



## Migration: A Historical and Contemporary Analysis

### ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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### Abstract

*This research paper covers the idea of migration and multiculturalism, their intertwinedness tracing them from early human history until the very recent modern world, from an analytical and interpretative point of view. Two factors for migration are listed in the paper—opportunity and escape. The paper initially covers the aspect of migration as historical phenomena, covering various incidences with analysis and interpretation. The paper lists migration as a phenomena going on since the dawn of human history, leading to introduction and mixing of cultures. Of how such mixing of cultures gave rise to tensions, wars and strife, leading to the birth of the ideology of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism aims at equal treatment and a society free of discrimination or domination of a culture, allowing individuals to follow and embrace the culture they are inclined to. The paper further delved into how this phenomena of multiculturalism has created conflicts most particularly in European countries*

*leading to emergence of various right wing leaders and parties like Gert Wilders, Marine le Pen, Georgia Meloni for first time at this scale after end of ww2.*

### Key Words

*Migration, History.*

### Introduction

One of the most distinctive aspects of human history has been migration, or the movement of people from one location to another. Human migration has influenced civilizations, economies, and cultures all over the world, from the early dispersal of Homo sapiens from Africa to the Anglo-Saxon settlement in England and the European colonization of the Americas. Migration can be forced or voluntary, temporary or permanent, and motivated by things like opportunity, economic improvement, or the desire to flee persecution and conflict. Globalization and increased connection have sped up cross-border migration in the contemporary era, with profound cultural, economic, and social repercussions. In reaction to this diversity, the idea of multiculturalism has arisen, promoting equality, tolerance, and harmony between the diverse customs, cultures, and societies. Understanding migration and multiculturalism is essential to analysing how human mobility influences societies and fosters both cooperation and tension among communities.

## Literature Review

Numerous scholars and researchers have explored migration and multiculturalism throughout the years. Migration is an inherent aspect of human existence, occurring since the dawn of humanity, most popular of the theory being “out of Africa” theory. observation of historians for migration can be interpreted into mainly two categories or reasons- opportunism or escape. For instance, the Anglo-Saxons migrated to England in search of improved land and job opportunities, whereas contemporary refugees flee to Europe to escape conflict in their native countries. Historical analyses, including works on the Anglo-Saxon settlement of England (Härke, 2006) and European colonization in the Americas (Morison, 1965), emphasize the role of economic opportunity and conquest as major catalysts for migration. The United Nations’ migration reports (2024) provide quantitative data showing that 304 million people, or 3.6% of the global population, live outside their country of birth, highlighting the scale of contemporary migration flows.

Scholars also discuss the impact of migration on culture. Migrants frequently maintain their own customs, language, and traditions, which can sometimes conflict with the local culture. This has resulted in the concept of multiculturalism, where communities aim to acknowledge and honour all cultures fairly. Research indicates that multiculturalism can assist individuals from diverse backgrounds in coexisting harmoniously, although it occasionally encounters difficulties when cultural values or beliefs conflict.

Recent research on migration indicates that millions of individuals currently reside outside their native countries, with numerous relocating to Western nations for employment or security. This movement impacts economies via remittances and workforce shifts while also introducing new cultural practices to various regions. Researchers widely concur that migration and multiculturalism are interrelated: migration introduces diversity, while multiculturalism offers a framework to handle it within society.

## Migration and Multiculturalism

Migration is the movement of human beings from one place to another. When a person leaves one territory for the other, he is said to have migrated from his former territory to the latter one. The migration can be both temporary and permanent. Temporary migration means migration for a certain specified or unspecified amount of time, after the completion of the time the person who is migrating leaves his current territory of residence. Permanent migration is the permanent settlement of a person in a territory. The person is permanently settled into the territory and does not leave it unlike temporary migration based on some specific criterias.

Migration has been part of human history since the dawn of humanity. There has always been migration either temporary or permanent, although the reasons and nature of the migration varies at times in human history. Generally, the factors affecting human migration have been driven by the following two factors- opportunity and escape, sometimes both.

Since the dawn of humanity humans have migrated all over the earth. As per the “out of Africa” theory, first homo-sapiens originated in East Africa, where their fossils and remains are found by the Archeologists.<sup>1</sup> and the claimed migration of Aryans from their Slavic homeland and further division to European Aryans who migrated to Europe and Indo Aryans who migrated to Indian subcontinent are two great claimed examples of human migration during early stages of civilised human society. Migration of Anglo Saxons and Normans to England. Migration of inhabitants of British Isles to north America, Australia and south Africa, Spaniards and Portugese to southern America, French to Algeria. Are some of strong and popular modern world examples. Migration of Arabs from war torn Arab countries to Europe;

These migrations as described earlier were driven by opportunities and escape. The migration of Anglo Saxons from present day northern Germany and northern Netherlands was a migration based on opportunity. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes first came to England as mercenaries for local kingdoms, they eventually got settled into their regions of service forming villages and maintaining livelihood by farming. Later these settlements

got into conflict with the locals regarding resources. The Anglo Saxons were strong enough to fight against the locals and the established kingdoms. This war invited much more Anglo Saxons who along with already settled kin fought, leading to establishment of their own kingdoms. This migration pushed the local “Britons” to western and northern England, establishing their own kingdoms there. The northern kingdoms also merged into the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms later on. This led to decline of Celtic and Briton culture where the Britons got assimilated culturally and traditionally into the Anglo- Saxon culture.

The colonisation and settlement of Europeans in North America was the migration driven by the opportunities. in the initial years after discovery of eastern coast of USA and colonisation by the English. The common population mostly peasants and small farmers migrated and settled owing to the benefits of large agricultural lands, protection and benefits of local administration offered by the English colonial Government. The first of such settlements was the “**Roanoke Settlement**” in North Carolina led by Sir Walter Raleigh, the settlers mysteriously disappeared by unknown circumstances. The first permanent establishment was Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 by the Virginia company of London. The younger sons of English nobles, peasants, farmers, small tradesmen, non commissioned soldiers and lower ranked officers of English army began settling in north America owing to the benefits of more fertile lands for cultivation, pastures, lower competition in trade and more influence in administration. Ultimately giving them more financial and administrative gains and better life than their birth country.

India too has a history of outward migration towards the Caribbean and African countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Mauritius and Fiji. Indian migrants migrated towards these countries during late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, mostly as labourers, businessmen and as employees of decent level of Government jobs. They eventually settled in these countries after spending a long time owing to poor communication technology, economic and social benefits; forming Indian diaspora there, retaining their native culture, traditions. Hinduism In Mauritius formed 50.3% of the total population as per census of 1972.<sup>2</sup> In Trinidad and Tobago population wit east Indian ancestry constituted 35.4% of the total population.<sup>3</sup> In Fiji as per census of 2007, the Indo-Fijians or the Fijians of Indian descent constituted 37.5% of the total population.<sup>4</sup>

Some descendants of these migrants formed a politically and economically influential group in these countries. Mauritian Statesmen like Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Navin Ramgoolam; Guyanese statesmen like Cheddi Jagan, Janet Jagan; statesmen from Trinidad and Tobago like Basdeo Panday, Kamla Persad-Bissessar; Fijian leaders like Mahendra Chaudhry, are all of Indian descent.

Popular cricketers from Caribbean like Alvin Kallicharran, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Alvin Kallicharran, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Devendra Bishoo, Clayton Lambert, Sunil Narine, Denesh Ramdin, Darren Ganga, Jason Mohammed, Ravi Rampaul are of Indian descent.

In recent years owing to globalisation, increased and easier connectivity, the world has witnessed migration of all classes across the regions internally and externally. As per united nations data in 2024 304 million (3.6%) of the world population live outside of their country of birth. The external migration whether voluntary or forced is largely destined at developed western countries with top destination being USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and western European countries.<sup>5</sup> By looking specifically at India’s external migrations the migrants who migrate as daily wage workers are mostly destined at Persian Gulf countries. The workers migrating for high wage jobs are mostly destined at USA, United Kingdom and Canada. This migration is based on opportunism and also escape. Some of these migrants migrated owing to better job and salary opportunities ultimately benefitting them for better life. In rare cases they migrated for “escape” purposes for instance, Kashmiri Pundits owing to their exodus in 1990.

These migrants have become a vital part of Indian economy. The remittances which the Indian economy achieves have become second largest source of external financing<sup>6</sup>. They account for total 3% of Indian GDP.<sup>7</sup> This also has led to “brain drain” for Indian workforce, as the skilled workforce who migrates to

developed countries contribute in growth and development of the economy of their migrated country. Majority of them tend settle permanently there owing to better standard of living as compared to India. This has led to significant lost in skilled Indian workforce, which is essential in growth and development of the country. As per estimations Indian workforce in future is said leave annually in numbers exceeding 100,000 skilled workers.<sup>8</sup>

## Migration By Escape

It can be termed as a forced migration owing to risk of livelihood and families in their native places. This can be attributed to aggressive factors by war, insurgency, terrorism, civil strife, lawlessness, factors which could disrupt their peaceful living. To save their lives and families individuals migrate internally and externally to different regions.

Arab migrants particularly from Levant in last decade, migrated to western and central Europe to escape civil strife and lawlessness, which got increased after the start of Arab spring in 2011.

As per estimates 710,000 migrants from Syria have alone migrated to all over Europe to escape Syrian civil war, starting from 2011.<sup>9</sup> This has also started several political unrest in Europe, which have now being linked by many analysts to rise of right-wing parties and groups across Europe. The majority of these migrants claimed asylum in Europe as migrants from war torn countries. Turkey for instance his Syrian migrants in secluded camps. Most prominent of them being Suruç camp, Şanlıurfa Province.

The impact of migration is- change in culture, traditions, religion and daily practices.

The migrants already have and practice their own culture and traditions from their native regions. As they migrate to other regions, majority tend to continue practicing their own culture and traditions as most of them feel uncomfortable or alien to the traditions and culture of their migrated regions. This makes the advent of a culture which was not present in their migrated land even though it is practiced by just one group or community it still is practiced in territory of that region which makes the presence of the culture.

The natives of the migrated region who practice their own culture starts feeling different from the migrated people. If the migration is in great numbers the migrant culture grows this leads to decline in the total share of the native culture of the migrated region. The change in culture is linked to change in language, daily practices, festivals and religion. This most of the times creates tensions between the culture of the migrants and culture of the natives. For instance, The Arab culture after the Arab spring of 2011, gaining prominence in Europe creating occasional tensions between the Europeans and Arabs. Tensions between Christians and Muslims in Europe. Tensions between Bengalis and Assamese in Assam.

## Multiculturalism

The idea of multiculturalism is equality for all the culture, tradition, religion, practices; present in the land. It does not differentiate or discriminate a certain specific culture but rather gives freedom to the population to practice culture, tradition and practices of their inclination and choice. As per multiculturalism all cultures regardless of whether native or alien are given equal freedom of practice and flourishing. Even if a culture does not belong to a land it is viewed as equal with equal rights. Multiculturalism is ingrained in Indian constitution.

- **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws to all individuals, regardless of caste, religion, language, or culture.
- **Articles 15 & 16:** Prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth and ensure equal opportunity in public employment.<sup>10</sup>

Several European countries started adopting multiculturalism in 20<sup>th</sup> century. The process seemed to be accelerated after ww2 and most particularly after the cultural revolution of 1960s. the impact of it can be linked to the protests in France against Charles de Gaulle leading to his resignation in the 1960s and massive protests against the Vietnam war in USA. In Britain after passing of Jewish Relief Act, 1858, they all non-Christians got right to get elected in the parliament at Westminster.<sup>11</sup>

Both migration and multiculturalism are highly interlinked. Migration leads to establishment of new cultures in a region which is alien to it. But multiculturalism can be interpreted as an ideology to omit the tensions leading to peaceful coexistence amongst different cultures. Both idea of multiculturalism can also give rise to more radical and severe hatred and tensions. As witnessed by the emergence of right-wing nationalism in Europe first time after ww2, the emergence of leaders like greet wilders, marine le pen and Georgia Meloni who come from parties strongly inclined towards right wing ideology are some of the many examples.

## Conclusion

Migration is a phenomena which has taken place across every time and period of human history both internally and externally either voluntary or by force. Humans move gradually from one place to another because always there is a scarcity of resources no one place can have enough resources to stop the migration in its entirety. The migrants either flourished in case of Europeans in north America or became destitute like native Americans of USA having been displaced multiple times or the migrants of Atlantic slave trade or remained status quo ante like the migration of peasants between villages in medieval Europe or the pastoral nomads moving from one place to another. The outcomes of migration have varied from being conflict in extreme cases extermination and displacement to status quo to positive results for migrants but still in majority of the cases resulted in tensions locally.

In present day world also there seems no sign of slowing down in fact the intensity of migration has shifted in its nature from nearby regions (in majority cases) to far off regions owing to globalisation and rapid progress in technology. The world is now connected than it was ever before and is getting connected at a much rapid phase as the years progress. The migration in future might have very different problems than the migrations at past. But at present still the reasons for conflict between natives and migrants remains same like before- loss identity, change in culture, control over resources and greed for dominance in the region. The reasons for migration today remains same like earlier economic and lifestyle benefits, better opportunities or escape.

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