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Labour Emigration In India: A New Phase

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- Review of the book:

"Emigration in 21st-Century India Governance, Legislation, Institutions" by S. Krishna Kumar and S. Irudaya Rajan*(Routledge- Taylor & Francis Group: New Delhi) 2014, ISBN 978-0-415-73602-2, Rs. 695.*

Migration is the special displacement of people from one place to another either permanently or temporarily. When this process occurs from one country to another country, it can be called as emigration for the source country and immigration for the country of destination. Human migration has no end till their life exist on the earth.

"Emigration in 21st Century India" portrays the new phase of India's labour emigration and the role of policy governance, legislation and institutions both at the state and central level. This book presents the findings based on the data from the National Sample Survey (NSSO) 49th and 64th Rounds and the Kerala Migration Survey (KMS). The book shows some major characteristics of Indian labour emigration based on the evidence of recent data on emigration clearances. It exposes a clear cut shift in the locus of emigration from Southern states to some of the Northern states. The aggregate number of emigration is still on the rise and emigration has now turned out to be a more inclusive, pan-India phenomenon. It also projects the likely number of the stock of potential emigrants from new source states by 2021. In *"Emigration in 21st –century*

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Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

India", Kumar and Rajan make out the dynamism in the emigration scenario in the first decade of the 21st century.

S. Krishna Kumar was a member of Indian Administrative Service and an expert in the areas of emigration policy, diaspora and mobilization based in Bangalore. S. Irudaya Rajan is Chair Professor in Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs Research unit and International Migration at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.

This book is organized into 12 chapters. The **first chapter** draws our attention towards the multiple dualities in Indian emigration and also explaining the problems due to the dualities among emigrants. The one kind of duality is pictured among emigrants as the unrestricted 'pravasi' and the restricted 'aam pravasi' and the other two streams are 'emigration from India and Bharat'. Emigration from India means emigration of high skilled, English speaking people, where as emigration of low skilled loabourers, who can speak only vernacular languages of India is meant by emigration from Bharat.

Chapter two exhibits the current phase of emigration which is mainly led by Northern States especially Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as against the old concept of Southern States, especially Kerala and Tamil Nadu. As per the annual Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) data, the region wise share to the total share of emigration shows that the percentage share of South is now 38.35 per cent, which were the highest, is now less than the Northern region (39.19 %). UP and Bihar became the largest source states (based on emigration clearances [ECs]) in India in the recent past (from 2009 to 2012). In 2012, emigration clearances in UP has touched 191,341 as against 98178 in Kerala and Tamil Nadu has replaced by Bihar from the second place. One out of every four emigrants in India was from UP in 2011 and 2012. Women accounted for only 25,809 or 2.59 per cent of the total ECs for January 2009 to August 2010; out of these the vast majority (99.16 per cent) is above 30 years old. This chapter also discuss about the consequences of emigration on the labour market, demographic composition, and its impact on investment in education, skill formation…etc. and thus, the need for policies.

Chapter three of this book focuses on the profile of the emigrants from India in terms of gender, age, reasons for emigration, rural-urban character, caste composition, and also the profile of the emigrants from Kerala, their education and employment status, and profile of the emigration from new source states.

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ISSN:0971-1260

Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

- **Gender and Age Distribution**: Most of the emigrants from India are in the age group of 20-49 among both male and female. The average age is 25.8 for male emigrants and 19.0 for female emigrants in 2011.Most of the emigrants from major source states such as UP, Kerala, Bihar and Tamil Nadu are in the age group of 20-30 (2007-08).
- **Reasons for Emigration**: Insome of the leading source like Kerala, 70 per cent of the people in 1993-94 emigrated in search of employment but in 2007-08, 65 per cent emigrated due to change in employment. In other states like, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and new source states like UP, Bihar and Rajasthan there is an upward shift from those who emigrating in search of employment (i.e. for the first time) to those who emigrating due to changes in job (i.e. who already employed, seeking better employment).
- **Rural-Urban Distribution**: Another interesting finding is that in most of the states majority of the male emigrants are from rural areas and female emigrants are from urban areas. But if we compare from 1993-94 (49^{th} NNS Round) to 2007-08 (64^{th} NSS Round), there is an increase in the distribution of male emigrants from urban areas. In some states like Kerala, both rural-urban contributions are more or less same in 2007-08. Similarly, the contribution of female emigrants from rural is also increased over the period. In some states like Gujarat rural women are emigrating more than the urban ones.
- **Caste Composition**: Caste composition mainly shows the share of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) among emigrants. There is an increase in the share of SC emigrants from 5.4 per cent to 7.5 percent between 1993-94 and 2007-08 and a decline in the share of scheduled tribes from 1.9 per cent to 0.96 per cent in the same period.

Krishna Kumar and Irudaya Rajan argue that the emigration from the new source states will be male dominated than from the states like Kerala. Secondly, the educational and skilled levels are also likely to be lower among emigrants from new source states. The destination of most of the emigrants from India is Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The higher emigration to these countries evidences the lack of recruiting industries, professionalism, inadequate capitalism and lack of competition in India.

Chapter four examines the demand side of emigrant workers from India in GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE) and their response in the form of 'Nitaqat' policy due to the overburden of expatriate labourers. Here, the greater challenge of India is to raise

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Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

the skill level of the workers and make them more competitive in high skilled jobs. This chapter also tells about how Indian emigrants will be considered by the GCC countries and how India can help them in trade and other technology.

Even though migration is a personal decision it has wide implications. Therefore good governance is needed in the perspective of emigration at the national level. In analyzing governance the authors look at four aspects; policy, legislation, the administrative machinery and the systems and procedures. In the **fifth Chapter** they concentrate on policy. The other aspects are discussed in the subsequent chapters. India had no strong policies on emigration. The Emigration Act 1922 was merely an Act to amend the law relating to emigration. The inadequacy of the frame work of this Act resulted in the enactment of the Emigration Act, 1983. After that there was not such an Act or policies in the context of emigration. But in the new phase of emigration, policies are essential to encourage or discourage the emigration from highly populated and socially and economically less performed states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. **Chapter six** deals with legislation in India in the context of emigration. Emigration from the country is manly governed under the provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983 and Passport Act 1967 and the Passport Rules 1980 from time to time. But all these are outdated.

Chapter seven and chapter eight of the book look at the institutional architecture for emigration both at the central and state level and their working, successes and failures. **Chapter seven** emphasis the institutional support provided by the central government through the 'emigration authorities' under the provisions of the Emigration Act 1983. This chapter also describes the functions of emigration authorities, like protection of emigrants. The author remarked that in most cases the emigration establishments do not know whether they exists to protect the emigrants or-if so, how to facilitate them. It shows the inefficient working of the authorities. Other functions mentioned are emigration clearances, offences and penalties, capacity building and publications and statistics. The institutional system in India fails these respects without much success. However, there are some welcoming initiatives from the government like the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with a number of important countries of destination. This helps the standardization and strengthening of contracts among India and other member country, and promoting workers welfare, the establishment of the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)

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Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

in October 2009 and Migrant Resource Centers (MRCs) at Kochi, Hyderabad and Panchukula (Haryana) to generate awareness about the legal and safe emigration.

Chapter eight focuses on the state level institutional support. It describes the role of state in educational and industrial training, development planning and law and order in determining the quality of final outcome for the emigrants. So, state governments have fundamental role in the new phase of emigration. After the introduction of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001-02, the Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) was launched in 2009 with the objective of raising the enrolment rate from 52.6 per cent in 2005-06 to 75 per cent in 5 year. This chapter expresses the importance of National Skill Development Mission chaired by the Prime Minister in the skill development and. It also mentioned the role of state-level specialized agencies such as Non-resident Keralites' Affairs (NORKA), an institutional support agency in Kerala on the matters related to emigrants.

In **Chapter nine**, Krishna Kumar and Irudaya Rajan project the level of emigration in future based on the current trends. They present three sets of projections (scenario-1, scenario-2, and scenario -3) of the stocks of emigrants both at the national and state-level based on the data from the 49^{th} and 64^{th} Rounds carried out in the years 1993-94 and 2007-08 respectively. Under Scenario 1, projections of the total stock of emigrants rise from 6,557,277 in 2011 to 10,536,952 in 2021 and to 11,591,059 in the year 2031. In Scenario the stock of emigrants between 2011 and 2021 is likely to increase from 7,786020 to 10,010109 and 8,116,983 to 12,641,685 in Scenario 3. In short, the stock of emigrants in India is likely to increase by 3.98, 2.22 and 4.52 million under Scenario 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Scenario 1 and 2 project saturation in the stock of emigrants from India by 2031, whereas the growth in the stock of emigrants continued also in Scenario 3.

The state-wise projections of stock of emigrants reveal that among the major source states, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have already reached the saturation stock of emigrants by 2011. Beyond that there is not much increase in the number of emigrants and then starts falling. The case of Andhra Pradesh is also not much different. At the same time Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are keep on increasing in the stock under all the three Scenarios since they are the emerging source states. Scenario 3 projects continued growth in the case of Rajasthan, one of the new source states but Scenario 1 and 2 projects beyond 2021 there is not much growth in the stock of emigrants in Rajasthan. Hence government should frame policies accordingly.

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Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

Chapter 10 talks about the reinforcement of individual success. It says there is a fine distinction between 'individual success' and 'successful individual'. Krishna Kumar and Irudaya Rajan opine the state cannot celebrate only the highly successful-high profiled 'pravasi'. It should take the modest and unglamorous victories of 'aam pravasi', who may not be regarded as successful individual but can be considered as individual success since they manage to finish the work without compromising their dignity and struggling to send remittances to take care of their families. Emigration is not a general phenomenon, it often a specific one or there will be some prone areas within the states. So the authors also give a picture of both internal and international emigration prone areas in India and some of the emigration-prone districts in UP.

Chapter 11 focus on how to avoid the failure of state-level institution and make them success in the coming years in the new emigration states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The necessary steps put forward in this respect according to Krishna Kumar and Irudaya Rajan, are closing the gaps in education and training, adopt decentralized planning, leveraging remittances to create jobs in the industries in the manufacturing and services sectors, strengthening the enforcement machinery of the Emigration Act, 1983, enlarging the emigration authorities through the expansion of staffs- authorize District Magistrates (DMs) and Superintendents of Police (SPs) at the district level and Home Secretary and the Director General of Police (DGP) at the state level and other capabilities such as IT support, expanding the list of penalties and offences, seal loopholes and make emigration clearance more precise...etc.

Chapter 12 concludes the book, in which the authors state that if demography and diaspora linkages were the fundamental forces behind the earlier phase of emigration from the 1970s to the early years of the 21st century, then the new phase of emigration cannot be continued by the forces of demography alone but also by the reforms. Their major conclusions are:

a) The institutional support received by the emigrants from central and state governments are insufficient, which is neither able to prevent emigrants from exploitation nor reinforce their individual success trough public policy and action.
b) Legislation and governance are going to be critical to our success in emigration matter as a country of origin not the demographic determents.
c) Emigration is not a state-wide phenomenon; it is often localized at the district or even taluk levels. So government should focus specifically rather than the state as a whole.

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The authors suggest the MOIA to realize the new emigration trajectory of India and regain its enthusiasm for reforms and changes. Finally they conclude by stating the fierce urgency of 'now' for making emigration process "safe and gainful to the thousands of young men and women in 21st century India and is the appropriate time to conceptualize a noble ideal of 'migration justice' and deliver it to the 'pravasis', in general, and the 'aam pravasis', in particular".

Concluding remarks:

This book is not about the historical aspects of emigration from India but about the contemporary trends and trajectories. Generally, it is difficult to find out the recent and reliable data on migration or its different kind (emigration). In such a way, *Emigration in 21st Century India* addresses this gap by presenting extensive picture on contemporary labour emigration. This book offer insights for the policy makers and young scholars of migration to move forward.

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