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GRFDT
Global Research Forum on
Diaspora and Transnationalism

Editor's Note

Dear friends,
Greetings!

We can see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel with the easing of lockdown restrictions. This has enabled some movement and mobility. As we now move towards the 'new normal', it is timely to reflect on management of migration in the future, to ensure that it is more organised and secure. This sets the tone for this September issue of 'Roots and Routes' newsletter. This newsletter includes reports on GRFDT panel discussions on Global Compact for Migration (GCM) objectives, jointly organised by Migrant Forum in Asia, Philippines, Cross-Regional Centre for Refugees and Migrants, Lebanon, Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism, India and Civil Society Action Committee, Switzerland. The Global Compact for Migration aims at improving international cooperation on migration and managing migration at local, national, regional and global levels.

The first panel discussion in the series of twenty three GCM objectives was reported by Abhishek Yadav. It focused on ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration by prioritising data. The panellists called attention to prioritising migration data which would pave the way towards understanding the more profound interrelationship between migration process and sustainable development. The second report elaborates on minimising adverse drivers of migration which range from structural drivers, micro factors to engaging with the very notion of migration by choice. The third webinar - 'Information: The Currency for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration' was reported by Michal Tengeri and Manjima. The third objective centres around providing accurate information at all stages of migration. In this webinar, speakers stressed the importance of fair contracts, translation of labour laws, etc. The reports highlight the attempts and the need to codify employment and post-employment laws into a compact. The need for civil society organizations in pre-departure and post-arrival orientation programs, in harmonizing information flow, ensuring that the right information reaches everyone, who is in need of it and gets translated to empowered actions.

This issue includes two book reviews. The first review is on 'International Migration and Crisis Transition Toward a New Migratory Phase'. It deals with transformations in the Mexico-U.S. migration due to economic crisis of 2008-09. The second book 'Impact of Circular Migration on Human, Political and Civil Rights: A Global Perspective' offers an insight into how circular migration is currently being used

as a policy tool. It brings in the perspective of the migrants' agency and its transnational dimension.

This newsletter also features an interview with Vinod Kumar who specializes on the Indian diaspora in Thailand. The interaction centres on issues of diaspora, culture in the areas of accommodation and assimilation and whether Indian diaspora be seen as a cultural ambassador across the globe.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter. Please free to get in touch with us via social media or contact us directly with your feedback/suggestions on editorinchief@grfdt.com.

S. Khan

Sabah Khan

Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Need for Prioritising Data

Prioritising data will pave the way towards understanding the more profound interrelationship between migration process and sustainable development.

Abhishek Yadav

As the whole world is facing the adverse impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, restrictive measures are being imposed by several countries as a short-term measure to restrict the mobility of people. In this context, there is a need to envision a world which ensures the safe, orderly and regular migration on a long-term basis. Such a long-term vision can be implemented in true spirit through the implementation of Global Compact for Migration (GCM). An international webinar was jointly organised by Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), Cross-Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants (CCRM), Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) and Civil Society Action Committee (CSAC) to have an insightful discussion on the implementation of GCM on 1 September 2020 covering the first Objective of the GCM- "Collect and Utilise Accurate and Disaggregated Data as a Basis for Evidence-Based Policies".

William Gois, the Regional Coordinator at Migrant Forum in Asia, moderated the session and put forward the view that data has become a big concept in migration. However, very little of migration policies are actually based on data, which is a matter of concern. Politically, we had not reached that stage where it can be recognised that migration data can shape the policies and bring about the development. There is a need to be vigilant about the usage of data as there remains a possibility that governments might use data against migrants. There is still a lack of clarity about the data repositories in the countries, and there is a lack of data about returnee migrants.

Practicality of GCM Objectives

Bela Hovy, Chief, Migration Section, UN DESA Population Division,argued that it was a long and arduous journey to formulate the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and hence needs to be celebrated and cherished by the global community for its vision. Data is dedicated to the first principle of GCM, which shows its significance as usually data is relegated to the last sections or even annexes of the international agreement documents.

Data has a clear purpose of improving the well-managed migration policies and of having a better -informed discussion on migration.

Bela Hovy suggested that there is a need to push the integration of migration during all the opportunities during national Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) reviews. GCM objectives are clear andextremely practical andhence can be achieved effectively using a bottom-up approach, starting from many low hanging fruits.

Prioritising Reliability of Data

According to Sonia Plaza, Senior Economist, World Bank, lots of policies could be based on data, but then policy analysis also needs to be done for proper implementation. During COVID-19 and thereafter, there is a need to reduce the recruitment costs. There is a need to see data from the human development perspective to ensure that it

reaches to the end-beneficiary.

It is important to collect data on stranded and transit migrants, but it is not available. There is a need to track return migration. Plaza posits that mobile data or social big data might be used, but it is inconsistent and cannot be fully reliable. There are also concerns over the privacy of data under the social media platforms including twitter data. Working with the national statistics office, civil society and research institutions on data collection on the different issues of migration is a possibility.

Shahidul Haq, former Foreign Secretary, Bangladesh, points out that governments and other institutions are not willing to put resources for the data collection relating to migration. There are issues of privacy like who uses the data and what sort of data is being used after the collection. On a positive note, Bangladesh is finalising the Migration Governance Framework.

Significance of Migration Data

S. Irudaya Rajan, Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Kerala, argued that COVID-19 is not discriminating anyone, but our policies have been discriminatory, and unavailability of migrants' database can be considered as one of the causal factors. None of the states in India were ready to handle migrants, and one of the significant reasons was the lack of knowledge about migration corridors. COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the scenariowhere every state wants remittances, but no state wants migrants.

There is a need to think about formulating National Migration Survey in India. Emigration Bill is still pending in the Parliament of India. Returned migrants can be helped as per their needs and requirements with the evidence-based data.

Cooperation and Collaboration for Migration Data

Sara Salman, Population Affairs Officer, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, stated that the first objective of the GCM on data shows that disaggregated, timely and accessible data is a precondition for achieving all the other remaining objectives. There is a need to wear the lens of migration to empower ourselves and then counter stigmatisation and discrimination being faced by migrants.There is a need to encourage collaboration and cooperation so that data from local institutions can also be utilised for successful implementation of GCM.

Several ministries like the Health and Labour have their own sets of data, but they are not shared with each other as they are almost incomparable, and hence it shows that data has lots of challenges. Multi-sectoral data for making evidence-based policies is important.

Ellene Sana, Director of the Centre for Migrant Advocacy,Philippines, emphasised the importance of data, but cautioned about the data that it might also be used against migrants as data is not neutral by nature. There is a need to put firewalls so that data is used to help migrants and not to discriminate them. Data should be used to provide services to the migrants and to advance their protection mechanisms.

Ensuring Quality of Migration Data

Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Migration Governance Analyst, Zambia, emphasised the importance of quality of migration data. There is a need to have data in terms of targets ranging from global, national, regional to the local levels. Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–30) is a step in the right direction for ensuring comprehensive migration data at the continental level.

Impact of the GCM has to be seen ranging from local, national, regional to the global levels, which will require accurate, reliable and valid data to truly understand the demography of the region as well as the pattern of migration.

Paddy raised concerns over the lack of capacity-building of local agencies as they are not equipped to collect migration data. She suggested some sources like IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, Mixed Migration Centre and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix for accessing the reliable data.

Political Dimensions of Migration Data

Camilo Perez-Bustillo, Director of Advocacy, Research and Leadership Development, Texas, questioned the larger issue regarding the usage of data. From the perspective of migrant movements, the control of data can often lead to the situation of creation of life and death. In the United States, data has been used to undermine the migrant efforts. The relationship between data and power must not be undermined. Data is important in all the contests and contexts. He envisioned the migrant perspective focused on migrant liberation.
Shabari Nair, Labour Migration Specialist for South Asia, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team, New Delhi, emphasised the importance of data in the developmental processes. If data is power, then there is a need to understand the scenario where SDGs were endorsed with unanimity, but GCM was endorsed by only 152 countries out of 193. Therefore, data is important for development, but we need to emphasise the importance

of data to governments by providing political purpose and showcasing immense importance as well. Data is political also, which is quite evident through the usual conception of recruiters, most of whom only talks of promotion of migration and neglect the protection of migration.

Although GCM is non-binding in nature, it enshrines significantly inclusive guiding principles – people centric in nature; international cooperation; national sovereignty; rule of law and due process; sustainable development; human rights; gender-responsive; child sensitive; whole-of-government approach; and whole-of-society approach. It is pertinent that all respective stakeholders should prioritise the importance of data to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration. Prioritising data will pave the way towards understanding the more profound interrelationship between migration process and sustainable development envisioning a better future.

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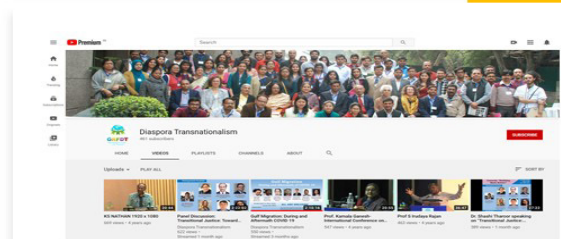
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Migration: How to Minimise the Adverse Drivers?

The essential factors in minimising adverse drivers of migration range from structural drivers and micro factors to engaging with the very notion of migration by choice.

Sabah Khan

Migration determinants are often understood econometrically and placed under the push–pull and gravity models. The factors, which compel people to leave their place of origin, or the 'drivers of migration' are complex. They need to be contextualised in terms of macro, meso and micro factors, which act together and result in migration.

Structural Drivers of Migration

Prof. Walden Bello, Adjunct Professor of Sociology, State University of New York, Binghamton, pointed out the internal structural drivers of the export of labour by focusing on two countries – the Philippines and Mexico. He claimed that the role of these countries as labour exporters cannot be disassociated from the dynamics of neo-liberal capitalism. The ballooning of the labour migration owes much to the devastation of the economy and jobs by structural adjustment policies imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) beginning in 1980s, the trade liberalisation under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and prioritisation of debt repayment by the Philippines' Marcos governments in national economic policy since 1986.

Prof. Bello was speaking at the webinar on 'GCM Objective 2: Minimize the Adverse Drivers and Structural Factors that Compel People to Leave their Country of Origin', which was jointly organised by the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), Philippines, Cross-Regional Centre for Refugees and Migrants (CRRM), Lebanon, the Global Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT), India and Civil Society Action Committee (CSAC).

According to Prof Bello, the structural adjustment resulted in deindustrialisation, loss of manufacturing jobs, and trade liberalisation, which pushed peasants out of agriculture. Structural adjustment alone is not be blamed as the already existing factors of inequality and population pressure were crucial. However, 'structural adjustment interacted with other variables to create a vicious cycle that draws people to seek work elsewhere.' He drew attention to two important aspects – Firstly, labour export has served as an economic safety valve, absorbing surplus labour created by neo-liberal policies in dependent capitalist countries like Mexico and the Philippines. Secondly, labour export as a political safety valve, channelling outwards energies that would otherwise have been a source of progressive change.

Micro Level Analysis

Vivianne Van Der Vorst, Senior Regional Project Manager, International Organisation of Migration (IOM), argued a case for micro factors which act as drivers of migration.

The orthodox theories of drivers of migration look at economic opportunities and involuntary migration, but there is a need to look at the social, cultural aspects, as well as the role of social media.

"It is important to understand that the general overall migrant triggers are similar but to understand its complexities, one needs to look into the geographies and the actual emotional value, social relations and obligations that migrants have and the social networks." Vivianne also claimed that "we often underestimate displacement and previous migration experience." She pointed out that if

we look at the migration from Nigeria, Iraq and Afghanistan, the small triggers are different. Vivianne moved away from the classical understanding of migration to a more nuanced understanding by focusing on micro-level analysis.

Governmental Responsibility

Poverty, domestic violence and unemployment are drivers of migration, said Bijaya Rai Shrestha, Founding Chairperson, AMKAS Nepal. Government has the responsibility in minimising the adverse drivers of migration. She gave the example of migration ban on women imposed by the Government of Nepal, such as age ban, total ban all of which restricts movement of women. Such restriction only further aggravates the problems as women are not able to go through legal channel, and the possibility of them being trafficked is most likely to be increased. In this scenario the onus is on the government to address the concerns regarding migration of women.

Similarly, Prof Walden Bello argued we need "structural reformation in sending countries and major political reform in receiving countries." The role of active labour market policies, stable income in deterring migration incentives was discussed by David Khoudour, who is a Human Mobility Advisor, UNDP Crisis Bureau, New York. He pointed that social protection plays a crucial role. "The more we invest in social protection the less people tend to migrate."

Shameem Ahmed, Secretary General, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), shared overpopulation, non-availability of jobs as factors which lead people to move for financial benefits. He discussed how the expenditure of migration often becomes a burden on the employee. Shameem Ahmed urged that the government create database system for aspirant migrant to register so that expenditures such as employment fees go through the bank and ease difficulties.

This webinar also addressed important issues of climate change and gender. Kayly Ober, Senior Advocate and Programme Manager, Refugees International, discussed how climate change as an important driver of migration. David Khoudour pointed to the need of disaggregating the drivers of migration by sex. Several studies have shown that women in developing countries migrate for additional reasons than men. Discriminatory social norms have a strong impact on women's decision to migrate. He suggested that one way to make women migrate by choice and not by force is precisely to reduce inequality and to have social norms and institutions which are less discriminatory.

The webinar raised important questions of deconstructing 'choice' in migration. Prof Bello argued that choice is conditioned by one's context.

If one's context is tremendous poverty then it is understandable why people migrate. Shabari Nair, Labour Migration Specialist for South Asia, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team, New Delhi, shared that when we talk about choice, we need to see aspiration as an important driver of migration. Prof Binod Khadria urged the need to address counterintuitive. This panel discussion brought to fore the essential factors in minimising adverse drivers of migration ranging from structural drivers, micro factors to engaging with the very notion of migration by choice.

The webinar was the second in a series on 23 webinars focusing on the objectives of Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which was adopted in 2018 in Marrakesh, Morocco. Roula Hamati, Coordinator of Cross-Regional Centre for Refugees and Migrants, moderated the session posing questions on migration out of necessity as against migration by choice.

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Accurate Information, the Key to Fair and Safe Migration

Michal Tengeri

This Tuesday (15th of September, 2020), Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism together with the Migrant Forum in Asia,Cross-Regional Centre for Refugee and Migration, and Civil Society Action Committee organized an online webinar regarding all stages of migration. The whole webinar was moderated by William Gois, the regional coordinator of the Migrant Forum in Asia.

Stages of Migration Process

Mohamed El Zarkani, Chief of Mission of IOM in Bahrain was the first speaker on this webinar, who stressed out the importance of information for migrant workers and their protection. However, the gaps in information may have a negative effect on migrant workers. They might become victims of unsafe migration, human trafficking, forced labour or be exploited by others. For these reasons, the IOM with other partner organizations designed a guide with all necessary information regarding the future employment of migrant workers.

The first stage is pre-employment, where migrant workers and future employers are talking about possible future employment. In the first stage, the migrant worker should be able to get all the necessary information about its future employment. However, as El Zarkani noted, not all countries provide this kind of information. The second stage is pre-departure when the worker has already signed a contract and is ready to leave. This program has been established and institutionalized in many countries. However, such information and are delivered quite late, when migrant workers are already on the way to their destination. The last stage is the post-arrival orientation when the migrant worker has already arrived at the destination.

However, similar to the first stage, only a few countries have developed this stage, despite its importance. In this stage, migrant workers are able to get important information about their rights and obligations. In his speech, El Zarkani stressed out the importance of the Comprehension Information Orientation Programme, based on which migrant workers should have the right information at the right time. Thanks to which migrant workers will be well informed and less vulnerable.

The provision of relevant and accurate information can support migrant workers in making decisions, that are right for themselves, and their loved one. As well as encourage safe and regular forms of migration, and as well as enhancing preparedness and most importantly...protection measure. On the other hand, gaps or misinformation can have dire consequences. It can lead migrant workers vulnerable to unsafe migration, exploitation, some cases of human trafficking, forced labor, depth bondage... : Mohamed El Zarkani

Right of All Information for Migrant Workers

The second speaker was Atyab Alshati, the Deputy Secretary-General of Kuwait Society for Human Rights. She talked about the challenge of providing necessary information to migrant workers in Kuwait. She talked about the important role of the Kuwait Society for Human Rights, an organization dedicated to protecting human rights in Kuwait with the accordance with international standards. One of the biggest achievements of this organization is the translation of the labor law in Kuwait into seven languages. Another one was the development of mobile applications for easier access to

all necessary information. Besides that, the Kuwait Society for Human Rights provides legal consultations for migrant workers in Kuwait.

We want to facilitate the information for every migrant to help them become their own lawyers, because when somebody knows the an info, it's gonna be a lot easier for them: Atyab Alshati.

The Philippines and National System of Migration of Migrant Workers

The third speaker at the webinar was attorney Francis Ron C. De Guzman, the director of the Anti-Illegal Recruitment Branch of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. Despite working for governmental organizations, based on his opinion, the government of the Philippines does not provide all necessary information for migrant workers and there is room for improvement. De Guzman stressed out the legal framework of the Philippines, according to which, Filipino migrant workers are only to send to countries who fulfil these conditions. The countries must have an existing system of labor laws, or be a signatory to multilateral labor agreement or must enter into a bilateral labor agreement with the Philippines. He also stressed out the importance to publish all necessary information not only in English, which can be found difficult to read for many Filipino but also into their local languages. The Philippine government, according to De Guzman, organizes all three stages mentioned earlier by first speaker El Zarkani.

Jordan-ILO Cooperation for more Fair Conditions

The fourth speaker was SuhaLabadi, the Project Coordinator of ILO in Jordan. Labadi same as other speakers agreed, that the biggest problem migrant workers are challenging is the lack of and access to information, which leads to their abuse, violation of their rights, and discrimination. She mentioned the outcome of research made by the IOM of Jordan about Indian workers. Based on

this, most Indian workers learn the terms of their contracts only once they reach Jordan and not before their departure. At this time, they also learn the fact, that their contract is three-year mandatory. For these reasons, the ILO in Jordan works closely with the Jordanian government.

She mentioned a specific project called a safe corridor between Nepal and Jordan, based on which Nepali migrant workers are provided with objective information about their employment in Jordan. They also developed a partnership with what she calls ethical recruiters, who provide real information to future employees. The IOM has also developed a system of pre-departure when future migrant workers receive all important information regarding labor law, wages, agreement, living conditions before departure. Labadi especially stressed out the importance of pre-departure programs for migrant workers. Thanks to this information, many migrant workers actually decide to not migrate.

Those workers, who came through the pilot...through the Nepal-Jordan corridor, they were more empowered. They knew about working and living conditions. They knew about how to calculate their wages, they did it themselves. How to calculate their social security and all of that. They were more empowered to bring issues of concerns to the management. So if there is something, that was of concern to them, they took it immediately to the management and discussed it with them: Suha Labadi.

Mental Stress as a Result of Struggles of Migrant Workers

The last speaker of the webinar was Mehru Vesuvala, who is the Grassroot Community Volunteer. Vesuvala stressed out the different problems migrant refugees are facing. She stressed out the mental stress, the domestic workers face when facing difficult issues. The fact, that many employers are not punished for the illegal treatment

of migrant workers. As well she talked about the pre-departure programs being generic and not providing all information to migrant workers before departure. Vesuvala also mentioned the dignity of work, based on which many migrant workers travel to other countries and take the job, they would not do in their home countries.

All speakers at the webinar were experts, who have been working with migrants and migrant workers for many years. Therefore, all of them were able to provide the main difficulties migrants are facing in other countries. What is clear from all speeches is the fact, that especially migrant workers lack the necessary information before they leave their country. There is a lot of work in order to assure, that the rights of migrants have been implemented. Therefore, the cooperation between governments, international organizations, international and local NGOs is important.

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Published in The Migration News

Information: The Currency for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Manjima A

Dissemination of right information at the right time plays a pertinent role in enabling safe, orderly and regular migration. This was looked into by an international panel of scholar and practitioners in a recent webinar organized jointly by the Migrant Forum in Asia [MFA], the Cross–Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants [CCRM], the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism [GRFDT] and The Civil Society Action Committee. The webinar was an analysis of the third objective of the Global Compact for Migration : Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration.

William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia, who moderated the webinar, commenced the discussion by calling to attention the contradictory realities of information overload existing parallel to lack of translation of information into knowledge. He pointed out various nuances in poor information circulation, from lack of co-ordination among stakeholders providing information to withholding and ill timing of relevant information, and insisted that the aim of this discussion is to analyze the feedback from migrants on the information dissemination system that is in place to aid them.

Addressing the Gaps

Misinformation plagues each stage of the migration process which sets the need for proper orientation programs to be held at pre-employment or pre-decision level, prior to departure and post the arrival of migrants. Mohamed El Zarkani, Chief of Mission, IOM Bahrain, shed light on the Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme [CIOP] adopted as a regional initiative following Abu Dhabi Dialogue covering Asia and the Pacific. It is rooted in the idea that information should be tailored, accurate and harmonized throughout the experience of migrant workers. Training modules and guides have been developed to achieve this. The impact of this approach is being evaluated to ensure better preparedness and protection of migrants and in helping them to navigate new workplace in new country.

The need to address the language barrier in efficient information exchange was highlighted by Atyab Alshati, Deputy Secretary General, Kuwait Society for Human Rights [KSHR]. KSHR has launched an e-platform – Together – which has made available labour laws and related information in Kuwait in 6 different languages. In collaboration with the Embassy of Netherlands in Kuwait, a hotline service was launched in July 2017 to provide legal consultation while information was also published in 7 languages in the form of booklets, and posters circulated through social media. The project is in its third phase of implementation and so far, around 4000 calls were attended through the hotline, 5000 legal consultations were provided and 700 lawsuits were filed, which prove the impact of the project.

Information has always been there, but there is not enough being done to ensure that it reaches the deprived. Atty. Francis Ron C Guzman, Director, Anti-Illegal Recruitment Branch, POEA, acknowledged that there is room for improvement as he described the model adopted by the Filipino government to ensure migrants are well informed. The government is allowed to suspend sending migrants to destination countries that mistreat migrants and the Philippines is a part of the Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme. Efforts are being made to codify employment and post-employment laws into a compact that is comprehensible and takes into recognition the distinction between land-based and sea-based migrants. In addition, the Philippines is at the forefront in

conducting pre-employment, pre-departure and post arrival seminars to aid the migrant workers and are working towards reintegration of returning migrants.

Even though information is out there and we are able to provide information... as long as there are migrants encountering problems at destination countries, we should be doing more: Francis Guzman

Concerns that Call for Immediate Attention

Interventions made by participants shifted the discourse to the hurdles in the information channel and the role of media in addressing it. Media reaches far in carrying information across migrants and shares stories that can be revisited by policy makers. With the content of message changing frequently, the cost of incorrect information can be high and the dissemination of information at ground level must be strengthened.

Suha Labadi, Project Coordinator, ILO, Jordan, also touched upon this when she detailed how recruiters often withhold information regarding pay and work hours from migrants before their arrival, resulting in ill informed choices and exploitation of migrants. To address this, ILO is implementing Integrated Program on Fair Recruitment [FAIR] across specific migration corridors in North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Pre-departure awareness programs are also held in origin countries which not only imparts knowledge on laws of the host country, but also on working and living conditions and essential information like how to calculate pay and number of hours of work, getting access to social security etc.

The underbelly of failed migration was brought to the spotlight by Mehru Cyrus Vesuvala, grassroot community volunteer. There is a huge gap between the availability of information and the processing of information by workers. Information is often misleading, overwhelming and fails to keep in touch with reality. Financial literacy is not incorporated in migrants and pre-departure talks often adopt a "one-size-fits-all approach, which

can be very generic", overlooking the differences between countries. She also pointed out the lack of sufficient programs addressing mental health issues faced by workers, which has become very necessary in the wake of COVID-19.

Role of Civil Societies

Civil Society Organizations play an important role in harmonizing information flow, ensuring that the right information reaches everyone, who is in need of it and gets translated to empowered actions. Mohamed El Zarkani insisted on the need for involving CSOs in pre-departure and post-arrival orientation programs while Atyab Alshati concluded that information outreach is also the key in fighting xenophobia and hate speech thereby ensuring respect and dignity for migrants. Suha Labadi acknowledged the uneven power dynamics playing against workers due to the restrictions imposed on the freedom of association in Jordan. The other panelists and participants also acknowledged the contribution of CSOs in aiding migrant workers and mobilizing the response to COVID-19 pandemic.

Civil Society must be taken seriously while engaging in policy matters or while taking the feedback...and confidence building measures must be in place to enable migrants to work openly with CSOs without fear of deportation: Mehru Vesuvala

The webinar served as a reality check on how the flow of information shapes the narratives around migration. Access to accurate and timely information results in premeditated decisions by migrants and reduces the possibility of exploitation. As the panelists concluded, despite the measures undertaken, there is still a lot more to be done in empowering migrants through the dissemination of the right knowledge at the right time.

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Jardón Hernández, Ana Elizabeth (2017). International Migration and Crisis Transition Toward a New Migratory Phase. Springer Nature. 130 pages

Kishlay Kirti

The United States of America and Mexico shares one of the largest migration corridors in the world. The migration between these two nations has always attracted scholars and policy-makers for many reasons. The border control, undocumented migration, detention, deportation, and the developmental aspects are some the key areas which are indeed the features of this migration. Mexico to the U.S migration is seen as a strategy of getting more opportunities and better living. However the lives of migrants are not easier in the United States. They face various challenges due to government policies and market conditions prevalent in the U.S.

The book 'International Migration and Crisis Transition toward a New Migratory Phase' written by Ana Elizabeth Jardón Hernández is one attempt to portrait the picture of Mexican migrants during the global economic crisis of 2008-09. Ana Elizabeth Jardón Hernández is a fulltime researcher and professor in the Center of Research and Studies on Mobilities and International Migrations at the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico. Her major contributions are on Mexico-U.S. migration, remittances, development and poverty. In this book, the author has written about the transformations in the Mexico-U.S. migration due to economic crisis of 2008-09, where her focus is to address the issues of Las Vueltas (one of the seven communities located in the southwest region of the Municipality of CoatepecHarinas in Mexico) communities. In the past community has witnessed a steep decline in the population due to migration. The book is organized in five chapters including its introduction and conclusion and its length is just 130 pages.

The first chapter is the introduction of the book; where the author has discussed the different reasons of Mexico-U.S. migration, changing pattern and demography of migrants and how these changes are associated with the 2008 international economic crisis. Apart from this, she has discussed strict U.S. policy on migration and the Las Vueltas communities.

The second chapter of the book is about the changing pattern of Mexico-U.S migration. Here four factors of migrations are suggested a) the economic crises in Mexico, b) the economic restructuring and demand for labour migrants in the U.S., c) the changes in American migratory policy and d) the maturation of migrants' transnational networks. Altogether these factors suggest that expected income is just one of the many reasons that motivate for international migration. The changes in the policy from recruitment to restriction are the main reason for the different migratory pattern between the nations. During the crisis of 2008-09 Latin American migrants recorded a higher unemployment rate than those of the migrants from other countries (p.11).

The third chapter of the book is about changing phases of Las Vueltas migrants to U.S. Historically, the migration of Mexicans to the U.S. can be divided into different phases with some specific characteristics of migrants such as- how do they cross the border? Do they have proper documentation or not? How long they stay? etc.

Many individuals who migrated after the crisis to the U.S. have decided not to return home because they realize that this is not a convenient moment to do so. Post-crisis undocumented migration from Las Vueltas communities has declined. In this chapter, many examples of migrants have been given where some migrants were severely affected due to crisis and also due to lack of proper documentation. Some of the migrants who stayed for long and obtained citizenship were in a better position as they were getting the benefit of social security. Despite everything, the Mexican migrants want to stay in the U.S. because the condition at their home is even worse.

Chapter four of the book is about the strategies of migration. Here the author has given some examples from her study where she found that without migration, life of Las Vueltas communities would have been very pathetic. If they do not migrate, they would not be able to meet their needs. Even internal migration has been seen as a strategy due to the pressing need to obtain resources to satisfy their basic needs. Although this strategy does not provide an income equivalent to a Mexian migrant in U.S., it still represents an option for entering labour markets that is significantly better than what can be earned in Las Vueltas. So the case of Las Vueltas is for survival.

Chapter five of the book concludes the study. The Mexico-U.S. migration is an age-old process which has seen many changes in the past. The Las Vueltas communities have also faced difficulty due to the crisis of 2008-09 and their flows have come down due to restrictions and government policies. Many migrants have lost jobs and they were forced to return. Knowing the situation, they have found alternative strategies to survive. They have started working locally and to earn more they have diversified their work towards agriculture, animal husbandry etc.

In this book, the author has put her words clearly and the book revolves around its theme. It makes it easier for readers to understand. The book is written with the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods which broadens the readers' vision and knowledge. The qualitative research tool was used to conduct interviews and quantitative research tool was used to statistical analysis of population survey data.

The book delivers plenty of information on Mexico-U.S. migration. As the book addresses the issue of migration during a crisis; one expects more information on remittance and developmental aspects, which is missing in the book. Further the sample size that is taken in the book to study the crisis is very small and study lags empirical findings. Overall it is a good book to take a look at Mexico-U.S. migration, and migration and its linkages to the crisis. The book can help researchers of sociology and development studies who wish to study international migration in the underdeveloped region in general or Mexico-U.S. migration in particular.

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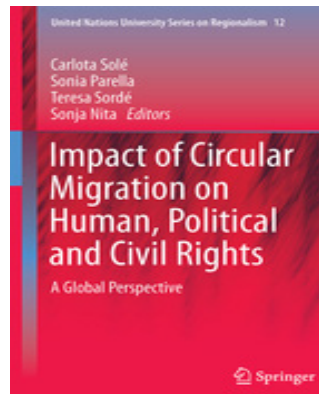E-mail: 01kishlay@gmail.com

CSolé, C., Parella, S., Martí, T., S. and Nita, S. (ed.) (2016). Impact of Circular Migration on Human, Political and Civil Rights: A Global Perspective. Springer International Publishing: Switzerland. 296 pages

Wegene Mengistu

The book Impact of Circular Migration on Human, Political, and Civil Rights: A Global Perspective is an edited volume organized into three separate sections and a total of thirteen chapters. The first part of the book consists of an introduction and the first five chapters. This first section of the book provides an insight into how circular migration is currently being used as a policy tool. In this part, the impacts of circular migration policies on the economic, social, and political lives of migrants, both at home and in their destination countries, have been aptly explored. The next section, which consists of only three chapters, looks into circular migration from the perspective of the migrants' agency and its transnational dimension. The final part of the book, which spans the final five chapters, discusses circular migration and its impacts on human development and citizenship rights and offers some concluding remarks on the issues addressed by the book. The text thus approaches circular migration from conceptual, policy, and practical perspectives, while adopting an interdisciplinary approach.

The authors have extensively explored the lack of conceptual clarity that surrounds the notion of circular migration. This book draws attention to the absence of common meaning of circular migration both among the academic and policy circles. According to the authors, there is still confusion as to what the term specifically connotes, even among those countries which have entered bilateral agreements to allow migrant workers into their labor markets. The case of Moldova and the EU is among those cases presented by the authors to show the ambiguity and vagueness in the notion of circular migration as a policy tool. Such ambiguities are mutually shared by the policies of both receiving and sending countries.

Having addressed the conceptual ambiguities and imprecisions surrounding circular migration, the text discusses the deficiencies in the implementation of circular migration agreements, and the lack of data-driven policymaking. The book underlines the importance of data-driven policymaking, which the authors examine via the examples of South African and Mexico-US migration policies. Specifically speaking, if circular migration is chosen because other avenues to permanent residence or citizenship rights are closed (see the example of the GCC in this book), it may instead leave the migrant in a vulnerable situation (Solé, 268). According to the authors, circularity should be part of a deliberate life strategy and, coupled with the freedom to choose between different options, that is when it is more likely to represent an added value to the migrant. In contrast, the association of circular migration with impermanency has repeatedly exposed circular migrant workers to the violation of their social, economic, and political rights. Intending to emphasize the discrepancies in circular migration-related practices and policies, this book sheds a light on how current models of citizenship (both the national and post-national) fall short of addressing some of the circular migrant workers' concerns. For this reason, the authors suggest, the ratification of migrant workers' rights should be guided by migrants' circumstances.

Practically speaking, the lived experiences of migrants contain different realities than what is commonly stereotyped. This is why, according to the authors, circular migration shouldn't be conceptualized nor analyzed in isolation from the daily lives of migrant workers. Subsequently, this book further challenges the notion of the so-called triple win by relying on the lived experiences of South Asian migrants to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries. Through these examples, the authors attempt to demonstrate how circular migration may not always be the consequence of migrants' free choice. To further explain the issue, the authors analyze migrants' lived experiences and migration decisions in relation to the agency-structure debate. According to the authors' findings, circularity has never been accidental; it is part of the life of migrants. One particular quote outlines the phenomena, by bringing to light how "the rural Bolivian family has not stopped suffering the effects of the "chronic rural poverty" that forced them to use old migratory logics as new adaptation tools, with several local particularities and the generation of logics of practice that would later also be influential in the departures of the future generation." (Ávila, 148).

Not only is circular migration thus ill-defined as a concept, mismanaged as a policy phenomenon, and unavoidable by nature; it also leads to inadvertent repercussions, both positive and negative. In this text, the relationship between circular migration and the flow of social remittances. has been examined by relying on the experiences of Filipino potential migrants and returnees from Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia. The authors took the idea of human development as a benchmark to evaluate the relationship between the two. In other words, if circular migrants are to contribute to the development of their home countries, it is of utmost importance to provide them with (safe) opportunities to network and participate politically while being abroad. But, as the authors specify, "for that aspect to be acknowledged, development has to be conceptualized not merely in technical terms but in the wider concept of human and democratic development" (Rother, 213).
To summarize, the authors warned of the impor-

tance of refraining from a blinded appraisal or critique of circular migration. Policies, perspectives, and arguments concerning circular migration need to be corroborated by actual data. The different sections and chapters of this book were able to collectively examine the impacts of circular migration on economic, human, political, and civil rights development, while the findings have been validated by examining cases from different parts of the world. Such a comprehensive discussion at a conceptual, policy and practical level is indispensable to bring more clarity to the issues of circular migration. The extensive attention given to conceptual clarification, policy debates, and the lives of migrants makes this book useful to anyone interested in obtaining a deeper understanding of circular migration and its impacts on those involved. Particularly speaking, researchers and academicians working on the issues of labor migration and human rights, and postgraduate students specializing in migration studies will be encouraged to read this book. Policymakers and advisors to labor migration and human rights departments might also benefit from reading this text.

But then again, as a text whose scope is global, one expects an adequate, systematic inquiry into the progress made as well as the challenges encountered by some regional and global institutions working on the issue of migrant workers' rights. While this book has devoted one of its sections – section II - to discuss circular migration vis-a-vis migrant agency, an uneven emphasis has been apportioned to structural factors shaping circular migration and its impacts. Lastly, except for a few wording problems and lack of a concluding section in the fourth chapter, this text remains informative and thought provoking.

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In Conversation with Vinod Kumar

Jeetendra D Soni, member of GRFDT welcomes Vinod Kumar on behalf of the entire team of GRF-DT. Vinod Kumar has expertise on the Indian diaspora in Thailand. Today I will have interaction with him on the various issues of diaspora, culture in the areas of accommodation and assimilation– Sir in your opinion; can Indian diaspora be seen as a cultural ambassador across the globe?

Vinod Kumar: Yes, I feel Indian diaspora can be seen as a cultural ambassador around the globe, but not everywhere and not in every country because, in some countries, they are politically influential, in other, they are economically significant. In some countries, they can make their voice heard by the government. But in the case of Southeast Asia, especially Thailand and nearby countries, they are not that much organized like they are in the USA, Canada, in some part of Europe. So, there are certain shortfalls for India, but they are also helping a lot to the Indian government and the new immigrants. They have several associations and collaboration with Indian companies and Indian cultural association. They are having a relationship with their homeland in different ways like Rajasthani diaspora association with their villages and state, or Punjabi diaspora and Malayali diaspora having some ties with their homeland. Not only this, but the diaspora communities are also influencing policies and affecting the social and political behaviour in the country of origin and the destination. They are helping the Government of India by providing them with a platform to come together, discuss their issues and form policy opinion in the interest of Indian diaspora as well as for the homeland government. Indeed, they are helping India in several ways. And remittances, of course, are a significant source, they are also showing that the contribution of the Indian diaspora is well approved and they are enjoying sharing Indian cultural identity abroad. But, whenever they are becoming vital in politics, and now in economy and business, they are coming up with more and more identity issues and are asserting their identity somewhere. They are coming up with some Indianness, though this Indianness cannot be seen as anything as rigid, because they are living in a different country. Therefore, they have to accommodate as for their culture, and at the same time, they can practice their own culture. So, sometimes you will find the assimilation and multi portrayal in some countries in the third or fourth generation. However, by the first and second generation, they are very much cultural ambassador of India.

Jeetendra D Soni: As you said that in the few pockets of the world where they are politically influential, economically well off, and in those areas where culture is lesser than those areas where they are intersected. Do you feel that the Indian tradition of accommodating various cultures in historical past helping Indians to adjust well to new distinctions?

Vinod Kumar: Yeah, sure. But we cannot say that this is helping them in some way as they are getting rigid sometimes, because they have seen so many contradictions back home between Hindu and Sikhs, Hindu and Muslim, and with other caste and communities. So, occasionally they carry over these entities abroad and are not quickly get-

ting rid of these. When I was working with the Indian diaspora and conducting interviews in Punjab, the respondent belonging to Schedule Caste background were telling that it was not so easy to get out from caste in even abroad, even in Europe. We are sitting in the heart of Europe. Still, we are seen within the Indian community as a schedule caste so, melting pot theory, and cultural assimilation is easy with Indian and others. But within India, they are trying to keep their identities that they were having back home.

Some influential caste-like Malayali and Jatt Sikhs in case of Punjab, want to reproduce their past some time. More so, for their first and second generation's diaspora, they are also asserting that you must go back home and get married, find a better wife and your future will be secured. They are giving lots of examples in these destinations countries of Europe, America and Australia that if you marry any other ethnic background girls, it will be difficult for them to survive because they have Indian mind. They also wish to establish the social status set up within and outside their home. Simultaneously, they want to treat their wife as per Indian ethics, Indian culture and Indian heritage, or whatever they are having in mind. So, it is not easy for the first and second generation to assimilate. Certainly when they go to the progressed society in the place of destination, then they assimilate easily with them because they have seen diversity, multiculturalism and multiple identities in India. So they are feeling easy to accept more multicultural identities, peoples and multicultural ways of doing things. Sometimes it is like pragmatic things you need to divide the Indian diaspora in their home, outside home, at the workplace or in between their workplace and home. So how you know, they are working in their place of recreation. Suppose if you see their place of recreation, you will find interesting things. If I can bring one example from Thailand, I was in the park early in the morning hanging around, and some Indian community houses were there. So, they were using Hindi Bollywood song to dance and enjoy, and the local people have no problem with it. Instead, they feel that our culture is being promoted in that way. And they felt pleased and were offering some food to the local population as well. Hence, they in that way assimilate at the same time they said we are Indian, that's why our food and music is different. So, this is a two-way connection. As a result, we cannot straight away say this community is assimilating, and this community is not assimilating, and this community is doing this and that. There are multiple identities with the same population. You know the location of the person and population matters. Suppose if I am an Indian; therefore, I will behave differently in Europe and Thailand. Therefore your identity, your caste, your class, your ethnicity, all the things have some location. Try to find out the link between your identities and your place of origin and destination. Your location means where you situate yourself when you interact with somebody. So these things you need to keep in mind only then you can understand easily about Indian diasporic mind.

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For more details, see the video at: GRFDT
YouTube Channel

Centre for Indian Diaspora Studies (CIDS)

in collaboration with

Department of Social Sciences, FLAME University, Pune
&
Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT), New Delhi

organises

An International Webinar on

MIGRANTS AND DISPLACED PERSONS AMID COVID-19:
Issues, Challenges and Policy Options

IMPORTANT DATES

- Last Date for Submission of Abstract:
  4th October, 2020

- Intimation on Selection of the Abstract:
  8th October, 2020

- Deadline for Full Paper Draft Submission:
  14th October, 2020

- Date of the event:
  15-17 October 2020

USEFUL LINKS

- For Registration/ Submission of Abstract:
  https://forms.gle/srhuGofvRgSd8dJy6

- To join WhatsApp group:
  https://chat.whatsapp.com/C2Bo7qInZGi81KFTVhijxg

- For citation and references:
  https://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide/intext

Concept Note

Human mobility has been an integral part of studies on migration and international relations. A multitude of factors and forces have contributed to the changing dynamics of human mobility throughout history. Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges to human mobility with its attendant consequences for the lives of migrants across the world. Pandemic and similar emergencies continue to impact on the life and livelihood of people in general. However, its impact on the vulnerable sections of the population such as migrant communities—composed of internal migrants, international migrants as well as displaced people (IDPs), asylum seekers and refugees—is often difficult to estimate. Lockdown, closing of borders, restrictions on travel, social distancing, quarantine, community containment etc. are being imposed by governments across the world as necessary measures to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Inevitably, socio-political and economic activities came to a near standstill all over the world. As a result, human mobility, in general, and the status of the migrant community, in particular, have been severely affected even as labour migration has been temporarily halted globally. In contrast, displaced people faced difficulties due to the lack of assistance (or a slowdown in the process of assistance) from the responsible agencies and they have been facing tremendous difficulties even to procure medical care and other emergency needs. The social, economic and psychological impacts of the crisis, with the onset of the COVID-19, are challenging and long lasting. For the migrants the crisis is multi-level having impacts on both the home and destination countries. India is a glaring example in this regard as the country has brought forth the highest number of migrants in the world with the largest amount of remittances. India is an important country of origin of international migrants apart from massive internal population movement. Similarly, India hosts several refugee communities–Tibetans, Sri Lankan Tamils, Rohingyas, and so on. Evidently, the plight of migrants, both voluntary and forced, and the adverse effects induced by the pandemic deserve special attention in this critical moment. The International Webinar covers the following themes related to human mobility and migrant communities amid COVID-19 pandemic in three thematic sections; 1) COVID-19 and Internal migration, 2) COVID-19 and International labour migration, and 3) COVID-19 and forced migration. The insights and observations generated from the webinar will be useful inputs for policy-making, academia and the civil society. The Webinar seeks to delve into the pandemic-induced impact on human mobility and the plight of migrants from a multidisciplinary perspective. All papers accepted for the international webinar will be published in a book bearing ISBN Number.

Sub Themes

- State and migrant communities

- Economic, political and policy dimensions

- International and national policy deficits

- Question of portability of rights

- Housing and workplace conditions

- Impact of travel restrictions

- Challenges facing migrant and displaced women amid COVID- 19

- Challenges facing migrant and displaced children amid COVID- 19

- Issues of access to health care and relief

- Disruption of migration and refugee services

- Crisis in migration and refugee management

- Psychosocial impact of COVID- 19 on migrant communities

- Return and reverse migration

- Protests and resistance

- Civil society interventions

- Role of international organisations

Guidelines

Guidelines for Abstract Submission

➢ The abstract submission deadline is on or before 4th of October 2020.

➢ Abstract must NOT exceed 350 words, including title and key words. If your abstract crosses the word limit you will fail to upload it on the given Google form.

➢ Ensure that your abstract contains a brief title, author(s) name and affiliation(s).

➢ The presenting author must be listed as the first author in case of collaborative paper

➢ Keywords must be separated by commas.

➢ Please avoid diagrams, illustrations, tables, references or graphs in the abstract.

➢ Abstracts must be typed in MS-Word in Times New Roman with font size 12 and 1.5 spacing.

➢ Please choose one of the thematic areas mentioned in the call for paper or topics that are related to the main theme of the webinar. Abstracts that are not in line with the webinar themes will be summarily rejected.

➢ All abstracts will be peer reviewed before final acceptance and communication regarding the acceptance/rejection of your abstract will be sent by email.

➢ Authors of accepted abstracts will be invited to present their paper at the webinar hosted on an online platform (G-Meet or Zoom).

➢ The schedule and the details of Keynote and Special Addresses will be shared in the WhatsApp group

➢ Abstracts must be submitted via the given link of registration https://forms.gle/srhuGofvRgSd8dJy6. Make sure to click on upload and submit after attaching the abstract.

➢ There is no registration fee.

Guidelines for Full Paper Submission

➢ Before submitting your paper, please follow the following guidelines. Papers not meeting these requirements will be either send back for revision or summarily rejected.

➢ The full paper must be written in good English suitable for publication

➢ The word limit of the full paper is 8000 words, including footnotes and references.

➢ It is your responsibility to ensure that all citations and references are accurate, and that the paper does not infringe any copyright.

➢ We request the authors to follow APA 7th edition style for citation and reference. Please click the link https://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide/intext for more details and clarity about APA style.

➢ Full paper must be typed in MS-Word in Times New Roman with font size 12 and 1.5 line spacing.

➢ All pages of the manuscript should be numbered.

➢ All submissions must include a Title, Author/s name/s and affiliations.

➢ Deadline for full paper draft submission is on or before 14th of October 2020

About the Organisers

Mahatma Gandhi (MG) University

MG University, one of the major Universities in Kerala, is a premier educational institution that strives to fulfil the higher educational needs of the people of Central Kerala. The University was established on 2 October 1983. At present, MGU offers research programme in forty disciplines through its own schools as well as its approved research centres. The University is also involved in active collaboration with research institutions of international reputation. The School of International Relations and Politics (SIRP) was established as one of the founding academic departments of the University. Now the SIRP is one of the few institutions in the country to offer instruction and engage in research in areas like politics, international relations, human rights, as well as public policy and governance.

FLAME University

FLAME University is a liberal education state private university based in Pune, Maharashtra. FLAME is the pioneer of Liberal Education in India. It is an active centre of teaching and learning as well as research. It hosts renowned national and international personalities who have distinguished themselves in diverse fields as well as numerous international and national conferences, symposiums and workshops every year independently as well as in collaboration with international and national institutions of excellence. The Department of Social Sciences offers four majors: Psychology, International Studies, Sociology and Public Policy.

Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT)

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