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The politics of migration in India: What it is; and what to do?

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ABSTRACT: *Migration has increasingly become a worldwide phenomenon supporting the livelihoods of a large number of people. But it can also be a potential source of conflict which is evident in India in general and its northeast region in particular. As a result the country's federal government has undertaken different measures for controlling illegal cross-border immigration into the country. But not so useful because the measures were undertaken largely due to the political compulsion, without taking into account the historical ties between the sending and the receiving countries. This failure has of course further led to the alienation of many people, and yet the opinion on migration has become polarised.*

INTRODUCTION

Migration is commonly known as the permanent or semi-permanent change of residence, usually across some types of administrative boundary (Wood 1994: 607) brought about by a number of push-and-pull factors. Migration depends on, and brings, a number of issues having demographic, economic, social and political dimensions. Over 740 million people migrated inside their own country, while over 200 million did so across national borders (UNDP 2009: 1-2). An increasing number of countries are now either the places of origin, transit or destination for migrants, and increasingly are all three simultaneously (Berne Initiative 2004: 2-8). As a result the division between the sending and the receiving countries is no longer relevant because the distinction between the countries representing "push" factors and those representing "pull" factors become questionable, since most countries simultaneously display both (Duvell

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2010: 289-310). The migrants were also said to gained higher income, better access to education and health care and better prospects for their children (UNDP 2009: 1-2).

But, migration is affected by enormous restrictions. The state migration control was said to be the key factor that determined the character and direction of migration flows in the 19th century (Fahrmeir *et al* 2003: 3). The governments of the labour-sending countries considered the migration of their high-skilled workers into another country as brain-drain and national loss, while encouraging the unskilled ones to do so because the latter could bring remittances, new skills and the like. In turn they welcomed high-skilled workers, not the unskilled ones. The context of their reception in the host societies could be of low receptivity; permitted, but not actively encouraged; and privileged reception, who received active legal as well as material assistance from the host governments (Portes and Bach 1989: 606-30).

Those who could not fulfill the requirements to migrate legally resorted to irregular means. The potential migrants paid huge money to the trafficking agents to take them to the desired destinations. Such migration is a form of irregular migration (Carretero 2008: 1) which occurs outside the authorized means of entering the national border (Carling 2007: 5). Yet, it is difficult to construct a typology of such migration, or even to know what terminology to use, due to the complexity of the issue and diverse contexts in which it occurs (Brennan 1984: 409). It has become prominence in public discourse because the political processes of state-building define the extent of the state's territory and its national space. Therefore migration control becomes a tool of demarcation and of enforcement of its crucial means. In short, the irregular migration supposedly defies the self-contained autonomy of the nation states (Morris 1997: 192), but it has become an inherent aspect of global migration (Duvell 2005: 16).

Migration is a subject of interest among social science disciplines, however there are deep theoretical divide based on disciplines, paradigms and political positions (Castles 2008: 7). It is studied and interpreted within the nationalist frameworks (Schendel. 2005: 2-3), and much of the literature is prescriptive that attempt to persuade the readers to support one or another solution to the problem. Hence, much of the recent literature aimed primarily at an audience composed of decision-makers (Portes 1978: 469).

IMMIGRATION INTO NORTHEAST INDIA

The colonial Assam, which was then constituted most part of northeast region of India, came into increasing contact with the colonial Bengal after being incorporated into the British colonial empire. This naturally brought a significant transformation in the society, economy and polity of Assam as well as other part of the region. Initially, the skilled manpower from Bengal was recruited to assist the colonial officers in running the day-to-day administration, whereas previously only some artisans, weavers and scholars came there. Then since the demand for labour was high due to the rapid expansion of tea plantation, coal mining and oil exploration, the labour recruitment from other part of the empire was also started.

In addition, the territorial boundary of colonial Assam was altered. It was administered as a part of Bengal from 1826 to 1873, subsequently became a province after the integration of the Bengali-populated areas of Cachar, Sylhet and Goalpara respectively in 1874. The twin provinces of Bengal and Assam were again reorganised in 1905 to facilitate the formation the provinces of (1) East Bengal and Assam, and (2) Bengal respectively. This was annulled in 1912.

The integration of Cachar, Sylhet and Goalpara into Assam along with the prominence role played by the educated Bengalis in the colonial administration helped create conditions favorable for the expansion and consolidation of the Bengali language in Assam. It became the court language and then the language of education, from 1837 to 1874. This happened much against the wishes of the Assam's largest linguistic group, the Assamese. Subsequently, the Bengali language was replaced by the Assamese language.

When the colonial rule came to an end the empire was divided and the territories were allocated along religious lines in which a part of Bengal became the eastern part of Pakistan. This was not a smooth affair, the territorial disputes and communal riots caused forced migration of refugees between the divided territories. Thus when great powers allocated territories and permitted the creation of new states hundreds and thousands of people (about 14.5 million Muslims and Hindus) were forced to become immigrants and refugees. In the 1960s, the alleged religious persecutions and the construction of Kaptai hydroelectric dam in Pakistan (East) forced many Chakmas to flee towards India. Further, during the Bangladesh liberation war against Pakistan (the war ended with the liberation of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971), hundreds of thousands of refugees moved towards East and Northeast India. Many of them settled down in India after the war. In addition, there has been considerable movement of people from Pakistan (East)/Bangladesh into India in the hope of improving their livelihoods. However,

neither India nor Bangladesh maintained any reliable records of the movement of people.

One wonder, why it was, and has been mostly one-way movement of immigrants and refugees. With a total population of about 142 millions in 2011, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world having a population density of about 964 persons per sq km. The land-man ratio in 2010 was .06 ha. The country is also a poor country. Further the country is highly prone to natural disasters such as flash flood, riverbank erosion and landslide. As a result, many people were left homeless each year due to the natural disasters. For instance, flooding has been a regular feature destroying lives and properties almost every year. One-fifth of the country used to be flooded every year and in extreme years, two-thirds of the country (Agrawala *et al* 2003: 9-70). Thus almost all arable land is being used with little scope for any significant expansion of cultivation into new areas, and the landholdings are small and fragmented with 88.5 per cent of farms less than 1.0 hectare (ha) occupying 60 per cent of the farmland area (Asian Development Bank 2005: 1-6). Further, the country is surrounded by India, sharing about 4096.7 km long land border.

On the other hand, India is also a poor country, yet it is over 22-times the area of Bangladesh, and it has an average population density of 382 persons per sq km in 2011, far below that of Bangladesh. The density of population is further less in the northeast region. Moreover, the people of the northeast region are not so familiar to work in new residential areas and communities. They are also not so used to menial and low paid works. The immigrants usually do such odd works. Thus when a significant number of immigrants were recruited into such occupations, they became socially undesirable for the native workers. The latter will be less incline to do such occupations. Migration can therefore change the social definition of work, causing a certain occupations to be defined as stigmatizing and viewed as culturally inappropriate for the native workers. This stigma came from the presence of immigrants, not from the characteristics of the occupations (Bohning 1974: 155-163). In such situation the main assets the immigrants bring to the destination places are cheap labour, willingness to work harder and loyalty. In short, the immigrants, largely poor and illiterate, are ready to do jobs the local residents rejected. The migrants work in the agricultural fields, in homes, as rickshaw pullers and manual labourers. They are preferred by the local contractors because they provide cheap labour. Further, the shared culture and history of the two countries also provide social networks for migration. The aforementioned factors naturally encouraged immigration into the northeast region of India.

IMMIGRATION-INDUCED CONFLICT

The immigration-induced ethnic conflict surfaced in Assam after the Bengali language became the language of court and education in Assam. As the Assamese-speaking protested the Bengali language was replaced by the Assamese language. This marked the beginning of conflict between two main linguistic groups.

On the other hand, the total population of immigrants, legal or illegal, is never known, and the available estimates are confusing, ranging from some lakh to 15 million. These estimates depend on the agenda of those reporting. The immigrants came from Bangladesh, Nepal and other parts of India in which about 60 per cent of the 5.1 million immigrants, by their last residence outside India, came from Bangladesh alone (Census of India 2001).

Immigration has been widely attributed as the main cause of high rate of population growth in Assam and other parts of the region. There were also the allegations of the manipulations of electoral lists to enroll the immigrants. Over 50 territorial assembly constituencies in Assam had reported 20 per cent increase in voters between 1994 and 1997, while the national average was just 7.4 per cent. Similar increase had also been reported in West Bengal (Swain 1996: 189-204). The cross-border immigration has reduced Tripura's tribal population to a minority, making it the only state in the country that has been transformed from being a predominantly tribal to a non-tribal state. In the 2001 census, the scheduled tribes constituted about 31 per cent of the population of 3.2 million, while six decades earlier they comprised about 50 per cent of the population. As a result the immigrants were accused of taking jobs from Indian citizens, exactly what the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena did in Mumbai. As a result, immigration has been seen as the threat to the local people.

After the partition, when Syllet district was detached from Assam and awarded to Pakistan, the Assamese-speaking people became the single largest linguistic group in Assam. After the reorganisation of states on linguistic lines in the 1950s, the Assamese middle class further tried to consolidate their language in the education and administration. The Assamese became the official language of the state (Bengali in the Cachar district and English in the autonomous districts). The Gauhati University, the oldest university in Assam, also passed a resolution to make Assamese the medium of instruction in the colleges under its jurisdiction. These policies have resulted in the alienation of other ethnic groups thereby strengthening ethnic assertiveness and polarization in the state. Down the line it

became evident that ethnic groups viewed the state government as an instrument by which to extend, consolidate or transform their position in the economy and social system (Weiner 1983: 284). Weiner elaborated that in the 19th and early 20th century, the Bengali Hindus used their dominance in the government to consolidate their position in the education and administration. In the 1930s and 1940s, when electoral politics were introduced, the Bengali Muslims won control over the government and then attempted to use their position to facilitate migration of Bengali Muslims. After independence, the Assamese retained power and used that control to assert the paramountcy of Assamese cultural identity and to seek economic and social equality in relation to the Bengali Hindus (Weiner 1983: 279-292).

It is also interesting to see how some immigrant groups were thought to be more threatening than the others. The Adivasis and Nepalese were engaged in tea plantation, cattle rearing and the like the occupations the native workers were least interested. Hence they were least problematic. The problem started with those who could compete for the government jobs. When the Assamese middle class started competing with the Bengali-middle class the former had always been the weak contenders. Moreover, the Bengalis wanted to assert the paramountcy of their language and culture in Assam. The Assamese fear of losing their cultural autonomy dated back to 1837 when the Bengali language was introduced as language of education and administration. The Assamese historical narratives typically refer to this period as a dark period of Assamese language, literature and culture (Baruah 1999: 71).

After the language issue was partially settled, the Assamese middle class turned towards the illegal cross-border immigration. The state-building in India had also started categorizing the immigrants along religious lines, and hence the Muslim immigrants were considered more problematic than their Hindu counterparts. The former came to be treated as the illegal immigrants while the latter as the refugees. The Assamese Muslims also started facing an identity crisis because they were often branded as immigrants by anti-immigrant lobbyists. This contributed to their alienation from the society in which they coexisted for centuries.

The death of Hiralal Patwari (then a member of lok sabha of the country's parliament), representing Mangaldai territorial constituency of Assam) in 1979 necessitated holding of by-election which set in motion events leading up to the anti-immigration movement led by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the main student group of the state. It was alleged that a large number of names of *suspect* nationalities was included in the electoral list of Mangaldai territorial

constituency. Consequently, the agitations were started demanding recounting of the citizenship of those living in Assam on the basis of the national register of citizens prepared during the Indian Census of 1951. The movement came to an end following an agreement, popularly known as the Assam Accord. The central government promised to take actions to *identify* and *deport* all noncitizens, officially known as "foreigners" and protect the cultural identity of the "Assamese people". The accord fixed March 24th, 1971 as the cutoff date for the identification and deportation of foreigners from Pakistan (East) into Assam. It also provided for citizenship to those who came to Assam between January 1st, 1966 and March 24th, 1971 after defranchising for a period of 10 years subject to registration. Thus, it was written in the accord that those who crossed the international border into Assam without proper legal documents after the March 25th, 1971 were illegal immigrants; but all those who came before this deadline became citizens through the legal process akin to naturalization.

In neighbouring Tripura, the post-1947 migration had outnumbered the tribal population. About 0.6 million refugees came to Tripura between 1947 and 1971 and were rehabilitated under different schemes, enabling some of them to settle down with financial assistance and some just helping them to buy land. These schemes accelerated the process of large scale loss of lands belonging to the tribal people (Bhaumik and Jayanta 2005: 216-241). The tribal people gradually lost their land to the recent immigrants, and the later started controlling the economy and polity of Tripura. The Bengali language along with English was made the official languages of Tripura in 1964, whereas Kokborok, the native language, managed to get the second language status only in 1979. The voices of dissent grew louder which ultimately culminated into an armed conflict.

In Assam, the founding members of ULFA had understood beforehand that the anti-immigration movement would not serve the expected benefits because the India's central government would not listen to mere strikes. The armed group started as a more militant stream of the movement and gradually broke away from the moderate forces that were associated with it (Das 2007: 12). They were right; the promises made in the Assam Accord remained largely unfulfilled. Samujjal Bhattacharya, a student leader, stated "till now we have not been benefitted from that accord" and the central government has done "nothing to safeguard the identity of the indigenous people." Bhattacharya cited how the central government took the initiative of guarding the India-Pakistan border within two years with barbed wire fencing, roads, flood-lights and guards patrolling all along the border. He said that the India-Bangladesh border has been as porous as before and hence anybody could come to Assam without any visa or passport (see, Bhattacharya 2004: 181-184).

After the signing of the accord the leaders of the movement floated Asom Gana Parishad, a political party, in 1985. Those who opposed the said accord floated United Minorities Front, also a political party. The Asom Gana Parishad had promised to fully implement the accord, whereas the United Minority Front was against its implementation. The Asom Gana Parishad won the legislative elections held in 1985 and 1996, respectively, but failed to arrive a consensus on this contentious issue.

The ULFA rebels were not born over-night. They started with some kinds of social movement. For instance, Paresh Barua, the top leader, was once an active member of the anti-immigration movement. Some of the founding members of ULFA were also then worked for the Asom Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Juva Parishad, a students' organisation. Many insurgent groups in the region have their origins in broader social movement, and they often began as a smaller subset of individuals within a mainstream social movement who are willing to pursue more radical strategies for political and social change by opting for violent means. Their radicalization resulted from a number of factors including inaction by the government to meet the popular demands, the repressive reactions of the government, an ideology of change that accepts the use of violence as legitimate, competition for the scare resources from other social movement organisations and perception that other social movements organisations are weak in their effort to achieve change (Hazen 2010: 81). An insurgent group is thus a particular type of social movement organisation (Hazen 2010: 82) that possesses organizational means to carry out sustained attacked against the government. The ULFA is therefore a social movement organisation.

Unfortunately, the anti-immigration movement had further led to the ethnic assertiveness and division. For instance, about 1819 people, mostly Muslim peasants of East Bengal origin, were killed in an attack organised by the rival communities in and around Nellie village of Assam in February 1983. The victims had participated in the legislature election of 1983 defying a poll boycott called by those demanding the holding of the election on the basis of a revised electoral list. Such incident caused a sense of insecurity among the Assamese-speaking Muslims which halted, for the first time, the process of their assimilation with the Assamese society (Ahmed and Yasin 1997: 148). Like any other Assamese they had also participated in the said movement (Udayon 1999: 1269). Thus many Muslims have alienated from the Assamese society in which they live for centuries. In neighbouring Tripura a deadly communal rioting in 1980 involving tribal and non-tribal people killed several hundreds of people.

The Assam Accord also soon became controversial because it only promised to protect and promote the culture, social and linguistic identity of the "Assamese people" only. Other ethnic groups who were unwilling to be treated as the Assamese people felt that the accord might legitimize the imposition of Assamese culture on them. As a result, other ethnic groups were encouraged to raise the demand for the bifurcation of Assam to facilitate the creation of new states. The Bodos started a movement to get a separate state and if succeeded might have divided Assam for the straight fifth times. It however did not happen but led to the granting of increased autonomy to certain parts of the state.

The immigration-induced conflict came into limelight from time to time. The most recent one was the violent conflict between Bodos and Muslims that took place in Assam's Bodoland region in 2012. It had claimed over 80 people and about 5 lakh people were temporarily displaced. As expected the politicians tried to intervene. According to the leaders of Bodoland People's Party, the ruling party in Bodoland, the violence was a conspiracy to destabilize Bodoland Territorial Council. They stated that it was incited by "foreigners" and accused "illegal immigration" from Bangladesh as the root cause. On the other hand, the All India United Democratic Front, the Assam-based political party, accused Bodoland Territorial Council of promoting violence against the Muslims. The party alleged that it was aimed at driving out the non-Bodos from Bodoland. The party said the Bodos which constitutes only about 29 per cent of the total population wanted to dominate the Bodoland region. The Bodoland had witnessed several bloody conflicts in the past, between Bodos and Muslim settlers and also between Bodos and Adivasis. Why was that so? The problem was linked to the movement for separate state by the Bodos, immigration from Bangladesh and struggle for the control of political power and natural resources. The violence conflict has far reaching impact beyond Northeast India. Since the violence was projected as an assault against the Muslims unspecified miscreants had succeeded in spreading rumours of violent attack against the people of the region residing and studying in various cities of the country. The rumors forced thousands of students and workers to flee from Bangalore, Hyderabad and Pune to their natives' places. However, no untoward incidents took place. A faction of ULFA reacted and warned actions against "Indians" in Assam if "atrocities" of the Assamese people did not stop in other parts of the country. It also charged Badaruddin Ajmal, the leader of All India United Democratic Front, of spreading communal hatred for his statement about the killings of Muslims in Assam.

THE POLICY DILEMMAS

Bangladesh has all along denied the presence of their citizens in India. In 1999, the then Bangladesh prime minister, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, stated: "There are no Bangladeshi infiltrators in India. Why should a Bangladeshi national cross over and relocate in a foreign country?" Again in 2003, the then Bangladesh foreign minister, Morshed Khan, stated "there is not a single Bangladeshi migrant in India." Bangladesh accused India of evicting Bengali-speaking Muslims by branding them as Bangladeshis. According to Willem van Schendel (2005: 200), Bangladeshis in India are "truly transnational" in three ways. First, they are not accepted as Indian citizens and live the shadow existence of "illegal" immigrants worldwide, a floating underclass who are in India, but not of it. Second, their motives of crossing the border have long stopped being related to nationalist ideologies. They have joined many migrants worldwide in pursuing the good life that is denied to them back home. And third, like their counterparts all over the world, they think transnationally, when they remit money and make occasional visits back home. Schendel further added that it was not impossible for Bangladeshi opinion leaders to start portraying migrants to India as "cultural heroes"; people who against enormous odds were able to rely on their own wits to survive and create new cultural and social forms of transnational Bangladeshi identity. Until that time, their discourse on migration to India is likely to be marked by denial, disdain and disinformation.

Among the familiar Indian complaints are: "illegal migration is affecting our national security", "illegal migration has become a serious problem for India", "they are eating into the economy of the country and to a large extent are a security threat" and the like. On the other side of the divide, the familiar statements of denial by Bangladesh are: "there are no Bangladeshi refugees in India any more", "there is no question of our taking any people back", "it is an internal problem of India", "under no circumstances accept any of the evicted persons" and the like. As a result, open confrontations along the border broke out whenever the Indian border guards tried to deport the "alleged noncitizens" whom their Bangladeshi counterpart claimed as "Indians." These official positions have had serious consequences on the individual migrants.

In the wake of the anti-immigration movement in Assam, the country's federal government enacted a special legislation for Assam to identify noncitizens and later a slew of border control measures. In 1983, the country's parliament passed the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983 (popularly known as the IMDT Act). Its intention was to detect and deport noncitizens, officially refer as "foreigners," staying in Assam when the Foreigner Act, 1946

was applied in the rest of the country. This Act defines "foreigner" as those who illegally settled down in Assam after March 25th, 1971, and the onus of proof shall lie with the complainant. The Foreigners Act puts the onus on the accused to prove his/her Indian nationality and it was applicable to Assam too before the IMDT Act was promulgated. Two decades later, the IMDT Act was struck down by the country's supreme court in a judgment delivered in July 2005. The court held that the IMDT Act acted as the biggest hurdle in the identification and deportation of noncitizens. Since then the Foreigner Act has been reinforced in Assam.

In addition, the policing along the Indian side of the India-Bangladesh border have strengthened with the construction of border fencing, border roads and floodlighting in order to prevent cross-border immigration and other illegal activities. There were problems in the construction of fencing in certain stretches due to riverine and low lying areas, population within 150 yards of the border, pending land acquisition cases and protests by the local population, which has led to delay in completion of the project. The constriction of border patrol roads have also started. However, most of the fencing constructed in the initial phase in West Bengal, Assam and Meghalaya have damaged due to adverse climatic conditions, repeated submergence, etc.

However, all is not so well. Consider this: Bhumidhar Barman, a minister of Assam, told the state legislative assembly on February 10th, 2011 that only 219 "foreigners" have been deported from the state between 2001 to November 2010, while over Rs 330 million have been spent for maintaining over 40 tribunals set up for the process of their identification and detection. The minister claimed that at least 15,835 persons were declared "foreigners" by the tribunals, while only 219 of them could be deported. Most of the people declared "foreigners" were "missing". The minister maintained that the total costs of maintaining each tribunal was about Rs 0.15 million per month (*Assam Tribune* (Guwahati), 11 February 2011). It is, therefore, important to revisit some of the key problems.

The stated border traverses through a range of natural and cultural landscape such as forests, lowlands, riverline areas and human settlements thereby making the construction of fencing and roads difficult. Further, there are unsettled border dispute in which both sides are least interested to resolve. Many people who were directed affected by the partition questioned the validity of the border because they claimed that the partition was done without their consent. The partition uprooted their livelihood since the border divided villages, towns, relatives, homes, markets and paddy fields. Since the people along the border share ethnic and linguistic ties it is natural for them to protect some of the aspiring

migrants who they consider as their ethnic kin. Thus, identifying who is a citizen and who is not is a difficult task in this part of the world.

Another problem has been the politicization of immigration, especially in Assam and Tripura. The issue is highly politicised in which political parties accused each other of indulging in vote-bank politics. In Assam, the Bharatiya Janata Party and Asom Gana Parishad have been accusing the Indian National Congress (the party in power for most of the time after independence) of encouraging cross-border immigration to enlarge their support base. On its part, the Indian National Congress has accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of communalising the issue. Differences have also appeared at the highest level of the Assam government. In 2005, the then governor, Ajai Singh, drafted a report on illegal immigration into the state. But the chief minister, Tarun Gogoi, termed the report as a "worthless document based on hearsay rather than facts". Gogoi alleged the report has created confusion among the people. The politicization has created distrust between the communities. In the post-independent period the focus had turned towards the Muslims accusing them of encouraging cross-border immigration. Such allegations have hurt them. In 2005, several hundreds of immigrants, mostly Muslims, were displaced from several regional towns of Assam after a drive undertaken by several ant-immigration groups. The All Assam Minorities Students' Union, a Muslim student body, alleged that the minority communities have been targeted in the name of ousting illegal immigrants. It accused the All Assam Students' Union of labeling the Bengali-speaking Muslims as the "Bangladeshi infiltrators." It warned of launching a similar drive against the Assamese people living in the minority-dominated areas of Goalpara and Dhubri districts (*Indian Express* (New Delhi), 3 August 2007).

The government has been unable to invoke effective legal measures acceptable by all the people of Assam. Any legal measure continued to be contentious. For instance, the promulgation of the IMDT Act had caused division among the people. The Muslim groups supported it while other groups opposed it. When the IMDT Act was struck down by the supreme court the Muslim groups alleged that the Muslims would be harassed by the police in the name of detection of "foreigners." By contrast, the other groups who were against the IMDT Act welcomed the ruling.

Finally, administrative corruption has all along posed one of the biggest challenges in the implementation of the existing laws and schemes. The officials of the state usually helped the would-be migrants in fraudulently acquiring identity documents such as ration cards, birth certificates, domicile certificates and voters' identity cards. When someone possesses such documents they can

establish the Indian nationality status. Finally, Bangladesh denies the presence of its citizens in India. This makes India's effort extremely difficult.

CONCLUSION

The discourse on immigration continues to ignore the contributions of the immigrants towards their host societies; instead they are projected as a threat or perhaps "exploiter" to the receiving societies. The immigrants have suffered due to the official positions taken by the respective states. The anti-immigration movements are the identity movements based on the notion of historic homeland for people and an exclusive entity for the formation of national identity.

If globalisation and migration have to benefit people, ways have to be found to protect the interest of the local communities in decision which affects them. Market mechanism is inherently incapable of doing this, while countries including the democratic ones often neglect local in favour of overriding national interests. Thus the immigrants became the target because they are the most visible symbol of these changes, while the real causes are invisible, complex and difficult to influence (Castles 1998: 179-186). Since migration cannot be simply stop through police and fencing, it is therefore necessary to devise alternate policies keeping in mind the history and cultural ties of the sending and receiving areas. Such policies would help protect the interests of both the migrants and the nonmigrants. If India continues to insist only on border police and border fencing, the aspiring migrants will come through other ways. What is important is to accept the existence of numerous push-and-pull factors forcing people to move. India has to make policies in the interests of both the migrants and the nonmigrants; it cannot ignore one group at the expense of another. The first challenge before India is to maintain and update the record of its citizens through a specialised agency. In this process many of the recent immigrants are to be included because there is no way to distinguish between the migrants and the nonmigrants/the citizens and the noncitizens. India has to adopt a realistic approach. Once this is done take introduce the temporary work permit scheme for the noncitizens and the inner-line permit. This will help protect the local interests.

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