

Editorial

The 12 papers in this special edition are an inspiration from the Inter-Congress that was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 15th to 17th July 2015. While several of the contributors were able to attend, others were ill-disposed for reasons of affordability or commitment to duties. But their interests in issues of migration are of significance for at least two reasons. Firstly, they represent an array of scholars whose study of migration converges to produce a plethora of interests that are representative of the wide ranging topics that currently prevail in international discourses. And secondly, the concept has become entwined with representations of both the best and the worst with what migrants take with them to foreign destinations. Migration has become an interest of immense proportion in contemporary world politics. While developed and developing countries have significantly cut costs in social service spending, the attraction for the skills of knowledge workers have accelerated in need because of the wide-scale absence of expertise in the professions of teaching, medicine, engineering and commerce. Their attraction to the developed west and to the Middle-Eastern countries is often more than supplementary help to existing infrastructural requirements. They fill gaps in the host countries needs that ensure survival and functionality. To this extent migrants are welcome as either temporary sojourners or as additions to the pool of contemporary and future functionaries of established economic and political pursuits. On the flip side of this coin are nuances about migration that are presently being seen as inimical to the security and sovereignty of countries. The Arab uprising through the first and second decades of the 21st century against authoritarian rule in Muslim dominated countries in the middle-east and north Africa, have by 2015 translated into immeasurable destruction of entire countries and mass exoduses of people fleeing the fighting. From welcoming Syrian refugees for instance, Germany has moved to a position of extreme caution after the Paris attacks on Friday 13th November 2015. France's "Black Friday" has reverberated throughout the western world, forcing countries such as the USA and UK to intensively screen every individual from Syria, Turkey, Iraq and other affected countries before accepting them as refugees and asylum seekers. But the refugees from the Middle-Eastern countries are not the subject of this edition. It is the related issues of mistrust, dislike and xenophobic behavior that are highlighted here, all in the context of migrants wanting to work.

This first paper by myself (Anand Singh), is about the notion of skills transfer in South Africa and the influences that emanate from outside the country. The paper distinguishes between certified skills transfers and "informally" acquired skills that migrants carry with them to host countries. Its emphasis is upon the lessons that can be learnt by locals who are unemployed and the initiatives that the state can take to improve upon employment statistics and skills transfers to those who may not qualify for entry

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into established institutions that reward individuals with internationally recognized certificates for completing their training/studies. **The second and third papers by Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed are about the rise of xenophobic attacks against foreigners in South Africa.** Desai's paper is about a wave of xenophobic attacks that swept across South Africa in the first quarter of 2015. He alleges that the violence was at its worst in Durban, where thousands of immigrants, mainly from Africa, were attacked by South Africans by looting their businesses and killing people out of frustrations that were pent-up about their successes in businesses and employment skills while many locals continue with lives of destitution. While Desai looked at what caused the violence, Goolam Vahed scrutinised the Zimbabwean connection to a local drug concoction called "whoonga". Vahed's aim was to examine how migrant Zimbabwean activities that surround the local narcotics market in Durban give rise to the blame game around xenophobic behaviour towards foreigners, how perceptions emerge about foreigners being responsible for these illicit activities and their negative effects on victims and communities. The notion of xenophobic tendencies is continued in **Sadhana Manik's** focus on the relocation of teachers from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Her content demonstrates what positive contributions Zimbabwean teachers are making to the teaching fraternity in South Africa. But little heed and appreciation is paid to this by South African authorities. Instead Zimbabwean teachers have more to whine about in terms of being marginalised, discriminated against and constantly fearing xenophobic attacks against them.

The fifth and sixth papers by Nandini Sen and Sultan Khan are about women migrants in two different continents. Both are qualitative studies of women escaping the harshness of their environments to work in better-off places outside their own countries. Sen's paper is more specifically about women from three different provinces and from three different age groups who are working in the upmarket sector Gurgaon, situated on the outskirts of New Delhi in India. Their life histories and work experiences are expressions of the personal and social complexities in the reservoirs of cheap labour from poorer states in India, ready to serve the wealthy in better developed regions of the country. Khan's paper is an analysis of the lives of 15 Rwandan women who took serious risks to cross borders to reach South Africa for meaningful employment. The focus here is upon the conditions that instigated their journeys to South Africa and an examination into whether their claim to self-initiation was really synonymous to voluntary relocation.

Two papers are about students in significantly different political contexts in northern and southern hemispheres. These are the **seventh and eighth papers by Kalpana Hiralal and Rupam Saran.** Hiralal's focus is upon the lives of students from neighbouring African countries who travelled on their own to Durban, South Africa, for a tertiary education. Their social networks have become their new forms of support against the

absence of family. And their narratives provide helpful insights into the push and pull factors that urged them to travel South Africa for an education. In the absence of familial support, their careers are more individually bound. Their survival and progress are dependent upon two factors viz. inner strength and social network support in sometimes hostile conditions created by local South Africans. Interesting differences in student support and learning in New York are provided by Rupam Saran's paper on Indian immigrant learners and the familial expectations from them. Locating her findings in the context of a "model minority", Saran succinctly captures the roles and expectations of parents in their guidance of their children in education. While there is an image to live up to, the idea about being a "model minority" is so easily bought by people of Indian origin in the USA. This is so because it subtly avers to what other minorities, especially African Americans, are not. But crucial to this situation is how home, family and aspirations converge to facilitate enabling environments for children of Indian background, a distinct contrast to their counterparts from the migrants of African countries living in Durban.

The remaining four papers by **Bobby Luthura-Sinha, Shanta Singh, Gerelene Jaganath and Lia Rodriguez**, are about people working across international borders. Each of the papers provide unique insights into a range of people either integrating into established domestic economies for personal upliftment or sheer survival, and others doing work as a means to social network or keep themselves occupied. Luthura-Sinha's paper is about cooks and/or waiters in restaurants or roadside eating places, night-watchmen, domestic helps and tailors from the mountainous state of Nepal. Referring to them as "itinerant migrants", she discusses the Nepalese migrants' contribution to the Delhi economy in the context of the past hundred years of oscillation between India and Nepal. Shanta Singh's and Gerelene Jaganath's papers follow up with a discussion of migrants in the more distant country of South Africa – dealing with Pakistani and Indian migrants respectively. Both papers are qualitatively rich and produce data that speaks about the dynamics of different groups of individuals in distinctly different environments. While Singh produces information on Pakistani small scale entrepreneurial migrants working away from their families in a small town named Verulem, north of Durban, Jaganath writes about how the 'trailing wives' of highly skilled migrants from India often labour under difficult circumstances to ensure that their spouses are not isolated and their families remain intact.

Lia Rodriguez's paper is about Bangladesh and the illegal immigration from there into India that is often associated with human trafficking and its socio-political implications. The Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP), signed between India and Bangladesh, and enhanced by a special Task Force for "Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation and Integration of Trafficked victims and survivors", has brought into

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focus issues of regional and national security in both countries. Security is a perennial problem in South Asia, making migration a problem far bigger than the general casualness that it is dealt with in times of peace and where neighbouring countries are not at odds with one another.

Collectively, all of the papers provide a wide ranging insight into issues that are of significance to a topic that needs to be understood in the broadest possible terms. There is a lot more that can be done in the study of 'migration and migrants' and there is a lot more that will be changing over the next few years as the world order adjusts to challenges of major political upheavels in the Middle-East, growing conservatism in the European Union and the USA, new major world players in the global economy such as China and India, and increasing demands for knowledge workers in developed countries.

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