

# Roots & Routes

Vol 9, No. 06, June, 2020



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# Editor's Note



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Dear Readers  
Greetings!

Globally, migration pattern and regulations by different nations vary significantly and generally according to types of migration roots and routes. Although, the vast majority of people migrate voluntarily for economic, family and study reasons while a relatively small portion of all migrants are forced to do so. However, in recent times and more often than not, migration and immigration are closely being regulated and monitored by governments under the garb of sovereignty in order to safe guard other elements of the economy. The current issue of “Roots and Routes” newsletter presents the practitioner’s perspectives on diaspora, migration and transnationalism. In this issue, the livelihood of migrants with possible future challenges was documented by Medha Navya Dwivedi. In the same vein, Alyona Seth wrote about issues surrounding Reintegrating Returning Migrants: A Global Challenge, in which different scholars of international repute identified possible solutions as it relates to the migrants’ roots and routes. Moreover, this edition captured Razia Sultana and Erere Oghoghome’s report on the realities of “Brain Drain” and its likelihood post COVID-19. Also, reporting on Media Narratives On Migrants During Covid-19, and Social Media and Cause of Migrant Workers, Srinita Bhattacharjee and Vijay Soni wrote about the exigency of journalism with the proper use of the social media on migration and immigration issues. Paige Fabry discusses COVID-19: Lessons from Africa, on two important insights, which are in terms of the actions taken and the inclusivity of their economic relief and rebuilding plans that ultimately soften the blow of COVID-19.

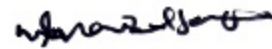
This issue includes two book reviews as well:

1. **India Moving: A History of Migration;** which contains information on the migration process of India, and it is for everyone with the interest to understand the phases of migration in India.
2. **Human Geopolitics: States, Emigrants and the Rise of diaspora institutions;** which exposes the need to invest in human resources recently due to the new global ecosystem. It focuses on acquisition of relevant skills for relevance in the competitive world.

Furthermore, Dr. Melissa Tandiwe Myambo in an interview session condemned the magnitude of xenophobia in some countries and concludes that “all countries benefit from migration while xenophobic attitude that is emerging in many parts of the globe is dangerous.”

Therefore, I strongly hope that the issues raised in this newsletter are significant and appropriate at this time when diaspora engagement is at crescendo and while the entire world is back to a default position with its migration implications.

I will expect your feedback at editorinchief@grfdt.com and I would be excited to share your experiences, Cheers!



Olatunbosun Emmanuel OGUNSEEMI



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**Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism**

# Livelihood of Migrants and Future Challenges

## Medha Navya Dwivedi

The socio-cultural and economic effect of the prevailing global situation of COVID-19 on the migrant population was discussed by a panel of international experts. The webinar was organised by the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT), discussed the Livelihood of Migrants during COVID-19 and the future challenges.

Jeffery Lesser, Professor at Emory University, Atlanta, USA, and author of 'Immigration, Ethnicity and Identity', talked about Brazil and its migration issues. Immigration started in Brazil in the 19th century, and has a wide history attached to it. Brazil has faced a lot of deadly diseases like dengue, Zika virus, Tuberculosis, and the National Health System has been very quick and adaptive in fighting the diseases. A lot of residential buildings have been turned into factories in Brazil over the period of years. This has led to greater spread of Corona virus. Most of the upper-class migrants, like research scholars and scientists have left Brazil. Since, there is no strict lockdown; the short-term implications on economic aspects are not visible yet. Prof. Jeffery talked about how Brazil is in a war in itself due to the prevailing political scenario in the country, and they need to find probable solutions for it soon.

Prof. Raj Bardouille, who has taught at various universities across the world, is a Former Senior Officer at the United Nations. She talked about how Hurricane Maria had devastated the lives and livelihood of people three years ago. Post the hurricane, 7000 immigrants, better called non-nationals came to Dominica. The main source of economic activity is agriculture (around 20 per cent of the GDP), followed by tourism. The country is still under curfew, due to which the tourism industry is at standstill. The Prime Minister has openly said that

the country is facing an economic crisis and the IMF or the World Bank will have to come ahead to help.

Camelia Tigao, National Autonomous University of Mexico, shared about the severe situation of Mexican immigrants in the US, and how they are illegal yet essential, as a lot of them are involved in the agricultural sector. She also informed that around 600 Mexicans have died in the US.

She talked about the agricultural workers not receiving the health care facilities in the US, especially in the rural areas.

From the 1st of June, Mexico has started opening up from region by region depending upon the number of cases, and only then the situation of the migrants can be solved.

Dr. Sandhya Rao Mehta, Prof. Sultan Qaboos University, Oman, shared that Oman is one of seven gulf countries where India has been sending its labour. The COVID outbreak has been managed up to satisfactory levels in the country because of its centralised political system. She told that around 27,000 jobs are estimated to have been lost in Oman, and it has affected health, education and livelihood drastically. In the domestic sector, women have no access to the outside world. According to her, economic challenges are not going away in the new normal as the country is facing oil and nationalisation issues. If value added tax (VAT) is imposed, it will make migration even more expensive.

Prof. Faiz Omar Mohammad Jamie, University of Bahri, Sudan, explained the condition of the pandemic in Sudan, and how the citizens coming from China spread the virus in the country. Sudan has migrants working in international organisations like the UN, and the pandemic has resulted in very

closed and tight restrictions on movement. The country is facing severe challenges of loss of jobs due to lockdown and closure of industries.

Prof. Bahija Jamal, Morocco, shared that migration to Spain and the whole of Europe is common in Morocco, which led to the spread of the virus. The country does not have any accurate data about migrants, which makes the situation even worse. The Moroccan government has followed a restrictive approach (by suspension of people's movement) and a supportive approach (by giving support to the vulnerable groups and providing medical insurance cards). However, the migrants are not able to benefit from these supportive measures.

Participants in the webinar like Prof. Binod Khadria, Prof. C.S. Bhatt, Ambassador Manju Seth, Prof. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, and Ms. Nasra Shah provided their comments on the discussions.

The webinar was attended by almost 200 scholars from around 45 countries. Each panellist was given a time period of 7 minutes to present their views.

Dr. Renu Modi, who has been associated with the Centre for African Studies, University of Mumbai, moderated the webinar.

GRFDT is a consortium of researchers and policy makers drawn from national and international universities, institutes and organisations. It is the largest such group focusing specifically on the issues related to migration, diaspora and transnationalism. GRFDT works as an academic and policy think tank by engaging national and international experts from academics, practitioners and policy makers, industry experts in a broad range of areas such as migration policies, transnational linkages of development, human rights, culture, gender, etc.

Medha Navya Dwivedi, a debating enthusiast, who loves writing, is an undergraduate student at Miranda House, University of Delhi.

[Published in Delhi Post](#)

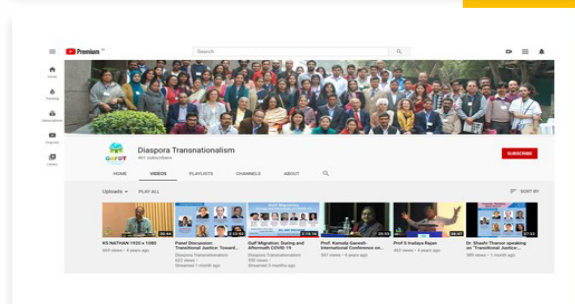
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# Reintegrating Returning Migrants: A Global Challenge

Alyona Seth

Migration – internal and international – has been dominating headlines in India. The challenges faced by migrant workers is a policy problem affecting countries across the world as per the views of the global panel at the webinar organised by the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT). The webinar “Return and Integration Challenges of Migrants During and Post-COVID-19” was moderated by Prof, Omar H. Ali, who framed two critical questions for the panelists. While the first one centred on the various challenges pertaining to return and reintegration of migrants, the second wanted the panelists to share possible solutions to address this issue.

## Reintegration into Distressed Economies

Migrants move to a foreign country lured by better economic prospects. They are key workers in the destination countries, but as Prof. Thomas Faist highlighted, are often denied access to basic rights. Citing the example of Romanian workers in the meatpacking district in Germany, Prof. Faist pointed out that Romanians, despite being the EU citizens, were also subject to deplorable working conditions making them vulnerable to the virus. Some of these Romanian migrants brought the virus back to Romania when they returned which in turn complicates reintegration. Another challenge facing some origin countries is the potential economic destabilization that can arise as a result of an influx of returning migrants. Prof. Faist offered the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the Indian context too, Prof. Pushpendra Kumar Singh identified job creation for returning migrants at a time when the economy is in severe distress as a pressing concern for the government. Prior to the pandemic, India was already tackling high unemployment. COVID-19 has only exacerb-

bated an already precarious economic situation, and as per some estimates the pandemic could cost India more than 100 million jobs.

A similar concern about the precarious economic situation has affected Ghana as well. On 12 May, the Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration published a request for information on Ghanaian residents stranded abroad as a result of closure of borders for possible repatriation. The conditions laid out by the Ministry were such that citizens abroad needed to pay for their cost of travel back to Ghana and were given 24 hours to make that information available to the government. Such a policy is a useful tactic to control the number of returning migrants. Kwadwo Boakye-Yiadom said that while this move was a step in the right direction, it excluded migrants who could not afford to pay the airfare. Furthermore, the 24 hour deadline meant that many people missed the announcement and of those who might have heard were not given any information on reintegration plans. In the absence on information on reintegration, he contends, it becomes difficult for Ghanaians abroad to decide whether to return to a country that they have been away from for so long and that too, in the midst of an economic crisis. From a policy perspective, it is important to acknowledge that returning migrants are not all the same.

*Shabari Nair, International Labour Organisation (ILO), New Delhi, emphasised the need for governments to recognise the different backgrounds of each returning migrant and devise policies that address the unique reintegration challenges they each face.*

For instance, migrant workers returning to India who paid money to emigrate but have returned

home without having been paid their wages need access to justice. Most migration flows to Middle East, Southeast Asia, and within South Asia are of a temporary nature. According to Nair, the biggest policy gap in all South Asian countries, except for Sri Lanka, is the absence of a holistic policy on return and reintegration. When migrant workers come back, they are not considered of a status where they can access services applicable to nationals who are below poverty line, which is an integral problem. This is because a lot of these people are viewed to be better off than those residing in the origin country which is a big misperception.

### **Irregular Migration**

Sharing on the significant gender dimension to COVID-19, Prof. Walton-Roberts said that even though infection rate of the Coronavirus may be higher in men, it is women who are disproportionately represented in frontline workers. Citing the example of Canada, he argued that the epicentre of infection, which is in long-term care homes, is predominantly staffed by women, and especially women of colour. Following President Trump's announcement banning refugees, many asylum seekers walked across into the Canadian province of Quebec. Among these were many Haitian women who found work in long-term care homes. Their work in these facilities, Prof Walton-Roberts said, has led to huge public support calling for the fast track regularisation of these asylum seekers.

Jean-Rene Bilongo shared about granting amnesty to irregular migrants in Italy. He argued that nearly 700,000 undocumented migrants, overlooked by Italian authorities, are living in deplorable conditions and at risk of getting infected. But, because they are undocumented they are unlikely to access public health facilities for fear of being reported. The return of Eastern European migrant workers to their home countries Romania and Bulgaria has created a labour shortage in Italy. Bilongo's organisation has been engaging in advocacy campaigns to push the Italian government to legalise undocumented migrants. Granting amnesty, according to Bilongo, is a strong way to promote inclusiveness and integration. Solidarity in times of a pandemic

means protecting the population, not only the citizens, and it also means paying greater attention to undocumented workers. Bilongo and Prof. Walton-Roberts highlighted how because of the work of undocumented migrants, Italians and Americans, respectively, have been able to have their daily meals on the table.

In Africa, Niger has long been a transitional corridor for irregular migrants from Ghana and neighbouring Western African countries travelling to Europe. These migrants traverse the Sahara Desert and cross into Libya and Algeria from where they cross the Mediterranean into Europe. According to Yiadom, in March, a convoy comprising of 256 people including 53 Ghanaians were intercepted and pushed back by Libya militia men at a border outpost between Niger and Libya. These migrants were forced to undertake a perilous journey to Niger in temperatures over 45 degrees and it was days before they received humanitarian assistance from IOM and Niger's police. Yiadom also estimates that some 2000 Ghanaian women employed as domestic workers are also stranded in the Gulf countries in abusive conditions. Facilitating the return of irregular and domestic workers should be a priority for the Ghanaian government because these are the most vulnerable groups.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Prof. Thomas Faist suggested that European countries must negotiate with origin countries to come up with a comprehensive economic package to facilitate the return of migrant workers instead of forcing origin countries to simply accept those whose asylum claims have been rejected. A combination of readmission, return, and prospects and gateways for legal migration is urgently required. In the European-African migration context, Prof. Faist called for sponsoring civil society organisations (CSOs) because they are the ones who ensure that negative effects of migration are caught early.

*Similarly, Prof. Walton-Roberts argued that understanding the integration of low-skilled migrant workers, especially internal migrants, is linked to the important role that CSOs can play.*

According to her, provisioning of basic needs such as food and shelter and organising a humane system of quarantine is extremely important and has not been fulfilled in an adequate and coordinated manner in India. This is where states need to focus in immediate and longer-term response and supporting CSOs can prove useful. In Kerala, women's groups have played key roles in disaster response and planning.

Nair agreed with Prof. Walton-Roberts on the need for a bottom-up approach. However, in the Indian context, he argued that the Indian national returning to the village or community requires a whole-of-government approach in order to facilitate reintegration. In order for reintegration to be successful, such an approach necessitates extensive coordination between local authorities, between the state and centre, and between different ministries which may be cumbersome to achieve. Prof. Singh contended that it is the Indian state which has to be the primary caregiver. Returning migrants will test the differential capacities of states as well as CSOs. He argued that states like Kerala have better capacities to deal with returning migrants, but the top sending states – UP, Rajasthan, Bihar, and West Bengal lack that capacity. Reintegration efforts will also be complicated by the attempts in the last 5–6 years to deprive CSO of funding and financing through changing legislations. Prof. Singh contends that the source of funding of CSOs in India has dried up to less than a third of what it used to be in the past. Prof. Singh also argues that government cannot just offer employment through the MNREGA as part of its reintegration policy but that the overall quality of the rural employment program in terms of wages itself needs improving. One way to do so, according to Prof. Singh, is to raise wages to at least make it minimum wage which will motivate returning international migrants accustomed to higher wages to work and utilise the MNREGA. He also called on the government to expand the work program beyond rural employment to meet the urgent need of implementing a similar programme in urban areas. Echoing same sentiments as Prof. Walton-Roberts further called for strident efforts to incorporate women and other marginalised

segments of the population into such schemes. Yiadom also called on the Ghanaian government to step in to do more. He also called for greater cooperation between parties such as UN, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and countries of origin to address the bleak humanitarian situation in Niger. He proposed the creation of some kind of international humanitarian corridor for aid delivery and to facilitate the safe return of migrants to their home countries. Similarly, Bilongo emphasised the need to involve a large number of stakeholders including NGOs, CSOs, influential writers, academics, and clergymen to spur the Italian government into action on legalising irregular migrants.

Reintegration, as emphasised by Prof. Faist, Nair and Bilongo, is not merely at the economic level, but also has a social dimension. Key to successful reintegration is erasing the stigma associated with returning migrants. Prior to the pandemic, migrant workers were seen as the backbone of economic growth, but as they return to their home countries, their communities and governments have begun to see them merely as disease carriers. The impact of migration cannot be understated. At a time when protests on racial inequality have erupted worldwide, Yiadom, Prof. Walton-Roberts, and Prof. Ali also stressed the link between forced migration from Africa over decades and its adverse consequence of creating systemic injustices as visible in the US today. Tying in with the Black Lives Matter movement, Prof. Ali concluded the session by reminding everyone of the importance of recognising the needs of vulnerable people. Further, he emphasised that there remain many struggles and challenges to be faced internationally.

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Alyona Seth, a public policy researcher, is pursuing Masters in International Affairs at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public policy, National University Singapore.

[Published in Delhi Post](#)



# COVID-19 to Change the Trajectory of Talent Migration

Razia Sultana

Brain drain is the process where highly trained and qualified personnel migrate from developing to developed countries in search of new opportunities, better standard of living and quality of life. The process of brain drain began in 1960s from South Asia to United Kingdom to fulfil the health workers' vacuum. There are many pros and cons concerning brain drain from the perspective of developing countries. However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has changed the perspective of brain drain in many different ways. What would be new realities of brain drain in the aftermath of the pandemic? Will brain drain continue as before? Will the nature of brain drain change or will there be increase of demand on particular or selective profession? The panelists from seven continents gave their expert opinions regarding these issues and answered the related questions of the participants at the webinar organized by the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) on 16 June 2020. The session was moderated by the Prof. Binod Khandria of Jawaharlal Nehru University, India.

## New Realities of Brain Drain

After 1960s the United States of America attracted skilled and educated people from all over the world. However, development of information technology (IT) changed the scenario of brain drain. When IT professional returned to their home countries with their knowledge and expertise, the process of "brain drain" was soon transformed into "brain gain" from "brain circulation." Prof. Binod Khadria mentioned this trend as the beginning of brain gain which overtook brain drain. However, brain drain is likely to return after COVID-19 particularly in health sector, as assessed by Prof. Binod Khadria. He posed a question: Will there be "talent hunt" or "talent war" among the countries in near future after the pandemic?

In search of answers to some of these questions, the panelists put forth their diverse views. It was asserted that unemployment had increased worldwide since the outbreak of the pandemic. Many people lost their jobs, both locally and internationally. Internal migration was at all-time high as people migrated from urban centres to their native rural villages after having lost their jobs and sources of earnings. Internationally many migrant workers were forced to go back to their home country due to economic hardship in their host countries. The general secretary of South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC) Laxman Basnet explained that migration trend would not change rapidly in developed countries because of secure policy of employers either from government or private sectors. Developed countries are assuring employment security which will protect the migrant worker to stay in the host country. He brought the example of Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. Basnet also highlighted the situation of Nepalese students whether they tend to return from USA to Nepal and pointed out that only 600 students returned to Nepal out of 400,000.

*This indicates that brain drain will continue, as qualified students become future skilled workers.*

Dr. Alan Gamlen, Associate Professor, Geography and Migration, Monash University (Australia), focused on three main areas – the demand for labour migration and supply of immigrants, migrant decision-making and migration control. He believed that the demand of migrant workers would decrease because of rising unemployment due to pandemic situation. Giving the example of IMF and EU worse economic downturn since great depression, he concluded that the demand countries would hire extensive local workers over migrant workers. However, the labour market will differ by skill, high and low skill work, especially

in health care, infrastructure and food production which are likely to witness less job losses in contrast to medium skill jobs such as tourism, manufacturing, retail which are often classified as non-essential. On the other hand, supply of immigrants will depend on the individual and household in two specific ways. One group of people will be less likely to migrate, as it would be a risky decision and may concern paying off long term and health risk. Other group of people might be more likely to migrate particularly those who desperately need to move for livelihood because of the pandemic.

Dr. Anjali Sahay highlighted her opinion on the perspective of United States' situation. She mentioned the reality of post-COVID-19 situation under which individual decisions will be least important because their movement will be dictated by political leaders, companies and even coronavirus. High skilled individuals will get offer for stable visa process. Skilled workers will also be attracted by the universal health care and insurance.

Prof. Luciana Sparta from Argentina also agreed that migration would continue after COVID-19 due to economic recession and decelerating currency value in Argentina. However, most of the panelist agreed that Healthcare workers are the first instruments of economic global migration, which has been vastly damaged by the COVID-19. Prof. Chandra Shekhar mentioned that after COVID-19, initially there will be a short lapse in brain drain, but it will soon resume because without foreign workers it will be difficult to gain economic recovery in the Gulf countries. This short gap may stay from 5/6 months to 2 years until a vaccine has come into effect, to provide immunity against the coronavirus.

### **Demand of Selective Profession**

There will be actually major shortage of high skilled workers worldwide. As the reality of COVID-19 situation we will see more of our dependence on technology and uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Therefore, the demand of expertise on innovation, skill, and AI expert would increase. However, the question is; do we have those skills available in our country or we would depend on other countries?

The current situation has already shown that countries are very selective to hire foreign workers especially in healthcare sector. Thus, all depends on country's own economy and need. Therefore, the government also become very selective and the future agreements between countries will depend on what skill will be needed in the recipient country and what available skill the sending countries have. GayatriKanth (IOE, Switzerland) drew attention in this regard. Prof. Binod also pointed out that there will be increase in health workers demand among the countries in post COVID-19 and also drew attention towards the US President Donald Trump's recent temporary suspension of green card applicants with the exception of those seeking entry to work as doctors, nurses or other healthcare professionals. Another example came from Prof, Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, where she mentioned about South-South movement as an example of medical students who travel from Zambia to India for study.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Labour Migration**

Gayatri Kanth pointed out the impact on labour migration of COVID-19 and given the fact by the report of ILO (29th April, 2020) estimated that: "the cost of 305 million full time job and 436 millions of enterprises faced high risk of serious disruption world-wide causing companies' trillions of dollars and lost economic opportunities. This constant changing figure indicates that demographic changes of labour market (regular and irregular work force) facing serious economic problem of recent times."

*Dr. Anjali Sahay concluded that North – North corridor will be very busy especially for dreamers who will be looking for better opportunities.*

However, in the case of USA, the shortage of skill worker in some selective sector such as IT, need to focus and hire the best quality of workers form home and abroad and lobby groups can negotiate with the government in this case.

### **Policy Response to Demand and Supply Sides**

Talent and skill people are naturally attracted to places where environment provides economic benefits such as opportunities and possibilities. Specifically, in this new pandemic situation, skills are vital component for development and achievement of SDGs. GayatriKanth gave the feedback on policy response of supply and demand side of migration after COVID-19. Labour market need to adopt well-managed and balanced migration policies among sending and receiving countries and regions, private sectors, trading, companies, industries. It is expected that post-COVID-19 will increase the skill gap in demand side and the future of migration policy will depend on host countries' needs and policies. It is important to have knowledge to address the gap in best way such as the knowledge of availability of skill and how to address them.

According to Gayatri Kanth, it needs to have a medium and long term planning by following the current data and migration path. She also mentioned that it needs to solve the problem by creating consents and agreements between both sides. Dr. Alan Gamlen believed that rather than game changing dimension it would slowdown the migration which he called "sending the gear". Others believed that policies and demand of health workers will increase. Brain drain will also look for better health structure of receiving country. As reported by Dr. Anjali Sahay, the decision of migration policy is going to come out from executive decision of government and she drew the example of Trump's election manifesto regarding migration policy.

Nevertheless, how the supply side will address to this selective demand of receiving countries? In response of this question GayatriKanth gave the

example of Japanese government's demand for care giver from India. There was an agreement between India and Japanese government where India has given training to 112 nurses about the culture, language and personal care of Japan. When those nurses will come back it will be a brain gain for India. Other countries that are considered as supply side can follow the example.

The panelists also came out the suggestion that COVID-19 has affected the migrant workers and remittance flow to Bangladesh also. The recent report of a national newspaper drew the scenario of the situation of Bangladeshi migrant workers who are mostly working in the tourism, hospitality and construction sectors. Many migrant workers to the Gulf have been laid off and face limited prospects of employment. International remittances normally represent around seven per cent of Bangladesh's GDP. But the COVID-19 pandemic is having an acute effect on Bangladeshi migrant workers abroad, who are largely concentrated in countries with strict lockdown measures. In response to this situation, the former foreign secretary Shahidul-Haque stated that a holistic, nuanced approach that acknowledges migrant workers' economic contributions is optimal. Concerning the current situation world-wide, it would be too early to draw broad conclusion in the case of migration because it would be different in different sectors.

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Dr. Razia Sultana is research alumni, Department of Social Welfare, EwhaWomans University, Seoul, South Korea.

[Published in Delhi Post](#)

# Will There Be Brain Drain Post COVID-19

## Erere Oghohome

The COVID-19 Pandemic, although primarily a health issue has managed to cut across all sectors of societal and economic life, bearing multi-dimensional impacts. In light of this, the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT), a New Delhi based policy and academic think tank, hosted a webinar to examine a probable migratory implication of the pandemic, Brain Drain. The webinar, titled 'Will there be Brain Drain Again Post COVID-19?' featured panelists and participants from various regions and was moderated by Prof. Binod Khadria, professor of economics and education, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

### What are the Determinants?

In kicking off the panel discussion Mr. Laxman Basnet, General Secretary, **SARTUC, Nepal** highlighted the migration of workers from South Asia to countries in the Middle East and Malaysia, making South Asia largest supplier of contract workers to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. He noted that despite the expectation of an avalanche in the Americas, Middle East and Europe as regions of destination, this may not necessarily be the case as people are waiting to first understand the new economic agenda that will emerge as a result of the pandemic. In his opinion however, brain drain is bound to continue to developed countries due to the conditions in countries of origin, particularly in South Asia, and the lack of institutional capacity to absorb highly educated people and low skilled workers. Expanding on this, he mentioned the apparent neglect of the needs of workers by government and employers in countries of origin, a situation which was only brought to fore due to the conditions of these workers during the pandemic. This situation, he juxtaposed with the conditions of migrant workers in developed countries, whose rights were

protected and whose conditions were better off. These migrant workers, he noted, were mostly unwilling to return to their countries of origin. Mr. Basnet expressed little hope for structural change in government concerning employment and rights of workers and this, in his opinion, will result in brain drain to developed countries. Prof. Khadria pointed out an early indication of the likelihood of a brain drain post COVID-19, which was the exemption of healthcare workers from the recent suspension on return of Green Card holders to the US.

Ms. GayatriKanth, International Organisation of Employers (IOE), Geneva, articulated that talent naturally gravitates towards places that provide an environment for economic growth, that enable ease for enterprise, attract investment and nurture achievements. She pointed out key drivers of the mobility of skills to developed countries, which include the aging population and skills availability and gaps in these regions necessitating the reliance on skilled migrants. In her opinion, COVID-19 may widen the skills gaps which will need to be filled possibly resulting in brain drain. According to Dr. Alan Gamlen, Monash University, Australia, we must consider key variables that are likely to determine the outcome. These variables include change in demand for immigration, change in migrant decision-making and the openness or restrictiveness of migration policies. Expanding on this, he projects that the demand for migrant workers in developed countries would dwindle in view of unemployment rates which have skyrocketed as a result of the pandemic. This new development is likely to mount pressure on companies to employ native workers over migrant workers, causing developed countries to be least dependent on migrant labor.

The impact of the pandemic on the job market will however differ from country to country dependent

on the essential nature of the skills involved. High and low skilled jobs in sectors such as healthcare, infrastructure, maintenance, food production and delivery which are considered essential may lose lesser amount of jobs and as such continue to retain migrant workers. Migrant decision making may also be impacted by the pandemic as some people might be less willing to migrate due to the risks involved while others who need to flee livelihood collapse or political instability might be willing to migrate. As a result of these variables, what we can be anticipated are unpredictable migration flows which will see some places receiving less migrants than normal and others sending more migrants than normal.

Dr. Anjali Sahay, **Gannon University USA**, in agreement with Dr. Gamlen, opined that it may be too early to draw broad conclusions with respect to migration trends. She also noted that migrant's decision making powers may be limited post COVID-19 due to restrictions placed by government, firms or those forced by the nature of the virus. She projected that highly skilled workers will move to countries that offer universal health-care insurance, stable visa process and status. Dr. Sahay also added that the political and economic climate in respective countries such as the upcoming elections in the US may influence immigration policies and consequently migration flows.

Drawing from Argentine history, Dr. Luciana Sparta, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, expressed certainty at the possibility of a brain drain in Argentina post COVID-19. She noted that since the 1980s, the concept of brain drain has been constant in the country, the only changes being the factors responsible for brain drain. Presently, the economic deterioration of the country contributes majorly to the emigration flows. She shared that the most recent devaluation of the currency has led many people in Argentina to make plans to emigrate once flight travels are resumed in the country in September. This trend of decision-making is also aided by the fact that many Argentines hold dual citizenship in other countries in Europe and therefore have the option of seeking jobs there.

Importantly, as Ms. Kanth highlighted, global governance efforts which have been instrumental in addressing some of the impacts of brain drain, may be impaired as a result of the pandemic as countries seek to make decisions favorable to their economies.

### **Averting Brain Drain**

To effectively address the possible migratory impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Sahay encouraged policy makers and countries in the developed world to recognize that they also risk brain drain if they fail to cater to migrant populations who are an integral part of their development. Dr. Amba Pande and Prof. Walton-Roberts suggested that countries put in place policies to regulate the emigration of workers as India is doing with the restriction of mobility of physicians to the US and of Nurses to the GCC to prevent brain drain. Ms. Kanth advised that countries take account of their skills gap particularly those in the pathways of migration. She further encouraged countries of origin and destination to explore the option of skills partnership on the mobility of skills as a way of ensuring that the mobility of skills does not improve the growth of one country at the expense of another. A great example of skills partnership is the agreement between India and Japan. According to the agreement, India provides caretakers to Japan and the country does this by training its graduates periodically to provide personalized care to the elderly population in Japan. These graduates are then sent to Japan to work for a period of 3 to 4 years after which they return to India who sends another batch of caretakers. These agreements provide a mutually beneficial way for India to maximize the potential of its young population and for Japan to meet its skills demand.

In concluding, most of the panelists agreed that the pandemic may not immediately result in drastic changes in international migration. However, for a brain drain comeback to be avoided in the long term, the above issues must be addressed and the policy recommendations made, implemented.

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# Media Narratives On Migrants During Covid 19

Srinita Bhattachrjee

Media journalism, the fourth pillar in a democratic set-up, plays a fundamental role in making the national population aware of the ongoing socio-economic and political activities by disseminating unbiased information and opinions. But in this era, the media organizations are meted out with acutely significant crises. Sponsored by corporate magnates, the journalistic attitudes have taken a U-turn from accurate reflections on social happenings to focus on business and higher TRPs. The ongoing pandemic has further mirrored the non-neutrality of journalism.

The ninth session in the virtual series of panel discussions conducted by Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) which concluded on 23rd June 2020 witnessed an eclectic amalgam of migration specialists, professionals, academics, and journalists from across the globe deliberating on its core theme- 'Media Narratives on Migrants during Covid19'. Moderated by Dr. Pedro Oiarzabal, Director, Social Innovation Research, Arima Social Lab, the illustrious panelists broadly discoursed upon two kinds of media narratives that are functioning during the pandemic. One is relatively democratic, promoting news based on facts conditioning the migrants and the other conservative media, which keeping in tune with the tradition, have highlighted migrants as carriers of the virus and hence demanded that they should be ostracized. The first speaker of the evening, Prof. Stephany H. Donald, University of Lincoln, UK drew the scenario of her country. Quoting from the popular British print media narratives, she revealed the racialized media portrayals of migrants whose presence within the national perimeters is considered an imminent threat to the nation-state and its citizen nationals. Even during the COVID crisis, leading British dailies have projected migrant workers in poor light, although, most of the frontline workers in the UK are migrants. COVID has been used as a trope to create fear among the citizens and as an excuse to push borders keeping the migrants away. The government has also deployed this idea in

dishonest ways to create a colonial perspective of the migrant. But simultaneously, there has been a narrative around the key workers whose relentless contribution towards British society during the pandemic, was rarely reported by British tabloids.

The deliberation then moved to South Asia with Ms. Dilrukshi Handunnetti, Executive Director, Centre for Investigative Reporting, Sri Lanka, and Mr. R. K. Radhakrishnan, Associate Editor, Frontline Magazine, India, pitching on the media narratives on migrants in Sri Lanka and India respectively. Ms. Handunnetti clearly stated the ironic portrayals of migrants by the national media during the pandemic. Sri Lanka, which is a remittance-based economy, has millions of its population engaged as low and unskilled labour in the Gulf countries, a majority among them being women domestic labour. Also, this is the only country in South Asia with a legislated return migration policy even then, the returnees are stigmatized and discriminated against instead of being provided with a secure haven and other provisions for sustenance. They are painted as COVID bombs to generate fear among the citizens. A holistic reintegration measure is out of sight while generalized discriminatory narratives are in full swing.

Mr. Radhakrishnan contended that the Indian media that heavily invested in the internal migrants and their arduous journeys back to villages, blaming the government for not addressing their problems, remained tone-deaf towards the similar plights faced by the less skilled and undocumented Indian migrant workers in the Gulf countries. Although India had facilitated the repatriation process, it came with a hefty price, unaffordable for migrants who have gone out of work and remunerations. For migrants who have overstayed their visa permits due to the worldwide lockdown and have become undocumented or illegals, leaving the host country was the only option. The mainstream media hardly covered their ardent pleas of return.

Ms. Anne-Marie Jassar el-Hage, journalist, L'Orient-Le Jour, Lebanon presented two variants of media reporting from her country. The conservative media continued to paint a negative picture of the migrant as replacing citizens in job sectors and as potential virus conveyor in the context of the ongoing crisis. This kind of traditional parochial portrayal has further led to abusive measures inflicted upon low skilled migrants who are not protected by the labour laws of Lebanon. But the new media rallied for the social justice of these disenfranchised immigrants, denounced the kefala system or modern-day slavery that gives all the rights to the employers, campaigned against human rights violations, and the reiterating hate speeches. They are helping prevent panic by amplifying the voices of those affected and mitigate the social and economic costs for the people and societies in which they work. Ms. Hage is enthusiastic that a section of journalists still provides relevant information by refraining from speaking on behalf of the migrants and instead served as a mediator so that the migrant voices reach the government and pressurize them to implement favourable actions and policies.

The next speaker, Ismail Einashe, Senior Journalist, lost in Europe, UK, concurs that the pandemic has shown how migrants indeed survive on the marginalized position globally. In the next few minutes, he clarifies how media framing is having an impact on the disenfranchised migrants with the EU borders and entry points closed for an indefinite period. The narratives on migrants framed by the media houses in several countries of the European Union are biased and xenophobic, the long-standing tropes of typically portraying migrants as threats to the nation-states since the migrant crisis of 2015. COVID has allowed the media to spread fake news and rumours constructed to display migrants as carriers of the disease accentuating racist attacks on them. Einashe reports that during this pandemic with the sudden closure of borders, most migrants are stuck on the routes as well as entry points not able to move forward or return home because the world has come to a standstill. He quotes the IOM in stating that these migrants exposed to exploitation, abuse, and stigmatization are further rendered deplorable in detention camps. Many right-wing governments in the EU like Greece and Austria are using the threat of COVID to further their own agenda on enacting strict border policies, to

the extent of dissolving the rights to asylum in the latter case. The kind of anti-migrant propaganda strewn across by media framings have further marginalized them.

Dr. Abhay Chawla, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, India, made the final topical speculations of the evening. He exposed the structural hypocrisies characterizing the mainstream Indian media that garnered applause for reporting the sad plights of the rural migrants during COVID. Further scrutiny revealed that an oft-repetitive image of a migrant was in circulation with different hyperbolized versions of the same story. Of course, the media narratives did bring to the fore the migrant lives that are usually glossed over. But these reports are not substantiated with profound evidence. Apart from a few exceptions, most media stories are mere concoctions of random elements extracted from narratives of other media organizations. In many cases, Dr. Chawla contends, that the news was churned out inside the newsroom and hence was ignorant of the ground realities. They displayed the journalistic perspective instead of the migrant and their real journey.

The six discourses received insightful reflections from esteemed scholars on migration. While Prof. Kamala Ganesh pronounced the missing 'class' element from the media narratives, Prof. Binod Khadria lauded the constructive efforts of the national media in shifting our focus from the elite diaspora abroad to the neglected plights of the internally displaced labour migrants in India and also lamented the absence of caricaturing humour from mainstream media today. Prof. C. S. Bhat, however, holds media framings responsible for highlighting the perishable conditions engendered by COVID that migrants are unlikely to survive.

An engaging and interactive session as it was, the audience posted several queries too. The main concern was around how journalism could be done ethically in terms of reporting real issues. Mr. Shabari Nair linked this concern to the tone and vocabularies used in the media circle to create fissures of binaries to which Mr. Radhakrishnan stated that democratic mode of news reporting requires tools which journalists are not well equipped. Moreover, the field reporters had FIRs filed in their names and several dispossessed with viral infections while ethically focussing on real issues. With a



sharp increase of attacks on journalistic freedom, media organizations should innovate ways of connecting and informing a wider audience.

Global instances of outstanding public-service journalism are plenty, so being the constraints. While clarity and accuracy in reporting can save lives, the government must amend laws in favour of journalism. Einashe opined that high-quality information requires business models for sustenance. The global economic collapse has severely reduced the advertising revenues that many media outlets depend. Worldwide, countless independent news providers are compelled to scale down, lay off reporters, or close altogether. The COVID crisis has proven challenging in terms of media reporting. Apart from a few courageous exceptions,

critical voices are barred, thereby restricting the media from playing its democratic role in society. An independent media is the need of the hour that can serve as a platform in the public sphere.

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# COVID-19: Social Media and Cause of Migrant Workers

Vijay Soni

Noam Chomsky in his book *Media Control* highlights how media have been turned into a propaganda tool by elites to serve their causes. This might be equally true during pandemic times when fight against COVID-19 has many interest groups as in the Donald Trump-WHO-China triangular blame game in which traditional media took sides of their interest groups. The picture was, however, contrary in social media when they came forward to expose the follies of the governments and brought to light the sufferings of the less privileged and marginalised in countries like Lebanon.

The stark reality was brought to notice by Anne-Marie Jassar el-Hage of *L'Orient-Le Jour*, Lebanon, during a webinar organised by Delhi-based Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) recently. While narrating the role of migrant works in Lebanon, Anne-Marie said that her country had some 250,000 unskilled labourers from Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and other African countries. They are subject to the kafala system or tutorship that puts them under the control of their employer. A large number of these migrants work in gas stations, factories and construction industry. Migrants who come from Southern countries are subjected to discrimination and racism by the Lebanese authorities, local people and some media organisations. They also face abuses and lack of protection, especially the domestic workers who are not covered under the labour law. And this situation has worsened with the pandemic. However, things are starting to change, very slowly, thanks to the joined forces of media, NGOs and civil society, Marie said. Marie shared that Lebanon faces a terrible economic and financial crisis. And the COVID crisis has aggravated the situation. People have lost their jobs. Some of the employers are not able to pay their foreign workers in USD, because they cannot even find dollars in the exchange market. Some Ethiopian domestic workers have no place to live because their employers abandoned them in front of their embassies. They were left without money and without passport. Some Bangladeshi male workers went on strike for a few days, because their

salaries were cut following the financial crisis and the confinement measures.

Speaking on media, Marie said that traditional media covered these COVID-19 stories, but had a slanted approach. Only stories, which had some sensational value, like death of a domestic worker, the death of an employer, a protest march, a riot, a scandal or a corona contamination case could find their way into media. Some of the media went to say that Lebanese people have lost their jobs because of foreign workers. This is not true because Lebanese people refuse to work as domestic workers in agriculture or in the construction sectors. These media (and among them some TVs) also considered migrants as a threat to the Lebanese population during the time of COVID, because most of them, like Bangladeshi workers and Syrian refugees, live in communities with poor hygiene. They can easily catch the virus and transmit it.

*They felt that it was necessary to confine them or to lock them up to stop them from mingling with the nationals. Such news coverage related to hate and discrimination was unfortunately very frequent.*

Highlighting the difference between traditional and social media, Marie said that the new social media work on a different perspective, which was quite close to what we call the Thawra, the Lebanese revolution. They fight for a nation based on social justice, where all people are equal, and have equal rights. Some of them are print papers while others are online and print both (like ours *L'Orient-Le Jour*). Some of these are only online, blogs, NGO publications and even researcher publications. They are not only active, but are very aggressive on social media. And they denounce the hate speech against migrant workers and refugees. Their commitment to the cause of migrants is the starting point not only of a campaign of solidarity, but also as a means to push the authorities into action, Anne-Marie said.

Dr. Abhay Chawla, Visiting Professor, Indian Insti-

tute of Mass Communication, new Delhi, was of the opinion that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the migrant issue to the fore. It was P. Sainath who first raised the issue of workforce migration from rural to urban areas and the process continues unabated till the breakdown due to the pandemic. The COVID-19 has reversed the migration process, especially for the time being. Dr Chawla said that the pandemic has posed a peculiar challenge to journalists as FIRs have been registered against them for reporting on COVID-19. The way media report news needs to be looked into as they rush in to produce more and more news mechanically, thus undermining the accuracy of reporting and facts. Dr Chawla citing an example of a 13-year girl, Jyoti, who had travelled from Haryana to her hometown Darbhanga in Bihar with a sick father as pillion rider on a bicycle. The news was reported first by the BBC. The same news was rehashed and written with the girl's age having changed from 13 to 15. The news was not descriptive about her suffering and her other ordeals and dealt superficially. Such kind of table reporting, Dr Chawla said, has posed a serious challenge to media reporting on the pandemic.

Dr Chawla said that while reporting on COVID-19, media were short in coverage as well as facts, and did a window-dressing which otherwise needed an elaborate narrative. Using the methods of Word Cloud, he said that the report on Jyoti had some common words in all the reports, thus showing a media bias. The common words included Paswan (the caste name of Jyoti's father), Bihar, Hindu, etc. The story could also be accused of political overtone, as Bihar Assembly elections are due in 2020. He also highlighted the use of male metaphor like "lion-hearted" for Jyoti, which showed gender insensitivity.

*Shabari Nair, Labour Migration Specialist, International Labour Organisation (ILO), South Asia, spoke about the tone of the message in the news coverage and the emphasis on opinion instead of facts.*

He was participating in the discussions following the presentations by the panelists. The question of media projection based on religion during the pandemic coverage also came up during the discussions. Participants mentioned that one religion was targeted in the media for the spread of the virus. Dr Amba Pande raised her

concern about work migrants who instead of migrating to their native places chose to stay in metropolitan cities. They had to face lot of problems, especially related to food and paying rent, as they had lost their jobs. This marginalised section was completely neglected and was not covered by the mainstream media, she added. Prof Binod Khadria, formerly at JNU, brought forth his observation related to the role of media working as Fourth Estate during the pandemic crisis. He said that the media, which hitherto had been more interested in elite workers, had for the first time shifted its focus on work migrants who generally are deprived of a voice in the media. It will have a long-term impact as it brought the starkness between the two labour forces. While warning about the dangers of fake news and paid news, he lamented the absence of tongue-in-cheek caricature of RK Laxman and Sudhir Tailang, who with their caricature and cartoons would aptly describe the situation in a few words.

Prof Kamala Ganesh, Scholar in Residence, Shiv Nadar University, highlighted the humanitarian aspect of the pandemic and said that while media paid lots of attention to humanitarian aspects, they also contrasted their coverage in the form of class division within the migrant workers. She said that media reproduced the stereotyping—migrants as a separate class of people inhabiting slums and working in unorganised sector as determinant along with family background and class division.

While commenting on pandemic situation in Sri Lanka, Prof C.S. Bhat, formerly at Hyderabad Central University, said that labeling returnee migrants as 'COVID Bomb' was adding fuel to the fire in a situation, which was getting worse day-by-day. He said that media projected the pandemic as an endgame for the workers, which is not true. Prof Bhat added that the wish of migrant workers to die at the place of their origin, has often been debated as the ultimate reality of nomadic life and the COVID-19 had brought many to their native place.

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[Published in Delhi Post](#)

# COVID-19

## Lessons from Africa

Paige Fabry

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented situation across the globe. As the number of cases continues to climb globally, national economies and health sectors of multiple regions have gone into a crisis mode. Europe and America suffered the greatest, as their economies and health sectors collapsed under the constant pressure of COVID. However, their African counterparts managed to navigate this pandemic, with very little consequences.

In a recent webinar organized by the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) titled “The Pandemic in Africa: Local and Global Strategies” on 30 June 2020, the galaxy of international panelists examined the responses of the African countries and the effects the virus has had on the continent, especially in the context of migrants. Out of all the regions in the world, Africa has been the least affected by the pandemic. As of 2 July, there were 418,211 positive cases of COVID-19 and 10,406 had succumbed to the virus. Out of the 54 countries in the African Continent, five account for 64 percent of the total cases, which include South Africa (159,333), Egypt (69,814), Ghana (18,134), Cameroon (12,592) and Morocco (12,636) (Africa News, 2020). These numbers are significantly lower than their European and American counterparts. For a continent that has been ravished by famine, plague, and violence, Africa has managed to flatten the curve of COVID-19. While there are multiple factors that can help explain the relatively slow transmission of the disease in Africa, the major factor was the quick, decisive, and strict responses to the virus. Due to their experience with plagues, Africa has experience handling these pandemics. Multiple countries, including Ethiopia, implemented strict lockdowns before a case was even confirmed in their countries. Ethiopia, as well as other countries, made preventive measures, performed

surveillance, and conducted health monitoring on those arriving in their countries. While it is inevitable that the virus will continue to spread due to being highly contagious, the responses and quick action of multiple African governments have slowed the transmission of the virus.

### **Economic Impact versus Health Impact**

The United States and European countries have felt the effect of the virus both economically and health wise. Whole economies were brought to a screeching halt, as societies sheltered in place to slow the progression of the virus. Hospitals became overwhelmed with the virus, as it is highly contagious and caused thousands of people to require medical attention at the same time. However, as mentioned previously with the relatively low number of cases, Africa has managed to soften the effects of the virus.

*COVID-19 has not led to a health crisis in Africa, but they have still felt the economic effects of the virus.*

The economic effects of the virus in Africa were significant. When lockdowns were implemented, economies stopped as only essential businesses were open. This posed a problem for multiple countries in Africa, as a large majority of the workforce, including migrants, in Africa is employed through the informal sector. While a large part of the formal sector remained open during the virus, the informal sector stopped affecting the livelihoods of millions of people. However, thanks to the virus, multiple African countries have taken the steps towards formalizing the informal economy, in an effort to protect from further economic crises.

While economically Africa has suffered the effects of

COVID, they have yet to feel the health effects. Africa has a rather young population, average age of 19, which has kept the death toll significantly lower than their American and European counterparts. However, while they have not faced a major health crisis yet, thanks in large part to their quick response, Africa would have a hard time handling the health crisis, if it were to occur. Africa does not have the healthcare capacity to deal with the pandemic. The large majority of the healthcare sector is located in urban areas, with limited resources and personnel in rural areas. The African healthcare system has seen major cuts in funding over the past few decades. Multiple countries are facing a shortage of ventilators, often having only a handful (3 or 5) for a whole population. With limited supplies, personnel, and funding, Africa would not be able to withstand a major health crisis without the help of the international community.

### **Effects on Migrants**

COVID-19 affected millions of people, including migrants, whose vulnerability increased drastically. Unlike citizens, migrants often do not enjoy the same benefits or protections offered by host governments. As the pandemic ravished economies worldwide, migrants were left stranded and without jobs in foreign countries. A large majority of African countries depend on the remittances of migrants and diaspora, but with COVID the ability for migrants to send remittances home drastically decreased.

*The migrants were left with the choice to stay in the host country without work or return home.*

A lot of migrants returned to their home countries, but some migrants were stranded in foreign countries or unwilling to return. As countries responded to the economic crisis caused by the virus, most countries focused

on their own citizenry before foreigners. However, many African countries, such as South Africa, looked to add migrants as beneficiaries for the economic relief packages. Countries, such as Ethiopia and Senegal, engaged and supported their diaspora abroad, in an effort to protect the vulnerable populations. However, some migrants were stranded in their host countries, as they were unable to return home. This led to countries and host embassies working together to bring stranded migrants' home. In the case of Ethiopia, the government worked with the Lebanese government, NGOs, and various other partners to bring over 15,300 people back to Ethiopia.

### **Lessons**

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, there are two important lessons; quick and decisive action saves lives and international cooperation is the key. COVID-19 has brought life as we know it to a halt. However, through quick and decisive action, Africa has managed to lessen the impact of the virus on the continent. Africa has led by example, both in terms of the actions taken and the inclusivity of their economic relief/rebuilding plans, ultimately softening the blow of COVID-19.

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Paige Fabry, a policy researcher, is a recent graduate in International Migration with Human Rights Law from the Brussels School of International Studies.

[Published in Delhi Post](#)

# The pandemic in Africa: local responses and global strategies

Charles Simplicie Mbatsogo

While the Covid-19 is affecting the world, African countries appear to be particularly self-reliant and resilient in dealing with the ongoing pandemic regarding the low infection rates recorded in the continent. National initiatives supported by strategic regional and international cooperation have played a major role in tackling the effects of the crisis. This is the main take-away from the 10th GRFDT Virtual Panel Discussion convened on Tuesday 30th June, 2020, with the theme: “The pandemic in Africa: local responses and global strategies”. The webinar was moderated by Mrs Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Migration Governance Analyst based in Malaysia. The impact Despite the current challenges, Africa countries have been less affected by the Covid-19 experiencing the lowest infection rate in the world compared to the western countries. Within the continent, urban areas are more affected than rural where there is a lack of facilities. But the situation has got a huge impact on local economies leading to the shutdown of businesses and shortages/reduction on migrants’ remittances and diaspora’s investments in Africa. In that vein, the World Bank is announcing one of the biggest depreciation in financial remittances ever accounted (about 23% of reduction). This will have huge implications in livelihood and lead to a potential financial crisis as many households depend on diaspora’s remittances. In many countries, Returnees in Africa have been subject to stigmatization and marginalization as a result of the virus’ spreading. Covid-19 pandemic mainly affected the tourism sector (which is one of the biggest sources of incomes in many African countries) but also labor mobility. As a result of the pandemic the informal sector is been transformed into a formal workforce in most of the African countries. The Covid-19 had direct and indirect implications on vulnerable migrants. Indeed, the lockdown measures have jeopardized the connectivity between villages and cities in most African countries thus impacting cross-border livelihood.

## Local Responses

There have been four main types of responses against the Covid-19 in Africa: information and communication (collecting and sharing information relevant to the situation), nudging and guiding (measures to be taken), coordination and collective action (harmonization of measures and gathering resources). National insights from South Africa, Ethiopia, Senegal and Mauritius revealed that during the pandemic, governments adopted several measures to fight the crisis and of course save their economies. In Ethiopia for example, the government has made preparations and performed surveillances as well as health monitoring at arrivals. The country also created taskforce composed of government officials at the rank of ministers. In most African countries, protective measures have been adopted to address the virus including social distancing, work safety and health issues at the place. On economic area, some governments have allocated resources to stimulate and save local businesses. Governments also took emergency measures to evacuate their citizens living abroad. However, lockdown measures have led to decline in earning falls and remittances

## International cooperation

International cooperation has been the key global strategy developed against the sanitary crisis in Africa. In that perspectives, Diaspora’s organizations were highly mobilized to assist local governments in addressing the pandemic. Ethiopian Diasporas residing abroad have contributed over 100 million Birr and equipment to support the efforts against Covid-19 (ENA, May 5/2020). Post-Covid-19, the country is looking forward to engaging more Diasporas in economic activity, such as investment. Multilateral institutions also brought a significant contribution in supporting national authorities in their purposes to deal with the impact of the crisis. The support or intervention of the international community during this period has been very encourag-

ing. The World Bank has provided 86 million to stimulate the African's economy and IMF supported with 411 million dollars. Thus, the global collaboration and collective action are highly required to fight this global pandemic. In the context of Africa, Covid-19 has reinforced the regional cooperation at a time where international cooperation is at its low. This can be seen as a value added. ECOWAS for instance is trying to have a harmonized approach to find a way out.

### **Policy Options**

There are many possible options and strategies for African countries. There are also visible best practices that may provide lessons for other countries. Considering both local and global responses and strategies the following can be identified.

1. The first and most important area is the informal sector in Africa is likely to be formalized by relevant authorities. The pandemic presents opportunities for African countries to find innovative and inclusive solutions.
2. There should be a bit of equity especially for those (migrants) who are more vulnerable to the pandemic's effects
3. The migration is going to be much more selective and complicated due to the reinforcement of restrictive measures prior to the pandemic
4. Intra-Africa cooperation must lead the way forwards and regional measures must be improved
5. African governments have the opportunity not only to redefine agency but to essentially recalibrate and calibrate agency to its own advantage
6. The challenge brought by the current context in Africa is to see how governments manage migration issues

in a better and clearer way than what they use to do before the pandemic

7. Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the necessity of putting "Humanity" more than ever at the center of any form of international cooperation rather than to the logic of power that has long dominated the global scene.

### **Post Covid 19 and Way Forward**

In the post Covid scenario in Africa, they will be a realization of the need to invest in the social sectors mainly health and food security and there will an emphasis on manage domestically items of basic necessity. Thus, the post Covid world will be Africa for Africans and early increasing reliance on social sectors, production of medicines locally and there has to be an improvement in south-south cooperation (between Africa and India) and of course other countries from the world. There should a lot of researches to be taken on Africa's resilience as the rest of the world has a lot to learn from Africa and it is only on mutual interdependent basic that we can fight Covid-19

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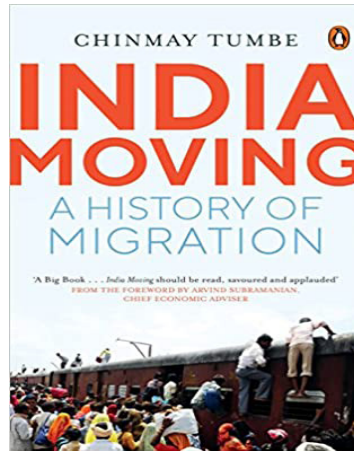
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**[Published in Indian Education Diary](#)**

**Tumbe, Chinmay (2018), India Moving: A History of Migration, Viking Penguin, Pages: 304**

**Kishlay Kirti**

Migration is a diverse area which has attracted scholars from different field of study; with the rising importance to the field in recent times the volumes of scholarly works have increased enormously. Despite that, one may find it difficult to understand the process of migration, especially in the Indian context. The book “India Moving: A History of Migration” is for all those who want to understand the phases of migration in India. The book has plenty of information on the migration process of India.



Chinmay Tumbe, the author of this book is a faculty of Economics in the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He is known for his scholarly works in the field of migration. He has also contributed a chapter in Economic Survey 2016-17 of India. India Moving: A History of Migration is his first book which took ten years of research to take the shape. The foreword of the book is written by Arvind Subramanian, a well-known Indian Economist and former chief economic advisor to the government of India.

The book covers ancient, medieval and modern Indian migration in just 304 pages. The book has six chapters that address the wide area of Indian migration from a historical perspective and explains why India is so much diverse and it concludes on the modern-day discussion of migration and development.

The first chapter focuses on India’s diversity and global migration. The chapter starts with the quote of India’s first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru towards the diversity and cultural values of India. Then the author raises some obvious questions like- Why is India such a diverse country? Why do Indians speak so many lan-

guages, or celebrate many festivals? Accordingly, two reasons have been suggested for diversity- migration and isolation. The author has explained how the social structure and marriage migration has resulted in the Brownian motion of Indians that is in all direction. In this chapter, the author has beautifully explained the management of migration in ancient India, cases of slaves in medieval India and organized migration in modern India; while contemporary migration has been dealt with data and more sophisticated classifications.

The second chapter is titled as “The Great Indian Migration Wave”. This chapter addresses the migration from different Indian regions like Ratnagiri, Udupi, Saran, and Ganjam. These regions are presented as a key example of great migration wave. The reasons of migration are different across these regions; migration as a precaution against cyclone in Ganjam is one such example. Most of these migrations were voluntary but the case of indentured labour started in the same period. The migration wave is continuing and many of these districts are the major origin of Indian migrants.

The third chapter is about the merchants of India. In this chapter author has talked about merchant communities and their journey. Parsi communities of India are an emigrant who left Persia because of war. Globally their population has declined but they were the pioneers of trade and business in India. They were the one who promoted women for education. Similarly, Chettiar, Panjabi, Marwari, and Gujarati or Muslim merchants of India have migrated across the region and they have established networks. Gujaratis are more transnational among them while Marwari has reached every corner of India. It is said that you cannot find a village without a Marwari. The Sindhis has the origin from present-day Pakistan but today they hold a prestigious position in



Indian business community, and their presence is global. One of the features of these communities is that they have circulated capitals to their community throughout the world with family and kinship network.

Chapter four is about the Diaspora and Dreams; here author has narrated the stories of great Indian migration wave where many Indians left the country to go abroad and earn for a few years but some of them could not return. The labours, those who were sent by the British to work in the fields or other colonies, they settled there some of them died as well. All those who maintained the connection with India or Indian culture are referred to as Indian diaspora. These Diasporas can be further classified based on language and region as well. Such diaspora can be found across Asia and other parts of British colonies. The author has explained some of the stories in great details.

Chapter five is about the partitions and displacements. In this chapter, the author has addressed the partitions that took place in the Indian subcontinent. The India-Pakistan partition is referred to as the largest and most rapid migration of human history, which went through a humanitarian crisis. It resulted in both internal and external migration as people moved to occupy the vacated land. The partition of Burma in 1937 was first such case which resulted in a barrier for Indian migrants as they were against it. Partition of 1971 resulted in Bangladesh. The author has also highlighted the case of Tibet, to which every government is giving shelter in India. Apart from these cases, the author has also highlighted the case of Kashmir and other internal migration and displacement within India.

Chapter six is the final chapter of this book which address the issues related to migration and development. In this chapter, the author has highlighted the term development with migration by putting an example of Bihar and Kerala. Both these states have historical evidence of migration yet there is a great difference in their level of development. The flow of remittance is more towards the villages. In this chapter, the focus on

brain drain, trafficking and other issues of modern-day migration have been mentioned.

In this book, the author has shown many aspects of Indian migration that we rarely talk or discuss. The author has used simple methodology which makes it easy for readers to understand the message of the book. Author's way of writing is very simple which keeps the reader fully engaged throughout the reading. Although the author is an economist by training, his work is equally useful to those who look at migration from a cultural, historical or sociological perspective. Further, the references and bibliography on this diverse area are provocative to a researcher of migration and related fields. The author has presented some of the rare pictures related to India's migration journey.

One thing that I could not found in this book was India-Nepal migration. Historically people of India have maintained the migration link with Nepal. Despite that author has not written a single paragraph about it. Author has touched many dimensions of migration within the dedicated theme of the book due to this it lags detailed information on its diverse topics.

Overall it is a great book that gives plenty of information on Indian migration. The author has skilfully discussed the issues in six chapters and he has justified the title as he has covered so many regions of India and he has talked about various stakeholders such as people, industrialists, government etc. The book can help researchers of economics, sociology, cultural studies and historians; after reading this book they would find new areas to research upon. General audience would also find it informative and easy to understand.

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# Gamlen, Alan John (2019), *Human Geopolitics: States, Emigrants and the Rise of Diaspora Institutions*. Oxford University Press, Pages: 352

Praveen Kumar Tiwari

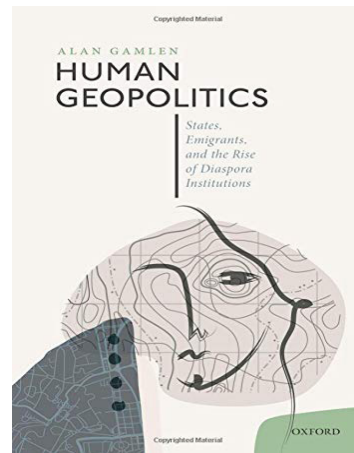
Gamlen, Alan John (2019), *Human Geopolitics: States, Emigrants and the Rise of Diaspora Institutions*. Oxford University Press, 352 pages, ISBN-13: 9780198833499.

The need to invest into human resources has become much more evident in these times where focus is on acquiring skilled and beneficial population rather than territory, yet this component has not got the requisite attention when it comes to studying world politics. 'Human geopolitics' by Alan Gamlen resurrects in unanticipated ways the major reasons guiding the impetus behind governments' renewed willingness to engage their emigrant diasporas.

The book is a commendable effort to adequately address the imbalance among researches which tend to focus mostly on the issues related to immigration while sidelining the emigration policies emanating from the migrants' origin states. The author has made sure that the book falls well within his area of expertise and is excellently balanced and well researched. The author, Alan Gamlen, is Associate professor at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. Alan has to his credits commendable research work when it comes to international migration and diaspora related fields.

The author provides reader with extensively researched account of the shifting focus on human geopolitics which saw springing up of a plethora of institutions and ministries dedicated to emigrants and their descendants. The book explores and presents a picture of the new diaspora relations in this century of intense connectivity and globalization.

Gamlen argues that various institutions dealing with emigrants and diaspora are a very recent phenomenon with most of them coming into existence in late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. He notes on their



importance that, "diaspora institutions are theoretically surprising because they project domestic policies beyond state borders in ways that seem inconsistent with the territorial definitions of citizenship and sovereignty that underpin the modern international system" (p. 68). A total of 118 states now have some form of institution that deals with the diaspora.

He mentions a critical consequence of these institutions as he writes that they can at times appear to potentially interfering with the freedom of exit of migrants, with the sovereignty of other states, and with democratic processes of the origin country. This implication of diaspora related policies on the world politics need to be looked into much more carefully as for the time being, their impact on world politics has largely been underestimated.

The author has deeply researched about the theoretical underpinnings involving diaspora, emigrants and their countries of origin, along the lines of political geography. The author in his empirical research, has relied on both qualitative and quantitative data from interviews, surveys and study of relatable policy documents thus collecting a wide array of primary data. The book is a very important addition in the study of this very little explored field of diaspora and emigration. Studies and research work on such topics have preoccupied themselves with either single case studies or generalized observations which could not be exported to other cases as well. This book is a refreshing break from that practice as it tries to build on various important concepts to develop a concrete theory concerning policy making with regards to the emigration.

The central argument that Gamlen forwards, revolves around a distinction between three epochs that fol-

lowed each other, starting from the end years of twentieth century to the early twenty first century, i.e., from a “world of nations” to a “world of regions” to a “governed globe”. The author has dealt with a huge number of cases and has conducted case studies of countries like Israel, Mexico, Eritrea, India and others. Gamlen has very skilfully touched upon the local contexts and the immediate causal factors for springing up of institutions for emigrants and diaspora in these countries and provides a chance to look at these issues from the origin state’s lenses while simultaneously throwing light on the global implications of these local policies on the wider human geopolitics at the international level.

The book feels like going through the modern world history from an alternative perspective that comprises of the viewpoint of emigrants and the diaspora as well as the various organizations and institutions concerning them. The author associates the rise in diaspora institutions with post-colonialism, as to how it led to the unravelling of fascism, coming up of the state of Israel, end of cold war with disintegration of the Soviet-Russian empire, democratization processes worldwide, regional integration in Europe and elsewhere, and the development of a global migration regime.

The book provides a major contribution when it comes to trying to give an all-encompassing theory that explains the springing up of diasporic institutions in the recent decades. A major takeaway from the book that has been discussed in the ending chapters is that this rise of human geopolitics as a separate field form territorial politics is attributed to the United Nations’ efforts to “create a global governance regime for migration.” I would personally recommend the book particularly because of the objective stance that the author has taken towards the subject. Gamlen has with utmost sincerity put forth both the positive and negative aspects of migration policies in the present International structure. While exploring the possibility of increased cooperation and a multipolar world order, he has also touched upon the limitations such as the recent anti-immigrant

sentiments being experienced in many first world nations. Moreover, the author talks about the misunderstandings and overlapping claims which could lead to animosity and even direct conflict which was evident in the tensions between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea. However, some questions were left unanswered in the book. The author failed to explain as to why despite such importance of diasporic institutions in recent times, many countries do not still have or even making any visible effort towards building any such institutions? Also, not all the states started building institutions since late twentieth century, for example states like Italy, Poland and others had similar institutions even before world war II. The author would have done a great work if he could have talked about these exceptions and related them to his central argument in the book.

Yet, despite all the shortcomings, the book by Gamlen, *Human Geopolitics* should be opted and must be recommended to all who are searching for good material and well researched in depth account of the states’ policies related to migration and diaspora in this highly globalized twenty first century. This book is the one, particularly for those who are pursuing their scholarly work in immigration and related fields and also gives valuable insight to related think tanks and policy makers thus making their decisions and analysis more informed.

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**Dr. Melissa Tandiwe Myambo**

Dr. Rajneesh K Gupta: Today, we have Dr. Melissa with us, and we would like to take this opportunity to understand her perspective on the issues of Diaspora, migration and transnationalism.



Dr. Melissa: My name is Dr. Melissa, and I'm a researcher affiliated with Delhi at the Centre for the Study of Development Society. And also, South Africa, in Johannesburg with University of the Witwatersrand. I am here doing a project, looking at what I call frontier migration, and within that, frontier heritage migration. So, I'm looking primarily at people leaving more, and the quotation marks, more developed economy to come to the emerging market economies of South Africa, India and China. So, countries like South Korea and the US, Germany, France, etc. are losing migrants. Who are coming to emerging market economies in search of what my question.

So, I am happy to talk to you today, and to talk particularly about the fact that in the Indian case. The Indian government has been very forward-looking by introducing the concepts of, firstly, the non-resident Indian (NRI); and they have also introduced the concept of overseas citizens of Indian (OCI), and PIO, which is the Person of Indian origin. So, because of these policy categories, the Indian government has laudably enacted people from many different countries in the world of Indian heritage (I called them frontier heritage migrants since they come from Western countries or more developed economies) with more diverse economies, and they can take advantage of these categories and come to India, and live and work in India to contribute to India. So, there are many American born, for example, people of Indian descent who are coming to 'new India' in post-liberalization. I've interviewed one lady who was born and raised in Germany, but her parents are from Mumbai. She has moved to India. There are people from coming from Europe, United Kingdom, the US

and Canada. People of Indian descent who identify as Indians there.

So, I'm very interested in this pattern of migration. Since I am based in Southern Africa, I can say most people of Indian

origin actually live in Durbin in South Africa, and that's where most of the people with Indian descent that live outside of India live. I think that this is also an area that the Indian government might want to expand into. The Indian government has been very aggressive since the 1980s, and since Rajiv Gandhi, and then through 1990s and 2000s after the current prime minister, in trying to mobilise the diaspora in the global north, such as the US, the UK, and other Western countries. However, there is a huge Indian diaspora everywhere, which is one of the areas of wealth for India. There is a diaspora in Malaysia, in Indonesia, in South Africa. It might be beneficial to examine those links and put more attention on them.

Dr. Rajneesh K Gupta: Dr. Melissa, you have expertise in diaspora and migration issues, and you have lived and conducted research in many countries - South Africa, Zimbabwe, and USA. A lot of these countries have migrants not only from India, but from other parts of the world, such as migrants from Israel, from China, and from different parts of Africa. Take Africa as an example, the organization of African unity, and even prior to that the African leaders, started attracting their Diaspora back in 1910. Likewise, the Chinese government established policies towards their Diaspora overseas long ago. When comparing these policies of different governments, do you think that India is a latecomer since India only started these policies at the late 80s, at the time of Rajiv Gandhi, more precisely; and these policies came after 2003 when the first Diaspora policy was carried out. What is your opinion on this?

Dr. Melissa: Thanks for that question. I think that ac-

tually the Indian government have been quite ahead of the curve in trying to recruit the diaspora. I think India and China are the forefronts of this, and other smaller countries, such as Vietnam has also been very good on this.

Although I will say when Ghana became independent in West Africa in 1957, the first president of Ghana has actually been educated in the US. So, he did something that I wish more African governments would do: he introduced the notion of Diaspora just in the country, so that people of African descent coming from the US (there is a population of 33% of African American) could actually be migrated to Ghana, and become a citizen in 1957. In my view, that was one of the first incidence that we have seen. But unfortunately, the African governments have not followed it. So, I think that Asia, both East Asia and China and India, has been very good on this. And I wish that African governments would take absolute advantage of this.

In my own research on the frontier heritage migrants, those who are coming from more developed to economies to a less, I found many African Americans living in Africa. They offered many German to live in Africa, after British people living in South Africa. They were there because they want to contribute to South Africa, but the African government is not making it any easier for them to stay there. They don't have the notion to Diaspora because within South Africa, and these people are not considered as the people of South Africa but considered as African descent. So, we have a dichotomy here. And I think that it would benefit South Africa greatly to say let us have people of African descent, and of course of any decent, whether it's European decent or Asian decent...etc. there shouldn't be a racial based policy, and I would never endorse that.

But I think that there is a particular interest among people of African descent of many countries, and even within Africa people from my country, Zimbabwe, people from Tanzania, Nigeria, and Mozambique, who want to come to South Africa. And I think all of the countries can actually benefit from migration. What is unfortunate is when we see people like Donald Trump in the US: it's unfortunate that there is a trend of xenophobia in the world. It's across Europe, across the US, and across South Africa against migrant people, and

say that they don't want any migrants. But those who work on the economy, and people who understood how migrants contribute to building countries, know that every country that receives migrants benefits exponentially from that.

There is an emerging political discourse that is nativist, and promoting the idea of anti-immigrant, which is very dangerous, and could possibly leads big dangers. The US benefits greatly from having Mexican and other people migrants to it; its economy cannot function without Mexicans and other people that speak Spanish. This is how they functionate their economy, and it's the same in regards to how people from Zimbabwe, Mozambican, and Nigerian, etc. in South Africa. There are also immigrants from Bangladesh in India. So I think that the general policy should be forward-looking, instead of responding to those tendencies of nativism and xenophobia.

Dr. Rajneesh K Gupta: There are two divergent phenomenon of migration. On one hand, there is a phenomenal growth in the migration internists, and on the other hand, in many parts of the world the upsurge of the fundamentalist, especially the emergence of many advocates of solidarity. There are conflicting ideas about migration. In this scenario, there are impacts that migration will bring into the societies of the migrants' motherlands, because certain problems may emerge when these people are returning to their motherland when they are no longer indigenous in that sense. What kind of the problems they are creating, and what could be the solution for this? Ideas about what is that equal society?

Dr. Melissa: Those are two good questions. So first of all, the student migrants coming from more developed economies to the less developed ones – the number of this group of migrant is relatively small, and it's difficult to get the exact data, because the governments don't necessarily release these data. In most cases, people tend to think that numbers are the most important element to consider in regards to migration, which is true. The numbers are important, and right now, the world's largest migration trend is the migration from rural to urban areas in China and India. There are hundreds and millions of people. Although the migration stream I'm talking about is small, it's extremely significant.

(... for more details, please visit to our [GRFDT YouTube channel](#))

# CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE EN LIGNE

## Migration, Diasporas et Développement durable : Perspectives, Politiques, Opportunités et Défis

**2-5 novembre 2020**

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Forum Mondial de Recherches sur les Diasporas et le Transnationalisme (GRFDT), New Delhi, Inde

Centre de Recherches sur L'Amérique du Nord (CISAN), UNAM, Mexique

Forum des Migrants en Asie (MFA), Manille, Philippines

Centre Interrégional pour les Réfugiés et Migrants (CCRM), Beyrouth, Liban

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Confirmation de sélection des abstracts : 25 septembre 2020

Date limite d'envoi des articles complets : 20 octobre 2020

Date du webinaire : 2-5 novembre 2020

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