

Unit 6

Post-Independence Patterns of Migration

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Learning Objectives

This unit will enable you to understand:

- the patterns of overseas migration which emerged in post-independence India;
- the diversity in the migration flows in the contemporary era; and
- the processes and patterns of socio-cultural adaptation of the overseas migrants.

6.1 Introduction

Migration is an integral and regular part of livelihood strategies and production systems. People of the Indian sub-continent have migrated to different countries for various reasons at various periods of its history. Among the immigrants of diverse nationalities, overseas Indians constitute a sizeable segment. Given their significant presence, unique socio-cultural histories and being subject to different economic and political milieu in the host countries, Indian communities abroad have evolved as distinct diasporic communities and have been under academic focus.

Though International migration has existed since the dawn of time, the driving force behind this was the search for sources of food and arable land. As civilization grew this became a search for better economic, social, political, and other factors of prosperity. Throughout history the socio-economic and political epicenters of power and prosperity have shifted from one region to another—from Asia to Africa to Europe and America.

Clearly, two main phases of emigration can be discerned: 'Overseas emigration in the 19th century' and '20th century migration to industrially developed countries' (see R. K. Jain, 1993). It is important to recognize the distinctive nature of the causes, courses and consequences of these two phases of migration, termed as the colonial and post-colonial phases of the Indian diaspora. You have already read about Indian emigration in the colonial phase in the previous unit.

The contemporary period of overseas migration began early this century, but accelerated especially after the Second World War. Despite a dearth of information and academic scholarship on Indian communities migrating to industrially developed countries like Britain, the U.S.A. and Canada, the significance of this form of migration has gained over that of the 19th century immigrants on account of their socio-economic implications.

6.2 Overseas Migration: Trends and Patterns

During the past few decades international migration has taken new strides. What we see now is a trend of global migration where movement of human resources is induced by international demand along with specific regional demand. As national boundaries dissipate and the world economy becomes more integrated by forces of globalization, labor from all skill levels moves to meet demand with relative ease. Unlike migration in colonial times the main types of migration in the contemporary period have been more sequential. We will examine some of the patterns of migration in the following sections.

6.3 Migration in Post-Independence Period

A new and significant phase of emigration began after India became independent in 1947. Broadly, three patterns can be identified in the post-independence emigration: (1) The emigration of Anglo-Indians to Australia and England. (2) The emigration of professionals to the industrially advanced countries like the United States of America, England and Canada. (3) The emigration of skilled and unskilled laborers to West Asia.

The emigration of the Anglo-Indians is one of the least studied facets of the Indian diaspora. Feeling marginalized in the aftermath of India's independence, many of these descendants of intermarriage between Indians and the English left India for England in the first instance. Finding that they were not racially and ethnically acceptable to the English, several of them emigrated to Australia, which has become a second "homeland" to a significant section of Anglo-Indians.

The large-scale and steady emigration of doctors, engineers, scientists and teachers to the industrially advanced countries of the West is essentially a post-independence phenomenon, and particularly so of the late 1960s and the 1970s. It somewhat declined with the adoption of stringent immigration regulation by the recipient countries. This pattern of emigration, often described as "brain drain," is essentially voluntary and mostly individual in nature. With the second and subsequent generations having emerged, and the emigrant population enjoying economic prosperity and socio-cultural rights, this stream of emigration has resulted in vibrant Indian communities abroad.

To be contrasted with the above is the emigration of skilled and unskilled labourers to West Asia in the wake of the "oil boom" there (Gracias 2000, and Nair 1991 and 1994). This emigration is voluntary in nature, but its trends and conditions are determined by labour market vagaries. It is a predominantly male migration, characterized by uninterrupted ties with the families and communities back in India.

Let us look at the immigration patterns of Indians to Britain, the U.S.A. and Canada since independence to understand the contemporary trends and patterns of migration.

Britain

A major influx of Indians to Britain did not take place until the 1950s and early 1960s when an expanding economy called for more labour in Britain. During this period, individual male 'pioneers' came and found work, lived together in shared houses, gradually brought over their family members and eventually re-established their families and accumulated material assets in the new context. Chain migration was the key feature of transplantation of Indian communities to Britain during this period. A comparatively new kind of overseas Indian community arose, that of 'twice migrant' towards the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s. The bulk of these twice migrants were Indians who had lived for decades or generations in East Africa but who were induced or forced to leave in large numbers due to radical Africanisation programmes introduced by the Kenyan and Ugandan governments.

U.S.A.

From 1820 onwards there has been a constant trickle of Indians to the United States. But large scale migration of Indians to the United States of America started only after the repeal of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965. Whereas in 1965 only about 600 Asian Indian immigrants to the United States had arrived, close to 10,000 came in 1970.

The reasons for the Asian Indian emigration of the post-1965 era have more to do with the American 'pull' than with the Indian 'push' factor. Indians who migrated to the USA belonged to the class of educated and professional elite such as engineers, scientists and college teachers as well as accountants and businessmen. Their life style and aspirations are similar to the general American population. Whatever distinctive religious and political ideology and values the Asian Indian might otherwise profess as symbols of their ethnic identity, one thing stands out is their full participation in the American materialistic culture. They are driven by the same social and economic imperatives as the white upper- middle class.

The U.S. economy witnessed a massive surge in information and other technology since the 1990's. Local labor forces were not fast enough to catch up with meeting industry needs. The education system also plays an important role in the shaping of the labor force in a country. It is somewhat accepted that U.S. students in general lag behind compared to their Asian counterparts when it comes to mathematical or analytical skills. Asians, or mostly South Asians, are more eager to learn technical skills—hence their proficiencies in those areas. This means highly educated Asian workers possessed educational and technological advantages over local workers and were able to fill the void very quickly. Skilled immigrants face fewer restrictions than the unskilled. Their class resources, corporate sponsorships, and immigration policies to foster growth in certain sectors enable them to move with relative ease. The average annual inflow of Indian immigrants to the U.S.A. increased from 26,184 persons during the 1980s to 38,330 (3.5% of total immigrants) during the 1990s (4.5 per cent of its total immigrants). The numbers are huge mostly due to favorable political and trade conditions between these two countries. With its huge population base and large middle and upper class, India serves as a huge market for U.S. companies like Pepsi, Maytag, Microsoft, and more. These companies effectively employ and transfer Indian employees.

Canada

Indians are the largest component of people of South Asian origin in Canada. They are one of Canada's most rapidly growing ethno-cultural populations. The majority of the Indians in Canada emigrated during the post-1947 period as the Canadian racial immigration barriers were systematically dismantled. Whereas early immigrants had been almost all Sikhs, the people arriving in the 1950s and 1960s came from an increasingly diverse range of ethnic and religious backgrounds. They soon began to establish new communities across the country. The overall Indo-Canadian population increased by more than four times between 1971 and 1981. This led to a rapid rise of Indian communities across the country where none had existed before and to a dramatic increase in the size of the communities that were established earlier. Sikhs remain by far the largest Indian group, numbering around 130,000 or over one half of all Indians in Canada today. Nevertheless many new communities were formed by comparatively new immigrant groups such as Hindi-speaking (25,000) and Punjabi-speaking (6,000) north Indians, Gujaratis (20,000), etc.

As a consequence of the 1969 immigration policy of Canada, the flow of Indian immigrants has been highly selective. About three-fourths of the recent immigrants are educated and highly skilled.

Table 6.1

Shows a comparative table based on higher-skilled occupation

	All Immigrants	Indian	% of Total
Professional and Technical	67286	6202	17.8
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	26931	1786	5.1
Sales	13024	386	1.1
Administrative Support	21590	747	2.1
Precision Production,	24518	192	0.5
Craft, and Repair Service	50646	846	2.4

(Source: Alarco 'n)

It is estimated that around 15 million Indians live abroad (World Migration Report, 2000). Every year hundreds of thousands of Indians emigrate. In 1997 alone 416 thousand Indians left the country to join those working abroad (Government of India, 1999). Indian professionals and technical workers migrate in large numbers, more or less permanently, for jobs in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. Australia and New Zealand are the new emerging destinations for Indians, with more than 2000 arrivals every year for permanent settlement in each of these countries (World Migration Report, 2000).

West Asia

Since migration of Indians to the West Asian countries is basically oriented to labour and servicing occupations on a contract basis, most of the socio-economic researches on this expatriate community have addressed themselves to the issues of recruitment, migration and job opportunities in the labour market. Following the oil boom of the mid-1970s, the Middle East has witnessed a massive injection of South Asian workers. Here, the need for

unskilled South Asian labourers has been eclipsed by the requirement for skilled labour but for both groups spatial segregation has been enjoined.

During the past fifteen years, a new form of migration from south Asian countries has gathered momentum, which differs markedly in its economic and social implications from the 19th and early 20th century movement of indentured labourers. This is a new phase of migration based on fixed temporary contracts, attracting labourers from South Asia to work in oil-rich countries of the Middle East. The economic development of Pakistan, Bangladesh and to a lesser extent India has become increasingly dependent on this type of labour export. Migrant workers remittances of foreign exchange in 1983 paid for 20 per cent of all merchandise imports of India. They amounted to more than 25 per cent of India's all merchandise exports. It is well known that by far the most important demand for expatriate labour today originates in the oil-exporting countries of West Asia which, according to the estimates, currently absorb up to two million Indians, 1.5 million Pakistanis and 200,000 Bangladeshis. The year 1973 witnessed the beginning of the rapidly increasing demand for expatriate labour in oil exporting countries of the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Libya. These countries adopted a development strategy which concentrated on the building up of physical infrastructure and therefore created a demand for labour, especially in the construction sector, and largely for unskilled manual workers. At the beginning of the 1970s, there were not too many South Asians among the migrant workers in West Asia. They had migrated individually, most of them from India which has a tradition of sending labour to the Middle East since the Second World War. However at this stage workers were available from Arab countries that fulfilled labour demands of their capital-rich neighbors for several years. It was in the middle of the 1970s that scarcity of labour was felt, as a result of which Indians and Pakistani immigrants began to be brought in large numbers. The advantages of the South Asians in the labour market were that they were cheap, disciplined and hard working.

At the termination of this phase of infrastructural projects and the new emphasis on industrialization in the Middle East, the structure of demand for labour changed and the supply had to adapt accordingly. Between 1975 and 1980, one million skilled workers had to be imported to manage and operate this new infrastructure.

At the end of the 1970s growing social unrest among the South Asian immigrants which resulted in hostility and riots, changed the employment prospects of the South Asian immigrant workers. East Asia became the new source of expatriate labour. In view of the increasing competition from the East Asian countries, South Asian immigrants are increasingly playing the role of 'replacement migrants', i.e., as immigrants who come into the country to fill a vacancy created by the departure of a national for employment abroad. This secondary labour migration has occurred specially in Jordan, Oman and the Yemeni Arab Republic (YAR).

Table 6.2

Migrants Stock in Gulf Countries in West Asia, 2002

Country	Population (in million)	Migrants (in million)	% of migrants to total pop.	Immigration Levels	
				View	Policy
BAHRAIN	0.64	0.25	39.8	Satisfactory	No intervention
KUWAIT	1.91	1.11	57.9	Too high	Lower
OMAN	2.54	0.68	26.9	Too high	Lower
QATAR	0.57	0.41	72.4	Satisfactory	Maintain
SAUDI ARABIA	20.35	5.26	25.8	Too high	Lower
UAE	2.61	1.92	73.8	Too high	Lower

(Source: United Nations, 2002)

Reflection and Action 6.1

What kind of migration trends and patterns have emerged in India after Independence? How is it different from the previous trends of migration?

Table 6.3

Countries with Estimated Indians above 100,000, 2001

Country	People of Indian Origin	Indian Citizens	Stateless	Total
Australia	160,000	30,000	0	190,000
Bahrain	0	130,000	0	130,000
Canada	700,000	150,000	1,000	851,000
Fiji	336,579	250	0	336,829
Guyana	395,250	100	0	395,350
Kenya	85,000	15,000	2,500	102,500
Kuwait	1,000	294,000	0	295,000
Mauritius	704,640	11,116	0	715,756
Myanmar	2,500,000	2,000	400,000	2,902,000
Namibia	32	78	0	110
Netherlands	200,000	15,000	2,000	217,000
Qatar	1,000	130,000	0	131,000
Reunion Islands	220,000	55	0	220,055
Saudi Arabia	0	1,500,000	0	1,500,000
Singapore	217,000	90,000	0	307,000
South Africa	0	0	0	1,000,000
Surinam	150,306	150	0	150,456
Trinidad & Tobago	500,000	600	0	500,600
U.A.E	50,000	900,000	0	950,000
Uganda	7,000	5,000	0	12,000
United Kingdom	0	0	0	1,200,000
Ukraine	0	3,400	0	3400
United States of America	0	0	0	1,678,765
Yemen	100,000	900	0	100,900

(Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. 2001)

6.4 Government Policy

Political elites in the pre-independence period had shown great concern for its 'nationals' abroad. The British imperial system had made the immigration possible and the Indian government had supported that development. Yet political developments in pre-independence India also laid the foundation of a very anti-imperialist, anti-racial course.

India was caught in a dilemma when it came to the expatriate Asians right after independence. The radical shift in policy and emphasis concerning the diaspora took time. India was pushing the settlers to identify with their host country and acknowledged the legal jurisdiction of the foreign states and their settlers, yet they were not India's problems, but that there was a certain interest in their welfare. Added to this was the emotional attachment of the Indians who had their kinsman abroad. This was reflected in the Indian Constitution where Part 11 Article 8 provided that any person being abroad whose parents or grandparents were born in India could be granted Indian citizenship by registration. However it is useful to point out that dual citizenship was not allowed at any point as India believed that one cannot be loyal to two masters. Yet Indians who had taken on new nationality could, if they wished to return to India, revert to Indian citizenship, although this process was not without complications.

It would be useful to distinguish the following categories:

PIO (people of Indian origin): A person is deemed to be of Indian origin if he at any time held an Indian passport or he or either of his parents or any of his grand-parents was an Indian and a permanent resident in undivided India at any time.

NRI (non-resident Indians): These are people who hold an Indian passport and stay abroad for study, employment, business, deputation, etc., indicating an indefinite period of stay outside India.

The Government of India was lukewarm to the issues of overseas Indians until the potential of the New Diaspora, or NRIs who emigrated after independence to the developed world was realized. They came from the middle class elite families, were a highly skilled group of professionals, scientists, doctors and engineers. The NRIs made substantial money and maintained informal ties with their mother country. Throughout its economic development in the 1970s and 1980s India tried to make room for the remittances coming from the gulf, but failed to open up the economy for any serious NRI investment which went beyond the family state border. Liberalization and the new industrial policy in the 1970s sought the involvement of overseas Indians in investing both in terms of capital and technology. NRIs were encouraged to invest in India through certain attractive schemes as much as they were welcomed to launch industrial enterprises along with transfer of technology. There is hardly any evidence of reaching the majority of the People of Indian Origin, the Old Diaspora, till the announcement of the new scheme of PIO Card was announced during early 1999.

Box 6.1: Do you know?

The People of Indian Origin Card was launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs in March 1999 to reinforce the emotional bonds of Indians who have made other countries their homes, but who now have a yearning to renew their ties with the land of their origin.

Persons of Indian origin up to the fourth generation settled anywhere in the world, except for a few specified countries, are eligible to avail themselves of this facility. The foreign spouse of a citizen of India or PIO would also be covered under the scheme. This scheme will entail a host of facilities to PIOs which were generally open to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

However, the factor of NRIs being a “hidden” asset did not strike the Indian government until the 1990s. With the opening up of the economy in 1991, in theory many barriers for investment were removed but in practice several obstacles remained and the special incentives set up for NRIs did not prove too useful. Issues of reform, citizenship and representational rights put the government and the NRIs at loggerheads. India’s policy of foreign non-involvement slowly changed over the years to allow the expatriate Asians to take a certain part in its economic development, but the barriers remained so high as to keep them at bay quite effectively.

6.5 Types of Migration Flows

With Globalization accentuating the trend in international migration, there is considerable diversity in the types of migration flows. Broadly, such migration can be categorized as authorized or unauthorized and as temporary or long term. Each form of migration has varied impacts on economic and social development at the points of origin and destination.

Permanent High-Skilled Migration: Over recent decades, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States have selectively granted permanent residence to a limited number of high-skilled foreigners who are likely to offer these countries positive economic benefits. Whereas Australia, Canada and New Zealand operate a “points” system to rate the desirability of potential immigrants, the United States primarily relies on nominations of potential immigrants by local companies who wish to hire them. Among source countries, India and China lead the way.

Temporary High-Skilled migration: In many developed countries, programs that grant permanent residence to foreigners who do not have historical or ethnic ties to the destination country are politically difficult. In such cases, governments may seek to fill occupational shortages through the recruitment of high-skilled migrants on a temporary basis. Historically, these flows have been concentrated in education and health-related services. During the 1990s, however, booms in information and communication technology (ICT) led to a shortage of related skills in many high-income countries, resulting in a jump in flows of technology professionals, most from India.

Temporary Low-Skilled Migration: Despite the fast growth of temporary high-skilled migration, these flows are dwarfed by temporary low-skilled migration, in which countries admit migrant workers to provide low-cost services on a strictly temporary basis. Countries typically implement these programs when rapid economic growth has improved the wages and work conditions of the local workforce and left them correspondingly unwilling to work at low-wage jobs. India and Pakistan are major sources of manual laborers and construction workers.

Family migration: Family migration is among the largest official channels of migration and represents a large share of flows from low- and middle-income

countries to high-income countries. This mode of migration enables foreign spouses of citizens, children born abroad and even foreign-born parents and siblings of citizens to gain permanent residency.

Visa-Free migration and Students: Visa-free migration exists (with some exceptions) within the European Union, as well as between New Zealand and Australia. This channel grants citizens the right to work for an unlimited time in any of the countries that are party to the agreement. Finally, students who travel to foreign countries for educational purposes have emerged as a major avenue by which young people from developing countries can, having satisfied a number of conditions, obtain the right to work and permanently reside in developed countries.

In recent years some categories of migration have increased significantly and pose particular challenges. These include the movements of refugees, asylum seekers, trafficked women and children and unauthorized labor migrants. While in many destination countries, there are policies in place to accept foreign workers with professional and technical skills, there are no policies to accept unskilled labour. This has given rise to undocumented migration. In order to meet the demand for foreign workers, both skilled and unskilled, and to augment the workforce for economic development, these countries recently adopted various measures to employ labourers by establishing new channels of entry. Many labour-exporting countries have in place procedures to deploy official contract workers, but owing to the time-consuming, cumbersome and expensive process of deployment, workers tend to avoid the system and leave the country (Hugo, 2002). Hence, the level of undocumented migration is on the rise. Undocumented migrants reportedly face high levels of abuse and exploitation, raising the issue of migrant protection. Migrant workers are seldom aware of their rights because of their lack of familiarity with the country, culture and language (World Health Organization, 2003).

Feminization has emerged as an important feature of international labour migration in South-East Asia. In recent years, there has been a growing tendency for women to migrate overseas for employment in their own right, rather than accompanying a family member. These women in many cases are more poorly educated than men (Skeldon, 2003a). The important factor in the sustainability of female migration is the demand for domestic workers, caregivers and entertainers. As the number of women migrating as domestic workers has increased, so have reports of discrimination, exploitation and abuse of these workers at their destinations. It has been noted that female migrants, especially domestic workers and entertainers, are particularly vulnerable to exploitation because of the nature of their work. Unlike male workers, who are more likely to work in groups in factories, on construction sites or plantations, female migrants often work under isolated conditions, which make it difficult for them to establish information and social support networks.

Reflection and Action 6.2

Talk to the family members of those who have migrated to other countries. Find out their reason for migration, their current status in the destination country, impact on their family and the possibility of return, if any. You may then categorize these into a particular migration type.

6.6 Processes and Patterns of Socio-Cultural Adaptation

Historically the emigrants from India have been a heterogeneous lot. They are varied in terms of their regional, religious, caste, occupational, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These variables explain the differential evolution of Indian communities abroad in general. Further the plight of Indians as a diasporic community abroad is to a considerable extent determined by ethnic, religious and socio-economic composition of the 'host' country. The economic and political changes taking place there have an impact on the Indians as a diasporic community. In polities where Indians have been numerically significant, their ethnic orientation has been tied to the struggle for political power. Crucial to the evolution of Indians as a diasporic community has been their ability to adapt themselves in an alien setting.

In contrast to the ex-indentured populations, Indian migrants in contemporary times have been able, due to comparative affluence and worldwide improvements in communication, to maintain extensive ties with South Asia. Marriage arrangements, kinship networks, property and religious affiliations keep many migrants well-linked to their places of origin in the sub-continent, especially as a large number are still first generation migrants. The benefits of migration, in the form of remittances, also play a significant role in keeping many overseas South Asians connected to persons in their homeland; in fact, remittances from abroad can even represent critical aspects of the local economy in parts of South Asia.

In contrast to Indian migrants in the USA, those in Britain lived in segregated settlements. This is largely because of the type of employment and opportunities for settlement in Britain during the post-war economic expansion and its recent collapse. Whereas the majority of migrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh lived in ghettos, the twice migrants from East Africa, now settled in Britain and elsewhere, have fared better in urban middle class occupations such as shopkeeping. Many of them arrived with experience in this field plus the capital to invest in business. Various immigration acts in Britain particularly in 1962, 1968 and 1971 served in many ways to curtail the rights and status of Indians in seeking to migrate or actually moving to the United Kingdom.

In the U.S.A. the problems of acculturation for the Asian Indians were relatively few and dependence upon others for initial support was usually for a limited time. The need or desire to form ethnic clusters seems to have been minimal. An important reason for the lack of ethnic concentration of ethnic neighborhood development of the Asian Indians in American cities may have to do with the very limited role of Hinduism as a religion. The majority of the Asian Indians are Hindus, but Hinduism has a very different religious organization from Christian denominations, Islam or Sikhism. It remains to a great extent an individual oriented rather than a congregational religion. The widely dispersed Asian Indians are probably among the most affluent ethnic groups in the USA and are largely professionals concentrated in medicine, engineering and the natural sciences. Recent South Asian migrants to Australia and Canada follow a similar occupational pattern, though their place of residence is more markedly clustered in the largest cities than it is in the U.S.A. National infrastructure pertaining to migration and settlement of South Asians has varied from country to country and over the years.

Religion, language and region of origin are closely intertwined amongst South Asian migrants. Out of Britain's, 1,271,000 South Asians, Muslims account for 44% and two-thirds of them are Urdu-speaking Pakistanis. The balance is made up of Bangladeshis and Gujarati or Punjabi Indians in almost equal numbers. Similarly, of the 30% of British South Asians who are Hindu, over two-thirds are Gujaratis, the remainder being composed of an equal number of Punjabis and other Indians such as Sikhs—practically all from Punjab—comprise just over 20% of the British South Asian population. To complicate matters, many of the above are twice migrants with experience in East Africa. The complexity of South Asian immigrants has led Robinson (1986) to define not less than 12 religious ethno-linguistic groups present in the UK. Caste has remained an important source of identification for some groups in the modern South Asian diaspora. Caste affiliations, religious sectarianism and regionalism have usually undermined tendencies towards cultural homogenization. The lack of Asian Indian spatial concentrations and their diversities in the U.S.A. should not convey the impression that ethnic identity is not developing at all. Actually the process of identity formation is proceeding apace at several levels— at some levels 'fusion' and at others 'fission' appears to be dominant. Although some blending of regional traditions within Hinduism has occurred in Britain (Knott 1987), Canada (Wood 1980) and the U.S.A. (Bhardwaj and Rao 1983), exclusive practices and associations have nonetheless developed among overseas Hindu groups (Bowen 1987; Barot 1987).

The nature of ethnic pluralism, the political responses of governments to the existence of plural societies and the place of South Asian communities within them have varied considerably among the receiving countries. In Britain, Canada and the USA. They have tended to be characterized by high status occupations. Most South Asians who initially came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s were manual labourers, though their occupational distribution now resembles more closely to that of the White British population (Peach et.al 1988). However institutionalized racism, particularly in housing (Brown 1984) has meant that they have been associated with a low position in Britain's class structure and therefore confront great difficulties in achieving other forms of social mobility. The role and status of South Asian women are also greatly affected by this state of affairs, as are the possibilities facing second-generation South Asians who are also confronted with difficult, culturally conflicting lifestyle choices. As regards political participation one finds that while the labourers and the lower class citizens of Indian origin in Britain take part in politics, the middle or elite classes tend to minimize such participation.

Regardless of their activities in the political sphere, contemporary Indian migrants have almost everywhere established community organizations wherever they have settled. Most of these, however, have taken considerable time to evolve and several have gone through phases of expansion, contraction, division and merger, whether instituted for the purposes of religion, community service or labour relations. Through these community organizations important leaders have come to the fore who have become involved in the conflict-ridden ethnic relations. In all major cases of contemporary overseas South Asian settlement in Britain, Canada, Australia and the U.S.A., South Asians have not escaped racial discrimination and abuse. Some of the organizations exercise an influence in the politics of their host country. The Association of Indians in America, which is considered to be broad-based and professionally oriented, worked to obtain a reclassification of Indians as 'Asian Indians' for the 1980 census. Most Indian

ethno-cultural people form informal communities in Canada through links between relatives and friends who share common ethnic, linguistic and religious roots. These include associations to ensure psychological protection against marginality, access to information, etc. Most social and religious organizations are very particular in observing religious festivals. Formal social boundaries between Indians of different backgrounds are generally sharp—each ethno-cultural group forms a somewhat discrete community. The socio-cultural adaptations of the Indians abroad in different diasporic situations have been varied ranging from persistence, assimilation to change and revival.

Box 6.2 Remittances from Abroad

Remittances are the main benefit of external migration, providing scarce foreign exchange and scope for higher levels of savings and investments. Remittances over the past 30 years have financed much of India's balance of trade deficit and have thus reduced the current account deficit. Remittances have had a considerable impact on regional economies. The most striking case is that of Kerala, where remittances made up 21% of state income in the 1990s. This flow appears to have increased wealth: although the average per capita consumption in Kerala was below the national average until 1978-79, by 1999-2000 consumer expenditure in Kerala exceeded the national average by around 41%.

International migration frequently results in the separation of family members, which in turn creates a greater dependence on the nuclear family, weakening wider kinship relationships and consequently widening the roles of nuclear family members, especially women. Families of international migrants are placed in a vulnerable situation, as those "left behind", particularly dependent members, confront social and emotional consequences. The women left behind face many hardships, from loneliness and isolation to financial difficulties. One of the consequences of the prolonged absence of migrants from the family has been marital instability and the consequent break-up of the family unit, leading to a higher incidence of divorce among migrant households (Hugo, 2002). Migration, on the other hand has also resulted in an improvement in the economic and social situation of women within the family and the community. There is evidence that, while male relatives remaining in the village may retain overall control, male labour migration has led to an improvement in the status of the women left behind (ESCAP, 2001). While migrants experience both positive and negative effects, even women migrants in highly vulnerable and exploitative situations often indicate that migration has improved their autonomy in some areas of their lives (Hugo, 2002).

Apart from the culture, lifestyles, migrants bring with them distinct skills or business contacts that can generate changes in technology, productivity and trade patterns that can affect an economy in ways unforeseen without their presence.

Reflection and Action 6.3

How have the diasporic communities adapted themselves in different socio-economic and political settings? Illustrate with examples.

6.7 The Phenomenon of Brain Drain

Migration has given rise to considerable debates on costs and benefits of emigration of certain categories of highly skilled workers through 'brain drain'. "Brain drain" is the phenomenon whereby nations lose skilled labor because there are better paid jobs elsewhere. In recent years, this has affected the poorer countries more, as some rich countries tempt workers away, and workers look to escape bleak situations in their poor home countries. The main flow of brain drain as a change of domicile starts from the underdeveloped countries towards the developed ones, due to social, cultural and psychological factors. There have been several efforts to define the concept of "brain drain", mainly by international organizations.

In a 1969 UNESCO report...." brain drain could be defined as an abnormal form of scientific exchange between countries, characterized by a one- way flow in favor of the most highly developed countries". One of the most comprehensive reports on the main characteristics of brain drain is as follows:

- There are numerous flows of skilled and trained persons from developing to developed countries.
- They are characterized by large flows from a comparatively small number of developed countries and by small flows from a larger number of developing countries.
- In these flows engineers, medical personnel and scientists usually tend to predominate.
- The above flows have grown with increasing rapidity in recent years.
- The higher the level of skill/training, the greater the susceptibility to migration tends to be.
- The flows respond increasingly to the changed economic complexity of world societies and to legislation which reflects the demands of a new era.
- The migratory trends are stimulated both by the character of national educational systems as by lack and inadequate planning for the training of students from developing countries, in developed states as well as the proper utilization of their-skills in their home country.
- Except possibly for South America, there are no signs that the migration of talents is decreasing and there are fairly definite signs that its increase will, under present conditions, continue to accelerate.

When the best of professional manpower leave their home country and settle in a more developed one, it is a political phenomenon, but it only rarely occurs that the motives are exclusively political. It involves a peculiar contradiction; it simultaneously indicates the lack of production and overproduction of professional manpower on the drained country.

It expresses the complexity and the interdependence of different societies; it derives from disproportionate economic, technological and scientific development of the developed and the developing countries. It is characteristic of the brain drain that the more underdeveloped a country is economically, the more it loses by brain drain while only developed countries profit from the process. It occurs through a complicated interplay of direct and indirect economic 'push' and 'pull' factors. It is stimulated by the lack of an educational system as well as the absence of a manpower policy in most of the underdeveloped countries, these deficiencies normally hindering the really efficient use of those qualified as well as those having talent. As

against this, there are higher living standards and better research and working opportunities of the more developed country, which provides thousands of possibilities for developing human potential. In addition to these objective economic factors, brain drain is also stimulated by the actually realized intention of the developed countries to acquire intellectual capital free, and as quick as possible.

The situation, in which many trained and talented individuals seek entrance into a country, is called a brain gain; this may create a brain drain in the nations that the individuals are leaving. A Canadian symposium in 2000 gave circulation to the new term, at a moment when many highly-skilled Canadians were moving to the United States but, simultaneously, many more qualified immigrants were coming to Canada. This is sometimes referred to as a 'brain exchange'. Despite the best of intentions, redirecting migrations is not going to be easy. Whether efforts to do so, by offering selective incentive are desirable must be a matter of debate.

After becoming the third largest country with diaspora population, India, which champions the cause of temporary relocation of skilled professionals at the World Trade Organization, is likely to experience a reverse flow of its migrants like China to increase the investment and trade potential. Much of China's recent success is largely due to its overseas population that ploughed back its savings into mainland China and turned the country into the global manufacturing hub. With many young Indian professionals returning home to a country increasingly seen as a land of opportunity, the brain drain from India is being reversed, according to a recent analysis.

Both in the colonial and post-colonial phases of Indian diaspora, some emigrants returned home for various reasons, termed as reverse migration. While in the normal course the returnees are individuals and families (Nair 1991 and Mohapatra 1995), under extraordinary circumstances reverse migration may assume massive proportions: The return of Indians from Burma (Myanmar) on the eve of the Japanese invasion of that country during World War II and from Kuwait during the Gulf War is a case in point.

Reflection and Action 6.4

The phenomenon of brain drain, according to many, is on the reverse. Find out the possible reasons and the consequent impact of this process on our country.

6.8 Conclusion

Global international migration is increasing exponentially not only in scale but also in the types of mobility and the cultural diversity of groups involved in that movement. Figures undoubtedly underestimate the amount of movement since data collection systems are poor and much mobility which occurs is clandestine. In addition, since much of the movement is circular, the actual numbers of persons who have ever lived in a foreign nation is larger than those currently abroad because of the revolving door pattern of much global migration. Replacement of more or less permanent migration by circulation as the dominant paradigm of global migration is a striking feature. This circulation is now occurring on an unprecedented scale and has been facilitated by developments such as the revolution in transport, which has seen the real costs of international travel plummet and their speed increase.

Accordingly, it is now much more possible for people to work in one nation while keeping their "home" in another country than was ever the case previously. Moreover, the cheapening of international telephone communication and the emergence of the Internet has enabled temporary migrants to maintain intimate and regular contact with their home area. This does not mean permanent settlement is insignificant. Indeed it has increased and often is associated with migrants maintaining strong relationships with their origin countries. However, the new reality is that more people are living and working in one country but still call another country home, many of their family members remain there and they maintain a fundamental commitment to the homeland.

Linked to the increasing degree of circularity in international movement has been the emergence of transnationalism which refers to the multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the boundaries of nation states (Vertovec 1999, 447). While such long distance ties have a long history, new technologies in transport and communication have facilitated greater speed, efficiency and intimacy in such connections and relationships. As Portes, Guarnizo and Landholt (1999) point out, it is the massive contemporary scale and simultaneity of long distance, cross border activities which provide the recently emergent and distinctive and in some case normative social structures and activities which has led to the emergence of transnationalism.

Thus the phenomenon of migration is becoming more complex, and its pattern is undergoing change. No longer a one-time move by an individual, it comprises multiple moves, often involving other family members. It remains one of the most challenging issues of contemporary times and there are serious economic and social implications emerging from migration flows. A grounded understanding of migration necessitates a study of the complex determinants and outcomes of the process. A number of important policy issues have not yet been resolved: increased multilateral coordination of migration flows, prevention of human rights abuses, care of refugee populations, facilitation of the temporary movement of natural persons in the services trade, the harnessing of remittance flows for poverty-reducing investments, management of the brain drain, and reduction of brain waste. These priorities compose a large and important policy agenda for better harnessing this important socio-economic process for development purposes in the modern world economy.

6.9 Further Reading

Ravindra K Jain, 1993. *Indian communities abroad: themes and literature*. New Delhi: Manohar

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Colin Clarke, Ceri Peach & Steven Vertovec (Ed.). 1990 *South Asian Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.