neru
- Amartya Sen

# Indians into Korea



- Taking opportunity of IT booms in 2001-02 and IT firms start-up,
- Shortage of S/W engineers
- Diversification of ethnic restaurants
  - Korean, Chinese, Japanese only → + Italian, French → + Thai, Indian, Russian, etc.
- Now participates in joint-business start-up

# Korea-India CEPA in 2010: a good momentum

- Trade growth 40.7% in 2010, 20.4% in 2011: export 42.7%, import 37.0% (cf. total trade growth 28.3%)
- 7<sup>th</sup> export partner, 16<sup>th</sup> import partner
- Commitment on movement of natural persons made for the first time in Korea's FTA, including commitment on IP's

# Cultural Exchanges and Interactions

- Joint Cultural Committee in 2009 committed more proactive cultural exchange
- Korean dramas in Indian public TV: <Haeshin> and <Daejangeum>
- Korean movies in India: <Arahan>, <Monster>, <D-War>
- Indian movies in Korea: <My name is Khan>, <3 idiots>
- July 2011 India Cultural Center in Seoul, Dec. 2012 Korea Cultural Center in Delhi

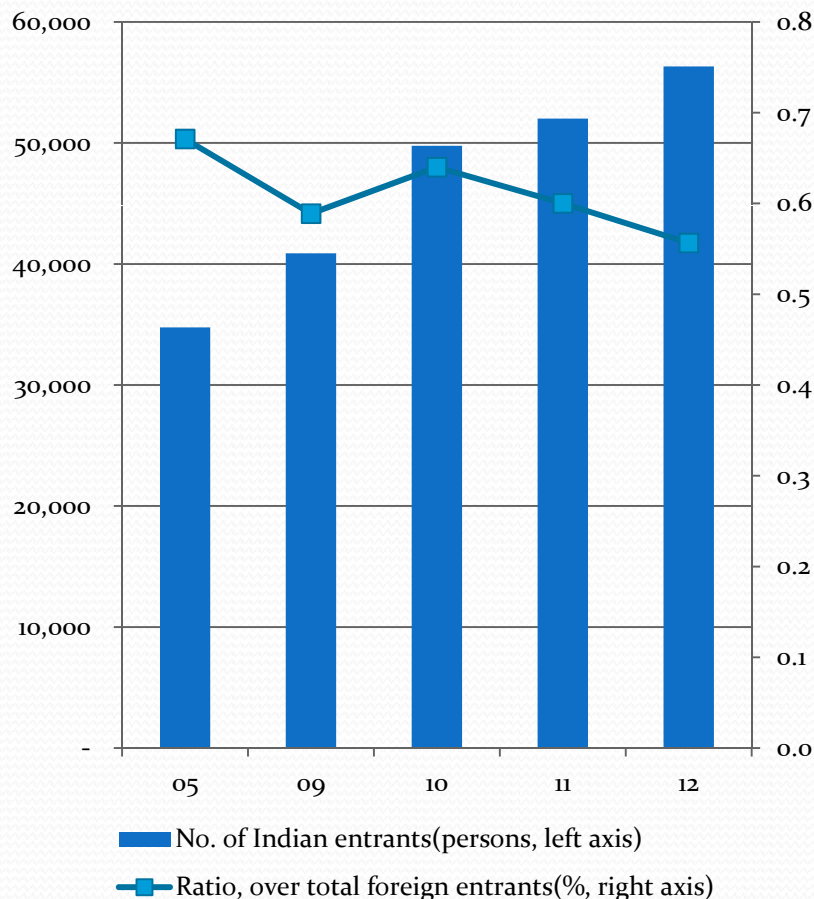
# Changes of view about India: balanced?

- Traditional: spiritual land
  - Land of Yogi, meditation, Buddha
- Journalists and entrepreneurs: rising economy
  - BRICs, Big elephant rising, investment, Tata, Reliance, Wipro, etc
- Academics and indologists: country of thousands of faces
  - “Incredibly diverse/optimistic/secular...”

# Cultural and Personal Exchanges Still Limited

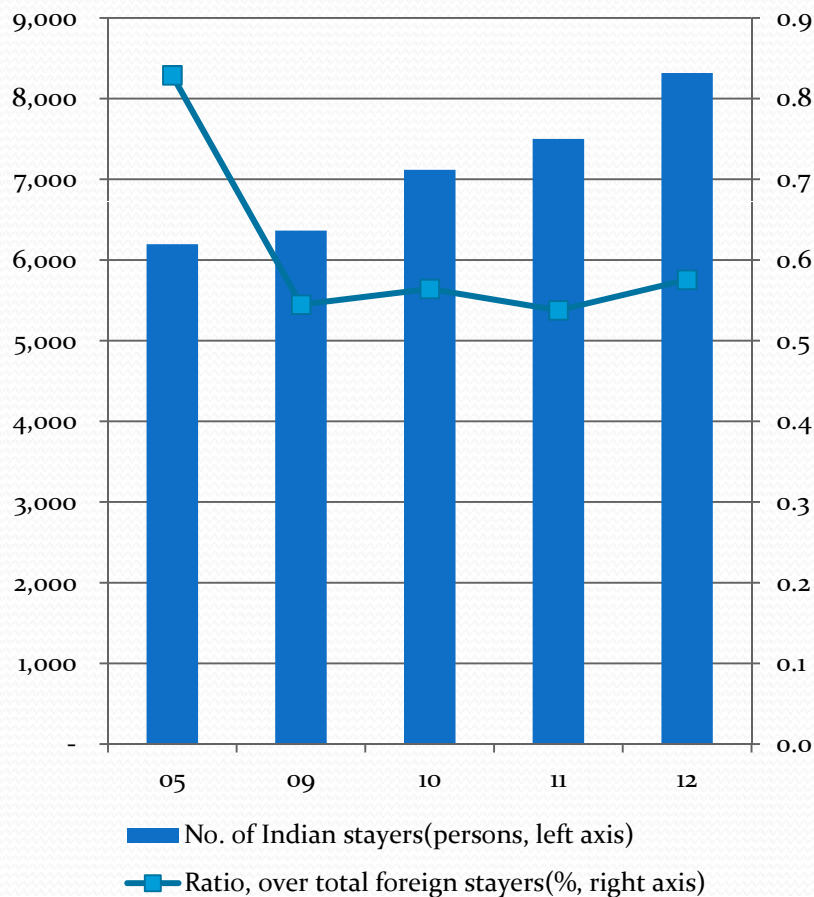
- As of 2012, only seven Indians visited Korea for cultural and artistic activity
- Thirty journalists came to Korea for newsgathering and coverage
- Fifty-six Indians came into Korea for religious activity
- In 2012, 232 Indians stayed in Korea for investment purposes, 265 Indians as intra-corporate transferees, 248 Indians for trades, and 862 Indians for research purposes.
- In total, Indians accounted for about 0.6% of total foreign arrivals/stayers/students in Korea

# Indian Visitors



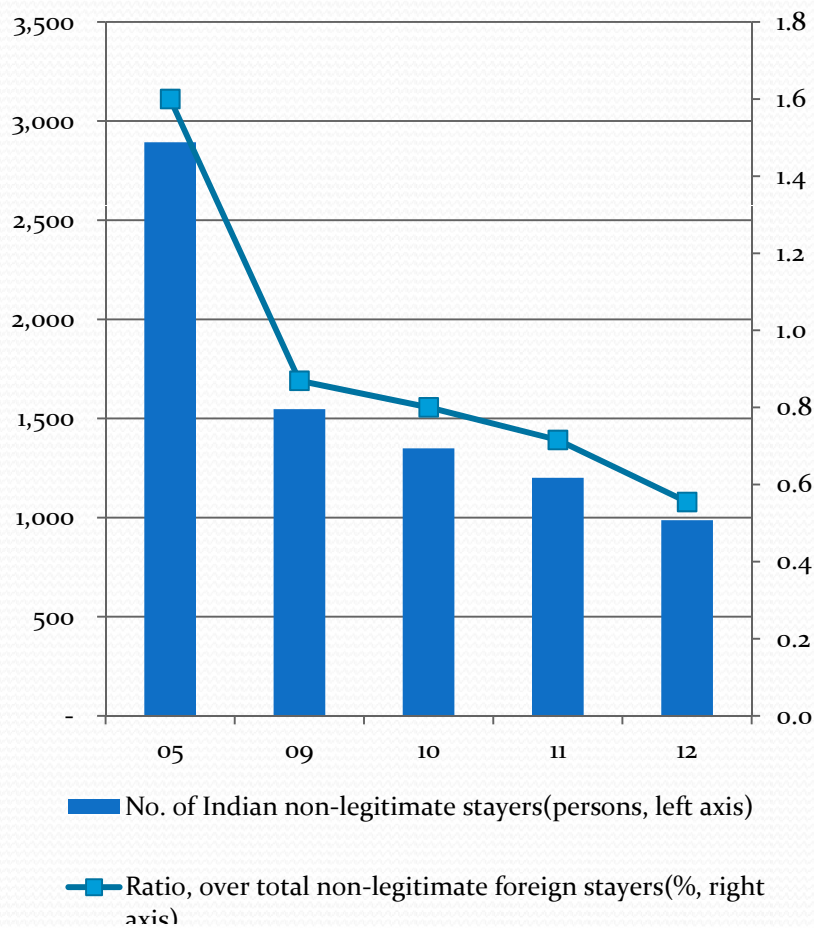
- Increased in number up to 56,000 in 2012, but slightly declining in relative proportion in recent years
- India's economic slow-down seems responsible for it

# Stayers



- Increased in number up to 8,300 in 2012, stable in relative proportion since 2009
- Increased economic and cultural exchanges account for the trend

# Non-legitimate stayers



- Declining both in number and proportion
- Cross-border movement of Indians becomes more sound

# Indians in Korean firms & Koreans in Indian firms (Hur 2011)

- Indians in Korean firms are found mainly in IT firms
  - Those in large Korean firms are recruited in India and sent to Korea
  - Those in SMEs are employed due to SME subsidy program for skilled foreigners
- Korean workers employed by Indian firms work in business relation w/ Korean firms
  - For example, Indian firms in logistic sector such as forwarding company which want to business w/ Korean firms employ Korean workers in India



# Indians in Korea

- Think it pays to work in Korea
  - for its high salary
  - because it can be a stepping stone before they go to American firms
- Have difficulties
  - in communication w/ colleagues,
  - for lack of consideration for vegetarian and religion



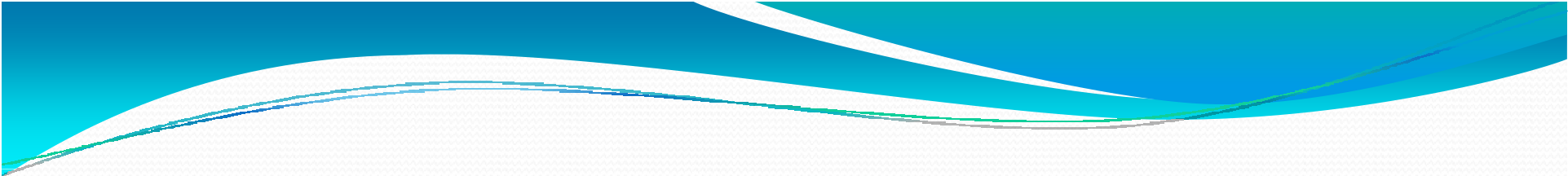
# Koreans in India

- Are ready to invest a part of their work-life for future chance
  - and/or paid international market wage
- Express their discomfort for
  - public services, security, water and electricity,



# For bridging the distance, we need

- Closer economic partnership and increased trade
- To be more proactive in visa issuance and in facilitating resident status
- To make joint efforts to improve infrastructure in India
- More Indologists and Indology classes in Korea, Koreanologists and Koreanology classes in India
- Exhibitions of India's cultural heritages and modern paintings in Korea and vice versa
- To show audio-visual programs on constant basis in Seoul and Delhi cultural centers and to regularize exchanges of cultural programs
- To support, in particular, youth exchange programs

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- Socio-Cultural distance?
  - Yes, the distance seems considerable for the moment. Let's not deny it.
  - It will continue w/ shortage of our efforts and consideration.
  - But it is not a bridge too far. It can be narrowed down.
  - We are here for it!

Thank you