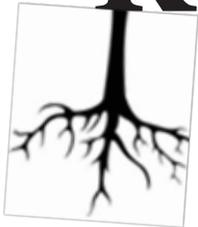


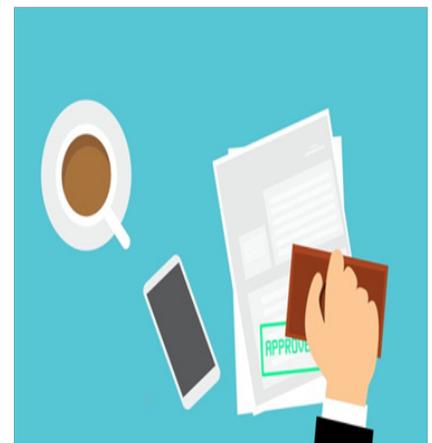
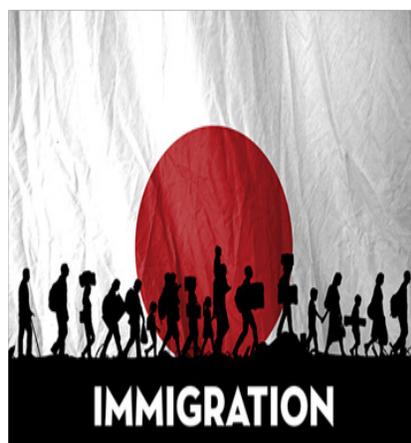
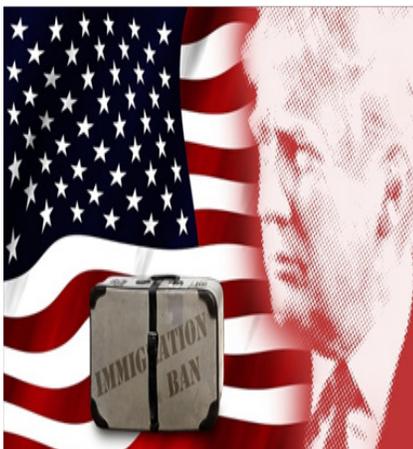


courtesy, pixy.org

Roots and Routes



Vol 8, No. 13-14, July - December, 2019



www.grfdt.org



Editors' Note



Dear Friends
Greetings!

We bring forth to you the new edition of our Newsletter Roots and Routes. Migration has changed the course of life for different group of people who have been the part of this process, be it forced migrant, student migrant, skilled and professional workers, unskilled workers or climate refugees. Migration has long term impact on an individual, which carve way for building histories of their existence and identity. The current issues have touched upon such aspect of migration which has long term impact on the migrant community.

The article by AniYeremyan titled 'Tracing the lost history of the Armenian diasporic community in India' has discussed about the existence of Armenians in Indian subcontinent right from the late 19th century. She discussed on the role of Armenian businessman in trade and commerce in Asia and their historical presence at the time when English East India Company came to India. The article provides an interesting account of Armenian diaspora in India, which is an unexplored diasporic community of India.

This edition also contains a book review of the book 'Refugee Background Students Transitioning Into Higher Education: Navigating Complex Spaces' authored by LoshiniNaidoo, Jane Wilkinson, Misty Adoniou, and Kipro-no Langat; reviewd by AbhishekYadav. This book is especially interesting because relatively less has been explored on the higher education scenario of Refugees. There are many interesting studies which discusses at length about the educational scenario and importance of education for refugees, but most of these studies are confined to primary education or tends to focus till higher secondary level of education. Therefore, this book review is an interesting addition to the resources on refugee studies.

In addition to the above mentioned article and book review, this edition also contains some news contents affecting migration in South Asia in general and India in particular. Also, for our readers we have gathered information about some interesting upcoming international conference and workshop focusing on diaspora and refugee studies. Such academic platform to discuss the research idea will help to build the wider community of diaspora scholars.

I hope you find this issue interesting.
Happy Reading!



Tasha Agrawal

Contents

Article
Book Review
News Updates
Editorial Information
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Tracing the lost history of the Armenian diasporic community in India

Until fairly recently, the use of the term ‘diaspora’ was related to the scattering of the Jewish, although there are plenty of historic evidences on the Armenian, Greek, and African diasporas. Since the 1980s the word has been more widely used and this has forced a reassessment of its meaning (Butler 2001: 189). Nonetheless, within this larger category of “diaspora” Jewish (as well as Greek and Armenian) diasporas might be taken as non normative starting points for a discourse that is travelling, hybridizing in the new global context.

This is the reason that in the theory of diaspora, Jewish, Greek or Armenian diasporic experiences and the distinguishing elements of their diasporic formations are observed as starting points. This helps the scholars to understand the peculiar characteristics of other diasporic experiences and to give more or less accurate definition of diasporic experience.

Robin Cohen characterizes Armenian diaspora as “victim” diaspora caused by the massacres of the late nineteenth century and the forced displacement of about 1.75 million Armenians to Syria and Palestine during 1915–1916 by the Young Turks (Cohen 2008: 2).

Due to historical reasons, out of 11 million Armenians more than 8-8,5 million live far from their homeland. About 3 million Armenians live in the post-Soviet countries, 2,5 million live in America, Europe, Near and Far East, Africa, and Australia (Dallakyan 2004: 8). Many authors believe that since the dawn of their history, the Armenian people are settled in different foreign countries in massive numbers. There were a number of reasons, but mainly it was due to exile and forced resettlement (Ibid. 3). Hence, the Armenian dispersion or *espiurkis* an ancient phenomenon. As Panossian rightly notes, writing about Armenia and the Armeniansentails writing about dispersion and diaspora (Panossian 2006: 1).

Nonetheless, already in the thirteenth century it was evident to some observers, like Marco Polo, that the dispersed section of the ethnic Armenians possessed features of an “archetypal diaspora”. Apart from subjugation by foreign invaders, long period of economic and cultural decline was also a reason of dispersal and

formation of the Armenian diaspora (Armstrong 1976: 394). The Armenian diaspora is widely known in the scholarship to be a “victim”, “archetypal” diaspora, which emerged as a result of trauma, ethnic cleansing, forced migration and exile. However, there were many other reasons also in the history of Armenian State and the Armenian people that caused migration from the homeland.

Since very long time Armenia had been a market place for the exchange of the products of Europe and Asia. It was not surprising that the great empires of the ancient world sought constantly to extend their way into the Armenian highlands (Lang 1970: 184).

Based on the source from “The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company” (1660-1760) Armenian traders were highly skilled arbitrage dealers in trade, and they were forced through historical circumstances to develop geographically very flexible and mobile forms of commerce (Baladouni, Makepeace 1998: xiii).

Till date there are few authors who have attempted to trace the history of the Armenian presence on Indian soil. There is no exact date as to when Armenians first came to India. Mesrovb Seth, one of the first Armenian historians in India of the late 19th and the early 20th century (whose writings are still extensively used by contemporary authors), claims that that Armenians were acquainted with India from remote antiquity. He traces it to the time when Semaramis, the wife of Ninus, and the queen of the once-powerful Assyrian monarchy, reigned in Babylon (Seth 1937: 20). Seth (1937), Basil (1968), Sarkissian (1987), Aslanian (2004), Bhattacharya (2005) note that Armenians’ connection with India was basically about trade.

When the English first came to India, by landing in Surat in 1612, they first met Armenians who were the leading traders in that period of time in India (Ibid.). In this regard, the Treaty of 1688 between KhojahPhanoosKhalantar (who was the leading Armenian merchant of that time), representing the Armenian people, and the East India Company is of importance. According to this historic treaty the Armenian merchants were given advantageous terms and free liberty to pass goods from

India in any ship of the Company with death warranty. It also provided equal rights, equal share and benefit to the Armenian nation with the English in India. It is worth noticing that Armenians were guaranteed freedom to exercise their religion in their own way in India (Seth 1937: 232, Basil 1969: 17). An interesting fact noticed by Seth is that the Company was supposed to give land to build a church for Armenians, wherever forty or more Armenians inhabited the Company's towns in India (Ibid.). Therefore, not surprisingly, in the Census of 1883, the Armenian Church is recognized as an Independent Church (Census 1881). Furthermore, it was guaranteed that any English Governor hindering the Armenians to enjoy their right to free trade, would be fired from their government service (Seth 1937: 232, Basil 1969: 17).

Prior to this, in order to improve the trade of his Empire, Akbar also invited Armenian merchants to settle at Agra (Seth 1937: 2). It was later discussed by some authors that in 1562 Akbar permitted Armenians to erect a church in Agra, as he knew that Armenians are ancient Christians and they would not settle in a place where they could not exercise their religion (Ibid.).

As a "mobilized" diaspora (Armstrong 1976: 395), the Armenian merchants in India had strong linguistic skills. That helped them to become successful in the practical usage of other languages also (Ibid.). Due to those skills they held high offices in the political life of the host country. Seth notes, that Armenians, apart from being eminent merchants in India, have given to the country of their adoption able governors and administrators, like MirzaZul-Qarnain and Markus Erizad, clever diplomats, like Khojah Israel Sarhad, MargavagSheenentz, distinguished military Commanders like Gorgin Khan and Jacob Petrus, skilled artisans and manufacturers of huge pieces of ordinance like Gorgin Khan and Shah Nazar Khan, renowned poets like MirzaZul-Qarnain and Sarmad who composed poems in Persian which was not their own (Seth 1937: vii).

We may assume that initially Armenians performed the role of a middleman or a mediator in the host society (between different ruling authorities, powers). They were successful and prominent in trade and commerce, at the same time they made contributions to the science, culture, and modernization of the host society. For them it was important to maintain the Armenian language, but this has not prevented Armenians from being fully embedded in the language and culture of the host society (Safran 1991: 84). On the one hand, there was a constant

struggle within the community to maintain their distinct identity (of course within a favourable society of a host country), and on the other hand, there was a tendency to become cosmopolitan due to their adaptable character and various skills, which helped them to hold positions in the decision making circles of the host country as well.

Currently, Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) is home to a very small Armenian diasporic community in India.

The Armenian College Philanthropic Academy is the only functioning educational institute for the community. And it is (as well as the Church) funded through the amount received from the real estate belonging to the community and the Trusts (Dallakyan 2004: 208). There are about 80 Armenian students getting education at the Armenian College. The majority of them are from Armenia itself, the rest are from other Armenian diasporic communities such as Iran, Iraq, Russia.

We may not call this a permanent diaspora, as they do not live in Kolkata for generations. In other words this may be called a 'temporary diaspora' as well, as time dimension, which is an important feature for the classification of a certain diaspora, is missing here. After residing in the host country for education they keep in touch with their families back in the home country, they practise the national religion and they speak in Armenian.

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Ani Yeremyan, PhD Scholar, JNU, School of International Studies.

National Council of Indian Culture (NCIC) in association with Indentured Labour Route Project (Trinidad Chapter) & Department of History, University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine

WORLD INDIAN DIASPORA CONFERENCE 2020

Celebration of the Formal Abolition of Indian Indentureship (1920) 28-30 Narvales Ramappa Mang Road, Chaguanas, Trinidad and Tobago

CALL FOR PAPERS

The National Council of Indian Culture (Trinidad and Tobago) in collaboration with UNESCO Indentured Labour Route Project and the Department of History, UWI, St. Augustine invite you to submit papers for a conference in commemoration of the formal abolition of the Indian Indentureship system (1920), to be held in Trinidad, from May 28 to June 01, 2020. **BACKGROUND** In 1917, the Viceroy of India, announced that the further recruitment and transportation of Indian labourers under the indentureship was prohibited and no more labourers would be taken to the various colonies to work as contracted labourers. A few years later, on January 01, 1920 all contractual obligations of all labourers were terminated and the Indian indentureship system was abolished in Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana (Guyana) and Fiji. This conference examines movements and trends in the post-indentureship period. When indentureship ended those Indian labourers who chose to stay in the countries where they were indentured, were then compelled to find ways to establish themselves in the society as non-contract labourers. To some extent they were forced to adopt these societies as their homes. There were left to find educational opportunities for themselves and to establish political alliances. They engaged in economic competition with other ethnic groups in the society and underwent a process of socio-cultural rejuvenation all in the interest of self-preservation. They made these countries their homes and they contributed in all aspects, to their development. This conference focuses on the economic, socio-cultural and political contribution and development in post-indentured societies.

The objectives of the conference are:

To focus new research on the post-indentureship/ post-20th century period as well as on contemporary trends. **Topics** The topics of the conference theme and areas of discussions listed are not conclusive. Additional ideas may be added as long as they relate to the theme of the conference.

1. Historical Perspectives - historical experiences that have shaped the Indian character since the end of indentureship.
2. The Emergence of multi-ethnic Nations and Societies – interaction with other ethnic groups, challenges and ethnic negotiations.
3. Emergence and Consolidation of Identities – multiple identities, ethnic identities, cross-cultural identities, contributions of gender, class, caste, religion, politics and race to the identity formation.
4. Labour in the Indian Diaspora.
5. Gender Issues – emergence of gendered identities, changes in gender roles, gender inequalities.

More detail, email to: Prineeth Gopnar (Ph.D.) Chairman, World Indian Diaspora Conference 2020 info@widd2020.com Tel: 1-868-470-0133

Refugee Background Students Transitioning Into Higher Education: Navigating Complex Spaces

By Loshini Naidoo, Jane Wilkinson, Misty Adoniou, and Kiprono Langat

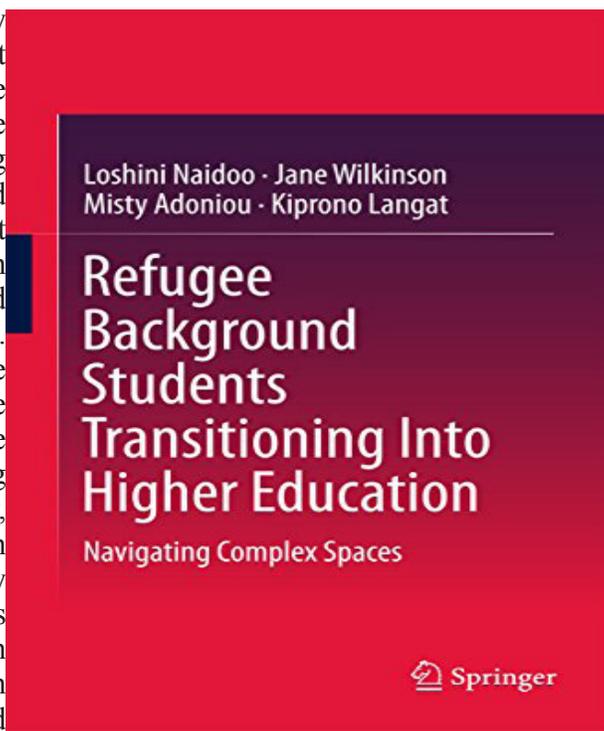
Springer 2018, 170 pages, ISBN: 978-981-13-0419-4

Migration is increasingly becoming a topic of keen interest for the States and non-state actors to formulate inclusive policies accommodating diversities. Specifically, forced migration is posing a significant challenge to the host countries in managing the refugee crises and its subsequent repercussions. Among several challenges, the education prospects of refugee background students become gloomy, especially in pursuing higher education. Additionally, there is a lack of information available on the issues faced by refugee background students in accessing higher education in the host countries. In such a context, the book titled “Refugee Background Students

Transitioning Into Higher Education: Navigating Complex Spaces”, fills this crucial information gap by providing valuable insights.

The book has been written by four authors who are eminent educators in various universities of Australia. It contains eight chapters to cover almost all the issues relating to refugee background students and their aspirations to acquire smooth higher education, particularly in Australia.

The first three chapters are authored by Loshini Naidoo, which provides a rich amount of theoretical literature raising the concerns of barriers and challenges, confronted by refugee students in accessing higher education. Incorporation of excellent theoretical ideas of various prominent thinkers like Nancy Fraser and Amartya Sen has made the chapters insightful. The author suggests considering education as a human right rather than a privilege to make it more inclusive and accommodative. Naidoo has provided an insight that



higher education faculties need to have ample understanding of human rights discourse and issues related to “social justice, diversity, equity and discrimination” (p. 30) so that they can help refugee students in transitioning phase from school to the university. She has made the point that the inclusion of prior-life experiences of refugee background students into the public narrative is imperative to formulate inclusive education policies (p. 42).

Misty Adoniou has written chapter Four and Seven. She has presented rich accounts to show that “the culture of low-expectations fails to recognize refugees’ capacities, substantial

life skills and knowledge” which results into under-recognised and under-utilised capabilities of refugee students (p. 54). Adoniou has presented the prior life-experiences of various respondents, who are students at the various Australian Universities to show that how their experiences can be “viewed as assets that can contribute to the academic and social cultures of universities, rather than problems to be solved” (p. 62). She has further explored the issue of English language proficiency as an essential criterion in higher education and has questioned the one-size-fits-all academic model. Adoniou argues that educators need to acknowledge and utilise the multilingual identity of refugee students to help them acquire English language skills (p. 121).

Chapter Five and Six are authored by Jane Wilkinson, who has attempted to identify significant enablers and barriers involved in the transition of refugee students from schools to university. She has provided various accounts to unravel “the role of teachers as cultural mediators for refugee background

students” (p. 70). She argues that a “holistic approach to refugee education in schools is crucial in building students’ sense of inclusion and capacity to learn” (p. 84). Wilkinson has mentioned the intricacies involved in the process of getting in, getting through and getting on from university for the refugee background students covering the themes of aspiration, politics and policy in creating an enabling culture.

Chapter Eight is written by Kiprono Langat to showcase the crucial role of communities and out-of-university organisations in enabling the successful transition of refugee students into higher education (p. 131). He argues that “education, language and other social barriers are minimized by way of support networks and mentoring in the community” (p. 133). Langat has provided various strategies, and examples through which effective and active learning spaces can be created to aid the university transition process.

In concluding part of the book, authors raised concerns about the lack of social justice towards refugee students in terms of recognition, redistribution and representation. The book recommends for “whole university practices built on human rights” (p.162) to “build social cohesion” in the society. The book provides constructive approaches which can help universities improve their policies and practices towards refugee students.

Incorporating views of education ministry officials, policy-makers and classmates of refugee background students could have provided more depth to the study. In overall terms, the book is a novel attempt to venture into the completely new domain, which looks into the transitioning phase of refugee background students aspiring for higher education. The book is well-researched with lots of case studies as well. Authors have interviewed many refugee students, who have struggled to reach into the higher education and thereby to provide readers with rich accounts of genuine grievances and obstacles which are usually faced by refugee students. The book can be highly recommended for the readers who want to understand the complexities involved in the higher education of the refugee background students studying in various Australian Universities. It is an important academic work for migration researchers, teachers, professors, human rights activists, policy-makers and anyone interested in understanding issues relating to refugee background students. The book effectively lays out the vision to formulate inclusive higher education policies for the refugee background students. This work is an

exemplary attempt to open up the debates on crucial issues relating to refugees at the global level.

Reviewed By: Abhishek Yadav

PhD Candidate and Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

News Update



The rejection rate of H1B visa has almost tripled between 2015 and 2019. This rejection rate has increased because USCIS has apparently changed the standards for approval without new regulations or new law being passed. As per data of USCIS, approximately 70% of the H1B applicants are Indian. This high rejection rate of H1B has directly impacted the thousands of aspirants aspiring for work in America.

(Economic Times, 30th October, 2019)

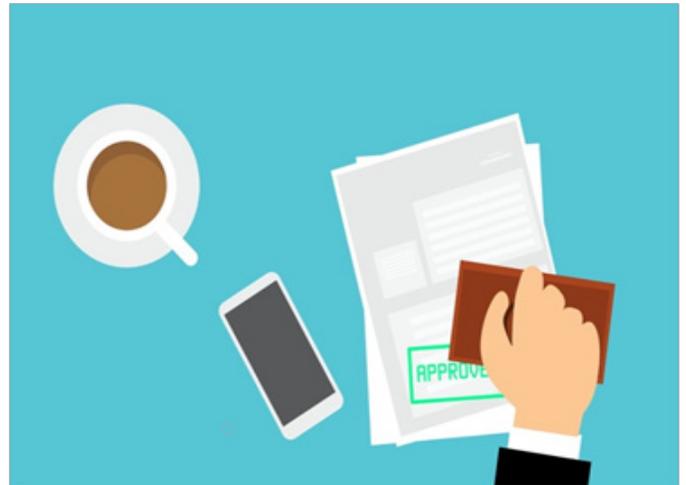
Japan is recruiting Bangladeshi skilled intern, free of cost. Hence, the technical intern need not pay any brokerage fee for going to Japan. Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment ministry joint secretary, Jahangir Alam, mentioned that in addition to technical intern, Japan will also recruit specified skill worker from Bangladesh. He specified the 14 identified categories of workers in different areas of work which includes caregiving, automobile, aviation, IT etc.

(New Age, 25th November 2019)



Malaysia is trying to reduce its unskilled foreign workers, who currently accounts for 15% of the workforce, by more than 130000 in next five years while planning to hire more of skilled workers. In similar lines, Thailand and Sri Lanka has been opening up their boundary for the skilled workers while restricting the immigration of the unskilled workers.

(Business Line, 30th October, 2019)



4th International Conference

Migration, Diasporas and Sustainable Development Perspectives, Policies, Opportunities and Challenges

31 October to 1 November

New Delhi, India

Call for Paper

Human mobility is an age-old phenomenon, though its dynamics and character is changing over the time. Under the garb of globalization, international migration with various forms and features has been growing exponentially in the recent decades in response to global capitalistic developments. Subsequently, many migrant groups have turned into Diaspora communities across the globe. Today, Diasporas constitutes not only a substantial but also a vital segment of population that the human civilization is experiencing today. It is considered to be one of the emerging actors that significantly influencing the socio-economic, political and cultural spheres in the national and international arena.

The multidirectional engagement between Diasporas and Diaspora and host country and home country, and engagement in transnational and virtual platforms provides a very interesting space for academician and policy experts to engage. There are multiple dynamics involved in shaping the contour of the Diaspora and engaging them with region, nations and in the transnational spheres.

In recent times female migration has been gradually growing across the globe, often faster than the male migration. The migration report of the UN (2015) mentioned that some parts of Europe and Africa the growth rate of female migration has already taken over their male counterparts i.e 51.9% in Europe, 51.6 % in Latin America and Caribbean, 51.9% in North America. Though traditionally migration from India has been male dominated, in the recent decade female migration has been rising.

With growing number of Diaspora population worldwide, there is a scope for comparative analysis. There are large Diasporas in Asian and African countries. Chinese and Indian Diaspora are two of the largest Diaspora in the world, combined together they constitute roughly 85

million (60 million Chinese Diaspora 25 millions Indian Diaspora). Spread out across the globe, these two Asian Diasporas redefined the demographic, social, cultural, political and economic profiles of many countries and significantly impacting on the home countries as well. Two Diasporas provides wonderful insights on how the Diaspora and homeland engage today. People from both the countries, having old civilizational heritage, have been migrating internationally for centuries. However, it is the colonial regime under the European power which made drastic demographic change by importing substantial number of labour from these two countries after the abolition of slavery. Subsequently, the free flow of migration continued that constituted skilled, semi-skilled and professionals. The two Asian Diasporas are very much linked to their home countries despite ideological, ethnic and identity contradictions, diversities and challenges on some occasions. There are number of evidences in several countries where Diaspora engage in skill building in China, Israel and in less developed countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh etc. This can be done through volunteerism and through sustainable private public participation in areas that are locally feasible and marketable as well. High Skill Diaspora can engage in public policy, research and development, business and enterprise. However there is need for more institutional platform to translate these to practice. Smaller Diasporas from Asia, Africa and Europe also provides very useful insight into the diverse range of engagement in the socio-economic and political spheres.

India having one of the largest Diaspora in the Globe has comparative advantage to undertake academic as well as policy research to engage its Diaspora. It is already evident that, besides the socio-cultural and political significance, Diaspora has immense policy significance in the current scenario of knowledge economy that is highly networked and virtual globalised world.

Besides the Diaspora and homeland engagement that has positive developmental outcome, there are also conflict relations. The Jews, the Tamils, Sikhs and many other Diasporas in different parts of the world have conflict relations that provides a different way to look at not only the Diaspora homeland engagement but also how they mobilize the transnational space to fulfill their objectives.

As migration will continue to occur and Diaspora communities continue to form, evolve and engage, it is time to think on the broader global context of sustainability. UN Sustainable Development Goal 2030 emphasizes on mainstreaming migration by focusing on various interrelated issues such as international cooperation, vulnerable migrants, humanitarian crisis, return migration, female migration.

Themes and Subthemes

Perspectives

- Changing nature of migration and Diaspora
- Human Development, Entrepreneurship and Knowledge
- Heritage, culture and the dynamics of change

Diaspora Policies in major countries

- Politics of Migration and Policies on Diaspora with implications for Foreign and National Security
- Impact of Politics on Emigration and Immigration
- Racism, Citizenship issue in Gulf, Visa policy of selective, USA/Developed countries,
- Diaspora and Soft power diplomacy (cultural diplomacy)

Impacts of Diaspora on Foreign Policies

- International relation and migration
- Diaspora lobby
- Transnationalism

Policies related to the Economic impacts of Diaspora

- Remittances
- Diaspora investment and Entrepreneurship
- Knowledge, Technology Transfer and International

Trade

- Diaspora Philanthropy

NGOs in Diaspora, Civil Society and Human Rights

- Diaspora organisations and their role
- Marriages, Custody, Adoption, Property, Hague Conventions
- Human Trafficking

Diaspora and Global Culture

- Diaspora in the global cultural revolution-multiculturalism and Diaspora
- Indian Diaspora: Film, Literature, Language, Food

New Dynamics of Diaspora Engagement

- Virtual Diasporas and Knowledge Platforms
- Indian Diaspora, Virtual platform and development

Regional Diasporas

- Regional Diasporas in India and Other countries

Return and Integration

- Return migration and rehabilitation
- Return migration and integration

Forced Migration

- Refugee crisis
- Refugee and Gender

Outcome

The conference will generate ideas and policy perspectives in the form of research papers which can contribute to the development sectors in home and host countries. The insights from other Diaspora engagements will certainly help to see the evolution and future engagement of migration communities and Diaspora.

Stakeholders

The conference will provide a knowledge platform for scholars working in policy and academic domain to share ideas, comparative perspectives on Diaspora and international migration. A large array of stakeholders at

national and international level will benefit from the conference and publications thereafter. The following stakeholders will directly benefit from the conference:

- Government Ministries: Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Culture
- Agencies/Departments: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Reserve Bank of India,
- Development Organisations working in the Migration and Diaspora
- Corporate Sectors: Working in the area of music, films, investment, knowledge transfer, human resource training, education sector

Important Dates	
Last date for receiving abstract	30 January 2020
Communicating about selection	15 February 2020
Last date for receiving full paper	30 March 2020
Date of Conference	31 October-1 November 2020

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Submission Guidelines

Participants

Participant's Contribution (to be covered for conference kits and food during the conference)	
Postgraduate Students	2000/- or USD 35
Other Scholars	3000/- or USD 50

Accommodation and Local Hospitality:

Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism is a not-for-profit academic research forum and we are not in a position to be able to assist with conference travel or subsistence. However, the organisers will help you to find accommodation nearby the venue and also arrange sightseeing tour on demand with the payment.

Guidelines for Abstracts

- All participants are required to submit a written abstract in .doc/x or upload the abstract on the GRFDT website www.grfdt.com (link will be given shortly)
- Format: 1 inch margin, 1.5 line spacing, Times New Roman, 12 font
- File name: YOURNAME_INSTITUTION
- The document must contain; a) author(s), b) affiliation as you would like it to appear in programme, c) email address, d) title of proposal, e) body of proposal, f) up to 5 keywords.

All abstracts will be peer reviewed and selected candidates will be invited for presentation. Please use plain text (Times Roman 12) and abstain from using footnotes and any special formatting, characters or emphasis (such as bold, italics or underline). If you do not receive a reply from us in a week please send a query

Abstracts or requests for further information should be sent to: internationalconference@grfdt.com

For more details, please visit our website: www.grfdt.com

Publication: All the papers will be peer reviewed and published in book by reputed publishers as well as in "Migration and Diaspora: An Interdisciplinary Journal" and GRFDT Research Monograph Series.