

# ROOTS & ROUTES



# Editor's Note



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Dear Readers

Greetings!

Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) is pleased to present its organizational newsletter “Roots and Routes” for September 2021. Continuing the long-cherished organisational vision to disseminate the crucial migration perspectives, the present issue of the newsletter includes two articles, one news release, and two book reviews. All these write-ups have been published in [The Migration News](#), the media outreach portal of GRFDT.

The first article titled “*Over Seven Decades of Displacement: The Ongoing Palestinian Refugee Crisis*” is written by Ranaa Madani. This article explores the vulnerability of Palestinian refugees and relevant issues associated with forced displacement. The second article titled “*Assam and Mizoram’s Border Dispute: Is It Used To Hide ‘Illegal’ Migrant Influx?*” has been authored by Dr. K. Ranju. This article describes various pertinent issues relating to the border dispute, suggesting to resolve inter-state border disputes for ensuring the development in the northeastern region of India.

There is a News Release regarding the elected members of the GRFDT including Professor Binod Khadria as President; Professor Camelia Nicoleta Tigau, Dr. Raj Bardouille, Dr. Amba Pande, and Ms. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen as Vice President; Dr. Smita Tiwary as Secretary; Dr. Divya Balan as Joint Secretary and Dr. Feroz Khan as Treasurer.

Additionally, two book reviews are included in this issue. The book titled “*Migration at Work: Aspirations, Imaginaries & Structures of Mobility*” has been reviewed by Piyali Bhowmick. The book titled “*Our Moon has Blood Clots: The Unheard Voice of Kashmiri Pandit Migrants*” has been reviewed by Waseem Ahmad.

We hope that this issue of our newsletter will help in expanding the horizon of your knowledge on certain issues. You are welcome to provide your observations and suggestions on the present issue of our newsletter. You can communicate with us through email at [editorinchief@grfdt.com](mailto:editorinchief@grfdt.com).

Happy Reading!

Abhishek Yadav

## **Over Seven Decades of Displacement: The Ongoing Palestinian Refugee Crisis**

More than half of the Palestinian population are displaced and “approximately one in three refugees worldwide is Palestinian” (Rempel 2006). The Palestinian refugee crisis is no new phenomenon, 700,000 Palestinians became refugees after the 1948 Arab -Israeli conflict, and seventy-three years later, as political tension increases many more Palestinians are facing the same fate. As of May 2021, “more than 38,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are internally displaced as they flee Israeli airstrikes and seek shelter in UNRWA schools and elsewhere” (UNRWA 2021). “Most Palestinian refugees fall under the scope of Article 1D of the 1951 Refugee Convention” and according to Rempel “is commonly misapplied in Palestinian asylum cases”(Rempel 2006).

### **The Relevance of the Palestinian Issue Today**

The infamous case of “Sheikh Jarrah”, a neighborhood that is being evicted due to Israeli settlement construction, has recently created turmoil on social media sites. Nonetheless, this is neither an isolated incident nor a new one. Many Palestinians are forced to leave their homes and find refuge elsewhere. If not forced evictions like in the case of Sheikh Jarrah, bombings and blockades cause relocation of Palestinians to the Gaza Strip which houses 70% of the Palestinian population within Palestine (UNRWA 2021). The restrictions on Gaza deprive the 2 million Palestinians living there of their right to move freely, access electricity and water, and devastated their economy (Human Rights Watch 2020). By October 2020, “Israeli authorities demolished 568 Palestinian homes and other structures in the West Bank” displacing almost 759 people (Human Rights Watch 2020). More devastating is the fact that it is in a time of international turmoil and uncertainty owing to the COVID-19 pandemic that “Israel averages its highest home demolition rate in four years” (Human Rights Watch 2020).

COVID-19 also brought more complications to an already complex process of movement of Palestinians to and from the Gaza Strip which left Palestinians without access to urgent healthcare, especially amidst a global pandemic. “Egypt also sharply restricted the movement of people and goods at its Rafah crossing with Gaza” (Human Rights Watch 2020).

### **Palestinian Refugees and National Identity**

After 70 years of fleeing Palestine, the Palestinian refugee camps now hold four generations of Palestinian refugees, with some not even holding a memory of their homelands. While the huge number of Palestinian refugees are scattered geographically, most are concentrated in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Jordan. The refugee camps they reside in are in terrible, dangerous conditions. Originally built to accommodate 10,000 refugees they now hold four times the number, which had exacerbated after the Syrian crisis (Adams 2018).

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is predominantly taking care of Palestinian refugees, in fact, it is the agency’s only job. However, there has been backlash about the organization being ‘too political’ (Adams 2018). The Trump administration, with its aspirations of ending the Palestinian/Israeli crisis once and for all, has attempted doing so at the expense of aggravating the Palestinians. The administration cut the budget of the UNRWA drastically, which further worsened the situation for refugees (Adams 2018). While the administration has done so in hopes of ending the ‘refugee’ status of Palestinians, according to Adams (2018) this is not likely. The refugees, despite belonging now to the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> generation, continue to retain their ‘refugee’ status due to their lack of integration in other societies. For instance, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are not granted passports, are not allowed to own property, and are not allowed to get jobs. Thus, they have no form of identification

except that of being refugees; intensifying their Palestinian identity and their want for and belief in a 'right of return'.

In a study of Palestinian refugee camps in Ein El Hilweh, Lebanon, it became apparent that there are four main themes that reflect the reality of the refugees: "the concrete barrier; corruption; Palestinian identity; and migration or giving up" (Nilsson 2020: 15). Strategies used for solving practical problems cause the strengthening of the Palestinian group identity (Nilsson 2020:15). There is a constant struggle between migrating for a better life outside the camp and the risks and difficulties that lead to giving up.

On the other hand, "Ein El Hilweh has become an open-air prison for many of its residents" (Nisson 2020: 16). The dire living conditions have also caused a weakening of the cause of the Palestinian resistance, since securing the basic life necessities has become the priority of most individuals. Thus, for some this has meant a weaker Palestinian identity and a want to be integrated into the Lebanese society (2020: 16). The situation has become even more exacerbated with the influx of Syrian refugees into the camps, causing competition over already scarce resources (Nisson 2020: 16).

"There have been only two periods of official negotiations on the Palestinian refugee issue: early UN-facilitated negotiations in Lausanne (1949) and Paris (1951), and more recent talks held under the auspices of the Oslo peace process", in addition to the Quadripartite (the 1990s) and US-guided Camp David talks in 2000, and a short round in Taba in 2001 (Rempel 2006). The issue however is that all these talks were between elites and did not include much input from civil society. Unfortunately, with the magnitude of Palestinian refugees, the constant political tension regarding their case, and the lack of efficient organizations dealing with the issue, it seems like there is no

end in sight for the plight of Palestinian refugees. Palestinians are deeply entrenched in their Palestinian identity, if not by pride but also by lack of options. Thus, it seems like there is no plausible solution to the Palestinian refugee issue, which calls for an overhaul in how the predicament is being currently dealt with at all levels of responsibility and authority.

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## Assam and Mizoram's Border Dispute: Is It Used To Hide 'Illegal' Migrant Influx?

*The recent disputes between Assam and Mizoram is not new. Rather it has historical roots of 150 years.....*

The northeast of India — a territory bounded by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Tibet and connected to the rest of the nation by a thin land corridor — has been a hotspot of ethnic conflicts for decades, and the borders between its seven states are hazy. Following India's independence in 1947, [Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh were formed out of Assam, with Mizoram first proclaimed a federal territory in 1972 and raised to a state in 1987. Kolasib, Mamit, and Aizawl — three Mizoram districts — share a 165-kilometer \(101-mile\).](#) Boundary disputes can occur as a result of historical and varied cultural claims, with factors such as race, ethnic origin, language, and religion all playing a part. Nobody can deny that a conflict zone — defined by international or interstate territorial disputes — is a frequent site of violence, infractions, and a plethora of complaints. The Mizos have lived in this reality in the Assam-Mizoram border regions for several decades. They are always on alert and live in utter uncertainty as a result of the unresolved border dispute; their everyday lives are constantly threatened by a series of occurrences, many of them violent and unfriendly.

### Long standing territorial Disputes

Sandwiched between Myanmar to the east and south and Bangladesh to the west, Mizoram, the songbird of the northeast, is an enticing state adorned with breath-taking vistas and rich cultural institutions. Mizoram's cultural border is reflected in that it is based mostly on the tribal groups who occupy this attractive state, referred to as the Mizos. Known as the country of numerous tribes and races of people coexisting peacefully, the various tribes and villages here each have their own distinct characteristics. Rev Liangkhaia, a priest and Mizo historian, asserts in his book [Mizo Chanchin — the first written historical history of the Mizo — that the Mizo people moved from China to western Myanmar approximately 750 AD.](#) They eventually began moving into modern-day Mizoram around the fourth decade of the 16th century. By the third

decade of the eighteenth century, the majority of Mizos and their clans had fully relocated to their current site. Mizo people were influenced by British missionaries throughout the nineteenth century, when the British Raj subjugated the chieftainship under its rule, which was eventually repealed in 1954 by the Assam-Lushai District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act. By 2011, Christian missionaries had facilitated the spread of education, resulting in a high literacy rate of 91.58 percent, the second highest in India. Almost all Mizos became Christians, and the majority of them continue to be such to this day. Following India's independence, a separatist movement inside the Union campaigned for accession to Myanmar, with which they shared historical, ethnic, and linguistic links and linguistic underpinnings. India's split in 1947, its separation from Myanmar in 1937, and the government's administrative expansion over the Indian half of the region all impeded people's freedom of travel. Numerous Mizo, incensed by the restrictions, refused to recognise the new territorial boundaries.

### Assam-Mizoram Conflict

Assam is a state in northeast India that is known for its fertile river basins surrounded by mountains and hills. Tibet is accessible from Assam via the Patkai, whereas Burma is accessible by the Arakan Yoma. Historically, these passes were used as a means of transit for people travelling from Tibet, Southeastern China, and Myanmar. The Brahmaputra and Barak valleys extend westward to the Gangetic plains. All of these entry sites were leveraged in the process of populating Assam. Eleven important waves and streams of ethnolinguistic migration went through these areas over time, according to estimations. In 1901, the British compelled Muslim peasants from Mymensingh, Bangladesh (Wave 10) to relocate to Assam in order to increase land productivity. These Muslims are referred to as Miya. Census data has long been a cause of dispute in Assam politics, instilling fear among the state's residents

that “unabated infiltration” from Bangladesh threatens their cultural identity. Muslims are said to have increased from 24.68 percent of the state’s population in 1951 to 28.43 percent in 1991 and 34.22 percent in 2011.

The Assam-Mizoram boundary dispute dates back more than 150 years. While many confrontations between various states in the Northeast have occurred over inter-state issues, the Assam-Mizoram rivalry has seldom escalated into violence. Despite this, it escalated to unprecedented proportions, culminating in the death of at least six Assam police officers and the injury of more than 50 others in a shootout on the interstate line. Days after Assam and Mizoram clashed at Lailapur, Cachar district, on the Assam-Mizoram border, the Assam government issued travel advisories banning people from entering Mizoram. It was comparable to the travel warning issued by [India’s Ministry of External Affairs \(MEA\) on 23rd May 2016, which advised Indian citizens not to go to Libya due to security concerns](#) and risks to the lives of Indian nationals in Libya. Numerous accusations and counter-claims have been made on social media by members of the general public, prominent politicians, state officials, and even former GoM bureaucrat, with the overwhelming majority claiming that the Mizos caused the disruptions. Mizoram expresses its deepest sympathy to the deceased’s family and the Assamese community. Mizos mourn the unjustified loss of important lives. At the same time, their deaths could have been averted if the Assam Government had refrained from invading another state’s territory or, at the very least, from engaging a large contingent if they intended to negotiate, as they subsequently claimed. Contrary to what some unscrupulous news networks have claimed, nobody in Mizoram applauds the cops’ murders. It should be recognised and included as a self-defense strategy to convince the Assam Police to leave and recapture the Mizoram border post, or in anticipation of possible Assam police firing, as has historically happened. On the other hand, the majority of Mizoram people heard about the catastrophe the next day, indicating that it was not planned in advance but rather a last resort to preserve lives and property.

The conflict is centred on an unresolved border issue

between Assam and Mizoram — a 164.6-kilometre-long interstate boundary. Three districts share this border in South Assam — Cachar, Hailakandi, and Karimganj — and three districts in Mizoram — Kolasib, Mamit, and Aizawl. [Mizoram’s claim to the region is based on an 1875 notification issued according to the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873](#). The British imposed restrictions on foreigners’ entry and stay in certain areas, requiring Indian nationals from other states to get an Inner Line Permit (ILP) in order to visit or remain. The Act divided the North East’s hills from the plains and valleys, prohibiting free travel between the two zones. The hills were classified as “reserved zones,” and Assam claims possession based on a 1933 state government notification that divided the Lushai Hills, formerly known as Mizoram. The boundary line established upon the purchase of the Lushai Hills in 1904 was altered in 1912 and again in 1930. Finally, following successive Assam government modifications, the border between Cachar (Assam) and Mizoram was created in accordance with a 1933 government notice, which the Assam government still adheres to today. According to officials and residents in Assam, Mizos have been squatting in regions 1-3 kilometres from the inter-State boundary. On the other hand, Mizoram claims that the authorities in Assam have been employing “illegal Bangladeshis” to traverse 10-12 kilometres into their jurisdiction. Mizoram politicians have previously maintained that the boundary declared in 1933 was unjust since Mizo society was not consulted.

### **The Issue of NRC**

Assam was forced to establish The National Register of Citizens (NRC) to differentiate between genuine Indians and refugees or unlawful migrants. The NRC was initially published in 1951 but was not updated by successive Assam governments for political reasons. Around 3.29 crore petitions for inclusion in the NRC were submitted, of which 40 lakh were deemed ineligible. This list includes 2.48 lakh “doubtful” voters and those submitted to the foreigner’s tribunal. However, politics has been played on the issue, and intense arguments between the leaders of the government and opposition parties continue, even in Parliament. What is being overlooked in this spat is that the entire saga of inspection began with the

Assam Accord, which Rajiv Gandhi's Congress administration signed with Assam's students in 1985 to identify the state's Bangladeshis. Despite this, successive Congress governments in Assam have refused to execute the pact out of fear of a reaction from the vote-bank. Additionally, it must be remembered that this exercise is not directed against any particular community, but rather against aliens who are not Indians but have falsely manipulated their stay in this country as Indians and are receiving all benefits, thereby depriving a genuine Indian of his or her rights. These illegal migrants dance to politicians' tunes and employ them as human shields in fights with other citizens to earn a living.

### **Interstate boundaries**

District boundaries created on a 1 cm:1 km scale by cartographers became [interstate boundaries for what were formerly mountainous and isolated districts of a vast state](#). Occasionally, the lines were drawn over a hill, and occasionally across a forest, on maps that did not specify whether the hill slope or forest area was in Assam or its new neighbouring state. This created considerable difficulty for administrators on the ground, since the line frequently ran counter to a tribe's idea of its customary hunting, grazing, or jhum (shifting) agricultural areas. The real difficulties begin with these delineations made by cartographers who have never seen the ground reality. Mizoram historians assert that these woodland regions were used by Mizo tribes for hunting and that people on both sides of the border have coexisted happily for centuries. These confrontations are a very new occurrence, which may indicate political reasons. However, the people of Assam accuse Mizoram's civil society organisations of inciting conflicts in order to maintain political relevance. Mizoram, on the other side, alleged that huge swaths of land encroached upon by Assam are within Mizoram's constitutional boundaries and have been utilised by the Mizo people for more than a century.

During the ongoing Assam-Mizoram border conflict, a politician from Assam's Cachar district was seen instigating Assamese people to succeed in their economic blockade of Mizoram, triggering the Mizo people to starve to death. Such inflammatory comments encouraging poor illegal migrant-dominated border village Lalipur have far-

reaching consequences. It should be emphasised that even hostile countries allow medical supplies to cross combat lines during a crisis. Such economic blockades were not unfamiliar to Mizos, who had previously borne them with little or no effort by the central government to overturn them. The implementation of such an economic blockade will force famished people to seek help from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar and Bangladesh. This is an embarrassment to the rest of the Indian community, and the federal government should recognise it.

### **International Bangladeshi Migrants**

On virtually every flight from Dhaka's ShahJalal International Airport, you will see uniformed, wide-eyed, nervous young men and women lined up with their bags for their first trip outside Bangladesh. Around the airport, children cling to their fathers, women cry, and occasionally entire towns come to see off their relatives. Visiting a new nation without a return ticket is scary. This year's migration added to the 9 million Bangladeshis already residing overseas, many since the 1970s. However, more than half of Bangladeshi migrant labourers are categorised as unskilled. Desperation to escape poverty might confuse crucial understanding and judgement of employing reputable services and secure migration pathways.

Due to a lack of education and knowledge, Bangladeshi migrant workers are generally unaware of their rights and duties. As a result, people are susceptible to having their rights violated. This is true, to a greater or lesser extent, for all migrant workers, who are exploited in a variety of ways, including denial of actual remuneration, physical and mental torture, coercion into work against their will, failure to provide adequate food, housing, and medical care, and sexual assault (female workers). In contrast, an exploitation-free migration system is crossing India's permeable borders, which may significantly benefit migrant workers by providing a more reasonable standard of living than they would have in their native country.

### **Issues of Illegal Migrants**

[According to reports, Indian identification cards and voter cards are sold in Mymensingh,](#)



[Bangladesh, just before illegal immigrants enter India across the border near Silchar. Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri, Guwahati, Sonitpur, Silchar, Goalpara, Dhubri, and Karimganj are the worst-affected places in Assam in this respect.](#) The highest infiltration occurred in these places, where the Bangladeshis seized land belonging to both the indigenous people and the government. The tragedy of the issue is that, despite Bangladesh's tiny size, they have been attempting to repatriate Rohingyas living on its territory to Myanmar, but we have been unable to repatriate even ten Bangladeshis from the crores who came here after 25 March 1971. According to the UN report, India was home to 3.2 million Bangladeshi residents in 2013. Assam continues to be afflicted by the influx of Bangladeshis, which is no longer merely a demographic issue but also a significant political one. These influxes are concentrated along Assam's Cachar district.

Economic factors have been the primary motivation for illegal migration from Assam. Bangladesh has the world's highest population density, with 969 people per square kilometre. That country's population is rising at a pace of 2.2 per cent, or 2.8 million people each year. Each year, floods inundate roughly one-third of Bangladesh, displacing over 19 million people. 70% of the population, or 70 million people, live in poverty. Bangladesh's annual per capita income is 170 dollars, significantly less than India's annual per capita income. India-Bangladesh border is quite porous. Under these circumstances, ongoing large-scale population migration from Bangladesh to India is unavoidable unless effective countermeasures are implemented.

Apart from the preceding, there are additional reasons that facilitate infiltration from Bangladesh. The illegal migrants and many individuals on our side of the border have ethnic, linguistic, and religious affinities, which permits them to seek refuge. This complicates their detection. Certain political parties have encouraged and even assisted illegal migration to create vote banks. These immigrants are hardworking and willing to work as inexpensive labour and domestic help for less money than the indigenous population. This renders them palatable.

Additionally, because corruption is prevalent, corrupt authorities are bribed to offer assistance.

Although there is no proof that Bangladeshi authorities organised population movement, they have made no attempt to prohibit it and may even welcome it to alleviate their population crisis. As a result, there is currently an attempt to conceal this trend. There has been no census conducted to ascertain the number of these illegal migrants. Although precise and accurate numbers are unavailable, their number is estimated to be in the millions based on estimations, extrapolations, and different indications.

When looking at the people in Assam's border areas, one wonders if one is in Assam or Bangladesh. The dangers of large-scale illegal Bangladeshi migration to Assam, particularly the NE states and our country, must be emphasised. No misguided secularism should stand in the way of this. As a result of Bangladeshi migration, the indigenous people of Assam may become a minority in their state, and areas may be illegally encroached upon. Assamese people and adjacent states' cultural survival is at risk, as is political control and job possibilities. This stealthy and invidious population invasion may result in the loss of Lower Assam's essential areas. The inflow of undocumented migrants has turned the border districts into a Muslim majority region. It will only be a matter of time when a demand for their merger with Bangladesh may be made. The rise of global Islamic fanaticism may be fuelling this desire. In this context, it is pertinent that Bangladesh has long discarded secularism and has chosen to become an Islamic State. Loss of Lower Assam and territorial expansion towards the NE. States will separate the North East from the rest of India, denying the nation access to the region's vast riches.

### **Consequences, precautions and looking ahead**

It is critical to highlight that most of the NE states were carved out of Assam hastily, with little regard for tribal realities on the ground and with newly established state boundaries that did not precisely adhere to the region's ethnic boundaries. Regrettably, the Central government did not provide a framework for these states to resolve these problems cooperatively and instead left these border disputes to be resolved at a later period. Later on, these concerned governments attempted to address their border issues through



bilateral discussions, but these failed, and third-party involvement was sought to resolve the situation. The Centre took the initiative to assist a just resolution of the Northeast's festering border dispute. It can do so by convincing the concerned governments to sit down and negotiate a settlement or by convening a border commission whose findings are binding on all parties. Needless to say, resolving these border disputes expeditiously has become essential in light of the Central government's increasing emphasis on the Northeast's overall development. This objective can only be accomplished by eradicating conflict and fostering greater collaboration among these governments in order to usher in a new age of peace and prosperity in the region. The Constitution has tools for dealing with such issues.

If a conflict resolution engagement is successful, it must be supplemented by judicial wisdom and, most crucially, public representation. Domestic fires must be extinguished at a time when India's international border with a massive neighbour — China — is raging.

**Dr. K. Ranju** works for the Qatar Government as a Consultant and Expert on SE Asian Migrant Labour Issues. He also possesses a PhD in the same field. He was born and nurtured in Mizoram's Hnahthial township (now a district) on the Indo-Myanmar border, where his father worked as a teacher for more than three decades. He is well-versed in Mizo culture and customs.



# Roots and Routes

The Newsletter of GRFDT

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## Prof Binod Khadria elected as the President of GRFDT

Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) has elected **Professor Binod Khadria** as the President of the Society. He will be supported by a global team of Vice Presidents to carry out various research, academic programmes and outreach activities of the think tank globally. Prof. Khadria has been a Professor of Economics, Education, and International Migration at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has been an experienced University Professor with a demonstrated history of four decades of teaching, research supervision and publishing in the higher education industry. His special fields of expertise are Economics; Education Policy & Governance; Globalisation, International Trade, and Migration & Diaspora

Studies. As a co-editor, his latest publications include the *World Migration Report 2020* (IOM-UN Migration) and the *Sage Handbook of International Migration* (Sage, London 2019).

**Prof. Camelia Nicoleta Tigau, Dr. Raj Bardouille, Dr. Amba Pande, and Ms. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen** have been elected as Regional Vice Presidents. **Dr. Smita Tiwary** has been elected as the Secretary of GRFDT and **Dr. Divya Balan** as the Joint Secretary. **Dr. Feroz Khan** has been elected as the Treasurer of the Society. GRFDT looks forward to learning from their expertise and experience to serve the world community by developing and disseminating the knowledge associated with Migration and Diaspora.

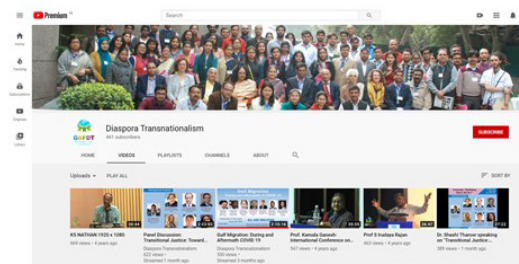
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## **Our Moon Has Blood Clots: The Unheard Voice of Kashmiri Pandit Migrants**

**Rahul Pandita (2014), *Our Moon Has Blood Clots: A Memoir of A Lost Home in Kashmir, India*: Penguin Random House, 9788184005134, 257 pages.**

Our Moon Has Blood Clots is a memoir about the lost home in Kashmir by Rahul Pandita, published in 2013. The author narrates the plight of Kashmiri Pandit's migration to different parts of India in the 1990s. The book is divided into five parts which describe the different phases of the history of Kashmir, but the dominant section deals with the exodus of [Kashmiri Pandits](#). It is a devastating and heart-breaking tale of a powerless minority which lost their homeland and took refuge across the globe. It brings the subaltern and marginalised voice of Kashmiri Pandits into mainstream literature. The violence, trauma, and nostalgia of exile is depicted by the author through his personal struggle. It is full of pain, sufferings, anger, and the struggle for survival.

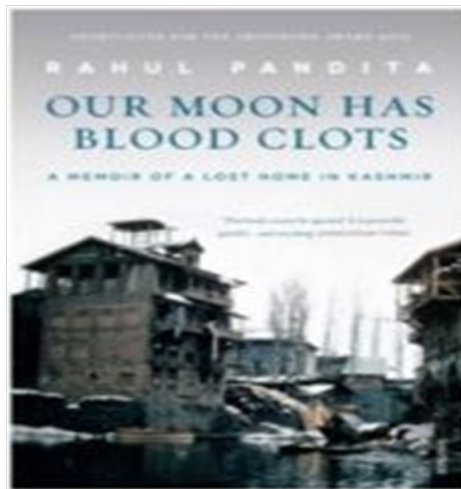
This memoir is about the life in exile which one experiences after losing his/her home due to war or conflict. The author provides a counter narrative to the well-established cannon of literature where the voice of the Pandits have largely been subjugated or ignored. The whole book is written from the migrant's perspective, which helps one to understand the complexities of the difficult situations in which the pandits find themselves. Issues like maladjustment, lack of education, unemployment, gamophobia and identity crisis perturbed the migrants and make their situation from bad to worse. Muslims blame the then Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Jag Mohan for the exodus of Pandits because he did not provide them the security in their homeland. Instead, he helped them in moving out by arranging transport facilities. Muslims also consider the Pandits as opportunists for migrating to the safer places leaving the Muslims to suffer. Rahul negates this discourse and brings forth a new perspective of

his own community.

In part one, the author puts light on the different periods of Kashmir history. This region had been ruled by multiple dynasties belonging to different religions like Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. The narrative starts in 1996 when the author was staying in his flat in Delhi and goes back to the peaceful times of Kashmir before 1980s. Everything in the valley was good before the insurgency movement. The different sections of society were living in peaceful coexistence. Rahul vividly depicts the traditions and culture of Kashmir.

Festivals like Eid and Shivratri were celebrated by both the communities with great fervour and gaiety. Most of the population were confined in Kashmir only where their lives revolved around their homes. Shalimar Garden, PariMahal, Aharbal waterfall and Dal Lake were the spots of their vacations. There used to be small strifes over the India-Pakistan cricket matches between the two communities, but it never turned into communal disharmony or riots.

In the second part, the author reveals the reasons of mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in the 1990s. It was during this decade that the rift between Muslims and Hindu started. They looked at each other with suspicious eyes. The insurgent movement of Kashmiri Muslims had put the lives of Pandits in jeopardy who were suspected as collaborators and loyal to Indian army. In order to spread the terror in the whole valley, prominent Pandits like Lasa Kaur, Director Doordarshan and Satish Tickoo, a well-known businessman among many others were killed. Newsreaders were asked to quit their jobs in Radio and Television so that people would not





be able know the actual situation. Pandits were ordered to leave the valley, “Advertisements had appeared in some Urdu newspapers. Released by various militant organisations, they asked the Pandits to leave the Valley immediately or face dire consequence” (Pandita 94). Jag Mohan, the then governor of Jammu and Kashmir could not stop the exodus of Pandits to Jammu. Rahul’s family packed whatever little they could into few suitcases and shipped to Jammu. Their sufferings did not end by leaving their homeland. New challenges and hardships engulfed them from all sides. They became worried, “Where were we going to live? Where would the money come from? Was everyone else safe- our friends, relatives”? (Pandita, 100)

Part Three deals with the hardships of the migrants in the refugee camps and other lodgings. Those who took rooms on rent were under constant surveillance of their landlords who continuously used to look how much water they consume, how much electricity they use, what kind of food they cook and who comes to visit them. In the refugee camps, the migrants suffered lack of basic necessities like drinking water and toilet facilities. There was lot of anger and distress among them. Their immovable property in Kashmir was either usurped up the state government or was erased from the official records. Some of them sold their property to meet the financial crisis. Initially the residents of Jammu welcomed them, but gradually they developed antipathy towards Kashmiri Pandits and taunted them with abusive words.

The migrants were living in unhygienic conditions and as a result they developed diseases which were hitherto unknown to them. Their trauma of exile was beyond imagination. Rahul’s father was very much concerned regarding the education of his son, so he had sent him to Chandigarh (India) for higher studies. He also sold his house in Kashmir to treat his ailing wife in a better hospital.

Part Four delineates the grief and misfortune of Kashmiri Pandits during the 1947 tribal raids of Pakistan. The invaders came from the Northwest Frontier Province and – entered Baramulla to make a way to Srinagar. The news of their arrival spread terror in the Hindu community. In order to save their lives, the Pandits fled to unknown destinations without informing anyone. People were killed, houses ransacked to get the gold and other valuable items. Maqbool Sherwani, a

member of National Conference misguided the tribesmen so they could never reach Srinagar. He was brutally killed by the [Pathans](#) for his loyalty to India. This section helps us to understand how Kashmir became an important issue and why disputes happened between India and Pakistan after Independence.

Part Five brings forth the nostalgia for the past. Kashmir has now become a part of their memory. The new generation did not find much emotional attachment to the land of their ancestors. They are losing their customs and traditions in exile. Rahul’s mother lost her voice and could not walk due to back pain. In order to bring happiness in his parent’s lives Rahul bought a flat in Delhi which is now his home. He worked as a journalist in Kashmir to report the episodes of human violation in the valley. He is hopeful that one day he will be back with his family and community in his homeland.

In conclusion, it can be said that the book is not just the memoir about the personal life of Rahul Pandita but it is a tragic tale of his whole community. It presents before readers the unheard story of the vulnerable people who left their homeland mostly due to religious persecution. The episodes mentioned in the book are true to the history. One loophole in the book which reviewer could find that the author blames the whole Muslim population of the valley for their exodus which can be contradicted with other accounts which were written at that time. It was such a horrible period in the Kashmir history that countless Muslims lost their lives for no genuine reasons. Overall, this is a wonderful book which not only highlights the sufferings of Kashmiri Pandits but also praises their resilience. This book is worth reading for scholars and common readers who want to study forced displacement and to all the people who want to see what it means to lose a home/homeland. It is wakeup call to all the world for mutual understanding and respect for diversity. Rahul is highly concerned about his dispersed community scattered all around, he wishes for their peaceful return to their ancestral land.

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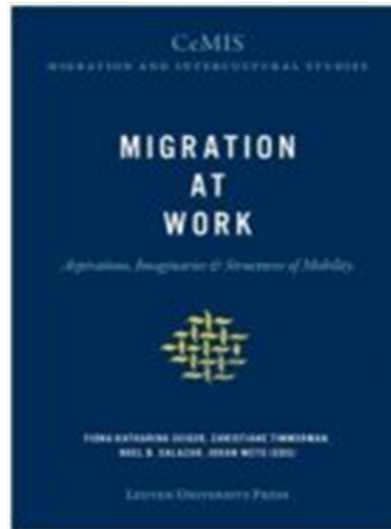


## Migration at Work

*Fiona-Katharina Seiger, Christiane Timmerman, Noel B. Salazar, Johan Wets (2020), Migration at Work: Aspirations, Imaginaries & Structures of Mobility, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 978-94-6166344-3, 194 pages.*

*"Migration at Work: Aspirations, Imaginaries & Structures of Mobility"* is a volume published in 2020 which offers a multidisciplinary approach towards migration. This book comprises empirical research in various fields providing valuable scholarship and evidence on current processes of migration and mobility. A wide range of geographical coverage can be seen in the book chapters. To understand the importance of migration and mobility from a wider perspective, the research is conducted in European Union, Turkey, and South Africa. The narrative, descriptive and qualitative research study shows the methods to tackle experiences and aspirations of the migrants. The chapters thus analyse the labour-related mobilities from two distinct yet intertwined vantage points: the role of structures and regimes of mobility on the one hand, and aspirations as well as migrant imaginaries on the other (p. 15). All the authors and editors of this volume delve deeply into various aspects of migration with their expertise in various fields. This book unearths the questions such as: the role played by the opportunities when people are mobilising; how structures enable, sustain and change different forms of mobility and how imaginaries fuel labour migration and vice-versa. The book thus is divided into two parts that are related to either of the two vantage points. Both the parts contain four chapters each.

In the first chapter **AijaLulle** discusses about the gap between migration literature and care which are to be bridged and should be critically read through the lens of care. Care is an important part in the lives of all. The chapter explains that existing structures such as European Union (EU), that has failed to consider migrants as caring agents and does not consider giving full social



rights to temporary migrants. The main argument of this chapter is that migration is not only an economic activity but also a care-giving project. There are instances in the chapter where the migrant workers are not allowed to ask for leaves from their employers. Thus, author emphasises that the migrants are deprived of their right to make use of their mobility. There is a continuous negotiation from temporary migrants for their need to travel for providing care.

In second chapter, **Joana de Sousa Ribeiro** discusses the topic of health care migration.

The chapter explores the interrelations between regulation regimes such as admission policies, academic institutions procedures, and professional bodies' rules. Based on the case studies, the author brings out the debate of division between regulation and emancipation in a capitalist society. The findings suggest that social transformation poses new challenges to the structure of mobility. Further, this chapter explores on the inter and intra-relations of regulatory regimes related to the international mobility of the health workers to and from Portugal.

In third chapter, **Alice Ncube** and **Faith Mkwanaenzi** emphasise how migration has allowed female sub-Saharan economic migrants in South Africa to use their agency and challenge traditional gendered roles and stereotypes. The authors use the Capability Approach (CA) to understand how gendered roles are playing a part in reconstructing traditional structures that saw women as passive in development associated with labour migration (p. 68). This chapter highlights the fact that in earlier times, migration was thought to be for the men and the role of females were within the family and invisible to the world. Thus it gave the view that migration was a male

centric phenomenon. Gradually, this assumption was changed and women could construct their path to development and break the glass ceiling. The findings illustrate that those women who have certain capabilities to migrate into a foreign country are exercising their agency in the field of work and earning for a living. . It is evident from the chapter that the nature of migration is not influenced by gender roles.

In chapter four, **Mirjam Wajsberg** tries to explore the tension between structure and agency experienced by West African migrants during their migration trajectories within Europe. The authors draw the attention where the migrants use tactics to achieve both spatial and socio-economic mobility despite various restrictions within the European Union. The migration trajectory approach used in this chapter allows us to understand the complex interplay between migrants' hopes, frustrations and aspirations during their journeys. The chapter beautifully carves out the tactics used by the migrants who challenge the rules and regulations imposed on them.

In chapter five **Maria Luisa Di Martino et al.** examines how highly educated migrant women negotiate their careers considering structural constraints. The authors analyse their experiences of the educated migrant women through the lens of migratory careers. The chapter throws light by focusing on the coping strategies of European and Latin American women in the Basque Country. The findings show how opportunities and challenges are dealt with and how women despite facing structural constraints are getting opportunities when their private and professional trajectories unfold abroad.

In chapter six, **Iraklis Dimitriadis** explores how subjective representations of work or any type of life-related subjects may induce desires to leave the place of destination. This chapter further discusses about the decisions of the migrants to stay in their place of destination also. The author analyses how the lives of Albanian migrant construction workers in Italy and Greece revolve around negative perceptions such as fears of racism or have to settle for less favourable lifestyles which works as deterrents for the migrants (p. 18). The author conducted 61 in-depth interviews with Albanian

migrant construction workers in Italy and in Greece to conclude that the analysis of imaginaries can become the motivation for onward migration. The only limitation emerged in this study is from the gender perspective where Albanian migration is traditionally known as male pattern migration. It thus represents to confirm males' prominent role in the household economy (p. 143).

In chapter seven, **Christine Moderbacher** focuses on the effects of future which is destroyed. The author describes the lived experiences of Cise whom he met and points out important nexus between imaginaries vested in mobility and structural realities. This study explores how certain migrants are systemically immobilised through governmentally prescribed training programmes. These programmes are typically used to keep the participants busy which eventually fail to convey skills that are applicable in the labour market. These policies are disabling people destroying their ability to imagine future horizons while at the same time producing a waiting room that turns people into "patients of the state" (p.166).

Finally in chapter eight, **Deniz Berfin Ayaydin** puts focus on the care in labour industry. The author argues that Filipino nannies are privileged in the hierarchy of foreign child-carers in Turkey. Accordingly, the placement agencies market Filipino women's English-language proficiency; their modernity and their supposed cultural predisposition which can provide good childcare. This study however sheds light on the power relations which are formed during the course of migration. The author further explores how the privileges are distributed which are not equal to all in the care sector. The preferential treatment is clearly given to those with knowledge of English or higher level of work ethics instead of experience or age in the work domain.

The role of agency of migrants is often missing from an analysis of migration systems. The only drawback is repetitiveness. Some of the points in the chapters are repetitive and could have been eliminated to provide an easier read and avoid monotony. This book presented a breakthrough study on migration which is solely based on qualitative methods. This book thus opens up new

possibilities for future research in the domain of migration. However the book is very informative in nature for anyone to read and gain knowledge about various aspects of migration. The aspects which the book covers are easy to read even for those who do not have any specific knowledge about migration. Overall, the book provides an excellent source of information for the students, researchers, policymakers or anyone who has interest in understanding migration.

**Source:** Fiona-Katharina Seiger, Christiane Timmerman, Noel B. Salazar, Johan Wets (2020), *Migration at Work: Aspirations, Imaginaries & Structures of Mobility*, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 978-94-6166344-3, 194 pages.

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