

ROOTS & ROUTES

Vol 12, No. 8, August 2023

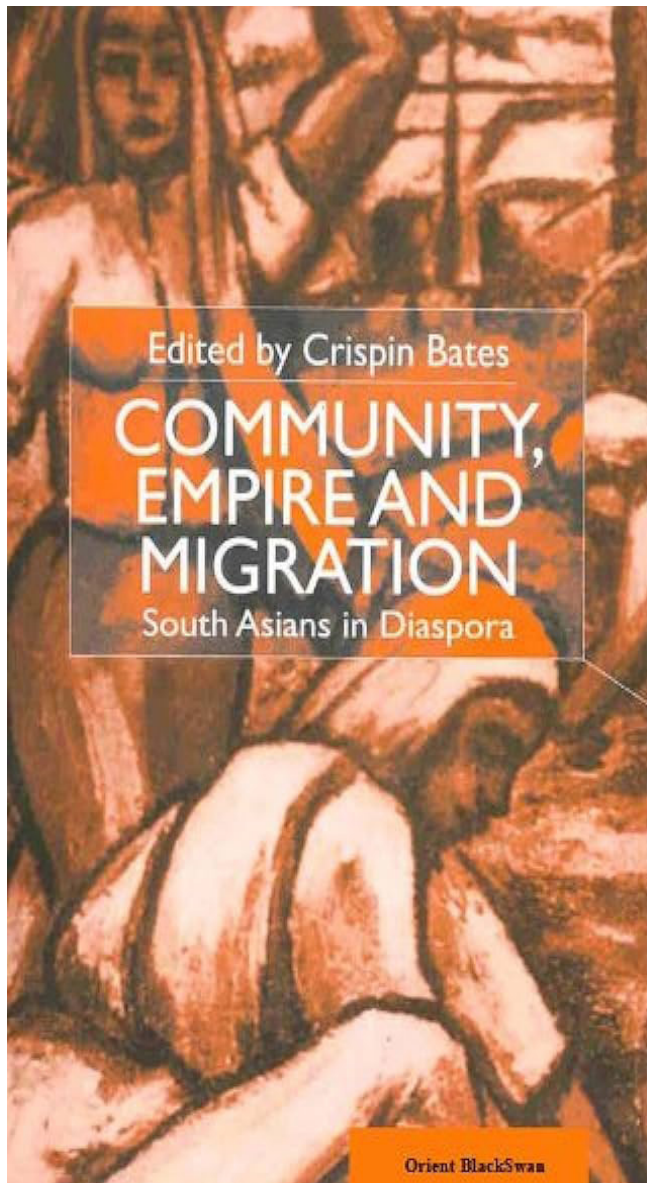


Photo credit: <https://www.amazon.in/Community-Empire-Migration-Asians-Diaspora/dp/8125024824>

In this issue:

Articles

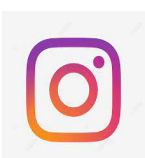
The Unfortunate Deaths of Migrant/Refugee Children

“Migration, Governance, and COVID-19: Perspectives, Policies, Opportunities, and Challenges” – Session V: Language Session

Book Review

Community Empire and Migration: South Asians in Diaspora

www.grfdt.com



Editor's Note



Contents

Articles
Book Review

Editorial Information
©GRFDT. Roots and Routes is printed,
designed & circulated by
GRFDT

Editor

Feroz Khan

Editorial Committee

Abhishek Yadav
Ani Yeremyan
Arsala Nizami
Feroz Khan
Felix Tombindo
Manjima Anjana
Michal Tengeri
Monika Bisht Ranjan
Rakesh Ranjan
Sadananda Sahoo
Smita Tiwary
Snehal Mutha
Unnikrishnan V

Design and Production:

Rakesh Ranjan &
Feroz Khan

Email: editorinchief@grfdt.com

Website: www.grfdt.org

Dear Readers,

Greetings!

The journey of refugees is full of hardships and sorrow. From the moment they decide to move from their native land to seeking refuge in a new host country, they face immense hardship and misery. Crossing their own country's border because of threat, and searching for a new destination after navigating rough terrain, hostile climates, and numerous visible and invisible challenges, they are in constant search of a safe place and a better future. While many people succeed in their attempts, many others lose their lives and opportunities. Some refugees, like children who are unaware of the concept of borders and refugee status, many time do not survive in this process. The hardship and sorrow, beyond words and imagination, underscore the urgency and gravity of the refugee crisis.

In this issue, we discuss the sorrow through an article titled "*The Unfortunate Deaths of Migrant/Refugee Children*" by **Himani Chauhan**. The article sheds light on the heart-wrenching realities faced by refugees during their journey and delves into the tragic outcomes of the refugee crisis. Alongside this, the edition features event coverage of the "*4th International E-Conference on Migration Governance and COVID-19*" by **Andrew Mendy**. The seventh session, specifically focused on forced migration and human rights, offers a deeper understanding of the nexus between migration, global health crises, and the rights of every human being. This issue also includes a book review titled "*Community, Empire, and Migration: South Asians in Diaspora*," reviewed by **Nisha**.

We invite readers to participate and share their experiences with us to have a meaningful engagement. You can communicate with us through email at editorinchief@grfdt.com. We wish you happy reading and look forward to your suggestions and comments.

Feroz Khan

THE UNFORTUNATE DEATHS OF MIGRANT/REFUGEE CHILDREN

Context

September 2nd, 2022, marked seven years since Aylan Kurdi became a worldwide sensation highlighting the refugee crisis that was arising from the war in Syria. Yet, many migrants continue to lose their lives whilst trying to seek refuge. One such instance occurred recently with the death of three children on board a boat filled with migrants and refugees from Syria and Lebanon who were trying to reach Italy for job opportunities.

Significance of the Death of Aylan Kurdi

Migrant deaths across the Mediterranean Sea started as early as the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in 2011. The year 2015 really heightened the refugee crisis when photographs of a lifeless 3-year-old Syrian-Kurdish boy, Aylan Kurdi, began to circulate the world. The photograph depicted Kurdi's body lying face down on a Turkish beach (Osmandizikovic, 2020). This image caught the media's eye as it was shocking to see how a young boy had lost his life whilst trying to flee for his life. It quickly raised international awareness of the refugee crisis and led the EU to fully open its borders, though for a limited time (Osmandizikovic, 2020). Regardless, many have drowned and lost their lives whilst travelling across the Mediterranean Sea due to the lack of safe and legal ways to cross it.



Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/9/2/alan-kurdi-what-has-changed-since-his-death>

The death anniversary of Kurdi is marked with an annual memorial service on the beach where his body was found (MUĞLA-Anadolu Agenc, 2021). The tragic death of Kurdi led Omer Sarikaya to direct a movie about his life and shed light on the unfortunate deaths of migrant/refugee children. However, during the 2021 memorial service, Sarikaya stated that “thousands, maybe tens of thousands of Aylan babies have unfortunately lost their lives in these seas since that day. We hope that the world will not turn a blind eye to this and something like it will never happen again.” (Sarikaya, 2021). Not surprisingly, many refugees and asylum seekers continue to board these rather unsafe boats and take the perilous journey across the Mediterranean Sea to seek better opportunities in Europe.

Recent deaths across the Mediterranean Sea

Since early September 2022, Aljazeera has been posting news articles about migrants and refugees who have lost their lives whilst trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. These reports began as early as September 5th. Aljazeera initially reported how around 60 migrants and refugees had been stranded on a sinking fishing

boat in the Mediterranean Sea for several days and are urging European coast guards to come to their rescue. Those onboard have communicated with their relatives and volunteer groups through a satellite phone, saying that “two young children have died, and that the group has been without food, water, and baby formula for the past three days” (Aljazeera, 2022). In addition, the interior of the boat is also struggling as more leakages are occurring onboard. Those onboard are trying to remove the water as fast as they can, but their abilities to do so are limited by the fact that they only have a few buckets on board, and one un-named migrant has claimed: “that’s all they have,” he adds how the “fishing boat is meant for five people, not 60” (Aljazeera, 2022). This reflects how lots of migrants and refugees board sailing vessels and trucks with little space as they want to escape their home countries and start living a better life in their host countries as soon as possible.

Interestingly, authorities along the coast of Malta and Italy have been informed about the situation at sea, yet no rescue operations have taken place to help save these stranded migrants. These migrants are worried that the increased leakages will cause the boat to sink at any time. Relatives that have been contacted through the satellite phone are also worried because, as one relative stated, “whenever I call, you can hear the children screaming and crying in the background; I don’t know why no government has taken action to rescue them, is it because they’re poor people trying to make ends meet for their families?” (Aljazeera, 2022). Another relative stated “the adults are handling the cold and lack of supplies okay, but the children are really struggling” (Aljazeera, 2022). Furthermore, The Doctors Without Borders (Medecins San Frontieres or MSF) organisation also posted on Twitter saying that the “Malta Search and Rescue Coordination Centres needs to take its responsibilities and comply with international and maritime laws NOW. Its lack of action is killing people. This is not acceptable” (MSF Sea, 2022). These claims illustrate how state actors and organisations are often slow to respond to such crises, and the words from relatives are extremely heartbreaking to hear.

As a result of no attempts being made to rescue those stranded, another child died on board due to dehydration which brings the total of children’s deaths while

attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea to three. In addition, regarding a different boat in Maltese waters, a four-year-old girl drowned and lost her life during a rescue mission (Aljazeera, 2022). However, they did manage to rescue 62 people. UNHCR representatives have claimed that child deaths are occurring at sea due to the lack of resources onboard – “they died of thirst, hunger and severe burns” (Cardoletti, 2022). “The UN agency said more than 1,200 people have died or vanished this year while trying to cross the Mediterranean and reach Europe” (Aljazeera, 2022). Interestingly, this past month has seen more reports being made on the unfortunate death of children, yet mainstream media fails to acknowledge and bring awareness to them. This is shocking to see as we often view these children as just mere children, not refugees or migrants.

The Future of Migration

It is heartbreaking to read such stories of young refugee and migrant children who have died whilst at sea. The Mediterranean Sea is only one example where migrants and refugees get stranded at sea without sufficient resources and help. As Cardoletti claims, “strengthening rescue at sea is the only way to prevent these tragedies” states need to start enforcing new rules and laws so that they can bring about change. The future of migration should not see more children dying but rather see them survive and live their lives to their full potential.

References

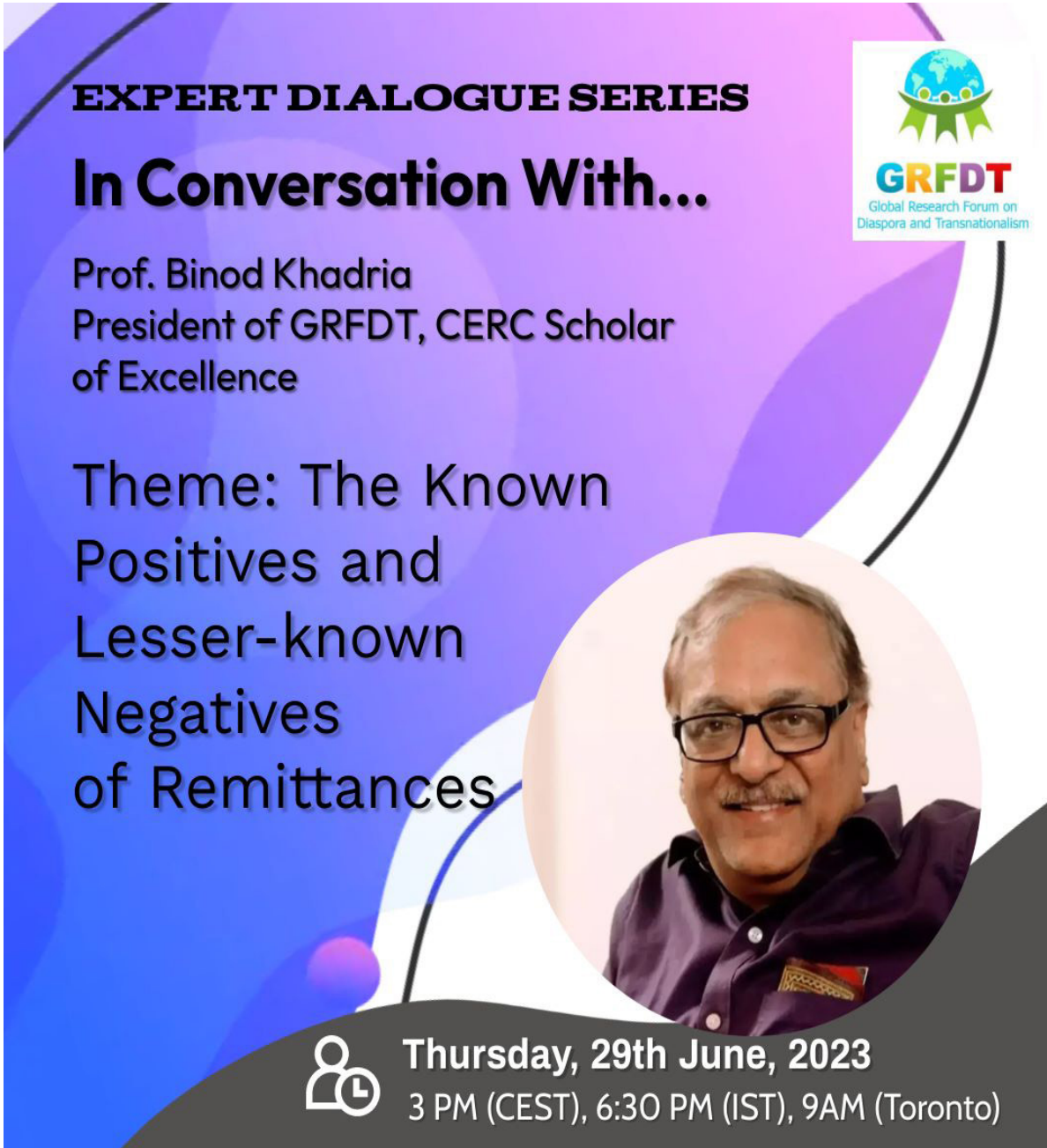
- Aljazeera. (2022). “‘Third child’ dies on migrant ship stranded in Mediterranean Sea”. Last accessed 14 September 2022, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/7/child-dies-migrant-ship-stranded-mediterranean-sea>.
- Aljazeera. (2022). “Dozens of Lebanese and Syrian refugees stranded for days at sea”. Last accessed 14 September 2022, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/5/dozens-of-lebanese-and-syrian-migrants-trapped-at-sea>.
- Aljazeera. (2022). “Infants among 6 Syrian refugees found dead on boat off Italy”. Last accessed 14 September 2022, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/12/six-syrian-refugees-found-dead-on>

[boat-reaching-sicily](#).

MUĞLA-Anadolu Agency. (2021). “Turkey marks 6 years since death of Syrian toddler Aylan Kurdi”. Last accessed 14 September 2022, from <https://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkey-marks-6-years-since-death-of-syrian-toddler-aylan-kurdi-167583>.

Osmandizikovic, Emina. (2020). “The drowning of Aylan Kurdi.” Last accessed 14 September 2022, from <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1660926>.

Himani Chauhan is an International Relations & History graduate and is currently pursuing a Master of Migration Studies from Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand). She comes from a family of immigrants, which has shaped her experiences, views, and interests in wanting to further explore and work in this area of study. Her area of interest includes – Migration, History, and Human Rights.





EXPERT DIALOGUE SERIES


In Conversation With...

Prof. Binod Khadria
President of GRFDT, CERC Scholar
of Excellence

Theme: The Known
Positives and
Lesser-known
Negatives
of Remittances





 **Thursday, 29th June, 2023**
3 PM (CEST), 6:30 PM (IST), 9AM (Toronto)

MIGRATION, GOVERNANCE, AND COVID-19: PERSPECTIVES, POLICIES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES” – SESSION V: LANGUAGE SESSION

The 4th International E-Conference titled “Migration, Governance, and COVID-19: Perspectives, Policies, Opportunities, and Challenges” was jointly organised by the Centre for Research on North America (CISAN), Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) from 3-4 November 2022.

The fifth session of the conference was chaired by Professor Camelia Tigau, a Senior Researcher at the CISAN, and regional vice-president of the GRFDT, on November 3rd, 2022. Prof Tigau introduced the session speakers, six scholars from Morocco, Mexico, and The United States of America, who would soon after start a discussion surrounding different topics of migration and its governance in their native languages: Spanish and French.

The lack of communication from the Moroccan government during the COVID-19 pandemic threatened migrants’ Humans Rights.

Ilham Siba, from Mohamed V University (Morocco), presented her master’s thesis “Moroccan Migration Institutional Communication Transparent: The case of status renewal documentation of migrant during the Covid-19 Pandemic”. The speaker highlighted the importance of Morocco as a transit country for African migrants, how the national emergency established by the government during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and especially the lack of communication regarding the migration procedures during the mandatory lockdown, represented an attack on migrants’ Human Rights. Through a documental analysis of Moroccan laws, questionnaires and interviews, the research concluded that migrants experienced difficulties accessing legal status or documentation mainly due to the absence of official and unified information, and the inability or indisposition of governmental staff.

Migrants influence their origin community, on a political and economic level.

Mr Luis Miguel Morales, from Puebla Autonomous

University, presented his study titled “Migration experience of San Francisco de Asis Community”, where he described how theoretical transnationalism focus on migrants maintain contact with their families despite the physical distance. Through a direct primary data collection methodology, the speaker analysed the Mexican “3×1” social programme, where all three levels of government (municipal, statal, and federal) use the resources gained from remittances to support migrant communities. In the specific case of the San Francisco de Asis community, there is a broad acceptance among its inhabitants about the positive impact of remittances for sustaining their livelihood.

Changes in policy require not only political will but local institutions to adopt them.

Ms Adriana Sletza Ortega Ramirez, from BUAP Mexico, discussed the migration paradiplomacy and policy adoption. While the international multilateral bodies play a fundamental role in migration governance, through hard international laws or soft international laws, a continued discussion with foreign public or private entities to find durable and sustainable solutions to socio-economical, political, and cultural issues posed by migration is necessary. The centralist and multilevel discussions development of foreign policy excludes the localist, and disjuncture or conflictive site of migration policies. The author sustains how local and international NGOs create the necessary external and internal political pressure for a proper interpretation and implementation of migrants’ human rights. This exerted pressure could aid not only swift government resistance but even the acceptance to achieve changes from local institutions.

Central American migrants protection protocols lack a broader gender category focus.

Francisco Landeros Jaime, from Sonora University, presented the IMUMI “Violence transnationalism suffered on the migration route by women asylum seekers in Mexico” research. A 48% increase in women

seeking asylum during the last year suggested the importance to study the issues encountered during their mobility and asylum requests under the context of violence. From the recompilation of personal testimonies and interviews, the speaker identified that 75% of women suffered gender-based violence from the point of origin through the point of entry in Mexico. The study concluded that the experienced violence does not end at the final crossed border but intensifies after it. Physical and psychological violence have a strong correlation, affecting the undergo migrant populations as well. The violence transnationalism is a cycle that worsens and negatively transforms the already present migrant suffered issues, highlighting the necessity of stronger gender-based migration protection protocols, and relocation programmes.

The COVID-19 Pandemic served to exacerbate the hate speech towards irregular migrants.

Janeth Hernandez Flores, an Institutional Studies professor at the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Cuajimalpa, examined the inequalities and hatred suffered by irregular migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic, analysing hate speech manifestations, weak institutions, and the available protection laws mechanism. Starting with an increase of violence towards Asian, and specifically Chinese, migrants, the pandemic exacerbated the already present negative stereotypes of migrants. The speaker goes further to criticise the lack of laws against hate speech across the American continent, as the necessity of an international observatory to gather the necessary information and promote policy changes. The study concluded that between the fragility of protecting institutions and the added vulnerabilities of irregular migrants, the politicization of the pandemic represented a menace to

this group, establishing a clear necessity for a regulation that criminalizes specifically hate speech.

Mexican medical tourism suffered from the initial closing of borders due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Maria Isabel Melchor presented her UNAM PHD “COVID-19 Impacts on U.S.A. medical tourism to Mexico” thesis preliminary findings. Her research aims to analyse the economic repercussions suffered by the Mexican medical tourism industry due to the pandemic travel restrictions. While Mexico developed dedicated private medical infrastructure to offer considerably more competitive prices to U.S.A. residents, its revenue was severely affected in 2020, but quickly recovered in 2021. Through a qualitative and field observation, the speaker concluded that the most common medical procedures performed after the reopening of the US-Mexican borders required little to no time post-surgery recovery time (bariatric, dentistry, and plastic surgery). The study also shows that medical tourism tends to be partnered with regular tourism, having a double beneficial impact on the Mexican economy.

The session brought diverse dimensions of migration, from the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants’ rights to the significant influence migrant diasporas play in their home communities. The complete session could be watched on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nm00x2qFAE4>

Angelo Gianturco Coletta is an Independent Scholar. He holds an Economy Bachelor and a MA in Humanitarian Action and Peace-building. He is currently based in Caracas, Venezuela. Email: agianturco@me.com



MIGRATION AND DIASPORAS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

For more details, email to:
Email: migrationanddiasporas@grfdt.com

Call for Paper



www.grfdt.com

CLIMATE AND HUMAN MIGRATION: PAST EXPERIENCES, FUTURE CHALLENGES

History of Migration and the Notions of Identity Formation in South Asia

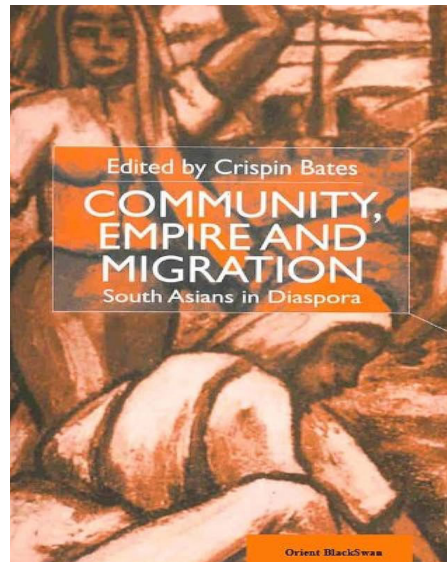
Crispin Bates (eds) (2001) *Community Empire and Migration: South Asians in Diaspora*, New York: Palgrave, ISBN 0-333-80046-X., xii, 319 pages.

The book “Community Empire and Migration: South Asians in Diaspora” is a collection of essays based on the conference held at University of Edinburgh in 1997. This collection of essays consists some of the interesting papers with regard to the history, politics, and anthropology of migration in south Asian countries including, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, as well as in various other foreign locations (like Fiji, Africa, the Caribbean, and North America) where South Asian communities moved during and after the colonial era. It throws light on the link between migration, identity, and ethnic conflict from a comparative perspective, and addresses the role of share colonial experiences in making ‘communal’ solidarities and discord by highlighting the ‘divide and rule’ policy. The major aim of this book is to throw light on issues of identity and ethnic clashes amongst migrant communities by comparing them internationally and by obtaining both anthropological and historical perspective.

This volume is a collection of twelve chapters. The first chapter is an introduction chapter which is written by the editor Crispin Bates. This chapter not only provides the summaries of all the contributions, but plethora of literature. In this chapter the particular focus is given on the possible meaning and emergence of communalism and community identity of south Asians. While discussing the emergence of communalism he

also throws light on the socio-economic changes that return into the ethnic and communal conflict in many countries.

The second chapter of the book is dedicated to the historical ethnography of Fiji. The author John Kelly in his contribution describes the history of Fijian migrant identity from ‘coolie’ to ‘Indian’ and the resistant of Indian population to the communal space carved out for them by the British. John Kelly particularly focuses on the identity issues of Fiji communities.



to credit: <https://www.amazon.in/Community-Empire-Migration-Asians-Diaspora/dp/8125024824>

The third Chapter of the book is written by Ari Nave which is dedicated to provide the history of the creation of Mauritian identities. This chapter is primarily about the significance of historical contingency in understanding actual patterns of ethnic conflict, or the lack of thereof. However, the chapter on Mauritius contains sweeping generalisations and highly questionable definition of basic concepts such as culture, ethnic group, and identity. The author also tried to locate and explain the basic mechanism by which ethnic relations abide and tries to reduce this to a scientific formula. Thus, the author Ari Nave in this chapter, while insisting that history has played an important role in the creation of Mauritian identities, does not explain this process in any detail.

The fourth chapter of the book is about the development of communalism in East Africa written by Michael Twaddle. Michel Tweddle accounts on the development of communalism is emphasized on the issue of spatial segregation in the construction of social differences in the East Africa. He put forward his views with the historians like Prem Bhatia (1973) Robert Gregory (1993), and other East Asian Activists particularly Yash Ghai who believe ‘Asian exclusivity’ as a major cause of communal tension in East Africa. The author

believes that social differences were created by the British officials by insisting residential segregation in the small towns of eastern and northern Uganda. The segregation was imposed based on the racial differences rather than religious grounds. Further, these differences were increased with the effect of urban segregation that was inserted by Devonshire Declaration of 1923 that excluded east African Asians both from rights of equal representation and from rural landholdings in African as well as white-settler occupied areas throughout the region. He argued that social estrangement only began by British officials that became the reason of subsequent conflict in the East Africa.

Chapter fifth is given by Ravi K. Thiara. The chapter talks about the ethnic identity of Indians in south Africa. The author provided the statistics of the Indian population living in the south Africa. This collection of essay provides a historical context of African and Indian relation since its inception. It addresses the historical and contemporary causes that have led to the attempts by Indians in south Africa to produce a collective ethnic identity. The chapter, in particular, argued that the history of discrimination and differences based on race, exclusive political organisation and extensive economic and political developments have been central to the evaluation of collective Indian identity. Further, it has highlighted the role of the state in the constitution of broader Indian identity, that enabled the successful execution of the ideology of racial separation. The chapter also explored the efforts of Indian Political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and other organisations to integrate Indians as a group and assist connections with the homeland government for political purposes. The chapter, further address the legacy and significance of violent incident between Indians and Africans for the expansion and elaboration of a collective ethnic identity.

Chapter sixth of this collection is written by Nira Wickremasinghe. The chapter talks about the migration, migrant communities in Sri Lanka. The author provides a historical background of Sri Lanka and describe the emergence of Sinhala nationalism. He throws light on how the definition of the migrants changed from early 20th century when all 'non-Aryans' were seen as alien by proponents on Sinhala nationalism to a more complicated definition of the 'other' founded on scientific and enumerative criteria -like residency period or proof of intention to settle- in consonance with the ration and legal order that was implemented in

colonial Ceylon. The chapter further explore that how both myths and apparatus of knowledge of the West combining to inscribe boundaries between communities and dividing them into migrants and sons of soil which led to the politics of exclusion and violence against the former (p.154).

Chapter seven is dedicated to explain the communal identity of south Indians in Malaysia. The author Amrit Kaur made an attempt to analyse the economic and social dimensions of change in Malaysia with the focus on particular themes including, the state and Indian labour migration, the economic role of south Indians in Malaysia, mainly in rubber plantation sector; and the ways in which identity was constructed and modified among Indians. He argued that the process of prescription and exclusion played an important role in the management of ethnic boundaries by the government in colonial Malaysia. A spatial separation of ethnic groups happened, every bit as pronounced as in East and South Africa. Encouragement was given furthermore to a distinct vocational segmentation of the workforce along ethnic lines. The process of identity construction amongst the Indian Coolie Migrants who came to work on the sugar, coffee and rubber plantation and government undertakings in the nineteenth century began with their definition by the colonial authorities vis-à-vis their Malyalam and Chinese counterparts.

Sumita Chatterjee in chapter eight described the issues of Indian women in Caribbean society. She made an attempt to reconstruct the gendered dynamics of migration in Trinidad during the period of 1845 and 1917 by reading official and non-official sources like newspapers, memoirs, female writer autobiography and oral interviews with the male and female of India. This chapter attempts to underscore not only simply the politics of this settlement but the gender politics of men's and women's efforts to carve the out the distinct and different, yet responsive social space in the period under the relationship when the problematic process of belongingness in an alien place began and continues to animate identity politics (p.207).

Chapter nine and ten addressed the issues of post partition migration. The author of the chapters, Karen Leonard and Mohammad Waseem analyse the fate of the so called Muhajirs (Urdu speaking Muslims) from Hyderabad and the north of India who shifted in the new state of Pakistan after 1947. The authors trace the issues of Muhajir from its inception pointing out

how Muhajirs sought to identify the Pakistan nation with wider Islamic world, interrupting the two-nation theory as giving the Indian Muslims right to move to Pakistan and ignoring the loyalties within the country. It is generally believed that the religion (Islam) being the basis of the new state, all people including migrated Muslims from India would be equally welcomed and united more or less on the same basis. However, in this collection of essays the authors demonstrate that the psychological responses and the outcomes of migration can vary greatly depending on the material and social situations (P.28). They highlight the fact that those who migrated from Panjab to Pakistan integrated quite successfully, however people who came from further afield, from Bihar, north India, or the former independent princely state of Hyderabad, had more difficulties. Thus, the authors in this chapter highlighted the identity issues of migrated Muslims who were termed as ‘Muhajir’ and even more hostile term like Makkar, Locusts, in Pakistan.

Thomas Hansens’s essay in this collection is an anthropological account of migrant culture in contemporary Bombay. The author highlighted the role of external factors in identity formation, however, his focus not on the migrants so much as those left behind and the effect that remittances and the returnee migrants have on the culture at home. The purpose of the author is to identify the impact of globalization and of global horizons on the world-view of Muslim local community (P.31). While in last chapter Aminah T. Mohammad highlighted the relationship of Hindus and Muslim who migrated from India to United States for the work. The author points out a wide range of clashes and the labyrinthine growth of association. He explained the conflict particularly over the language issues of Hindi and Urdu speaking. Thus, the author in this chapter provides a detail account of the relationship of Hindus and Muslims and how the rift has developed

between the Hindi/Urdu Speaking communities living in USA. He further explored the particular role of community leaders, and holds them responsible for much of animosity.

Overall, this collection of essays is optimistic in marking the agency and violation of migrants, their capacity to adapt- despite adversity and maintain new often unexpected identities independent of their forefathers and the prejudices of others. It has particular importance in the light of contemporary clashes in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Indian ocean, Indonesia, Fiji, and elsewhere amongst diasporic South Asian Communities. The book provides a historical background of the migration in south Asian countries with plethora of knowledge about the emergence of communalism, identity formation and relation between the communities. However, first two chapters in particular Kelly and Nave might discourage readers from carry on with the book because Kelly’s account on Fiji identities is blurred by the excessive jargon while Nave analysis on Mauritius contains over generalisation and highly questionable definition of basic concepts like culture, ethnicity, ethnic groups and identity.

Dr. Nisha completed Ph.D. in Women’s Studies from Centre for Women’s Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India and now working as independent scholar with five year of research experience. Email: rananisha1209@gmail.com

GRFDT Publications

