

Editors' Note

Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) is delighted to introduce its biannual publication “Migration and Diasporas: An Interdisciplinary Journal. We would like to share with our readers that when GRFDT was launched in 2012, the need of a journal was acutely felt by our founders as well as academicians and scholars associated with us to address the current issues of Diaspora and migration. It however, took us more than six years to reach this stage when we could proudly announce the launch of the journal. The time in between was an enriching experience as we learnt a lot during the International conferences that we have been organizing regularly, which has also gone in shaping the tone and tenor of this journal. Our interactions with academicians, researchers, policy makers and diplomats during our conferences, through newsletter and informal meetings set the vision of the journal, which is now in your hands. The Journal has attempted to bring out up-to-date, high-quality and original research papers alongside relevant and insightful reviews in the areas of migration and diaspora. Although there is a growing body of literature in the area, there is still a dearth of journals to cater to the interdisciplinary nature of the subject. The journal attempts to fill up that gap.

As we know, Diasporas are dynamic and have diverse formations. They are diverse in context of countries of origin, historical experiences, nature of skill or profession, collective narratives of communities and differing relationships to homelands and host lands. They are dynamic because the core of the concept has changed and grown over the years and continues to do so owing to the increasing international migration of people who are making foreign lands as their home while at the same time remaining connected with their homeland. Consequently, there is an ongoing process of engagement with the home as well as the host country for which Diasporas have devised different methods and instruments. The growth of multiple identities ranging from identification with family, village, region, and two or more nations simultaneously has been facilitated by modern communication technology. It has strengthened the ideas of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. The migrants continuously utilize computer-based and mobile technologies to communicate, interact, exchange information, promote cultural and religious practices, and enhance political mobilization across borders.

The virtual connectivity of the diaspora groups has also helped the real or the practical connectivity with the countries of origin while residing in different part of the world. This new dimension further strengthens the concept “long distance nationalism” as it gives an opportunity to the diaspora groups, of gaining political information, participating and running political campaigns etc and thereby affecting the political and economic developments in the home country. In the countries of adoption also, the migrants claim for their space, rights and control over and ownership of resources. Problems arise when they appear to be taking over jobs, resources etc. and their presence is despised by the natives. In this context, citizenship becomes an important issue and a continuing struggle for the migrants. It is a political instrument that leads to access to economic and social rights hence become critical for the survival of the migrants/diaspora groups.

The complexities of the host country further push the migrants towards identification with the home country and they are forced to return even after generations of living there. India is a good example of witnessing return migration. Nevertheless, it is not always a joyful experience as the migrants return to a completely changed landscape of the home country and have to navigate through the issues of identity.

A substantial body of diaspora research has been built on empirical and comparative case studies. Each diaspora group is formed under a different context. African diaspora, which originally, is a result of slave trade, is also witnessing dynamism as African communities are migrating in the modern times as semi-skilled labourers, skilled professionals or business people. The initial preferred destinations like Western Europe and North America has also changed over the years as more and more people are migrating to the Developing countries in Asia owing to new opportunities. None of the Diasporas are a uniform and homogenous group and the experiences of each group differ from the other. Hence, Diaspora Studies continue to grow with new vigour and vitality. The complexities of migration and diaspora in the globalised world are new challenges for the academics. It is in this context an interdisciplinary engagement is necessary.

In this inaugural issue of the Journal, there are six research papers cutting across disciplines and regions and covering diverse range of issues. The first paper titled “Ascription, Aspiration and Achievement: Malaysian Indian” by Ravindra K Jain examines the three interrelated concepts among

people of Indian origin in the Malaysia in the context of new politico-economic and social dynamics that is shaping up in recent times.

The second paper by Luciana L. Contarino Sparta “The Emergence of Long Distance International Displacements and Restrictive Migratory Laws: A Review of Legal Expressions Based on Racist and National Discrimination” extensively debates on the issue of discriminatory regulatory system in the Developed European countries as well as in USA towards to citizens of less industrialised countries such as Asia, Africa and South America.

The third paper by Zeynep Aydar “Digitalization of long distance nationalism, diaspora and their on-line political participation via internet” brings out an interesting area of diasporic engagement with homeland through virtual platform. Though diasporas are often politically active groups, they have been traditionally restricted in their engagement with homeland due to lack of any viable communication platform. However, with the advancement of social media and digital technology, the gap between the homeland the diaspora is shrinking. The nationalist movement of Turks and Kurds are examples of such long distance nationalism that actively promoted and perpetuated through virtual platform.

In the fourth paper “Managing Migration in the Time of Economic Crisis: Example of Four EU Countries” Yasin Kerem GÜMÜŞ discusses about the impact of market economy on EU migration policy especially during the time of Economic recession. The paper compares various European countries and their migration management strategies during the economic crisis in the recent past.

The fifth paper “Frontier Heritage Migrants: Finding Home in Globalizing India” is by Melissa Tandiwe Myambo who coined the phrase “Frontier Heritage Migrants” to capture a new phenomenon of return migrants in the globalising India with a new urban cosmopolitan space that matches with the taste of western and globalised Indians.

The last paper by José de Jesús López Almejo “Diasporas Lobbying the Host Government: Mexican Diaspora as a Third Actor of the Bilateral Relationship between Mexico and the U.S” explores diaspora strategies to mobilise and lobby in the home as well as host countries through various formal, informal and non-formal ways. The author examines that these

lobbying are done by very small elite group within the diaspora and has a far-reaching impact on bilateral relation, remittances and other social and cultural arena.

This issue has seven book reviews that covers such as Development and Transnational Engagement, Globalization, Culture, Digital Diasporas and Diaspora Politics.

We would like to mention that GRFDT team has been continuously engaged in debates and discussions through its regular seminars and conferences in which scholars from various disciplines and various regions of the world have been participating and sharing their views and ideas. It has been a long pending need to have an Interdisciplinary journal where scholars could share their research, findings and initiate debates on the issues. It is overwhelming to see the idea taking shape today. We owe our gratitude to the entire GRFDT team as well as to the eminent Editorial Board Members who have been a great intellectual and moral support to us.

Wishing you all a very Happy Reading experience.

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