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Dear Readers,

Greeting from GRFDT!

With 2017 coming to an end, we bring to you distinct but interconnected issues related with diaspora and migrations such as crises and challenges of international migrations, diaspora and their tryst with new media, diasporic political engagement, and prejudices and perceptions as threats to global security. Some of these issues are covered in the book reviews that we present in the current issue, while others have been brought forward through an interview, and reports. Review of the book, ‘International Migration in the Age of Crisis and Globalization: Historical and Recent Experiences’ by Monika Bisht analyses the author’s comprehension of historical and current waves of international migration as also the conceptualisation of push and pull factors of current migration waves and their impacts on the development of source and receiving countries. Another review of the book, ‘International Migration and International Security: Why Prejudice Is a Global Security Threat’ is by Vijay Soni. Soni discusses and analyses the author’s understanding of ‘prejudices’ as a threat to international security. It is discussed that prejudice could be more dangerous than terror attacks, as it is a negative emotion leading to a destructive thought process.

In addition to book reviews, the current issue also consists of an interesting and thought provoking interview of Prof. Karim H Karim. Prof. Karim, who is a Professor at the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University, Canada and Director of the Carleton Centre for the Study of Islam, spoke to Vijay K Soni on various issues related to the changing world of media and its impact on diasporic population and the emerging nationalism debate in the global order.

Furthermore, the issue is also inclusive of a report of a talk entitled ‘Indian Diaspora in the Aftermath of 2006 Military Coup in Fiji’ organised by GRFDT. Prof. Biman Chand Prasad was the distinguished guest-speaker to deliver the lecture on the issues of Indian Diaspora communities in Fiji and the consequences of 2006 Military coup in Fiji. Prof. Biman Chand Prasad discussed the changing dynamics of migration and Diaspora in present context of globalization. He further discussed the significance of migrants and Diaspora communities for the home-land, India and analysed the political role of Indian government in addressing its substantial number of migrants and Diaspora communities abroad. Moreover, a one-day forum on ‘Social Movements in Malaysia: a review of BERISH and HINDRAF after ten years’ was conducted by National University of Malaysia. A brief report of the event is provided in the issue.

This issue consists of two book reviews, one interviews and two reports. This issue will hopefully provide comprehension of the emerging issues associated with diaspora and transnational migrations. We wish you a happy reading and look forward to your comments and suggestions for a meaningful engagement on the subject.

Thanking You,
Arsala Nizami and Monika Bisht
GRFDT has organized a talk entitled ‘Indian Diaspora in the Aftermath of 2006 Military Coup in Fiji’ on 8th December 2017, Friday in Room No. 226, School of International Studies (SIS-II) at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Prof. Biman Chand Prasad was the distinguished guest-speaker to deliver the lecture on the issues of Indian Diaspora communities in Fiji and the consequences of 2006 Military coup in Fiji. Prof. Biman has a long academic experience and has been working on many international issues with various international agencies. He has been associated with various international organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, UNESCAP, CLGF, WTO, Aus-Aid and Pacific and governments in the Pacific region. Currently, he is the Director of Fiji Institute of Applied Studies (FIAS) and Parliament leader of the National Federation Party, Fiji. The talk was started with the formal welcome session by Dr. M. Mahalingam. He also welcomed Dr. Amba Pande, Associate Professor, School of International Studies (SIS), JNU. He also welcomed all the scholars and participants who have come to attend this talk.

Prof. Biman Chand Prasad has discussed the changing dynamics of migration and Diaspora in present context of globalization. He mentioned about the significance of migrants and Diaspora communities for the home-land, India and analysed the political role of Indian government in addressing its substantial number of migrants and Diaspora communities abroad. He started his lecture with the historical trends of the Indian labourer in Fiji focusing on plantation industry workers. He also shared few narratives of the migration experiences of his parents who was from Gonda, Uttar Pradesh, India. He briefly talked about the background of the earlier military coups happened in Fiji. Furthermore, he pointed out the 2006 Military coup in Fiji and its repercussions in the lives of Indo-Fijian people. He discussed the negative effect of Military coup on Indo-Fijian which has created the environment of fear and insecurities. They have continued to live in the fear and insecurities of being migrants from India. Therefore, the aftermath of 2006 Military coup resulted in the out-migration of Indo-Fiji to Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and various other countries.

Importantly, there has been an identity issue among the Indo-Fijians and they thinks that Fiji is their home but there is a sense of original homeland ie; India. They are materially and non-materially associated with their roots in India. Mostly, they learn Hindi in schools and colleges and commonly speaks too. However, they do not have political support in Fiji even in the case when they got elected Prime Minister of Indian origin in Fiji. The Indian-Origin Prime Minister neither took up their issues and problems nor support them. In present context, the Indo-Fijians are in doubtful condition of seizing their rights due to their migratory status by formation of new government in Fiji. Due to the lack of political support in Fiji, the situations of Indo-Fijian are precarious. Therefore, they are dealing with many socio-economic and political issues in Fiji. They are not even assured for the support by the Indian government. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Fiji in 2014 during the initial days of his governance. He promised to forge the relationships with Fiji which could provide hope to the Indo-Fijians but the current government of Fiji is not showing any positive actions towards it. The current government of Fiji does not have political-philosophical agenda to come forward for the strategic relationships with India. Although, it is important to study whether
India is with Fiji and comparative analysis of India with China.

The present government of Fiji has nexus with China more than India. The overwhelming number of Chinese in Fiji has been strong Diaspora communities like Indians in Fiji. China has been overhauling their socio-economic and political stake over Fiji. They are contending elections for political participation and emancipated for the rights for the Chinese in Fiji. This resulted the low negotiating power of Indo-Fijians with government of Fiji. Since last many years, the socio-psychological problems has been increasing among Indo-Fijians. A significant number of young Indo-Fijians have committed suicides due to insecurities of employment, career, rights and secured future. They are facing psychological trauma of insecurities about their secured future. The recent trend shows that they are running away from Fiji to other countries like Australia, Thailand, United Kingdom and other Pacific regions. Prof. Biman highlighted the reasons for the problems associated with migrants like Indo-Fijians. He argued that Fiji is not an independent country like India which can ensure the rights of the migrants. The migrants, minorities and ethnic groups do not have negotiating power with the Fiji government.

Finally, the talk was open for the discussion with the various participants and scholars. During the discussion, there were many questions were raised related to whether Indo-Fijian want to come back India, whether they have any tangible investment in India, role of India for securing their situations in Fiji, whether they have any associations or groups to association with India, linguistic identity of Indo-Fijian, whether Hindi language has instrumental value to the lives of Indo-Fijians etc. Prof. Biman have further discussed many issues such as corruption, lethargic system, lack of democratic setting in Fiji, welfare and social securities for the Indian Diaspora communities in detailed. He also emphasized that India’s role is very important to secure the identity and rights of Indo-Fijians. India should strategically involve with the Fiji government to safeguard the Indo-Fijians.

At last, the talk was gone ahead with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. M. Mahalingam. On behalf of the GRFDT, he gave vote of thanks to the prestigious guest-speaker Prof. Biman Chand Prasad to deliver this insightful lecture. He further extended heartful thanks to Dr. Amba Pande to make this talk possible inside the JNU campus and to provide her immense support for this programme. He also gave thanks to the participants and scholars for taking part in this programme. The talk was close with tea and snacks for everyone.

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Report by Monika Bisht, PhD Scholar, NUEPA, New Delhi.
Bello's research could be seen in a similar light. The threat to our security is not from the terror per se, but from the prejudices held by people, the victims and the perpetrators alike. It is the prejudice that is the genesis of fear, anxiety and restlessness that has set in our global society. Prejudice is a negative emotion which breeds destructive thought process. As the author explains prejudice “concerns the sphere of those biased feelings and mental dispositions towards others that precede the real experience of facts. It is pre-judgment; a conclusion to which persons arrive before experiencing facts.” The very notion of prejudice is anathema to international peace and could well be equated with international insecurity.

To cover a larger canvas, as the subject is multi-layered and complex, the author has divided the book into three parts. The first part deals with the impact of international mobility, free-flow of capital, human and ideological transgression and the process of radicalization and terror attacks in various parts of the world. The second part is more explanatory and expounds some of the recent crisis and historic processes have been observed, studied and analyzed from the European perspective, for example, when she traces the rise of restlessness in the anxiety-ridden Europe. She asserts, “At least for older generations of Europeans - and particularly for those who live at the borders with Balkan countries, and mainly Italian, Austrians and German - a region that reminds us of a painful historical memory - the start of the First World War. Those who lived in those years felt that even the Second World War was only a further consequence of the First, so much that some historians and analysts talk of 50 years of Civil War in Europe.” The author dexterously brings home the existential angst of the continent, which saw two World Wars that changed the global geo-political order.

The world, in the meantime, seems to have moved in altogether a different direction at the end of cold war, which in fact was the consequence of the Second World War itself. The second phase, heralded by the process of globalization, was an era of advanced capitalism. It was during this time that capital flow became much more easily but at the same time, it created massive barriers for human transnational movement.

A pertinent question that needs to be asked at this juncture is - was it based on prejudicial notion or was it because of economic reasons as the transnational empires of colonial powers were shrinking. A historical fact that needs to be analyzed is the human capital flow to Europe during the pre and post-colonial period. It should be noted that most of the human migration in the past was the result of colonial relationships that European countries shared with the countries they colonized. There was a mass human movement from England, Spain, France, and Portugal to various continents and when it ended in the second half of 20th century, a reverse migration from these colonies began to these European countries. A large part of these migrations were motivated to meet the latter’s manpower shortage to their expanding economy. It was during this phase of intercontinental interaction that perception; notions, predilections and prejudices were formed about people, nationalities, religions and the so-called human ‘races’. Although Bello excludes this phase of historical development in her enumeration on ‘prejudices’, a drill down on it could have done more justice to the contested subject that she has dealt with.

Bello has given a more humane face to human migration. Her observation that securitization of borders have not diminished illegal migration across the borders needs to be seen from this perspective, along with the fact that they are the victims of a system which is beyond their control. Quantitatively, a large part of European societies hold positive attitude towards immigrants but unfortunately this perception is being altered because of extraneous pressure put on the limited resources that these countries have. Immigration alters demographic balance of a region by claiming a share in the existing healthcare and education system, to which the natives are sensitively posses-
Another pertinent observation that Bello leaves us with is the concept of regions and empires in the global order and our faulty assumption of labeling them as mere markets. History has reasserted itself from time-to-time that a large part of geo-regional powers work on their own inherent historical logic instead of superimposed concept of market places. The case of Afghanistan, Syria and the Middle East are examples which have, time and again, brought this contradiction to the fore by claiming themselves as regions inhabited by ethnicity rather than markets of demand and supply. Probably, a lot of global conflict could be avoided if the geo-population is seen in the light of their historical development instead of economic utility value.

A prominent feature of the contemporary polity that Bello deals with is the rise of far-right populist ideology, which draws political mileage by framing migrants as “outsiders”. It is not something new in the conceptual framework as the rise of extremist views is always based on prejudiced views. Whether it is the rise of the Islamic State or the rise of nationalism in legitimate democracies, both harbor an ill-feeling towards a group of people who are alien to their social construct and are often framed as threat to their existence. It has also been a failure of conservative political parties who have not been able to counter and provide an alternative narration to meet the challenges of populist culture.

Realistically, it is hard to imagine a world without a populist culture as the very ideology governing democracies is based on numerical strength of a population favoring or disfavoring a particular public policy. There is no empirical evidence to suggest that a more liberal, porous trans-border movement could be a liberating force from the tyranny of insecurity, which is staring at the face of European insecurity. No doubt, the life of an undocumented migrant is abysmally hard and difficult and there are forces always ready to exploit their vulnerability as Bello says, “Making access to Europe harder will only increase the market of smugglers and human traffickers. Not only this, but it will increase the number of migrants residing undocumented in Europe. This will make them particularly vulnerable in the labour market and employers will take advantage of this, lowering workers’ condition, thus creating the phenomenon know as ‘social dumping.’”

Seen in the milieu of migration and migrants, ‘social dumping’ finds an equal parallel in yet another phenomenon explained by Bello called flexibilization, which can alternatively be seen as a by-product of large-scale commercialization and globalization of labour market as opposed to European model of Welfare State System. Under this system, a flexible worker is as vulnerable as an undocumented migrant. Explaining the phenomenon, Bello says, as I am tempted to quote it in full, excluding the references

“Since the 1990s, financial hardships and other market vulnerabilities have been tackled in Europe with the so-called politics of “flexibilization”, whose main effects have been to change the European Social Model and Welfare State System. This was possible through the introduction of flexible contracts and the wider possibility of hiring freelancers for some services in positions that are supposedly independent from employer but that are indeed not.”

Now, what is obvious both in the case of an undocumented migrant and a flexible worker is - a deliberate lack of policy guidelines. It is not as if these facts are not known to nation governments, but their studied silence in coming out with a willed decision, either because of political exigencies or economic compulsions or both, is appalling. While imagined perception and prejudices play a role in the realm of an individual world-view, it is the political and economic realm, which decides the lives of an immigrant in the receiving country. Prejudice is one of the reasons for global security threat but not the only one. In fact, these prejudices if not nibbled in the bud lead to collective consciousness and give birth to xenophobia and fascist tendencies, which pose a greater threat to the global order.

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Vijay K Soni, PhD Scholar, School of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Studies, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, India.

Call for Papers

Inclusion and Exclusion: New Perspectives in History and Sociology

10th Annual Seminar of the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS), 5–7 July 2018, Bielefeld University, Germany.

The conference, which will be held in English, is intended for junior researchers at any career stage. We invite proposals for papers that touch upon one or more of these issues within the inter- and transdisciplinary frameworks of history and sociology. Abstracts (max. 250 words), along with a two-page CV, should be submitted to the conference organizers at annualseminar@uni-bielefeld.de. In addition to your abstract, please also indicate the topic(s) listed above that your research agenda relates to.

The deadline for proposals is 25 February 2018.

Please note that the BGHS offers financial support to graduate students whose contributions are selected for the Annual Seminar program. This support includes accommodation and at least a portion of the travel expenses. Due to limited resources, please indicate in your application whether you would like to be considered for a travel grant, and include an estimate of your expected travel expenses. Please also check with your home institution for other funding opportunities. Speakers will be responsible for their own daily expenses.

Applicants will be notified by 12 March 2018 as to whether their abstract has been accepted.

This CFP and further information regarding the BGHS Annual Seminar are available at: www.uni-bielefeld.de/bghs/Programm/Ansem/2018.html
In the globalized era, the international migration has become a prominent area of discussion in academic field. The global forces intend to pace up the flow of money, resources, workers and society from one geographical boundaries to another. The international migration of people has been a main feature of the global economy of today and past. For last few decades, the international migration of workers, professionals and ethnic minorities have been increasing due to socio-economic and political pressures. Under such conditions, the migrants’ rights and safety remain ambiguous in the destination countries. Therefore, the international migration, both as a process and condition has become challenging and precarious for both country-of-origin and country-of-destination.

The book titled “International Migration in the Age of Crisis and Globalization” was written by André’s Solimano in 2010. Prof. Solimano is the Founder and President of the International Center for Globalization and Development in Santiago, Chile. He was a former Country Director at the World Bank, Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank. He has discussed the international migration with the historical cases and recent evidences comprised of various country-examples from the mid-19th century and early 21st century. It also conceptualized the push and pull factors of current migration waves and their impacts on the development of source and receiving countries. The author has analyzed the migration experiences under the certain time-frame, political structure, cost involved in migration, socio-economic pressures and so on. These issues are relevant in every phase of time even in times of economic crises as well as economic growth and prosperity.

The book consists of seven interconnected chapters dealing with theoretical underpinning and empirical experiences of people and societies. The author has given detailed introduction of the global migration history and discussed the major characteristics of the international migration. The first chapter examined the trends, themes and stratification of international migration, highlighting the major drives and incentives for mobility. It also discussed the role of visas, walls and deportation to allow easy and smooth immigration of people vis-a-vis to discourage the immigration from sending countries. The chapter also discussed the shift in political power and ideological differences which plays critical roles in the flow of immigration.

It also examined the eight critical themes of international migration which resulted in the conceptualization of international migration. Such eight critical dimensions underline the international migration in the following areas: contentious or consensus issue, economic prosperity or economic crisis, consequence or mitigation of income disparities, goods and capital or people are important, talented elites or workers are more mobile, economic success in north or economic failure in south, irregular migration or fragmentation of global labour markets, multicultural framework for regulating international migration.

The second chapter examined why people move, due to international differences in income, wages, payments, economic cycles, policies, social networks, financial crisis, political instability, civil war, dissolution of empires and so on. The impact of economic development on the standard of living, social services, community safety, health, environment and overall social securities for both individual as well as society. The role of development organizations, philanthropy and investment in the communities back home. It also analysed ‘why not’ people migrate which includes financial, family and social costs mainly. It also put forth the dimensions which influence the decision to migrate, other than income.

The third chapter addressed what happens when people migrate which discussed the dilemma of legal ambiguities, denial of rights and restrictions on immigration resulted in the illegal migration. Also, the internal grudge among natives and immigrants for the employment opportunities, natural resources and capital affecting the demand of more capital than people in globalization. Furthermore, the dilemma of migration compatibility and income convergence in view of size of migration. The challenges of brain drain and brain gain in tandem with migration outflow and inflow in the sending and receiving countries respectively were discussed. The impact of economic growth in sending countries in view of talent circulation, remittances, new development effects have been also discussed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter dealt with the policy regimes and economic imperatives which influences the mobility of capital and people. The author has discussed the economic liberalization in the first wave of globalization for labour and capital markets during 1870-1914. He talked about the major traits, nature and role of global capital market in the labour-flow from developing countries. He also discussed the de-globalization phase during 1913-1945 wherein economic instability (western and developing countries) and political turmoil (in developed nations bloc) led to restricted immigration flows. Furthermore, the book emphasized the rising debate over nationalism vs. internationalism during 1945-1973, corresponding with the Bretton Woods era. The chapter also talked about the second phase of globalization with mass labour migration towards Western Asian region from South Asia. The chapter analysed how international capital markets have interacted, shifted and reshaped under certain political events and policy regimes. The chapter explained that how the nature of international trade, capital markets and free labour mobility took place from first wave of globalization to second phase of globalization.

The fifth chapter deals with case of Latin America which was discussed as an example of economic development, political crisis, poverty and remittance gain. In this chapter,
Call For Applications

ARUA Post-Doctoral Fellowships On Mobility & Sociality In Africa’s Emerging Urban

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) is seeking post-doctoral fellows to join a five-year research programme entitled ‘Mobility and Sociality in Africa’s Emerging Urban.’ This initiative is a scholarly response to unprecedented levels of urbanisation and mobility driven by conflict, ambition, and repatrialising economies. It is intended to develop African-based contributions to theories of human mobility and transforming modes of social engagement, authority, representation, and expression. Successful applications will have completed an appropriate social science or humanities PhD by the start of the fellowship. Special preference will be given to those who have studied or worked with ARUA members or associated universities. These include Addis Ababa University; University of Cape Town; University of Dar es Salaam; Cheikh Anta Diop University; University of Ibadan; University of KwaZulu-Natal; University of Ghana; University of Lagos; Obafemi Awolowo University; Makerere University; University of Nairobi; National University of Rwanda; University of Pretoria; Rhodes University; University of Stellenbosch; University of Witwatersrand. Applications are due midnight, 1 March 2018. Selections will be completed by June 2018 with successful candidates expected to be in their positions between September 2018 and January 2019. Members of historically disadvantaged groups are particularly encouraged to apply.

GRFDT Newsletter

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GRFDT Interview

It’s Not the Best of the Time for Immigrants, says Karim H. Karim

Versatility is an attribute, which gives an academician a 360-degree view of the things and phenomenon shaping the cultural milieu around. And Karim H. Karim is one such scholar whose versatility has propelled him into diverse academic disciplines. One of the senior patriarchs of Diaspora and media studies, he has authored and edited several books and his evangelical zeal has found expression in numerous international studies and organization of which he has become a natural extension. His books The Media of Diaspora (2003) and Re-Imagining the Other: Culture, Media, and Western-Muslim Intersections (2014) have received critical acclaim and are quite relevant in today’s time of new media proliferation.

A Professor at the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University, Canada and Director of the Carleton Centre for the Study of Islam, Dr Karim has served at various positions including as Director of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London and has won the inaugural Robinson Book Prize of the Canadian Communication Association in 2001 for his book, Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence. His latest book Diaspora and Media in Europe, which he has co-edited with Ahmed Al-Rawi, is on the anvil and to be released soon. Professor Karim spoke to Vijay K Soni on various issues related to the changing world of media and its impact on diasporic population and the emerging nationalism debate in the global order. An Excerpt from the interview:

You are one of the pioneers in the field of media and diaspora studies. How has New Media played a transforming role in the lives of diasporic population?

Communication is the terra firma of a diasporic life and New Media has enabled the kind of communication not seen before in the history of mankind. It has been instrumental in initiating a point-to-point communication between individuals, groups and societies, which hitherto were separated by geographical distances. The Internet-based communication has empowered diasporic population politically, socially and economically and is reflected in their world-views. The earlier communication tools like postal letters deprived them of instant access to news and information, which could have a far-reaching impact on their lives. The lives of a transnational migrants are full of uncertainty and unpredictability and New Media is a tool, which helps them in managing their lives more efficiently. By providing a point-to-point access, New Media has become a game-changer in the lives of Diaspora. It provides instant communication between their home and the receiving countries.

It has to be remembered that mankind has been mobile since time immemorial and the transnational movements of diaspora is an extension of the same. While the earlier migration was in groups, the modern movements are more often than not individual quest. In the past, the mobile groups always maintained a line of communication with the group left behind by various means. During the medieval time it were the runners who were the channels of communication. In today’s time, New Media has provided the platform of communication between the mobile individuals and the kith and kin that are based back in homeland. It is a platform of sharing experiences and initiating cultural discussion with the home country. New Media is a new space where news and cultural events are disseminated.

For the diaspora, the Internet-based media plays a positive role in the social and cultural milieu of the receiving country where they are settled. It provides them easy access to local infrastructural facilities like education, healthcare and in the process helps them in integrating with the local populace. Accessing transnational television content through Internet is an easy and cost-effective means of entertainment for diaspora, which helps them, remain connected with their home country. A large number of TV channels are now providing two-way communication and are quite popular among the diaspora. The same could be seen in the film industry where diasporic narration has found expression in some of the popular movie culture.

Do you think that New Media has helped in strengthening the feeling of nationalism amongst the Diaspora?

Nationalistic feeling is a complex emotion. For the diaspora, there are two sides of the coin – one, their attachment with the country of their origin and second, their existential reality in the receiving country. New Media has helped them in retaining their contact with the old country. There are also runaway diaspora, which emigrate because of repression or other political reasons and are often antagonistic to the incumbent home government. For them, nationalistic feelings have different tinge because they have left their home country not in best of the terms.
There are dual nationalistic feelings among diaspora who have retained fond memories of their home country and are also treated with dignity in the receiving country. A large number of migrations happen for economic reasons and if a diasporic group does well economically and are well off, they develop nationalistic feeling for the country they are resident.

There is yet another side of the diaspora’s existential reality. If they happen to be in a western country they are exposed to liberal ideologies and often come to appreciate values such as human rights, dignity of labour, gender equality and gay marriages, which are not there in their home country. The fact that these values are not appreciated in their home country sometimes affects their nationalistic disposition.

**Ethnic identity is an important aspect of diaspora’s life. How has it been impacted by the digital media?**

The notion of ethnic identity is a layered one and could be seen from various perspectives. In the home country, an individual has a different ethnic standing as compared to in the receiving country where they are in minority and may not enjoy certain privileges of the home country. The ethnic identity is often transforming and keeps on shifting from place to place depending on the socio-political ideologies.

A racial minority in the receiving country, the diaspora often negotiate their identity at the cultural and linguistic levels. Sometimes, their identity is clubbed with other nationals as they belong to contingent geographical location. This could be seen in the case of South Asians in the US and Canada. The recognition of ethnic identity of a diaspora also has a correlation with how their home country, language and cultures are seen and valued in the receiving country. Racism is a visible expression of interaction between various ethnic groups as economic forces have a direct bearing on the natives and the diaspora’s livelihood.

**How has media helped the Diaspora in establishing new identity in their host countries?**

In most of my writing and discourses, I avoid using the term ‘host country’ as it implies immigration as a short-term and temporary residency phenomenon. Instead, I prefer to use the term ‘receiving country’, which doesn't look at immigrants with a tainted glass and does not discriminate them on the basis of their residency. Again, the concept of identity entails dual feelings depending on their relationship with the home country and their integration within the receiving country. The longer a group stays in a country, there are higher chances of them being absorbed and integrated within the local culture. Sometimes, they are more committed to the receiving country as it could be seen in the case of Indian diaspora in Canada who are not only committed Canadian citizens but have become ministers in the Canadian cabinet and represent the interest of Canada at various levels. But they, at the same time, do not cut ties with their home country. It’s not a zero-sum game.

The media has helped the diaspora in retaining ties with their home country. It provides constant cultural engagement. This is also evident in second and third generation of immigrants as their parents make them watch Indian movies and listen to home country music. There is a category of films, which are produced for overseas audiences, especially Indians living overseas. These films are expression of their emotional anchoring to home country and often depict the changing attitude of the receiving country. There are also countries, which discourage diaspora’s tendency of maintaining relationship with their home country as it interferes in their acculturation process. So, one can say that there are multiple influences, feelings which govern immigrants’ identity and their relationship with the home as well receiving country.

**Do think that religious identities and ethnic disparity of diaspora brings them in indirect conflict with the natives of the receiving country?**

In today’s time, religious identities are thwarted and people feel threatened by the visible religious symbols, as has been seen globally. It largely depends on the understanding and tolerance of the receiving country and their impressions about the people of various nationalities. People wearing turban and hijab are looked with suspicion. At one point of time, when there was less awareness about their identity, they were considered terrorists. Political and ideological leaders shape this kind of stereotyping. Media also has a role to play in reconfirming these stereotypes, the way they run and narrate such events and ethnic people.

At times, political leaders shape the understanding of media institutions in such stereotyping. It creates a negative attitude towards a particular group of immigrants. US President Donald Trump has already set the tone and flavor of such misunderstanding. Sometimes, films also help in propagating stereotyping as is evident in the Indiana Jones films. It portrays people of various nationalities in their prejudiced perspective. To thwart such stereotyping, immigrants groups are now interacting more and more with anti-racism organizations, media, academia, human rights groups and local bodies for cordial inter-faith understanding.

**In recent years, there has been anti-immigrant feeling in some of the countries. Online social media fuels much of these conflicts. Do you agree?**

Social media is only one part of media communication, which impacts diaspora’s lives. It has a positive role for circulating ideas and retaining cultural context of communication. Consequently, the role of social media has magnified in
recent times. But it has certain limitations, which at times are detrimental to the very idea of communication. Take for example Twitter that has limited number of characters through which one has to communicate. If a message is not put up meticulously, it may at times be misleading or may be interpreted wrongly as it doesn’t allow much of the explanation. It creates a major limitation especially during terror attacks when facts need to be communicated precisely and accurately. Even newspapers gloss this fact and often come out with misleading headlines. These are the factors responsible for creating negative feelings and impressions about a group of people, which could also happen to be an ethnic or diasporic group.

Do you think the social media has become dysfunctional in maintaining social order?

The main motive of any media, be it social media, electronic or print media is to make profit. They are business enterprises first. The responsibility of maintaining social order does not lie with them but with the government. It is the role of the government to be vigilant to oversee that media is performing its role appropriately. If it does not, then the government intervenes to ensure that social order within the society is maintained.

Sensationalism is a major evil that most media houses indulge into to increase its readership without thinking about the consequences. Likewise, there are hate groups in social media that target and malign a particular group of people based on ethnicity, race and religion. It disturbs the social harmony of the nation.

Has there been a change, the way immigrants are being treated in various countries in today’s time?

It’s not the best of the time for immigrants in most countries. The US, which has been a major immigrant recipient country, is undergoing an anti-immigrant phase under the leadership of Donald Trump. One should remember that history goes in different cycles - an idea which finds an appeal in one age may not find favor in another times, under a different political dispensation. The US is undergoing the same phase under which H1B1-visa has become a political issue. The same is true in some of the European countries.

Immigration as a consequence of globalization has become more a political rather than economic issue now. Contrary to what is happening globally, Canada offers a bright prospect for immigrants during these dismal times. It has raised the immigration limits to 340,000. The country is friendly to immigrants and has nurtured its diversity. It’s no surprise that diaspora has played a vital role in its growth and development.

Conference Report

A Report on Social Movements in Malaysia: From Protest Movements to Reform Movements

The institute of Ethnic studies also known as (KITA) of National University of Malaysia (UKM) as part of the public advocacy initiative hosted a one day forum on “Social Movements in Malaysia: A Review of BERSIH and HINDRAF after ten years” on 25th November, 2017. The forum was organized to take stock of the present condition of BERSIH and HINDRAF movements as they celebrated its tenth anniversary. The seminar had three objectives such as (i) to review the position of social movements namely BERSIH and HINDRAF over the past 10 years (ii) to analyze the impact of these movements on the economic and political institutions in general and society in particular (iii) to chart out the role citizen’s action groups can play in strengthening democracy, good governance and impacting public polices for inclusive development.

Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria, Principal Research Fellow, KITA welcomed the gathering and introduced the theme of the forum. Prof. Ulung Datuk Dr. Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, Founder and Director of KITA, gave a special address under the theme of “Social Movements from a Historical & Socio-Political Significance: Some Reflections & Relevance”. He dwelt upon a threefold framework namely framing, decision making & resource mobilization for researching upon social movements. His special address set the tone and context for the ensuing discussion.
The key note speaker was Dr. Anantha Raman Govindadasamy from Universiti Malaysia, Sabah who spoke on the theme of "Social Movements in Malaysian Society: An Overview of BERSIH, HINDRAF & PERKASA". He pointed out that "the future activism of BERSIH, HINDRAF and PERKASA in Malaysian politics would produce a diverse outcome. While BERSIH is expected to continue pushing for democratic reforms, HINDRAF would remain as a small, fragmented movement representing working-class Malaysian Indians. On the other hand, PERKASA would be side-lined with the rise of other far-right movements that will bring the debate of race and religion more openly than before in Malaysian politics".

Later, the panel discussion titled "HINDRAF & Marginalized Community" was moderated by Prof KS Nathan from KITA-UKM. The speaker of the panel was Dr Arunajeet Kaur from Rajaratnam School of International Studies, (NTU), Singapore spoke on the theme "The Saffron Rally – The Malaysian Indian Community’s bid at a reform movement ". She underscored the point that “Hindraf continues to be a watchdog for the Indian community of Malaysia in terms of raising protest over issues regarding Hindu temples, BERSIH, Tamil schools and keeping Indians out of crime, however, its momentum and impact for political advocacy seems to have cooled”. The session had three discussants namely Rama Ramanathan, a blogger cum activist, YB Ganabathirau, former Hindraf activist & presently Selangor Govt Exco and Dr Thaatchaayini Kananatu from Monash University, KL campus. Mr.Rama Ramanathan analysed the Indian Dilemma in Malaysia with the help of compiled data from the various reliable documents after the HINDRAF phenomenon. YB Ganabathirau stressed that “there was a socio-economic impact or improvement from the pressure by HINDRAF movement. Many policies created by both Ruling BN Federal Government and PH Opposition State Governments which now includes Indian Communities”.

The post lunch panel discussion titled “BERSIH Movement & Electoral Reform” was moderated by Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah from Institute Darul Ehsan. The panel speaker was Dr Khoo Ying Hooi of Department of International and Strategic Studies, UM. He discussed the implications from social movement perspective. This session had two discussants namely Dr Adil Johan of KITA-UKM and Ms. Maria Chin Abdullah who was the Bersih chair and campaigned for electoral reforms. The discussants highlighted the various views about BERSIH movement. The seminar ended with concluding remarks and reflections by Prof Johan Saravanamuthu and Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria. The main highlight of the seminar was the participation of YB Ganabathirau, former HINDRAF activist and former ISA detainee and Ms Maria Chin Abdullah, the Bersih chair who were actively involved in the above said social movements. Indeed, their first hand knowledge about the rise and the present status of the movements had enriched the discussion. The forum finally provided an opportunity for academics and activists to revisit the events and draw lessons for today.

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Report by Dr.M.Mahalingam