

India's Overseas Citizenship

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India's Overseas Citizenship: Rights, Restrictions, and Impact

Context

PM **Narendra Modi** presented the **OCI card** to **Mauritius PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam**, calling it a "**proof of friendship**" between the two nations. Mauritius has a **large Indian-origin population**, making this a significant diplomatic move.

Background

- The **OCI scheme** was introduced in **2005** via an **amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955**.
 - It provides **foreign nationals of Indian origin** certain rights **without full Indian citizenship**.
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Key Provisions

Eligibility

- Those who were **Indian citizens** or eligible for citizenship on **26 January 1950**.
- **Descendants** (children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren) of Indian citizens.
- **Spouses of Indian citizens or OCI cardholders** (with conditions).

Restrictions

- **No political rights** (voting, contesting elections, holding constitutional posts).
 - **No public service jobs**, except those **permitted by the government**.
 - **Cannot own agricultural or plantation land**.
 - **OCI can be revoked** if laws are violated.
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Benefits of OCI

- **Lifelong, multiple-entry visa** for India.
- **Residency and work rights** in India.
- **Economic and educational parity with NRIs**, except for agricultural land.
- **Exemption from FRRO registration**, regardless of stay duration.

OCI vs. Dual Citizenship

- India **does not** allow dual citizenship.
 - OCI offers **permanent residency benefits** but **not full citizenship**.
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Significance for India-Mauritius Relations

- **68%** of Mauritius' population is of Indian origin.
- Strengthens cultural, economic, and diplomatic ties.
- Enhances **business, education, and people-to-people connections**.



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