

Roots and Routes



GRFDT
Global Research Forum on
Diaspora and Transnationalism

Monthly Newsletter of the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism

VOL.3, No. 6-7, June-July 2014



Roots and Routes disseminates the latest
information on research and policy developments
in Diaspora and transnationalism

www.grfdt.com

CONTENTS

03 GRFDT Activities

GRFDT Seminar

'I am a Tibetan': The politics of identity and belonging among young Tibetans in Sikkim

Professor Heaven Crawley

04 Interview

The Indian community is in need of a credible team of leaders who can work effectively with other communities and in the best interest of the nation. (Part-II)

Dr. Denison Jayasooria

There is a need for greater cooperation with countries of destination receptive to diaspora initiatives in view of the increasing emphasis on the migration-development nexus

Dr. Piyasiri Wickramaseka

10 Global Update

Editorial Information

©GRFDT. Roots and Routes is Printed, designed & circulated by GRFDT

Editor: Sadananda Sahoo

Guest Editor: Dr. Mahalingam M.

Editorial Board: Jitendra D. Soni, Kshipra Uke, Monika Bisht, Panchanan Dalai, Ravinder Singh, Rakesh Ranjan, Saroj K. Mahananda, Smita Tiwari, Vinod Kr. Choudhary, Vinod Sartape.

Design and Production: Monika Bisht and Rakesh Ranjan

Email: editor@grfdt.com

Website: www.grfdt.org

Editor's Message



It is a great feeling to be a guest editor again for the newsletter 'Roots and Routes'. Ever since inception, it has been carrying a potpourri of themes in the domain of Diaspora and Transnationalism. GRFDT has been organizing a series of talks to share, to discuss the on-going research and issues on global Diasporas. To follow up, a talk on the theme "I am a Tibetan: The politics of identity and belonging among young Tibetans in Sikkim" was organized. As the Tibetan movement for 'Free Tibet' is too long, the theme of the talk is so relevant as to do a reality check for 'Free Tibet' discourse with in young Tibetan community. The speaker dwelt upon the identity issues and political process within young Tibetan community living in Sikkim. It was an eye-opener for many of us who attended the talk as the speaker portrayed the young Tibetans living in Sikkim in different vein.

GRFDT interview section carries the continuation of Dr. Denison Jayasooria's interview who shares his views on Malaysian Indian situation. There is yet another interview with Dr. Piyasiri Wickramaseka who calls for constant engagement with Diaspora community for the development of home country. His interview reveals the various possible strategies to tap the potentials of Diaspora.

Global update section captures the various happenings on the front of Diaspora. This issue covers the GOPIO's Jubilee celebrations in Trinidad and Tobago, coinciding with the 169th anniversary of Indian arrival to Trinidad and Tobago. The other update is the remembrance of Komagata Maru incident in Canada to remind the young generation the importance of the event. We hope you enjoy reading and appreciate our efforts. The team at 'Roots and Routes' wishes all its readers a great and fruitful academic year 2014-2015 ahead

**Happy Reading !!!
Mahalingam M
Guest Editor**

GRFDT Seminar

'I am a Tibetan': The politics of identity and belonging among young Tibetans in Sikkim

Tibetan community is one of the strong diaspora community today, mostly residing in India as well as some parts of globe. GRFDT organised a talk on the theme 'I am a Tibetan': The politics of identity and belonging among young Tibetans in Sikkim'. The speaker, Professor Heaven Crawley, Centre for Migration Policy Research, Swansea University has highlighted the background of the making of Tibetan diaspora. Her study was based on personal interviews and observation. Since 1959 more than 120,000 Tibetans have followed the Dalai Lama into exile fearing religious, political and economic persecution and marginalization. Around 3,000 Tibetans continue to leave each year, crossing the Himalayas into Nepal and India. The majority of these refugees live in India which is also home to the headquarters of the Central Tibetan Administration(CTA), the government-in-exile established in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh.

Here are some of the excerpts from her talk. A significant proportion of Tibetans live in settlements established by the CTA with the support of the Indian authorities. Within these settlements, and the Tibetan community more generally, there is a strongly held view that the future of

Tibet - and of Tibetan language, culture and identity - depends upon the next generation of Tibetans, most of whom have never visited their homeland and who feel politically, economically and socially marginalized in India and who are increasingly looking to take advantage of opportunities for resettlement in the US, Canada and Europe.

At the same time there are growing political differences between young Tibetans about the best way of securing a future for Tibet, exemplified by calls by the Tibetan Youth Congress for a move away from the Dalai Lama's 'Middle Way' approach, and increasing incidences of self-immolation within Tibet, many involving young people under the age of 25.

These shifts raise important and as yet unexplored questions about the extent to which it will be possible to maintain a consistent narrative around Tibetan identity, language and culture and the ways in which any generational differences and differences between young Tibetan themselves might translate politically.



The Indian community is in need of a credible team of leaders who can work effectively with other communities and in the best interest of the nation: Dr. Denison Jayasooria (Part-II)

(Continued from Roots and Routes April-May 2014.)

Mahalingam. M: Could you compare and contrast Mr. Samyvellu and Mr. Palanivel as MIC chiefs? What are the challenges of MIC at present?

Denison Jayasooria: Political style and leadership approaches are different. Dato Seri SamyVellu is a dynamic personality speaker especially Tamil and controversial personality. He does not hold back his feelings both praises or anger. Datuk Palani is very different. He especially does not like the public stage and is not a dynamic speaker. He rarely displays any emotion in public.

However, both are strong personalities but their styles differ. While Datuk Palani might seem a weak leader, he has one advantage over Dato Seri Samy namely that he does not have any major financial accusations or Anti-corruption agency investigations. Also he is rarely attacked by the opposition.

While there seem to be many controversies on Dato Seri Samyvellu's time, it is now being remembered that he was dynamic. He engaged with various groups, he organised institutions (like MIED, University, YSS) and programs. The party seemed active and got high media coverage.

Dato Palani was hardly seen in the media, nor the party featured nor the party hosting events which are well highlighted including policy research and recommendations to government. Although he is a media person he has kept away from controversy and as a champion of the community. Some say he works better in negotiation style rather than open confrontation.

Mahalingam. M: What is your take on racial slur 'kafir-pendatangs' by Isma recently? Why it recurs now and then in Malaysia?

Denison Jayasooria: This is wrong and a wrong understanding of Malaysian history. This nation was built on the toil of all the communities. While a majority of Malaysian Chinese and Indians came during the time of the British and worked on the colonial economy, after independence, the nation was built on the rich resources of both rubber and tin. It was only later that it diversified. Also the Federal constitution and independence struggle was a joint effort of all the communities.

Right wing politics based on political insecurity is not just a feature here but in many parts of the world. It is one position and within democratic societies they too have a place but within limits. Unfortunately when their leaders raise racial or religious right wing sentiments there seems to be very little action by authorities.

There are sufficient Penal code provisions for hate speeches or actions. The authorities must act in the best interest of the nation and community harmony. Indian political leaders must play a major role to defuse these tensions, build bridges and seek conflict resolution

It is said that this style of politics is being supported by certain sections of the ruling elite to discredit the opposition. It is politicising the issues and these developments are dangerous in the long run.

Truth and justice must prevail. Federal authorities must respond in fairness and not show favouritism or double standards in the execution of the law.

Mahalingam. M: Is racial divide growing or declining under Najib's rule? Are there any policy measures to improve ethnic or race relations?

Denison Jayasooria: At the level of everyday relationships there is peace and harmony. However the political discourse especially by politicians is racially and religiously charged. This is a contraction to the 1 Malaysia slogan of the PM who calls for greater appreciation of diversity and mutual respect. However some groups have been interpreting both ethnicity and religion from a very right wing position inconsistent with the Federal Constitution. The Federal political leaders seem to remain silent, especially the PM and this is causing insecurity among the general population.

One positive step forward was the establishment of the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) on Nov 25, 2014 with the mandate to prepare the National Unity Blueprint. I am a member of the joint secretariat as our Institute of Ethnic Studies has been tasked to write the draft document with input from the 30 NUCC members and through public consultations. The NUCC is exploring and studying different legislations and mechanisms to enhance national unity, social cohesion and reconciliation.

Mahalingam. M: The Hindu-Buddhist historical site Bujang valley was destroyed by the property developer recently. Why the Malaysian government has not taken steps to protect such priceless, historical monuments that were left out idle? There has been communalization of history text books by the government. Could you give your comment?

Denison Jayasooria: There has not been much highlight on this historical site, while some Indian groups have been reminding Malaysian society about their concerns on destruction. Very often in decision making commercial interest and profits might be a greater temptation rather than preservation of historical and natural resources. The public outcry on this has come to the attention of authorities.

Selective historical writings or promotion of certain historical interpretations are a concern especially in history text books. Government has appointed panels to review this and there Indian community leaders must be vigilant in ensuring accurate historical writings are promoted.

Greater awareness is needed and stronger public advocacy of preservation of our historical and cultural legacy. A number of research based voluntary organisations have emerged. In this context the promotion of history and cultural studies as the post graduate levels are essential.

Mahalingam. M: What was the key role of Puan Sri JanakyAthiNahappan, who passed away very recently in Malaysian freedom struggle and in MIC?

Denison Jayasooria: Unfortunately I have never met her or her husband but heard a lot about them from by parents. She was outstanding in her time as the early role in the INA and the early founding of the MIC. My dad the late Daniel Jayaratnam of Banting was also in the INA and a founding member of the MIC.

I have followed the work of her husband Dato AthiNahappan, who was a Minister in the Cabinet. He is always remembered by the Royal Commission that he chaired on local government.

They were dedicated workers for the party, community and nation. I am sure they will be disappointed the way the current leaders are managing the party as well as the nation as it might not be based on the vision they had as founding members of the MIC and part of the independence struggle for Malaysia.

Mahalingam. M: The champion of migrant worker Irene Fernandes who passed away in the recent past, was harassed by the Malaysian government for revealing the human rights abuses against

migrant workers in Malaysia. Despite harassment and intimidation, she led the campaign bravely in defense of migrant workers. Has Malaysian state acknowledged her legacy or not?

Denison Jayasooria: Both the recent death of Ireme Fernandes and Karpal Singh are a major loss to Malaysian society. Both are Malaysians of Indian origin but they championed for all communities from a human rights basis. Irene has fought for the rights of migrant workers and other marginalised communities including women and sex workers in Malaysian society. She is fearless in her work and paid the price for standing up for truth and justice. The life of Karpal Singh is well documented in the Karpal Singh: Tiger of Jelutong, a 325-page biography of Karpal Singh, Chairman of the Democratic Action Party, written by New Zealand journalist Tim Donoghue, and published by Singapore's Marshall and Cavendish. Unfortunately as both personalities are linked to the opposition, the current ruling elites have not recognised their contributions to Malaysian society but both these personalities have won the hearts and minds of the ordinary Malaysians as reflected during their funerals and memorial services.

Mahalingam. M: According to you, what are the contributions of Indians to Modern Malaysia?

Denison Jayasooria: Most academic writing on Malaysian Indians has focused on the poverty and marginalisation of the community. The studies and popular discourse have been on the working class and plantation sector and now more pertaining to urban poor in high rise flats. Very little is written as the contributions of Malaysian Indians in the field of education, medicine, law, sports, music, drama, trade unions, civil society and politics. We have had giants in these fields but very little is documented and the popular discourse in on the bottom 40% or crime related issues. It is a kind of stereotyping of the community and this does great damage to the image and identify of the community. Malaysian Indians played a major role in building the educational system especially the schools, with sizable number being English language school in the post-independence to the early 1970s. This also includes institutions of higher education especially in medicine and law. In these two fields, Indians continue to play a major role.

=====
Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria is the Principal Research Fellow, Institute of Ethnic Studies, UKIM, Malaysia. Published in the Star on May 13, 2013 on page 34

* The views expressed here are of Dr. Denison Jayasooria's.

Xth Migration Summer School conducted by Migration Policy Centre, Florence

The 10th Migration Summer School organised by the MPC in Florence from Monday 23 June until Friday 4 July 2014. 23 participants selected from India, China, Turkey, Israel, Palestine, USA, Germany, Sweden, Bahrain, Lebanon, Italy, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and other parts of the worlds participated in the programme. The participants include doctoral and post-doctoral researchers, as well as civil servants and professionals participated in the programme.

The summer school critically questions some of the assumptions underlying much of the contemporary academic, political and media debate surrounding migration. This includes, above all, the notion that migration is a fundamental problem that needs to be managed, contained and regulated. Some of the important issues discussed during summer school are; Migration Theories, Methodologies, International Statistics on Migration, Legal Aspects of the Exter-

nal Dimension of European Migration Policy, Diasporas and Development along with many other contemporary dimensions.

Re-framing how we view migration can shift the discourse of migration from purely security and integration concerns to start thinking about migration as a creative asset. Migration gives migrant-receiving countries a fundamental competitive edge over non-migrant receiving countries, and it helps open doors for migrant-sending countries. This re-framing will take place from a number of different disciplinary perspectives, including law, economics, demography and sociology. While each discipline approaches the study of migration differently, we will see how these approaches are ultimately complementary and necessary for a comprehensive academic understanding of a complex phenomenon.

Report by Rakesh Ranjan, GRFDT from Florence

There is a need for greater cooperation with countries of destination receptive to diaspora initiatives in view of the increasing emphasis on the migration-development nexus: **Dr. Piyasiri Wickramaseka**

There should be due recognition, regular engagement with, and provision of support as needed to the diaspora communities by home countries, says **Dr. Piyasiri Wickramasekara**, Vice-President of Global Migration Policy Associates, Geneva, in an interview with **Dr. Sadananda Sahoo**, Editor, Roots and Routes.



Sadananda Sahoo: In a globalised world, International migration is affecting almost every country now. Do you think it is a positive sign?

Piyasiri Wickramasekara: International migration can affect countries as origin, transit and destination, and some countries like India and Pakistan represent all three. The number of nation states have increased four times in the past century or so to about 200, which means more borders to cross. While it is true that migration is affecting many countries, mobility of people and labour is still limited compared to mobility of capital and trade flows. I have described international migration as the 'missing link' of globalization elsewhere.[1] The share of international migrants in the world has been around three per cent of the global population in the past six decades or so. There is a vast array of migration controls and restrictions across countries which limit international mobility.

Greater mobility across borders is to be welcomed for better employment and educational opportunities, higher global prosperity and cross cultural interchange. Families at home could benefit from more remittances and diaspora links. Yet greater mobility can also lead to growing xenophobia and hostility towards migrants as being experienced in Europe, especially the UK, today. Forced migration through poverty, persecution, armed conflict or natural disasters can pose problems and cause tension between origin and destination countries. What we should strive for is a situation where migration occurs by free choice, and not by need, as argued by the Global Commission on International Migration. This of course, cannot be expected in the foreseeable future.

Sadananda Sahoo: How do you locate South Asia in the International migration map?

Piyasiri Wickramasekara: South Asia hosted 12.4 million or 5.3 of the global migrant stock of 231.5 million (immigrants) in 2013 according to the United Nations. It is also a major source region of low skilled and skilled migration flows to other parts of the world, and the World Bank has estimated the emigrant stock from South Asia at 27 million in 2010. For example, Indian skilled workers are found in many advanced countries. The main migration corridor for temporary migrant workers from South Asia is the Gulf Cooperation Council countries including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. South Asian workers also migrate to Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong SAR and the Republic of Korea mainly as temporary workers. South Asia received 111 billion out of a total of 404 billion of global remittances to developing countries in 2013, and India with \$ 70 billion in 2013 is the largest recipient of remittances in the world. At the same time, South Asia is host to millions of migrants from other South Asian countries. South Asia hosted 2.2 million refugees in 2013 with Pakistan hosting 1.7 million, mostly from Afghanistan. But no South Asian country has yet acknowledged itself as an immigration country. There is no visible regional labour market in South Asia as in ASEAN (Association of South East Asian nations) where Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are major destination countries for ASEAN migrants. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is yet to place migration on its agenda unlike the ASEAN.

Sadananda Sahoo: Your scholarly work in the areas of International migration and labour issues is well known and you have also widely travelled. Can you tell about some of the best practices that any country adopted towards the migrant communities and why so?

Piyasiri Wickramasekara: As a matter of fact, there are more 'bad' practices than 'good' practices in this area (I prefer to avoid the term 'best' practices since we cannot pretend to be aware of the universe of existing practices to select

the best). There are different types of migration: permanent migration, temporary migration, forced migration, skilled and low skilled migration, and regular and irregular migration, among others. Good practices on labour migration are to be found in international instruments relating to migration, and the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration contains a long list of good practices across countries arranged by principles and guidelines in international instruments, which is being regularly updated in the ILO database on good practices.[2] In regard to permanent migration, long-standing settler countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand have evolved multicultural policies and good integration practices for migrants. They have also managed to build public consensus on the need for migrants and recognized their contribution to the economy and society. These countries have laid down transparent and clear criteria for admission of migrants and their families. Ratification of international migrant worker Conventions and respect for their provisions through national legislation and enforcement is a good practice, but major destination countries have fallen behind in this respect. In the Asian region, the Philippines provides the best example of an origin country which has ratified all three international migrant worker Conventions (ILO Migration for employment Convention, 1949 (No.97), ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) and the 1990 International (UN) Convention on the Protection for the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families) as well as the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). The European Union's free mobility of people and labour for all EU citizens is a very good practice of what can be achieved through deep economic integration. EU citizens are entitled to equal treatment and non-discrimination when they move across borders.

It is less common to find good practices for admission and treatment of temporary migrant workers as seen from rampant abuse and exploitation of such workers in the Middle East. A clear admission of the need for low skilled migrant workers by the introduction of a legal migration programme for them is another good practice followed by the Taiwan province of China in the early 1990s and the Republic of Korea since 2004 when they introduced the Employment Permit System to bring in low skilled workers. For some temporary migrants, Australia, Sweden and USA, among others, have defined pathways for permanent residency and citizenship unlike in the Gulf countries, where there are virtually no prospects for naturalisation for migrant workers and families despite long stays.

Bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding to govern labour migration flows and protect migrant workers are another good practice in all regions of the world, and a number of South Asian governments have signed such agreements with the GCC countries, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea. They however, lack transparency and their implementation has fallen far short of expectations except perhaps in the case of the Republic of Korea.

In dealing with high incidence of irregular migration, amnesties and regularisation exercises present a very good practice as seen in the Spanish regularisation exercise of 2005, and in Southern European countries such as Italy. The USA carried a major regularisation exercise in 1986, but has not repeated it since then resulting in an irregular population exceeding 12 million today. Malaysia and Thailand in Asia have also introduced regularisation programmes, but their implementation has impinged on migrant rights in some cases.

SS: Over the time South Asians are found in almost every part of the globe we call them as "diaspora". Do you think the diasporic link is a welcome sign for the home countries?

PW: Diaspora communities develop through emigration of nationals to other countries over time. The estimates of the diasporas of South Asian countries vary widely with 21 million estimated for India followed by seven million in Pakistan. Overseas Indians and overseas Chinese form two of the largest diaspora groups in the world. Diasporas link home countries with countries of settlement. As the High Level Committee of the India diaspora stated: "The Indian Diaspora spans the globe and stretches across all the oceans and continents..... They live in different countries, speak different languages and are engaged in different vocations. What gives them their common identity are their Indian origin, their consciousness of their cultural heritage and their deep attachment to India".

It is a welcome development in that home countries see an extension of their influence and cultures in other parts of the world. Overseas Indians are a well-recognised group in many developed countries such as Australia, Canada, the UK and the USA, and have influenced home country development through transfer of remittances, technology, investments, and influencing economic reforms. The downside of out-migration over time is the exodus of skilled persons which can constitute a brain drain, especially for small economies. But India and China have shown that diaspora communities can promote gainful brain circulation. The mere presence of a diaspora community however, does not guarantee that it is

beneficial to the home country. The second and third generations may not have the same bonds and relations with home countries. There should be due recognition, regular engagement with, and provision of support as needed to the diaspora communities by home countries. At the same time, development in some countries can be negatively affected by actions of hostile diaspora community action that fuels and sustains insurgencies and conflict as experienced by Eritrea, Kosovo, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

Sadananda Sahoo: There are hostilities toward the immigrants in many countries, including within South Asia. What should be done to overcome this?

Piyasiri Wickramasekara: Indeed this is an unfortunate trend. The September 2011 events in the USA have also reinforced a worldwide tendency to view migrants, especially those in irregular status, as a security threat to host countries. Since no country in South Asia has acknowledged itself as an immigration country, most immigrants may find themselves in irregular or informal status. Free mobility is practised only between India and Nepal under their 1950 Friendship Treaty. Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees for several decades, and now there is growing resentment at their presence.

It is very important to educate the public on the contributions of immigrants to host society. Building public consensus on the need for migrants and their role in promoting growth, and cultural and social diversity should be highlighted by governments, the media and civil society. Host country governments should recognise that immigrants deserve the same treatment they expect for their emigrant nationals abroad. Thus they need adopt appropriate measures to avoid xenophobic and racist tendencies in the form of strong legislation, and zero tolerance of such practices accompanied by effective enforcement. All immigrants should enjoy basic human rights as guaranteed by universal human rights instruments widely ratified by most countries. Equal treatment and non-discrimination are the cardinal principles promoted in international human rights instruments. Politicians and the media should play a responsible role without fueling anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiments among the public. The issue of Bangladesh migrants in India is one such example of a highly sensitive issue, with Indian politicians and the media often quoting exaggerated estimates of those in irregular status. Regional and bilateral cooperation and dialogue are essential to sort out such issues. Civil society organizations and human rights bodies should also play their role in advocating respect for human rights of immigrants.

Sadananda Sahoo: Which are the areas that need to be taken by national governments back home for facilitating the diasporic link for development back home?

Piyasiri Wickramasekara: The first step is getting to know the diaspora. Building a database of diaspora populations in different countries and their profiles is very important. At present few countries have access to this information. It is equally important to give due recognition to the diaspora communities and their diversity. Diaspora groups can be quite diverse in terms of skill and occupational profiles, ethnicity, migration status, and duration of stay abroad. A common tendency on the part of governments has been to bet on the intellectual or elite diaspora groups leaving out the less fortunate diaspora, low income and often low skilled. It is also important to avoid a 'golden goose' approach in dealing with the diaspora and treating them merely as a resource to be exploited for the benefit of home countries. Diaspora engagement is a two way process where home countries also should reach out and support diasporas as needed. A conducive policy environment at home is very important in the form of stable political systems, a growing economy, respect for democratic rights, transparency and access to information. This is more important than providing costly incentives and concessions to an already favoured diaspora community. Embassies and consulates should play a pro-active role in interacting, supporting and engaging with the diaspora. There is also a need for greater cooperation with countries of destination which are now more receptive to diaspora initiatives in view of the increasing emphasis on the migration-development nexus. The second and third generations also need to be encouraged to develop links with the home countries.

On the institutional side, a number of countries in Asia and Africa have established dedicated ministries and high level councils to promote diaspora relations. The Indian Government has launched several initiatives to mainstream diasporas including diaspora youth programmes, annual high level diaspora forums, establishment of the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre, and setting up a Prime Ministers' Global Advisory Council of People of Indian Origin. At the state level, a good practice is the Department of Non-Resident Keralites Affairs (NORKA) to safeguard the interests of Non-Resident Keralites (the Kerala diaspora) set up by the Government of Kerala in 1996. The Philippines established the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) in 1980 to promote and uphold the interests of Filipino emigrants and permanent residents abroad. Pakistan has developed a National Policy for Overseas Pakistanis for maximizing the welfare and empowerment of Pakistani diaspora working in different countries in the world

Sadananda Sahoo: Can you please tell about the role of Sri Lankan diaspora in home country's development? We hear that Sri Lankan diaspora's engagement is more related to religious philanthropy than other social sector engagement.

Piyasiri Wickramasekara: There is very limited information on the Sri Lankan diaspora and their contributions. The Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare Sri Lanka attempted to establish an online database for registration of the diaspora, but I gather that the response has been poor. The Ministry acknowledges that while overseas Sri Lankans are one of the most worthy assets of Sri Lanka, the government is yet to take positive initiatives to harness their potential for mutual benefit. There has been no attempt to develop a coherent policy or establish institutional mechanisms to engage with the diaspora as yet.

There is a sizeable diaspora in Western countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA because of permanent migration of skilled persons over several decades, and also because of high levels of emigration of persons of Tamil ethnicity during years of conflict as refugees to neighbouring India and other destinations and also for seeking better economic opportunities to many Western countries. This has given rise to a divisive diaspora which has negatively contributed to sustain the insurgency and conflict situation in Sri Lanka. Following the end of the conflict by the Sri Lankan government, the President made an appeal for unity and diaspora support for the reconstruction of the North and the East, but the response from the Tamil diaspora abroad has been very limited, who still seem to be following a separatist agenda.

I do not have much information on religious philanthropy of the Sri Lankan diaspora, which may be mostly on an ad hoc basis. The best demonstration of the diaspora potential was during the 2004 Tsunami disaster when diverse groups of the diaspora across the world mobilised large amounts of funds and goods for the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of affected areas. However, this diaspora engagement was short-lived, and we are yet to see the emergence of strong Sri Lanka diaspora organizations in major countries of destination

Sadananda Sahoo: Thank you

=====

Dr. Piyasiri Wickramasekara is Vice-President of Global Migration Policy Associates, Geneva - an international NGO of migration experts; he is an internationally recognized expert in development, migration and employment issues. He obtained his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Cambridge (UK). He joined the International Labour Organization in 1985, and was Senior Migration Specialist in the International Migration Branch of the ILO from 2001 to 2010. Previously he was Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of Sri Lanka, 1968-1984. His expertise covers: Asian labour migration, governance of migration, migration and development, circular migration, rights of migrant workers, irregular migration, and migration statistics. He steered the development of the National Labour Migration Policy in Sri Lanka in 2007-08 which has been a model for other countries including some in Africa. He was part of the team that developed the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006) and was joint-author of the 2010 ILO flagship product, International labour migration: A rights-based approach. Recent publications include "Circular Migration: A triple win or a dead end?" and "Labour migration in South Asia: A review of issues, policies and practices."

[1] http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1898868

[2] <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/migmain.home>

Global Update

GOPIO's 25th Anniversary Jubilee ignited the Diaspora Spirit

Port of Spain: June 5, 2014: The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO International) has concluded its 25th Anniversary (Jubilee) Convention 2014 in Port of Spain in Trinidad and Tobago, with a memorable and highly successful celebration from 27th May through 30th May, 2014 coinciding with the 169th anniversary of Indian Arrival Day commemoration in Trinidad and Tobago.

The convention was an historic event in the Indian Diaspora attended by delegates from several countries where GOPIO is prominent and where persons of Indian origin

reside in substantial numbers and even small numbers. Countries include: Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Malaysia, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, India, South Africa, Netherlands and other countries of the European Union (EU), UK, Canada, USA, and the Caribbean region: Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Belize, St. Vincent, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Grenada and St Lucia.

Among the many events of the convention, some of the notable highlights include: Welcome reception at the Diplomatic Centre residence of Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, GOPIO's elections

for new officers, all-day academic conference, special guests at cultural performances held at National Cultural of Indian Culture (NCIC), and unveiling of arrival monument marking the first arrivals of indentured Indian laborers in Trinidad.

Reception at Prime Minister's Residence

A significant highlight of GOPIO's 25th Anniversary Jubilee Convention was the special welcome reception of GOPIO delegates at the Diplomatic Centre residence of the Hon Prime Minister Kamla Persad Bissessar on 28th May. The reception was hosted by Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration with Minister Dr Roger Samuel making the initial remarks, followed by GOPIO International president Ashook Ramsaran and presentation of gifts. Hon Prime Minister Kamla Persad Bissessar formally welcomed GOPIO's delegates, recounted GOPIO's special reception/dinner during the visit to the Kolkata Memorial on 12th January, 2012 and thanked GOPIO for holding its 25th Anniversary Jubilee Convention in Trinidad and Tobago. In attendance were several ministers and members of parliament of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago as well as the Indian High Commissioner HE Gauri Gupta. The evening included a special celebratory treat of Caribbean and Indian music with delegates joining in dancing.

On 28th May, a Business-to-Business seminar featuring prominent scholars and business leaders was held at the Radisson Hotel. It was sponsored by Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Trade and Investment. Sessions include: Investment and Trade Opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago; Investment and Trade Opportunities in St Vincent and Grenadines; Investment and Trade Opportunities in Guyana; Success Stories of Doing Business in the Caribbean; Free Enterprise, Market Economy and Business Successes; The Growth of Education and Medical Services for Bi-Lateral Trade; Media as Marketing Tool in Emerging Economies

The Academic Conference segment of the convention was a full 1-day event held on 29th May at the Radisson Hotel. There were several sessions designed round the convention theme of "Indian Diaspora Today and Tomorrow" The chief guest at the Inaugural Session was Indian High Commissioner HE Gauri Gupta and the keynote speaker Dr Mahin Gosine, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at SUNY, New York, USA. Prof Kumar Mahabir, Assistant Professor at University of Trinidad and Tobago, concluded the session.

Other sessions with prominent and suitably qualified speakers from several countries were: Global and Regional Diaspora Investments and Economic Opportunities; The Indian Diaspora: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities; Diaspora's Youth, Children, Gender and Inter-Generational Issues; Multi-Cultural Diversity and Inter-Ethnic Cooperation in the Indian

Diaspora; Education, Science and Technology as Significant Assets in the Indian Diaspora; Health, Wellness, Lifestyle and Nutritional Factors in the Indian Diaspora; GOPIO's 25th Anniversary Resolutions; Wrap-up and Conclusion.

Gala and Jubilee Recognition

The Jubilee Recognition Gala was another highlight of GOPIO's 25th Anniversary (Jubilee) Convention 201, held on 29th May, 2014 in the Grand Ballroom at the Radisson Hotel in Port of Spain. In attendance was Indian High Commissioner HE Gauri Gupta, Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Trade and Investment, Dr. Vasant Bharath; and Min. Ramona Ramdial, Minister in the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources. The event was emceed by prominent radio and television host Zelisa Boodoosingh.

GOPIO's Jubilee Recognition for outstanding achievements in selected categories were awarded to several persons "who contributed to the betterment of people of the Indian Diaspora. The Jubilee Recognition recipients achieved significant and prominent levels of stature and recognition in their respective fields of endeavor and have served interests of people in their respective countries of domicile and others as well, in addition to generating pride and respect among the Indian Diaspora and others in country of birth or domicile".

In addition to recognition of those who contributed to GOPIO's formation in 1989 as well as all previous life members, GOPIO recognized the newest life members since 6th January, 2014. Elections were held by GOPIO International Council for several positions in GOPIO at the international level.

Indian Arrival Monument at Waterloo-by-the-Sea

The Indian Arrival Monument at Waterloo-by-the-Sea was unveiled on 30th May 2014, the 169th anniversary of Indian Arrival Day in Trinidad and Tobago, another significant and historic marker of the journey of Indian migration to other lands for better livelihood. The monument is another commemorative milestone marker in honored tribute and well deserved recognition of the first arrivals of indentured Indian laborers in Trinidad and Tobago. This unveiling was attended by Trinidad and Tobago's Ministers Dr. Suruj Rambachan MP, supporter Minister Ramona Ramdial, Counselors Abdool and Seepersad, Couva Regional Chairman Henry Awong, among many others officials. GOPIO International President Ashook Ramsaran and Indian High Commissioner HE Gauri Gupta unveiled the monument in the presence of hundreds of people including several "legacy generation" persons, a few over 100 years old.

Komagata Maru incident remembered in Canada

Komagata Maru incident, that marks the rare courage of the Gurdit Singh to fight against injustice by the then Canadian Government towards Sikhs community was remembered recently with the commemoration with a series of events including introducing a postal stamp in Canada. The Komagata Maru incident was largely forgotten in Canada, even though it ended in a tragedy as on its return to India in late September, the British police boarded the ship in Budge Budge, a riot ensued and 19 passengers were killed in firing and over 200 arrested. Several events are being held recently in Canada to mark that watershed event. The Vancouver Maritime Museum is hosting the ongoing Komagata Maru: Challenging Injustice exhibition; The Surrey Museum has the multimedia Echoes of the Komagata Maru; The Surrey Art Gallery is showing Ruptures in Arrival: Art in the Wake of the Komagata Maru; and the Museum of Vancouver has two concurrent events.

Komagata Maru incident took place in 1914 has historical background. By the end of the Second World War, the British colonies were shrinking. In Canada and America, the immigration policies were very restrictive especially for the Asians in those days. Those who fled from the British Colonies to Canada and America were not even admitted as refugees. Many Punjabis arrived at shore of Canada were refused entry to the country. The news about the restricted and discriminatory immigration policy against the Asians spread like wild fire across the world. Many Sikh organisations and associations started registering their protest at the international platform and brought this issue to the world. Such scattered efforts did not yield result as desired by Indians. News about restricted immigration policy also travelled to Hong Kong where a sizeable majority of the Punjabis were living and working. In a courageous act, a Sikh Business man Gurdit Singh from Hong Kong organised some people and thought of hiring a Japanese vassal namely *Komagata Maru* to take 376 Indian passengers to British Columbia, Canada. The effort by Gurdit Singh was to protest against the restrictive immigration policy of the Ca-

nadian Government. The Japanese vassal was carrying Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims. The message about the vassal reached to the Canadian Government. On arrival of the vassal, Canadian Government refused to allow the passengers onboard to enter into Canada. The Canadian Border Security Agency treated this vassal as illegal. It was termed as smuggling of human beings illegally into Canada by the government of Canada. A small number of passengers were allowed to enter into Canada and the remaining were sent back to the country of origin. Such act on behalf of the government of Canada got negative publicity across the globe. Not only India but other countries also stood by such step on the part of the Asians.

The resentment was high among the Asians against the government of Canada. Representation by various social as well as political bodies exercised tremendous pressure from all corners on the government of Canada resulting into change in the immigration policy in 1967. According to this new policy the immigrants were accepted on point systems rather than on race or country of origin.

The step taken by Gurdit Singh won accolades among the Punjabi Diaspora elsewhere. Today Canada is known to be a multicultural country where people from all countries reside. Punjabis over the time have established their solid presence by sending elected members to the parliament of Canada. Punjabis joined all kinds of professions in Canada. In a rare gesture of humility, the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, expressed apology to the Indo-Canadian community for the injustice done in the past during a public function. Gurdit Singh died at the age of 95 but left an imprint on the minds of the Punjabis for his courage and audacity to give light to this incident.

The postal department of the government of Canada released a postal stamp to mark 100th anniversary of Komagata Maru Incident. By doing, the government of Canada won the hearts of the millions of Punjabis living in Canada.

Report by Rahul Bailey, GRFDT

We invite Students, Researchers and Faculty Members to submit a small write up of their achievements and awards to the editor. It will provide the scholars a platform to connect with peer groups working on themes related to Diaspora and Transnationalism. Information related to seminar/conferences/events can be sent to the Editor at: editor@grfddt.com