

Roots and Routes

Monthly Newsletter of the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism

Vol. 2, No. 3, March 2013



GRFDT

Global Research Forum on
Diaspora and Transnationalism



Participants during the GRFDT seminar on "Life-World in a Cross-Cultural Marriage"

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

www.grfdt.org

CONTENTS

03 GRFDT Activities

GRFDT Seminar on Life-World in a Cross-Cultural Marriage by **Dr. Renuka Singh**

05 Interview

In the era of globalization, qualified and educated people supported with realistic perception and positive attitudes will enhance co-existence of peaceful multicultural relations: **Prof. Yossomsakdi**

07 Article

Southern Italy as a Nexus of Women's Transnational Migration by **Laura E. Ruberto**

09 Book Review

Diasporas in the New Media age: Identity, Politics and Community
Abhay Chawla

12 GRFDT Activities 2012-13

Editorial Information

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

Editor: Sadananda Sahoo

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

Design and Production: Monika Bisht and Rakesh Ranjan

**Email: editor@grfdt.com
Website: www.grfdt.org**

Editor's Message



Dear All,

GRFDT has completed a full year. During the year, we conducted a series of seminars related to important themes on diaspora and transnationalism. A total of twenty three papers were presented by scholars, in which thirteen were from India and ten from abroad. Wide ranging issues were covered that included diaspora policy, gender, literature, culture and quite a few of them were comparative studies, thus providing insights into many new areas and mapping a broader picture of diaspora/ transnationalism as well as homeland/hostland engagement.

Though GRFDT has been a modest beginning at out end, it nevertheless enriches us with ideas and directions to march ahead and reach, especially, to the younger research scholars. The overwhelming cooperation from students, scholars and researchers both within and outside India has augmented our activities to be more inclusive and global in nature. Besides the regular talks, we also receive articles and news from our readers. The interview section covers the views of many renowned scholars and young scholars.

The present issue carries coverage on a talk "Life-world in a Cross-Cultural Marriage" by Dr. Renuka Singh where she explores the nature, form, content and direction of the cross-cultural marriages in a global world marked by large scale migration. The interview with Prof. Yossomsakdi reveals how the mobility of educated people has made many societies multicultural in different parts of our globe. He also talks about the lives of the Indians living in Thailand. The article on "Southern Italy as a Nexus of Women's Transnational Migration" by Laura E. Ruberto, explores how the migrated women negotiate in the transnational space.

The newsletter also features news, book review and information related to seminar/conferences. Hope our effort to reach out to various researchers during the last one year bears some results. Wish your con-tinuous support for nurturing GRFDT!

Sadananda Sahoo

GRFDT Seminar

Cross-Cultural Marriages are on rise among Second and Third Generation Indian Diaspora: **Dr. Renuka Singh**

International migration created profound impact on the way human being live and interact. Unlike earlier migration, where only working male were the main constituents, the post liberalised migration witnessed more number of women participation. The impact of international migration felt in many areas including the marriage.

Speaking at a seminar organised by Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) on 16 March 2013 on the topic "Life-World in Cross Cultural Marriages", Dr. Renuka Singh of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India highlighted some interesting development among cross cultural human relations. The growing international migration not only opened opportunities for cross cultural contacts, but also provided opportunities to actualise these interactions in marriages. Based on the case studies and interviews in North America, Europe and India, she finds that the second and third generation of Indian diaspora is increasingly opting for cross-cultural marriages. She has also brought out the lived experiences of some of these marriages which are successful as well as unsuccessful. What makes these marriages so attractive?

Dr. Singh finds some interesting answers. According to her findings these marriages provide opportunity to have



Dr. Renuka Singh

their individual growth, especially in the professional front. Some couple prefer to become international identity or global citizens rather than national citizens with narrow identity. For some these marriages also provide opportunity to learn from each other thus nurturing cross fertilisation of world views.

She finds that these marriages have also serious challenges in many fronts. Most of these marriages do not last longer. "About 50% of these cross cultural marriages are failure in India", she said. This failure happens due to factors such as joint family and mother-in-law syndrome which does not allow freedom to the married couple. In a mixed marriage, some differences are celebrated while some became a matter of contention. These marriages also have impact on kids when they grow up. These marriages often undergo tough times as there is constant change of location, diet, culture, which creates difficulties in adjustment to new situation.

There are also legal and citizenship issues involved in these cross-cultural marriages. Foreign wives used to have legal problems related to the right to property in India till recently. Now they can get People of Indian Origin (PIO) card.



Dr. G Srinivas

Another interesting observation in her study shows that “Indian lady marrying westerner becomes more westerner than the native western lady. Similar things happen to the foreign lady marrying to Indian husband”. This phenomenon arises due to insecurity, she mentioned.

The discussant Mr Abhay Chawla while giving his remark on the talk by Dr Singh mentioned about the importance of the institution of marriage in the Indian context. With the advent of globalization and the new Indian traveller due to livelihood and other reasons, the importance of understanding cross-cultural marriages has increased. He was of the opinion that the chances of such cross-cultural marriages succeeding will depend on the “vision regarding family” that the two individuals who decide to enter into matrimony have. The vision will provide the operative procedures to negotiate knotty issues regarding culture especially raising children.

Answering questions of Dr. G. Srinivas, faculty of CSSS, JNU on whether these marriages lead to family and how many of them are successful? Dr. Singh mentioned that cross-cultural marriages are not same as conventional families. Some people could make it success and while some could not. These marriages are non-traditional and often by the rebels in their own culture. These marriages are also preferred by the people who have ‘romantic/

exotic ideas’ about the partners’ culture. She also mentioned that these cross-cultural marriages work as ‘compensator’ and increases their self-esteem in the own culture as many of them don’t find partners of their choice due to many reasons. Dr. Singh said though the success rate is not so much; nuclear territory has more success as compared to the living in joint family.

“How many of these cross-cultural marriages are interreligious?” Answering to the above question by Vasudha, a student of CSSS, JNU, Dr. Singh said that most of these marriages are interreligious. However, these marriages does not cross the class boundaries, she said. Most of these marriages are among lower to lower class. Interreligious marriages have been often run through difficult times as there is always misunderstanding in rituals, visit to religious places and socialising kids.

Infertility is also a big issue in cross-cultural marriages. Dr. Singh mentioned that “in most of these cases the couple prefer to have adoption”. She predicted that the Cross-cultural marriages will increase in the future due to mobility of people and contact with new society. The best thing about this is that the “new global kids” will create a culture of cross-cultural marriages.



Call for Application: Course on Researching the Contemporary

Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi

The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) invites applications for its two-month Course on ‘Researching the Contemporary’. This cross-disciplinary Course will critically examine the formation of the contemporary and its multiple histories, ideologies, forms and affects. The three courses offered will enable participants to familiarize themselves with concepts, theories

and methods that help analyse the contemporary.

The Course will be conducted over 8 weeks between 1 July-31 August 2013. Applications are invited from M.Phil/ Ph.D students as well as independent researchers. As part of your application please submit your C.V. and a 1000-word description of your research question/topic. Deadline: 30 April 2013

Application may be sent to: teaching@csds.in

In the era of globalization, qualified and educated people supported with realistic perception and positive attitudes will enhance co-existence of peaceful multicultural relations: Prof. Yossomsakdi

Indian communities in Thailand share a lot of cultural similarities with the Thais. A lot of Thai cultural practices are Indian-related. The Indian-Thais never cause any social, political or economic problems. They contribute a lot to economic and commercial well-being for Thailand, says **Prof. Yossomsakdi** in an interview with **Vinod Kumar** of GRFDT



Vinod Kumar (VK): One of the major challenges that the humanities is facing in recent times is due to increasing human mobility within and outside the national boundaries. These movements often throws several challenges that are social-economic and developmental in nature. How do we cooperate as a human civilization?

Prof. Samrit Yossomsakdi (PSY): We have to accept the fact that in our real world, there are a variety of disparities happened among localities, nations, sub-regions, regions, and continents. With the progress of globalization, many changes have occurred in the world. Transfers of goods and services, currencies, information, and population are now swiftly moving across borders of various countries .

VK: Thailand is a country much lauded for its peaceful multicultural relations. What social and cultural reasons you give for Thailand's tolerant and accommodative nature?

PSY: In the era of globalization, qualified and educated people supported with realistic perception and positive attitudes will enhance co- existence of peaceful multicultural relations. Common and shared understandings of both local people and foreign visitors are necessary. In Thailand, the motto the "Land of Smiles" is still true, which reflects the cultural tolerance of the Thai people. Buddhism is also regarded as cultural heritage of most Thai people. They have been taught to believe in Karma - actions and their consequences. Doing good deeds or actions is important in terms of building good Karma, which leads to good results and vice versa. Nationalism is seldom used by political leaders to protect national interests against outsiders. Political struggles are conflicts among politicians from different factions without relating to foreigners.

VK: Thailand being the neighbor of India attracts more number of Indians. Please tell us about "Indians in Thailand" especially about Pahurat Road (Ban Kaek), where maximum Indians are residing. How does the Indian diaspora relate with Thailand? What are the contributions of Indian diaspora to the Thailand?

PSY: In the past, human resettlements in Thai history could result from various reasons. Many multi-racial communities, not only Indians, scattered around various parts of Thai soil. The Indian diaspora especially about Pahurat Road (Ban Kaek) exists because of social and economic reasons. Of course, there is a group of elite in Indian communities. Indian communities scattered around Pahurat and other parts of Bangkok, such as Soi Nana, fill up the gap of business and commercial transactions between nations. Unbelievably, big business conglomeration with young Indian-Thai generation can be seen in Thai top business circle. Intermarriages between Indians and Indian Thais are still found in their own cultural society. Indian communities in Thailand in fact share a lot of cultural similarities with the Thais. A lot of Thai cultural practices are Indian-related. The Indian-Thais never cause any social, political or economic problems. They contribute a lot to economic and commercial well-being for Thailand.

VK: Being an expert in the area of Law and political science, how do you think about the diaspora in today's globalised world? Does the national legal and political system get challenged while dealing with the increasing size of diasporas?

PSY: Thailand is a unitary state. People who have been brought up in Thailand speak the same Thai language regardless of their races and no problem exists among Thai people who share same language and culture in different parts of Thailand. Thai legal system does treat Thai citizens with foreign origins equally. Generally, there is no discrimination against second-generation diaspora. There has not been any obvious opposition from the public against diaspora.

VK: It's quite evident in the case of the most of the diasporas that the challenges often make them more enterprising rather than failure in foreign soil. The new social network provides them better social capital for harnessing useful resources for entrepreneurship. This happened to most of the diasporas from Asian countries as well as elsewhere. Can you please throw some light on how did the ethnic entrepreneurship in Thailand flourish and how did the social network help them in this regards?

PSY: First, as mentioned above, there is no discrimination in Thailand against any diaspora. They basically have all the freedom to do their businesses. Secondly, there are always opportunities in Thailand as the country has been growing economically. Thirdly, it is quite common for any diaspora to form social networks and business associations among themselves. Again, in this respect, Thai legal system is quite open. Moreover, the diaspora do receive good higher education in Thai universities and abroad, which further enhance their business capabilities. At the same time, as globalization grows, Thai and Indian people who had closer contacts. This helps open up more business opportunities between the two countries. Furthermore, ASEAN market will be freely open for member nations at the end of the year 2015, including five main areas: freely open for products without tax barriers, freely open for services, freely open skilled human resources and eight professional areas, freely open for capital investment, and freer flow of fund. This is a great opportunity for them.

VK: You have been working on several issues and your academic contribution to the legal and political studies are well known. Please let us know what are your current research?

PSY: I am going to start a new research project with my colleagues from Korea. The research topic is about Korean business in ASEAN.

VK: Any Other issues you find useful?

PSY: This is my personal interest. However, it is interesting to conduct the research on "Indians, Thai Indians and its heritages in Thailand." If I can work together with Indian scholar to conduct the research with some sources of sponsorship, that will be great.

VK: Thank you Professor Samrit for sharing your insights on the diaspora issues. These ideas will definitely help in providing insight to scholars engaged in diaspora and migration research.

Prof. Samrit Yossomsakdi is a Faculty Member in Political Science and Law, Burapha University, Thailand. He did his Ph.D. in Political Science at Northern Illinois University, U.S.A., 1999. He held several positions in the University i.e Department Head, 1992, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, 1999-2001, Associate Dean for Research and International Affairs, Faculty of, Humanities and Social Science, 2001-2002, President, Faculty Senate Council, 2002, Head, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, 2002-2007. He has published wide range of research papers in issues related to higher education policies, governance.

Vinod Kumar is a Faculty member in Sociology, Department of Sociology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India. Email: vinodchoudhary09@gmail.com

Southern Italy as a Nexus of Women's Transnational Migration

Laura E. Ruberto, Berkeley City College

Contemporary Italian transnational migration has mainly been studied in urban centers, and yet looking at migration in Italy's Southern rural areas is particularly revealing. The dynamic between the image of a Southern Italy that is economically depressed with a deep and continued history of emigration and the image of a vibrant, stable Italy that draws new immigrants is especially hard-felt in rural parts of the South. Given that much of Southern Italy remains economically and politically at a disadvantage in relation to Northern parts of the country, the presence of new immigrants in the South and the visible racism and xenophobia that comes with this presence is striking—the riots spurred on by the clash between immigrants and “native” Italians in and around Rosarno (Calabria) in 2010 are a case in point. My research teases out this complexity through an analysis of contemporary transnational migration of women within rural parts of the region of Campania, in the landlocked hill towns of Alta Irpinia (province of Avellino). (This research was funded by a Fulbright Research Fellowship in 2006 and involved a larger ethnographic project throughout Alta Irpinia from which this is just a part.) I recognize that looking at the culture and experiences of different kinds of inbound and outbound migration helps uncover, for instance, ways in which national identity gets created and sustained, and how citizenship rights become tied to cultural appropriation. This study's emphasis on transnational migration, including aspects of both the history of Italian emigration and the contemporary phenomenon of immigration to Italy, recognizes the South as a location for dynamic processes of cultural identity, appropriation, and history, thus countering traditional narratives of Southern Italy as stagnant and retrograde.

Migration as a Backdrop to the Landscape of Alta Irpinia

The towns and villages of Alta Irpinia have witnessed an ongoing decline in population due mainly to emigration. Historically, Irpinia's economy was agriculture-based, with few industries, thus leaving the area with high rates of unemployment, especially as industrialization hit Southern Italy. The 1980 Irpinia Earthquake further impeded economic growth and also spurred emigration. However, more and more former Alta Irpinians retire (either permanently or seasonally) in their native towns and villages and become, in essence, returning emigrants. This elderly age group, coupled with the changing demographics throughout Italy that has resulted in more and more

younger generations living in urban centers, has led to a rise in the need for elder care. This type of domestic labor, as with other domestic labor sectors in Italy today, is almost exclusively performed by immigrant women—in Irpinia, mostly women from the Ukraine or Poland.

In fact, in great part due to this curious population flux in the small towns and villages of Irpinia (its native population overall continues to decrease although its retirement-age population slightly increases) new immigrants have increasingly moved to the area. Again and again immigrant men and women I interviewed noted their contentment with having found work in small towns where there was less competition for service jobs and the cost of living was lower than the cities; even though a larger city might offer a better paying job, more cultural networks, and social assistance for immigrants. Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) figures demonstrate an increased presence of new immigrants, as do the existence of weekly buses that go to and from the former Soviet Union and elsewhere, the rise in multicultural events in the towns, and recent publications from the area.

Overlapping Dislocated Identities

In this study, I trace the migration stories of three women residing in Alta Irpinia: “Rosina,” a former emigrant to Argentina, “Assunta,” a former emigrant to the United States, and “Lubica,” an immigrant from the Ukraine. Juxtaposing these stories illustrate how specific case histories of women's lived experiences highlight individuality within a broadly shared global economic context. Oral histories afford points of view and perspectives often obfuscated by more standard narrative techniques. Scholarship on returning emigrants have noted, for instance, a kind of culture shock that sometimes comes with a move back to Italy; my interest is in examining that fissure in specific cases and in relation to a more intricate criss-crossing of migratory paths to and from Italy. The bottom line for this research is recognizing how the transnational aspects of Italian migration help create critiques of the nation and nation state. Considering women's lived experiences through their own voices provides, as I have written elsewhere, “the possibility of a subaltern alternative to the hegemonic culture of the nation-state,” by underscoring marginalized subjectivities within dominant national idioms (Ruberto, *Gramsci, Migration, and the Representation of Women's Work*, 2007/2009).

Lubica who was living in Calitri when I interviewed her but who is originally from the Ukraine, explains the nexus of migration in a straight-forward but telling way:

We have many Italian acquaintances and friends, but not real friends that you hang out with, have over for parties, celebrations. Everyone has their families and their own ways of doing things. If Italians come here, and I serve them some Russian salad, they say, oh yuck, mayonnaise. Then I feel bad that they haven't eaten and it ruins the party. It's not a party if people don't eat your food and they don't have an open enough mind. We are more open. The only Italian we are friends with who isn't like that is an older gentleman, in his 60s, who is single. He lived in Holland for 40 years, and he understands, he says, he was like us.

Her anecdote reminds us of the ways in which everyday interpersonal experiences lead to what we can consider a "dislocated" identity (a phrase whose use I borrow from the work of Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization*, 2001). This dislocation encompasses both the institutionalized and cultural ways migrants' identities are fractured but also the manner in which migrants negotiate or even resist this fracturing. Indeed, this kind of resistance is something apparent in the experiences of the three women I focus on here. Consider Rosina, originally from St. Angelo dei Lombardi, and a former emigrant to Argentina:

[Mi considero tambien Argentina, si.] I still consider myself Argentine, yes. Because I spent most of my life there. Here I'm considered a foreigner and even there I'm considered a foreigner, but I don't, no, I don't consider myself one. Here, they treat me differently, I'm considered poor, ignorant, but they're the ones who are ignorant. The people here are the ones who have never been away.

Rosina's negotiation of dislocation is apparent in the linguistically charged way she clarifies her own subjectivity and in the way she positions herself against others' definitions of her status. Assunta, originally from Cairano but who had returned from the United States, describes this contested identity as a reflection of her own happiness:

I was not happy to return. I knew that I would no longer be able to get used to living here because me, I'm a person who likes to live and here it's all about dying.

For Assunta, Southern Italy supports a moribund past rather than a vibrant future.

An International Popular Culture Through Oral Stories

Together, the individual stories of Lubica, Rosina, and

Assunta are in line with other cultural expressions of belonging and not belonging associated with transnational migration. The women's stories I collected in Alta Irpinia highlight themes of alienation, non-belonging, contradictory class mobility, and sense of social exclusion. Noting the similarities between the experiences of return migrants and new immigrants within the same location suggests a more hybrid sense of national identity and way of recognizing the role of globalization within what is often seen to be a nation-specific framework of migration.

All three women present a hybrid identity, informed by a series of dislocations—from conflicting class mobility to social alienation. And all three women recognize Italy's (especially Southern Italy's) own rocky position within global migration history as ways of explaining their own emotions and responses; the macro, structural affects on these women's lived experiences. Put differently, it is precisely because they are women (who for the most part are in Italy performing gender-specific jobs), that their oral stories and their lived experiences underscore the kinds of contradictions inherent in Italy's culture and history of migration. The public negotiation of identity imposed on women migrants due to social pressures and physical practicalities creates particular layers of dislocations. From such dislocations we might arrive at what I call an "international popular culture," where the women's oral histories "by demonstrating a complex idea of cultural identity," create a counter-hegemony:

we can imagine how the women's diverse histories and experiences...might point to the transformative potential the women have on their work and living environments. (Ruberto, *Gramsci, Migration, and the Representation of Women's Work*, 2007/2009)

These three oral stories seek to remind us that transnational migration experiences inform how individuals think about their own identities, how they negotiate relationships with others, and how they negotiate their own sense of whatever temporary or long-term space they might call home. These negotiations are not dream-like but instead are visible on women's faces and in the words they use to talk about their lives.



Laura E. Ruberto, Humanities Professor, Berkeley City College; author of *Gramsci, Migration, and the Representation of Women at Work* and co-editor of *Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema*. Her research interests include cultural theories of transnational migration, Italian American culture (gender, media, material culture, and the West), Italian transnational migration, and Italian cinema. <http://www.berkeleycitycollege.edu/wp/lruberto/>

For a complete version of this paper, see "Always Italian, Still Foreign: Connecting Women's Lives Through Transnational Migration," *La Question Meridionale*, Num. 2, Feb. 2011, 77-97.

We invite Students, Researchers and Faculty Members to submit Stories, Reviews, Articles, Working papers and other academic notes 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@grfdt.com

Diasporas in the New Media age: Identity, Politics and Community, Andoni Alonso and Pedro J. Oiarzabal(ed.), University of Nevada Press, Reno, Nevada, 2010, ISBN 978-0-87417-815-9

If Facebook were a country, it would be the third most populous. On the Internet, there are multiple digital social networks like Facebook, Twitter and MySpace. The study of social networks can be traced back to the eighteenth-century Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler who solved the famous Königsberg bridge problem (i.e., how to cross the city's seven bridges and get back to the starting point without crossing any one bridge more than once). With the new media age upon us social networks are heavily relied upon by citizens and diasporas for messaging and activism.

This book, with 18 multidisciplinary essays divided into two parts, tells the reader how the Internet and the digital social media are being used by diasporas to redefine identity, politics and community.

Even though historically there has been a close link between technology and migration, i.e. technology advancements in communication and transport resulted in increase of population movements, Internet has taken it to a new level allowing people to look at places they wish to migrate before the actual travel, and have a ready link back to their homelands. In "Migration, IT and International Policy", Jennifer M Brinkenhoff argues that digital diaspora has become a vehicle for disseminating information and advice to newly arrived migrants, hence it acts as a tool for soft assimilation into the host society as they combat marginalization, provide solidarity and facilitate access to public goods and services. As the Internet has become a tool for mobilizing collective identity of the diasporas into action by facilitating issue framing and confidence building, digital diaspora has policy implications for the host and homeland governments as well as international development policy makers and analysts.

Michel S Languerre goes further in Digital Diasporas (definitions and Models)" by bringing out the interplay between information technology and diaspora, and then constructs models of digital diaspora explaining the building blocks required for digital diaspora to emerge. Adela Ros in his essay "Interconnected immigrants in the information society" critically analyses interconnections in immigration and interrelationship between integration and elements that are transforming our way of life in an information society. He concludes that, in such a society, the need to remain in contact makes people buy mobiles even when they don't have food to eat.

Andoni Alonso and Inaki Arzoz in their essay "An activist

common for people without states by cybergolem" argue that cybergolem has become something more than collective authorship; it has become an entity that changes, acquires different forms and tries to re-elaborate the idea of authorship in each work. The author gives the example of Basque shepherds who used to carve with knives, messages, slogans and drawings onto the white bark of poplars trees showing their condition, their dreams and their nostalgia for their homeland. Internet has evolved as an electronic forest for communication.

Part two of the book has dialogues across cyberspace, with essays on the African, Eritrean, Jamaican, Salvadorean, Indian, Chinese, Arab, Uyghur, Galician and Basque diaspora. With internet making possible new kinds of communicative spaces and practices, the essay "Nationalist Networks, The Eritrean diaspora online" by Vistoria Bernal talks about the Eritrea online as a kind of virtual Eritrea and serving as a nationalist space on cyberworld. The Eritrean diaspora having created a web based public space for debating national issues like the formulation of Eritrean constitution.

Even when Maffesoli considers relationships on virtual networks as being characterized by banality, superficiality and fragmentation, Javier Bustamante in his essay "Tidelike diasporas in Brazil, From slavery to Orkut" feels social media like Orkut and other diasporan websites allow for creating of totems around which people can assemble. He goes on to add that this factor is extremely important in order to keep a cohesive and collective identity, and that this identity is based on the search for and supply of support. Pedro Joiazabal argues some of most potent and durable aspects of nationalism are national symbols, customs and ceremonies. These evoke an instant emotional response from all strata of the community especially the diaspora, since symbols are their last vestiges of ethnic identity. He substantiates this argument with the example of online re-creating of Grenika by 16 Basque diaspora associations. Grenika incidentally was destroyed by bombings of Nazi Germany in 1937 and is subsequently used as an identity marker defining Basqueness.

Giving a counterpoint in her essay "The Internet and new Chinese migrants", Brenda Chan feels that we cannot assume that internet will always be a powerful and effective medium in mobilizing migrants into collective action. She quotes Cass Sunstein that "Internet supports the development of deliberative enclaves and becomes the breeding ground for group polarization and extremism".

Diasporas in the new media age is about theoretical studies and examples of the ways diaspora today is using technology to construct and represent notions

of identity, nation and homeland, that is leading to the concept of digital transnationalism and long distance or internet nationalism. The digital diaspora are also processes of deterritorializing through which one latter territorializes a new locus of that displaced through virtual networks.

Some chapters while well written and internally cohesive somehow repeat the argument made in other chapters. For example the chapters on "The Internet and new Chinese migrants" by Brenda Chan and "Migration of Chinese professionals and the development of the Chinese ICT industry" by Yu Zhou could have been combined under overall Chinese migration with a section for those migrating to south-east Asia and those migrating to the west. An overall tighter editing would make the book a better read.

With issues, debates and discourses in the field of digital diaspora and migration the present volume is of value to students and scholars of understanding the interplay between technology and diaspora studies. It will also be useful to students of international relations especially with the mobility as the new mantra in migration studies.



Abhay Chawla is a journalist and a visiting faculty in CIC, Delhi University. He teaches online journalism and his Ph.D topic is —"Marginalizations and consumption of new media".

Email: drabhaychawla@gmail.com

Twitter: gurgaonharyana

GLOBAL UPDATE

The great African Saga: Exhibition of African Diaspora

Though the epic odyssey remains little known, African diaspora is a global phenomenon today spreading across different countries. They are often known as Kaffir, Siddi, Habshi, or Zanj is different parts of Indian subcontinent. They work in very diverse occupation such as soldiers, servants, sailors, merchants, mystics, musicians, commanders and nurses etc. They have been adapted to the local cultures wherever they have settled. The African diaspora in Asia have contributed and added more diversity to the local cultures.

The African diaspora is a story replete with fascinating stories of struggles which they exhibited in their host societies. These Africans were brought into the Indian subcontinent through the ports of Baluchistan and Sindh, where they worked as dockworkers, horse-keepers, domestic servants, agricultural workers, nurses, palanquin carriers and apprentices to blacksmiths and carpenters. Naturally, most of them settled in Pakistan as compared to other parts of the Indian subcontinent. Most of them settled in "Mombasa Street" and "Sheedi Village" in Karachi. In India they are mostly called as Siddis as well as Hobshi settled mostly in Hyderabad (Habshiguda), Gujarat, Bengal, Goa. In Gujarat they have raised up to the

ruler which is a remarkable feat as compared to the African in other parts of Asia.

They are also spread across Matota in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and Maldives. During the 14th century, when the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta was at Colombo, he noted "the wazir and ruler of the sea," Jalasti, had "about 500 Abyssinians" serving in his garrison.

The Africans diaspora in Asia have speaks local languages. They are part of Indian society and guaranteed constitutional rights like other citizens. Some of them are given reservation as Schedule castes and Tribes. They have been assimilated into the dominant religions in the Asia i.e Hindu, Islam and Christian. But still there are traces of linguistic and other identities markers which one can easily identify while interacting with them. There are few exhibitions on the African diaspora in the past. The forthcoming exhibition at New York Public Library during July 2013 is a great initiative to showcase the history of African Diaspora.

<http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africansindianocean/images.php> will provide more details of the exhibitions. <http://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/africans-india-slaves-generals-and-rulers#.UUhh0qeXPGY>.facebook

Can developing countries learn from Obama's Immigration Policy?

"Real reform means fixing the legal immigration system to cut waiting periods, reduce bureaucracy and attract the highly-skilled entrepreneurs and engineers that will help create jobs and grow our economy," Obama said. This should be a wake up call for the planners of the developing countries. Though this is happening in practice always, there is intensive planning to attract selective group of skilled and entrepreneurial folk since last two

decades.

The bureaucracies in the developing countries are the worst enemy of any progressive policies so far. Bureaucracy work best as more barriers than facilitator. Most of the time, the decisions are taken and executed without any systematic planning and understanding. This is the case with migration. The bureaucracy created problem in creating conducive environment for economic

engagement of the skilled and entrepreneurial communities. This is still happening even after several countries liberalized their economy. Managing migration is the biggest challenge for everybody today and there is a greater need for bureaucratic reform. Though migration is a global issue today, certain countries have realized the potential of migrant people, though they facilitate selective migration.

Brain drain is still a very serious issue that is affecting many countries across the world working as a slow poison. This is further aggravated by the policies of the de-

veloped countries that have been very selective in selecting whom to receive and whom to reject. In the process the high skilled and entrepreneurial folk migrate to the developed countries leaving the skilled and semiskilled back home creating a very dangerous situation of unemployment and underemployment. This fuel the migration cycle further as the most sought after entrepreneurial create jobs abroad. Now the developing countries must realize that they have huge potential which needs proper management. The loss of entrepreneurial skills a great loss that any country can afford!

Diaspora is getting higher profile in International Relations: Pinak Chakravarty

Indian diaspora has become of one the important factors in India's foreign policy since 1990s, said Mr. Pinak R. Chakravarty, Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Speaking at an International conference at India International Centre, New Delhi which jointly organised by the Organisations for Diaspora Initiatives, School of International Studies, JNU and India International Centre on "India and Its Diaspora: A Comparative Perspective" during 29-30 March 2013, Mr Chakravarty elaborated the context in which Indian diaspora came in to prominence. He said that India has been looking outward since liberalisation in which Foreign Direct Investment is one of the most important components. In 1970s the FDI was hardly 3 % and now the share has gone up to 30 %. Diaspora is one of the key players in the FDI too. Similar is the case of remittances. India is the largest receiver of remittance in the world today. Thus, Indian diaspora's prosperity is one of the attractions for mutual engagement which was realised in 1990s.

Mr. Chakravarty mentioned that "Indian diaspora reflects the socio-economic and cultural diversities of India". They are spread out in 136 countries across the globe. The foreign policies with these countries have no one size diplomacy rather each countries needs different ways to engage depending upon the socio-cultural and political and economic scenario. Indian government have made various efforts to engage diaspora on regular basis. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) and a host of policies are some of the initiatives since last one decade to reach out to the diaspora. Some of the state governments such as

Punjab and Kerala which have large number of diaspora abroad also have special policy measures to reach out to the diaspora.

"One of the problems of the Indian diaspora is the lack of political mobilisation in its early days in their host countries", said Mr. Chakravarty. The Ugandan and Fiji crisis were due to the lack of successful political mobilisation of the Indian diaspora, which resulted in large-scale damage and exodus of People of Indian origin. However, over the years the Indian diaspora is learning lessons and tries to mobilise better.

Mr. Chakravarty also mentioned that the Indian engagement with diaspora often misunderstood by the host countries as they perceive this as the external loyalty of their citizens. However, these misconceptions are slowly getting eroded due to the changes in the global level as each country now having their own diaspora. The connectivity and network has made people relate in an unprecedented way which is experienced everywhere across the globe.

Finally, Mr. Chakravarty also mentioned that diaspora is getting higher profile in International Relations. In this context the role of academicians are very important. "It is not possible for Ministry to have wide range of inputs on its own and hence it time for building synergy between academics and policy and to develop a peer group for better understanding and engagement with the diaspora" he emphasised.

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@grfdt.com

Note: The list of information about Conferences/Seminars/Call for Papers in this newsletter are compiled from the web-sources and researchers are requested to contact the organizers and cross check the details before sending the abstract/paper and most importantly before registering.

GRFDT Activities Papers/Talks During past one Year (April 2012-March 2013)

1. "Life-World in a Cross-Cultural Marriage" by Dr. Renuka Singh, CSSS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 16 March 2013
2. "From Remittances to Migrant Money: Two-way flows between Australia and India" by Prof. Supriya Singh, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, 24 February 2013.
3. "The Toxic Narration: Italian policies on Immigration in the last 20 years" by Anadi Mishra, PhD candidate at University "La Sapienza" of Rome in Culture and Civilization of Asia and Africa, 19 January 2013 at JNU
4. "Dalit Diaspora in Britain" by Dr. Meena Dhanda, Reader in Philosophy and Cultural Politics, University of Wolverhampton, Chaired by Dr. Vivek Kumar on January 13, 2013 at JNU
5. "(Re)Framing the Nation: Chinese and Indian Diaspora Policies in Historical Perspective" by Dr. Els van Dongen, Nanyang Technological university, Singapore, on Dec 22, 2012 at JNU.
6. "Overseas Citizenship and Nationality: Study of Turkey and India" by Ms. Hande Unsal, Ankara Law School, Turkey, 10 November 2012 at JNU
7. Film-screening titled "Asa Nu Mann Watan Da" on 22nd September, 2012
8. "Elder Abuse Among Indian Diaspora in USA: Issues and Problems" By Prof. P.K. Mishra, 18 August 2012, JNU
9. "The Globalization of Hindutva-A Study into the emergence of e- Hindutva" by Dr. Ingrid Therwath of the Centre de Sciences Humaine, New Delhi on 30th July 2012
10. "Gender and Diaspora: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies and River of Smoke" by Dr. Nandini C. Sen is an Associate Professor, Cluster Innovation Cen-tre, University of Delhi on 27th October, 2012 at Room No. 13, CSSS II, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Indian Diaspora: Emerging Issues and Challenges, 25th June 2012.

11. Introduction to the Indian Diaspora- Prof. P.C. Jain, SIS, Jawaharlal Nehru University
12. "Hindu Nationalism, Identity and Marginalization in Indian Diasporic Literature in the US" by Kshipra Kamlesh Uke, Centre for American Studies (SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, 25th June 2012
13. "Indian Diaspora in India's Look East policy" by Dr. Amit Singh, Associate Fellow at the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, 25th June 2012
14. "Giving back to India; Investment opportunities and Challenges" by Dr Anjali Sahay, Department of Political, Legal and International Studies, Gannon University Pennsylvania, U.S.A, 25th June 2012

Indian Diaspora: Policy and Advocacy, 7 April, 2012



15. "Engaging the Indian Diaspora" by Dr. A. Didar Singh, Former Secretary, MOIA, 12 May 2012
16. "India's Diaspora Policy 1999-2008: Evolution, Objectives and Principles" by Dr. Smita Tiwari, JNU, 12 May 2012
17. "Public Policy and Advocacy: Understanding Indian Diaspora Advocacy" by Kamala Kanta Dash, Monash University, Australia, 12 May 2012
18. India's Diaspora Policy: Evolution, Challenges and Prospects' by Shri J.C Shamra, Former Member Secretary, High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora, April 21, 2012 at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)

Indian Diaspora: Mobility and Identity, 7 April, 2012

19. "Failure of Cultural coincidence and Closure of development horizons: Narrating the case of Return Emigrants among Mappila Muslims of Kerala" by Muneer Illath
20. "Tamil Diaspora: A Case Study of Contemporary Mobilization in Malaysia", by Dr M. Mahalingam
21. "Forms of Reproduction and Subversion of Caste Relations: Dalits within the Indian Diaspora" by Vinod Sartape Ashok
22. "Understanding Diaspora as a Social Process: The Conceptual Scheme"- by Mr. Shivam
23. "Labour migration to West Asia from Sikar, Churu and Jhunjhunu Districts: Problems and Prospects" by Jee-tendra D. Soni

