

# SESSION 8: POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

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# **Session 8: Policy Perspectives on International Migration**

## **Outline**

- Why people move
- Why receiving countries need migrants
- The Stereotypes in migration and the dynamic conflict of interests
- The Age: The Primacy of Temporary Migration
- Wage: The Silent Backwash of Remittances
- Vintage: The Primacy of Student Migration
- Policy Options for Better Governance: Equitable Adversary Analysis
- Conclusions

# Objectives

1. This session provides a brief analysis of some important factors that lead to divergence between the policy objectives of countries of origin and destination.
2. It attempts to throw light on some of the stereotypes in migration discourse and suggests a possible win-win framework for all the stakeholders.

## ▪ **Introduction**

- Several push and pull factors that drive migration operate in countries of origin and destination respectively.
- There are differences in the expectations and motivations at the two ends.
- Whereas the migrants and their countries of origin want stability to plan optimization of their private/public gains, the receiving countries tend to fulfill their short-term labour shortages and optimize their long-term strategic interests.
- Consequently, frequent changes in immigration policies of the destination countries put migrants and their source countries at great disadvantage.

- India which is almost at the top of the list of countries involved in international migration, is passing through a critical stage:
  - It has to deal with growing emigration of its high skilled graduates on the one hand, and
  - Immigration from neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal, a considerable share of which is irregular and unauthorized.
  - Indian migrants constitute significant diaspora groups in many countries and make considerable contributions in different sectors of their economy and society.
  - However, their contribution in the destination countries hardly gets as much attention as their contribution in home country- generally referred to as remittances, and transfer of knowledge and technology.

- This can be attributed, at least partly, to the perception of migrants as ‘others’ (in the destination countries) who primarily focus on their own upliftment and prosperity-education, earnings etc.
- While migrants aim at improving their future prospects by emigrating to ‘greener pastures’ and source countries remain silent spectators, especially those facing high unemployment.
- Whereas, many people in receiving countries look at the migrants as intruders grabbing their share in the national resources.
- There are several instances where not only the laymen but the political leaders too have been involved in tarnishing migrants as strangers, aliens, uninvited guests and so on.

- Popular and civil society perceptions of this kind in the receiving countries most often result in the imposition of stringent policy measures against the interest of the immigrants.
- Frequent policy changes in the destination countries further put the migrants at a great disadvantage.
- British migration policy, for example, has gone through many trials and tribulations particularly with regard to the case of High Skilled Migration Programme(HSMP).
- There is a symptom of a persistent asymmetry in migration policy between the receiving and sending countries.

## ▪ **Why People Move?**

- Several factors ranging from sociological and demographic such as race, ethnicity, education, household size and its composition, to political compulsions are responsible for human mobility internationally.
- Economic factors tend to play the most crucial role in steering the individuals decision making- to migrate or not to migrate.
- Migration involves a number of economic calculations, usually in weighing the costs and benefits of the move and taking the risks only when the gains from one's move outweigh the costs.
- A majority of economic migrants in the world move due to the lack of suitable employment opportunities at home and better economic incentives in destination countries.



- People are forced to migrate due to poverty or unemployment as is the case in many countries of South Asia.
- The exodus of low skilled and unskilled laborers from the Indian subcontinent under the indenture system that continued in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries., for example was mainly the result of persistent lack of economic opportunities in India.
- Even today, majority of people leaving India, some better skilled in vocations, mention *inter alia* the lack of appropriate employment opportunities and low monetary returns as important causes of their emigration.

- Many countries across the World are facing large influx of unauthorised migrants.
- Most often, these migrants originate from the neighbouring countries.
- Such migration primarily takes place due to the immense pressure of unemployment and deprivation at home counterpoising the probability of getting economic opportunity to survive in the destination country.
- For example, Bangladesh and Nepal, are prominent sources of unauthorised migrants in India.
- The large scale of infiltration of Bangladeshi migrants into India is usually attributed to poverty and unemployment in the place of origin.
- Unauthorised migration has become a cause of serious concern today throughout the world mainly because it is seen as adversely affecting employment opportunities for the local population, and sometimes connected with criminal and anti-social activities.

- Political climate in the country of origin has also been a major determinant of international migration.
- Fear of persecution in the homeland tempts people to migrate to some other country, preferably a safer one.
- Frequent occurrences of political, ethnic, religious and regional turbulences in some parts of the world have forced people to leave their homeland & seek asylum everywhere.
- Estimates shows that in 2000 there were 17 million refugees in the world constituting 9.7% of all international migrants(IOM 2005).
- India hosts about 456,000 refugees, mostly coming from Tibet, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal, who have fled their homes and sought refuge in India(World Refugee Survey, 2008).
- India is not a signatory to the International Convention for Refugees 1951 and the Refugee Protocol 1967, but claims to protect the rights of refugees on its own.

- Cross-border mobility of people for higher education, especially during the last four decades, has emerged as a major cause of international migration.
- A majority of international students have come from developing countries including India, and they prefer to go to developed countries such as U.SA, UK, Germany, France, Australia and Japan.
- A large part of student migration can be attributed to the limited availability of seats in higher education institutions in India which forces many students to look offshore.
- The country, despite having a huge network of about 400 universities and over 18,000 colleges enrolling more than 11 million students, is not able to meet the growing demand for higher education.
- Shortage of good quality institutions, particularly in the field of technical and professional education, pushes a section of middle class youths to migrate rather than to take admission in any second tier institution at home.

## ▪ **Why Receiving Countries Need Migrants?**

- There are countries where the economic system often fails to absorb its human resources in most productive ways.
- On the other hand, there are countries which, willingly or unwillingly, welcome these flows of human resources from abroad.
- There are variations in the receiving countries as far as the requirement for immigrant workforce is concerned.
- Some countries such as the USA want regular supply of immigrants while others such as: countries of the Gulf want immigrant workers for specific projects intended to be completed in specific durations.
- The immigration policy in the receiving countries is guided by their labour and skill requirements and partly by the demographic compulsions.

- Receiving countries, which exercise control on immigration, decide not only the number of people to be allowed to immigrate in a particular duration from each country(e.g. quota system in the US) but also the skill composition of foreign workforce that enter their territories.
- Migrants are not always pushed by the opportunity-deficient home economies; many times they are pulled by the forces active in receiving countries.
- They prefer to migrate to the places where employment opportunities are abundant.
- ***Silcon Valley*** in the US, for example, has become a hub for IT professionals in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century because it provided enormous opportunities to people, mostly professionals and knowledge workers, from all around the world.

- Mass emigration from the Indian subcontinent to the European colonies that started in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was primarily demand driven.
- Indians were taken to the colonial destinations to fill the labour shortages on plantations in British and other colonies in places like Fiji, Guyana, Malaya, and employed to build the Railway networks in African countries.
- Later migration from developing countries like India has also been facilitated to meet the labour and human capital requirements in the OECD countries.
- Migration policies of the UK, the US, Australia and Canada, for example, have explicitly resorted to immigration for filling up the supply gap in various occupations and professions.

- The demand for immigrants in receiving countries, particularly in the OECD countries, was exacerbated due to several factors such as: the fear of slowing economic growth, ageing of population, growing competition for highly skilled human resources from developing countries, and to control unauthorized migration.
- **Ageing of population** is extremely important as far as the contemporary discourses of international migration are concerned.
- Majority of migrant receiving countries are passing through the problem of ageing.
- Several nation-states, which used to maintain distance from the immigrants a few decades back, are now realizing the necessity of migrant workforce for managing their economy.



- **Internationalization of higher education** has become instrumental in many receiving countries to induce immigration.
- International students have not only emerged as important source of funding their higher education sector but also retain some proportion of the students whose contribution in the receiving countries would further their progress by picking from the large pools of ‘semi—finished human capital’.
- For example, to serve the dual purpose of sustaining expensive higher education and meeting short-term labour shortages, both the US and UK have adopted a policy of allowing international students in US and UK Universities to stay on and work, rather than return to their countries of origin upon completion of their degrees.

- The growing completion in the destination countries in USA, UK, and non-English speaking countries like France, Germany and the Netherlands, is attracting even Ivy League institutions to South Asia, particularly India, to recruit best students.
- In order to attract the large number of foreign students, universities are sending their representatives to countries of origin such as India.
- They provide services like counseling, expert guidance on issues regarding the choice of institutions, educational programmes, foreign exchange arrangement, orientation programmes.
- Education fairs are organized where representatives of different universities meet students and provide information regarding the courses and provide information regarding the courses offered and the kind of opportunities that the students might get if they decided to take admission and migrate.

- The Stereotypes in Migration and the Dynamic Conflict of Interests
- Professional Indian Migrants are seen as ‘angels’ with a perfected image of transnational ‘global Indian citizens’ belonging to India the stereotype benefits in the form of:
  - (a) The return migration of workers with enhanced skills from the host countries of the North to their home countries in the south;
  - (b) The remittances; and
  - (c) The transfer of technology.
- There was also a wave of return migration of skilled people, in the wake of BPO or outsourcing, the quantity and quality of human capital returning to home countries like India is simply not known.

- There are estimates of remittances being substantial and increasing, the source of these remittances are mostly from countries of the South itself-sent by unskilled migrants from the Gulf countries of West Asia and the ‘tiger economies’ of East and South-east Asia.
- India has drawn worldwide attention as a country of origin for the migration of so-called ‘**knowledge workers**’ in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, mainly the IT professionals, to developed countries with 80% of the emigrants migrating to the US.
- However, the knowledge workers have been emigrating from India since 1960s.
- Traditionally branded as ‘**brain drain**’, the cost of migration of such highly educated Indians was seen as a financial investment loss in education, a social skill loss of trained personnel, and as the loss of catalysts of necessary political change in the exodus of young unemployed graduates.

- Conversely, the primary benefits have been identified as the return migration of those Indians further educated and experienced abroad, the monetary remittances sent home by the migrant workers, and the transfer of technology through programmes like the UN's TOKEN programme.
- The TOKEN(Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals) Programme was initiated by the UNDP in 1977 with a view to countering the adverse effects of 'brain drain' in the developing countries.
- However, the perception of these costs and benefits have changed with shifts in the paradigm- from 'brain drain' of the 1960s and 1970s to '**brain bank**' of the 1980s and 1990s, and subsequently to '**brain gain**' in the 21<sup>st</sup> century(Khadria, 2010).

- The term '**brain bank**' as an alternative to 'brain drain' was suggested by Rajiv Gandhi soon after he became the Prime Minister of India in 1984.
- He stated that the prosperous and talented Indians living abroad were a pool of resources that India could potentially draw upon for support in its quest for development.
- Subsequently the term '**brain gain**' was brought into prominence by the west at the turn of the century, when their economic crisis drove many Indians into returning home- ironically to new opportunities in India.
- This was interrupted by the west as more than any reasonable compensation of the erstwhile losses that India might have incurred through the brain drain.

- However, there are emerging contours of profit and loss(or benefit and costs) in international migration that have remained uncharted so far.
- Methodologically, these could be seen as arising from three key aspects of a dynamic conflict of interest of nations over international migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that are potentially very significant.
- These are described in three generic terms, respectively, as ‘age’, ‘wage’ and ‘vintage’(Khadria, 2010).

## ▪ **Age: The Primacy of Temporary Migration**

- The international migration policies of the developed North countries are encouraging even the high skilled immigrants from a developing South country not to settle permanently in the destination country.
- Rather to circulate, or shuttle, between temporary modes of stay(in the host country) and return(to the home country).
- Studies on permanent settler admissions in developed countries have slowed down, the number of temporary worker entrants has grown more rapidly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- In the case of legal migration, particularly involving educated and skilled migrants, the ‘British work permit’, the German ‘green card’, and the US H-1B visa are examples of policies invoked to encourage temporary instead of permanent migration of high skilled professionals.



- Migration has thus come to move and replace older generations of human capital with younger ones on a continuous basis, thus keep the age-profile of the migrant workers young, particularly to neutralize their own ageing population structure.
- Migration policies of the receiving countries of the developed North, which intend to promote temporary migration and discourage permanent settlement in the host countries, project return migration as beneficial for the source countries.
- However, these policies neglect the social costs of return migration on individual workers and their families, especially concerning unexpected violations of basic human rights and undesired outcomes on the humanitarian front.

- When return is imminent, for example, in most cases only the primary worker moves and the immediate family remains in the country of origin for much of the time.
- The family dilemma arises because of the possible constraints of the spouse's job and the children's schooling in the home country.
- Under such circumstances, temporary migration entails a compulsory separation between the members of the family, making both the worker and the family 'nomadic' travelers.
- It also makes the return of the worker to the home country a kind of 'forced migration', although all the decisions within the concerned migrant's family tend to remain voluntary.

## ▪ **Wage: The Silent Backwash of Remittances**

- The second conflict, *Wage*, refers to the comparative advantage lost by the country of origin in a globalized world trade arena when the younger migrants take away with them the more cost-effective production functions due to their lower wages, perks and pensions and the older returnees add to the cost of production.
- In addition, this also indirectly reduces the remittances potential of the migrants because of their lower wages, perks and pensions in the destination countries.
- Remittances have drawn a lot of attention as one of the positive fallout of international migration.
- There is discussion surrounding the creation of policies to promote remittances, but not enough attention is being paid to the utilization of remittances in the home countries.

- A more recent trend is the backwash of remittances to developed countries in the form of overseas students' fees.
- During his 2004 visit to the UN, the former Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh had made an appeal to the developed countries, such as the UK, to reduce their overseas student fees- that are far higher than corresponding fees for their home students.
- As a result, there is a new trend of silent backwash flow of remittances out of the home countries of the migrants in the South to their host countries in the North.
- Partly the home countries' short-sighted policies, or lack of any policy, are also responsible for this development.

## ▪ **Vintage: The Primacy of Student Migration**

- High skilled persons from countries such as India have migrated not only through the employment gate, but also through the academic gate- as the **‘semi-finished human capital’**.
- Figures presented in Open Doors 2009 revealed that during the 2008-09 academic year, Indian students accounted for 15.4% of all foreign students in the US, the largest percentage followed by China, Korea, Canada, Japan and Taiwan.
- In 2008-2009 academic year, India remained the largest academic emigrant country of overseas students in the US with a total member of 103,260, registering 9.2% increase over the previous years enrolments.

- The effects of such trends in countries emigrant origin like India are evident in the shortage of teachers in leading institutions of professional higher education.
- The country's biggest global brand, the publicly subsidized Indian Institutes of Technology(IITs) also known for brain ndrain of their 25 to 30% of top graduates to the US and other countries(DST, GoI Surveys) is starved for qualified teaching staffs.
- The substantial increase in students intake, consequent to the implementation of 'reservation' for backward classes(Central Educational Institutions(Reservation in Admission Act, 2006) have further aggregated the problem of teacher shortages.

- With future teachers being wooed abroad, India will be left high and dry in its capacity to produce human capital, the backbone of India's advantage in IT, Biotechnology and so on.
- The North countries accumulate latest vintage of knowledge and technology embodied in later generations of students.
- In addition, destination countries also gain political mileage in the form of foreign students who become their long-term ambassadors in the international political arena.

## ▪ **Polity Options for Better Governance: Equitable Adversary Analysis**

- What could be useful as a policy tool to resolve the dynamic conflict of interest is ‘equitable adversary analysis’ whereby the contribution of migrants in social and economic development of countries of origin would be assessed from point of view of the stakeholders in countries of destination.
- To do this in a multi-lateral international-relations framework at fora like the GATS under WTO, the benefits of remittances, technology, and return migration to South countries of origin can be weighed and even pitted against three advantages of ‘Age’, ‘Wage’, and ‘Vintage’ that accrue to the destination countries of the North.



- These are the advantages derived through higher migrant turnover in-built in temporary and circulatory immigration, and operationalised by:
  - (a) bringing in younger migrants to balance an ageing population,
  - (b) keeping the wage and pension commitments low by replacing older and long-term migrants with younger and short-term migrants, and
  - (c) stockpiling latest vintage of knowledge embodied in younger cohorts of skilled workers respectively.

It remains to be judged and explored what are the long-term economic and social costs of these to India as a country of origin.

- The changed perceptions of the destination countries, in which the Indian professional migrants have settled to form a diaspora, might play a catalyst's role in this exercise.
- While the dichotomy between skilled and unskilled migrant workers is unwarranted, lately India has drawn disproportionately high world-wide attention to the success stories of its highly skilled human resources doing remarkably well in the world labour market abroad.
- The world labour market is overwhelmingly represented by IT Professionals, the nurses, the biotechnologists, the financial managers, scientists, the architects, the lawyers, teachers and so on in the globe.
- There is a great demand amongst the developed countries- the German Green card, the American H1-B visa, the British work permit, the Canadian investment visa, the Australian student visa, the New Zealand citizenship, to acquire Indian talent embodied in workers as well as students.

- In comparison, the Indian labour migrants in the Gulf had for long been considered more of a responsibility for India.
- To neutralize this imbalance and empower the Indian labour migrants, the interest of stakeholders in the Gulf (and South-east Asia too) are gradually being looked into and innovative programmes are being introduced.
- The developments following the institutions of the '*Prabasi Bharatiya Divas*' (Expatriates Indians Day) and the constitution of a separate Ministry by the Government of India reflect a break from the past.
- A confidence is emanating from a paradigm shift towards India taking pride in its diasporas and vice-versa.

## ▪ **Conclusions**

- This sets a 'double challenge' of public policy for a major emigration country like India.
- First, to convince its own diaspora community to rethink the development process in India as a 'bottom up' creation and enhancement of sustainable productivities of labour through development of education and health rather than 'top down' development through participation in business and industry- one comprehensive, the other dispersed; one long-term, the other immediate.
- Secondly, India must be able to convince the countries of the destination( and other countries of origin in the south as well) to distinguish between most 'painful' and most 'gainful' socio-economic impacts of migration for its workers-both skilled and unskilled.
- The equitable adversary analysis in multi-lateral for a would help a country like India press for international norms in negotiations around the issue of migration.

**1.Pravasi Bhartiya Divas was celebrated on which day of year?**

- (a) 10th January
- (b) 11th June
- (c) 9th January
- (d) 10th March

**2.In which year Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi returned to India from South Africa & led India's freedom struggle?**

- (a) 1915
- (b) 1920
- (c) 1925
- (d) 1930

**3.Who gave the concept called 'brain bank'?**

- (a) Mahatma Gandhi
- (b) Jaya Prakash Narayan
- (c) Indira Gandhi
- (d) Rajiv Gandhi

# Readings

- Khadria, B., P.Kumar, S. Sarkar and R. Sharma. 2008. 'International Migration Policy: Issues and Perspectives for India', IMDS Working Paper Series, WP no. 01.
- Khadria, B. 2008a. 'India in the Global labour market: International Economic Relations, Mobility of the Highly Skilled and Human Capital Formation'. ISAS Working Paper No.32. Singapore: Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore.
- Khadria, B. 2008b. 'India: Skilled Migration to the Developed Countries, labour Migration to the Gulf' in S. Castles and R. Delgado Wise, pp. 79-122.

- With this I come to an end of the session on Policy Perspectives on International Migration and leave you with few questions which you will find easy.
- Thanks for watching the video.



**Thank you**