MIGRATION DYNAMICS: NETWORKING, ETHNICITY, IDENTITY AND SCHISM

M A Kalam

Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR)

YalakkiShettar Colony, Dr. Ambedkar Nagar, Lakamanahalli
Dharwad – 580004, Karnataka, India.
www.cmdr.ac.in

Migration Dynamics: Networking, Ethnicity, Identity, and Schism

M.A. Kalam[1]

Centre for Multi Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR)
R.S.No. 9A2, Plot No. 82 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Nagar
Near Yalakki Shettar Colony
Dharwad-580004 Karnataka State, India.
www.cmdr.ac.in

August - 2018

CMDR Monograph Series No. - 100

First Published   :   August - 2018

Migration Dynamics: Networking, Ethnicity, Identity, and Schism

M.A. Kalam[1]

Introduction

Migration no doubt involves mobility but is not to be mistaken with nomadism or semi-nomadism or transhumance; nor with being footloose or harbouring wanderlust. Migration, of course, involves mobility from one place to another, be the place a village or town or city, or in some cases even another country. But this mobility is not for just a short while, or a visit to someone, or as a pilgrim or a tourist. It involves a degree of residence over a period of time in the place moved to, though it may not entail a permanent stay; not that permanent residence is not a feature of migration. It indeed is. One of the interesting facets in migrations, for instance, is the change in residence of women on marriage in the predominantly patriarchal societies all over the world. This sort of migration is the most leading of all kinds of migrations. So, in what looks like a simple or straight forward occurrence known as *migration*, we are looking at different dimensions and variations within the same phenomenon.

Migrations occurred in the ancient world without any hindrances or roadblocks in a no-holds-barred manner. There were no hassles of international borders because there were no countries as such; no passports, no visas, no customs regulations, no quarantines, no dumps and detention centres for forced migrants and asylum seekers.

People moved about freely for eons even after *Homo sapiens* appeared on the face of the earth between 300,000 and 200,000 years ago. The most recent predecessor and ancestor of *Homo sapiens*, *Homo erectus*, emigrated from Africa 1.8 to 1.3 million years ago and spread to Europe and Asia. Also, from 400,000 years to as recent as about 28,000 years ago *Homo neanderthalensis*, also known as *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* lived in Europe. They all moved about freely in different places; as did *Homo sapiens* in its relatively brief presence on the surface of the earth compared to its non-*Homo sapiens* ancestors. These early drifters were, nevertheless, migrants in a permanent sort of way, as they never went back to their original climes and niches in Africa. Interestingly, they could not be bracketed either as internal or international migrants as the whole of *terra firma* was one single expanse *sans* any restrictive inter-

---

[1] Professor of Applied Social Sciences (Adjunct Faculty), Loyola Institute of Business Administration, Chennai.

state or international boundaries of nations and countries, save for natural barriers like the seas, water bodies, and mountains.

Given the time frame of evolution of the universe, and of humanity in general, the emergence of nations and independent countries is something that has just happened very recently, relatively, and adds up to something quite negligible on the overall evolutionary timeline. Hence, when we allude to international borders between countries and travel restrictions, we are basically talking about what is obtained in the so-called modern and contemporary world that shows political enclaves in the form of countries, many of which emerged as a result of colonial divisions, and their spoils, as in the case of, predominantly, Africa and South America. Depending on relations between different countries and various sorts of alignments, and social, cultural and economic distances between countries based on friendliness and hostilities, different kinds of regimens, treaties and protocols have emerged. These have evolved in various ways, and do keep showing modifications and revisions day in and day out. And we are left with various forms of travel arrangements and requirements of travel documents, passports, and visas depending on the bilateral and multilateral give and take between various countries. Some of these have *favoured nations* statuses between given countries, and trade and commerce treaties in bilateral, and at times multilateral understandings. The European Union (comprising of 28 countries), for instance, allows its citizens visa-free travel within the Union. The US and Canada do enjoy very easy travel regimens vis-à-vis the European Union, and reciprocate in like terms, for citizens of the European Union. It is, generally, the citizens of the Third World countries who bear the brunt of a high degree of restrictive travel practices promulgated by the white countries. So, to put it in a nutshell, contemporary travel restrictions and regimens between different countries is to be seen as something that is based on, to put it mildly, in a *Black and White* framework due to the overt and undiluted discriminatory attitudes and racism practised by the white countries wherein the free flow of capital is unashamedly encouraged and promoted but not that of labour or people, in particular non-white people.

In spite of the above, it is not that all migrations are international and occur only across international borders. Lots of migrations ensue within the borders of a country in the form of internal migrations. In some cases, there could be restrictions even on just simple travel, not to talk about migrations, between the different states of a country

itself. For instance, in India we come across the phenomenon of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) that exists in the North East of the country. The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland, require people, even Indian citizens from other states, to obtain the ILP in order to travel to these states. And another North Eastern state, Manipur, is contemplating introducing ILP!

Migrations occur due to different reasons and the triggers are diverse in different cases and in varied geographical and socio-cultural contexts. Economic pursuits invariably are inherent in migration practices and processes. While migrations are in the realm of spatial mobility, aspired economic upward mobility is a concomitant and often a dominant factor in migrations. Though, at times, a perceptible economic gain may not seem to be present in spatial mobility, there definitely cannot be, at least in terms of expectations, any sort of downward economic mobility.

According to Anthony:

> From a constructivist perspective, viewing the actions of individuals within specific historical contexts, migration can be understood as a behaviour that is typically performed by defined subgroups (often kin-recruited) with specific goals targeted on known destinations and likely to use familiar routes. Kinship linkages and access to information limit many of these behaviors. From a processual perspective, examining constraints and regularities in a larger term pattern of behavior, migration can be viewed as a process that tends to develop in a broadly predictable manner once it begins. Social organization, trade relationships, and transport technology constrain some of these processes (1990: 895-96).

While distances travelled are relatively less in internal migrations, these do not differ much in operational/aspirational ways from international migrations. In fact, there are strong parallels and lots of commonalities of various kinds between internal and international migrations, as explicated below.

Ethnicity is ubiquitous in human societies. Though ethnicity plays a role in internal migrations too, it assumes greater significance in international migrations. From the South Asian/Indian subcontinental perspective, kinship, caste, village ties, and nationality are predominant factors in spatial mobility. Ethnicity and identity are dealt with in detail in their various dimensions in this paper.

Pioneer migrants, needless to say, set off on their own, initially at least, and seek out greener pastures through their individual initiatives and efforts. However, as migrations gather momentum and newer individuals join the migration bandwagon, they do so

through networking with those who would have already established some bases in the place of destination through their labour and groundwork.

Due to different reasons, those who had networked between themselves in the erstwhile context, may gradually maintain distance based on their caste, language, village or origin leading to schism in a group that had integrated earlier through networks as a necessity. Also, schism comes about on reaching a *Critical Demographic Scale* (CDS) (see Kalam: 2017b) or because of events back home in the place/country of their origin or for some other reason; but it is indeed come across among migrants in certain locales.

The aim of this paper is not just to examine the dynamics involved in migrations, but also to lay bare how networking, ethnicity, identity, and schism unfold among migrants, and under what circumstances. Relevant examples are provided, both from within India, as regards internal migrations, and contexts from abroad where we come across Indian migrants in the international migration realm[2].

Networking: the Indian Context

When people from a particular locality have acquaintances/kin in far off places, they skip nearby towns/cities and cover greater distances to reach those places. What empowers people to skip nearby towns and cities is the *jump factor* (see Kalam 2005a, 2017b). The jump factor operates significantly in spatial mobility, both in internal as well as international migrations. Step migration (moving gradually from a relatively smaller and nearer place to a relatively distant larger town, and then on to a further distant city or a cosmopolitan region), expounded in some studies, is not come across as frequently as it is bandied about. In some studies step migration is considered as a necessary requirement for migrants to eventually reach larger cities. However, this is rarely true. Nor is there any strong empirical evidence. The fact that the jump factor operates so frequently and can be deciphered and demonstrated in innumerable internal and international migration studies, almost totally negates step migration. One does not completely rule out step migration as such, but if it is contended that all migrations happen that way, then the argument is far-fetched. On this issue Landy has observed as to how "untrue [are] the two laws of Ravenstein (1889): one of which

---

[2] I deliberately refrain from using the term Diaspora; as to why I do so, see Kalam 2002, 2005b and 2014.

states that distance deters migration…. According to his second law…migration takes place in steps towards progressively larger cities from these villages; [but] the migrant heads directly for the metropolitan cities….” (1997:128).

In the often far off jumped to places, language, culture, food habits, economic factors, and social structures of the different communities already living there (that is, at the place of destination) for wide-ranging time periods, vary greatly. In general, greater the distance that a migrant has to travel, more diverse will be the place migrated to in terms of language, culture, food habits. This is due to acculturation, and, at times, a sort of integration that can occur due to first-hand contacts and sharing of the same space. These socio-cultural settings may differ greatly from what is obtained in the habitats and moorings from where the migrants originate. But what exists and is available to the migrants in such alien locales is hand-holding and succour in myriad ways from the acquainted individuals/groups who preceded them and established themselves in many a way in the place of destination. Hence, networking works so frequently, and so fervently, in migration contexts.

As regards solidarity shown in the migrated to place, Kalam has argued that:

> Nativity is expressed in various ways when one is away from one's place of birth. More often than not migrants who come from the same place tend to share linguistic and communal commonality too. The manifestation of these aspects can be seen in terms of linguistic and communal organisations and associations. Even when linguistic and communal factors are not in common, regional associations which cut across linguistic and communal aspects do come into being. In the latter case, customs, traditions and food habits seem to be the guiding criteria that make people identify with one another, and consequently they feel the need to come together on a common platform in order to express their solidarity as well as to protect themselves in an alien area away from their wider kinship network (which may be confined only to their native regions or at least be away from present locations) (1997: 80-81).

It is interesting to examine the correlation between the strength and solidity of a network and the distance that migrants would be willing to travel. With no, or at best a very loose network or contacts, a migrant would not be keen to travel long distances, particularly because longer the distance from the place of origin more likely it is for a migrant to encounter a society or culture, at the place of destination, that is more alien to what is obtained at home in terms of language, religion, food habits and allied factors, not to mention discrimination and racist attitudes. Hence for someone from the vicinity of Patna, Kolkata, Bhopal, Bangalore, or Chennai, to land up in Mumbai calls

for the existence of some sort of a networked phenomenon to exist in Mumbai. Those who land up in Mumbai, for instance, do have some idea of hostility that is shown, particularly by the cadres of the Shiv Sena, to an outsider, a non-*Marathi manush*, who lands up there and adds to, what the cadres and supporters of their kind of ideology think, an already burgeoning and exploding population of the metropolis (Weiner: 1978). Lower level of economy and unemployment in a given locale always go against the presence of immigrants. They always get blamed for any economic crisis that ensues in a place. This happens not only within the country context but also in international immigrant contexts. The immigrants are blamed and are branded as the culprits who have taken away the jobs of the *locals.*

What goes in in alleviating the fears of a potential migrant to a place like Mumbai is the existence of a person or group from one's own village, kindred or caste group of the migrant, the risk-taker. Immigrants and their networks also expose them to resentment and attacks from the *natives* who lay claim to almost all the structures and spaces in a given place. In international migrations the networks need to be far more solid and strong than in the case of internal migrations as the distance to be traversed is invariably greater, and returning home is not easy in case things do not work out suitably after travelling overseas. Hence the international migrants have to be sure that the reception at the place of destination is of no dubious kind.

Overtime Mumbai has shown pockets of networked groupings that have sprung up. Many of these receptacles, if not all, have led to ghettoisation of various kinds in different places in Mumbai. An extreme example of ghettoisation with its own internal segmentation and clearly marked ethnic boundaries, showing different pockets and sectors of societies is Dharavi, one of the largest slums in Asia. And when we talk about ghettoisation we necessarily have to add another angle to the spatial and residential aspect that we usually refer to; and that is, economic ghettoisation which invariably gets intertwined with the residential factor (see Mhaskar 2018). Mhaskar also avers that "Caste, religion and gender add another dimension to an individual's economic choices" (2018: 31).

Dharavi has well-defined and marked enclaves on ethnic, religious, regional, and linguistic lines. While India's Muslim population is about 13%, they constitute about 20% of the population of Mumbai (2011 Census). However, it is interesting to note that

in Dharavi, the Muslim population is 33%! High degree of networking of a unique kind – religious networking cutting across languages and regions -- has given rise to this burgeoning. It is significant to point out that due to migration based on such strong networks Dharavi has become a microcosm of India itself in terms of regional, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity.

As regards the concentration of Muslims to such a high degree in Dharavi, Mhaskar's research in Mumbai, "revealed these discriminatory barriers for Muslims across classes in the housing market. Muslims are thus compelled to live in ghettos, a process particularly aggravated since 1992-93 anti-Muslim pogroms…. Muslims are left with little choice but to live in areas dominated by their community members…." (2018: 31).

Racine contends that networking is not just for landing up in a place and staying with or close to one's *own* people, but is also in terms of doing jobs/vocations of the same kind (1997:352). This kind of data is not easily available in other studies. This study is also from the other end – from the places of origin of the migrants, besides of those who have migrated. Other studies, in general, concentrate on places of destination of the migrants, in the towns and cities where they have landed up. Here attempts were made to study those who did not migrate. Why they did not, and under what circumstances would they be willing to do so?

Also, it is relevant to point out here that many of the lower classes and the landless migrate to towns and cities, at times just to escape oppression or exploitation. Kalam (1997) maintains that:

> …for the Dalit landless labourers who are subjected to a high degree of exploitation economically, socially and physically, the solace of anonymity in the town/city is a survival strategy, even if they have to beg on emigration. On the other hand, for a bonded labourer the bestowal of certain 'privileges' by the patron may enable him to survive in the village itself. For those who cannot generate any income in any manner in the village, survival in the town by begging would be the choice as they have anonymity there; begging in the village itself is a humiliation which they cannot even bear to think of. Besides, any 'immoral' activity is best performed in the town/city where there is no first-hand contact between different people; the reduction of physical distance (due to high density of population in the city) increases the social distance (92).

On the one hand migrants distance themselves physically from the *other* but this exclusive space is shared with people from home. This attempt to distance themselves

from the *other* works only in terms of social distancing; given the layouts and settlement patterns of cities the physical distancing is just in notional and cognitive terms. In fact, they can go to the extent of making themselves *lonely*, but only in a social manner. Physical distances between individuals / communities no doubt shrink in urban locales but social distances can be maintained depending on the kind of interaction that may be called for in a given context. Hence, in the migrant setting there is always an attempt to construct boundaries vis-à-vis the local population, but these boundaries are open to people coming from *home*, and gear up towards networking.

A networked area is defined not just in physical terms and proximity, but is also a space for economic, social and cultural interactions. What kind of boundaries and barriers are constructed vis-à-vis the *other* depends on the kind of space and nature of interactions that are necessary. Only individuals/communities from home can be full participants in the spaces that get inhabited by the migrants. Local communities cannot be full, active, or desirable participants in such spaces.

Networks are formed by the immigrants as they too are translocated/transferred *natives* from elsewhere and try to regroup and realign in a new location and do express in their own way their nativism in the place of destination. And the original *natives* target them and can be hostile to them because of their own *nativism*! So, hostility is born due to antagonism between *foreign nativism* and *local nativism*! The hostility, at least superficially, may seem to be due to social, cultural, or communal issues, but does harbour strong economic undercurrents. Loyalty/attachment to one's own group (even among those who consider themselves to be the original inhabitants or the so-called *sons of the soil*) may impel a person to dislike/hate another person/group. Solidarity within a group appears to lead to rivalry with the *other* (see Weiner, 1978). This rivalry/hostility may operate at various levels from the family to community to village to region or nation. One can perceive shades of nationalism/patriotism among most groups leading to a sort of xenophobia (see Kalam: 2014a).

Networking in migrated to places is expressed in different ways; one of the ways is to form clubs/associations. The Coorgs (Kodavas), for instance have established Kodava *Samajas* in many cities in the country. Also, in the USA and Canada they have formed an *Association of Kodavas in North America* known as *Kodava Koota*. Similarly, migrants form associations on ethnic, regional, or linguistic lines in the states they

have migrated to. For instance, we have Kannada Associations and/or Karnataka Associations in many states. On the other hand, an example of another kind is the *Nair Service Society* (NSS) found in many states and countries outside of Kerala. There is an NSS in North America too. Now networking happens in a big way through purpose-constructed websites and the social media.

Integration Issues

Immigrants (who invariably are in small numbers relatively, as well as other minorities) are blamed for not integrating/*assimilating*; they are not only censured for not *joining the mainstream*, but are beseeched to do so. In Assam the *Tai Ahoms* and *indigenous* Muslims are *long-time* residents/settlers and have integrated/*assimilated* in various ways and degrees. Both these groups speak Assamese as their mother tongue. However, the issue in Assam, basically, is with the *Bengali Muslims* whose language, Bangla, and lifestyle are problematic issues vis-à-vis the locals compared to the former two groups (Garg 2018: 13).

Also, it is somewhat incongruous to note that the so-called *tea tribes* in Assam are not listed as Scheduled Tribes (STs). There are Bodos and many others who are STs. So, the *tea tribes* are unwanted immigrants who came to work in the tea plantations years back from Chota Nagpur/Jharkhand areas. However, the *tea tribes* are quite strongly organised and have durable networks that are more or less confined, in a major way still, to the tea plantations.

To what extent physiognomy and phenotype play a role in anti-immigrant sentiment and on occasions bordering on racism? Examples are from Assam where the Tai Ahoms and indigenous Muslims have similar physiognomy as the other Assamese, and hence do not face the kind of hostility that is directed against Bengali Muslims who are easily differentiated at *face value* itself from the *Tai Ahoms* and *indigenous* Muslims.

Outsiders even after 150 years

We have an example of hostility towards a migrant group as *outsiders* due to, among factors, the land value of the place going up over one-and-a-half century. The *Mazhabi Sikhs* have stayed in the original place they had been settled over about 150 years back; in the *Punjabi Lane*, also known as the *Sweepers' Colony*, in Shillong, the capital

of Meghalaya state, in the heart of the city. This area has gradually grown to be the commercial hub of Shillong. The fact that the *Mazhabi Sikhs* are a single monolithic community with no internal divisions as well as almost bereft of class stratification has enabled them to form a strong monolithic network. Either internal divisions inherent in a community or emerging class divisions, or both, are in the main responsible for scattering and an altered settlement pattern. This has not happened among the *Mazhabi Sikhs*. The attack on them by the *native Khasis* has a lot to do with the high commercial value of the land inhabited by the *Sikhs*. But this gets hidden in the communal division that has sprung up. The fact that the agitating *Khasis* demand that the *Mazhabi Sikhs* be moved out of the area they have lived in for 150 years and be resettled elsewhere is a vehement one. It is pertinent to point out here that *Bengalis* during 1979, and *Nepalis* during 1987 "fled the State" of Meghalaya after being violently attacked by the *Khasis* (The Hindu 2018).

The *Lamanis*

How the *Lamanis* have formed their *tandas* is an interesting way of looking at networks. From being nomadic to seminomadic to now settled life in many places, the *Lamanis* have had different kinds of formations in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. Originally from Rajasthan/Gujarat, they have migrated south due to various reason and are now in the above-mentioned states.

In Karnataka *Lamanis* are a Scheduled Caste (SC) group. Originally SCs have been part of multi-caste villages; of late *Lamanis* too are part of multi-caste villages. But in the other states *Lamanis* are Scheduled Tribes and live in independent *tandas*. So, there are different kinds of networks when we look at *Lamanis* as SCs and STs.

We also have groups that are nomads/semi-nomads like *Iranis*, *Hakkipakkis*, *Voddars* or *Veddars* in Karnataka who indulge in a sort of seasonal migration, though it may appear as though they are itinerant groups.

Seasonal migration and stay of the migrants on the fringes and undesirable localities, as do the *Iranis, Hakkipakkis, Voddars*, does not seem to trigger any violent action or hostility against them. Nor do the locals seem to get *provoked* easily by them. Only when they get settled and begin making claims on spaces and resources in a given area do issues seem to come to the face vis-à-vis the earlier settled local population. Here we have the case of the Bakarwal Gujjars in the Jammu area for instance.

Overseas Networks

Silicon Valley, California, USA

Undoubtedly somewhat surprising, but one of the most successful as well as utilitarian network of Indians, has been in the Silicon Valley, in California, in the US. Regional, linguistic and other kinds of differences have been relegated to the background where due to the advent of a web of business and financial grid, a sort of *Common Indian Identity* has emerged.

Indian society is such a plural, diverse, and fragmented entity, religion-wise, caste-wise, class-wise, linguistically, and regionally. Unsurprisingly, almost all over India they exhibit fissiparous tendencies to the extreme. And this multifaceted ethnicity must very much be the given even in the migrant, overseas context all over the US (and in other countries too. In England, for instance, there is a huge debate whether caste-based discrimination amounts to racism or not). Silicon Valley is in no way bereft of this complexity, at least at a relatively micro level. Hence for a *singular* Indian identity to emerge in the Silicon Valley context has been quite a phenomenal and unusual kind of occurrence. In fact, it is a sort of defiance of logic going by the goings-on in India. Saxenian (1999) has a take on this. She contends that,

> Groups like SIPA [Silicon Valley Indian Professionals Association] and TiE [the Indus Entrepreneurs] create common identities among an otherwise fragmented nationality. Indians historically are deeply divided and typically segregate themselves by regional and linguistic differences: the Bengalis, Punjabis, Tamil, and Gujaratis tend to stick together. But in Silicon Valley it seems that the Indian identity has become more powerful than these regional distinctions. As the author V. S. Naipaul wrote of his own upbringing in Trinidad: "In these special circumstances overseas Indians developed something they would have never known in India: a sense of belonging to an Indian community. This feeling of community could override religion and caste." As with the overseas Chinese community, there are of course subgroups with varied amounts of familiarity and trust, but the shared experience of immigration appears to strengthen ethnic identities that may not have been as strong at home.

Notwithstanding the above, however, what is latent in the Silicon Valley context is as to how certain features and factors like upper caste/upper class backgrounds of the main players there get hidden. A majority of those in the Silicon Valley have IIT/IIM background from India, at the least, if not from some of the top US universities. The

networking in the Silicon Valley is a kind of *Old Boys' Club* and has strong alumni web (Kalam 2017c). Needless to re-emphasise, those with this kind background are drawn from the top echelons of Indian society both caste-/religion-wise as well as class-wise. In the context of India, even in the contemporary highly industrialised and high-growth oriented state, one is not off the mark in contending that upper caste invariably also means upper class. The reverse too is true; lower castes in the Indian milieu unvaryingly are lower classes.

Bradford, England

An interesting example as regards networking, is of the people from the Indian subcontinent (Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) in Bradford, England. They all started their lives by staying together in Howard Street in Bradford. Then events in the subcontinent led to different kinds of impacts on the subcontinentals in England. There was schism too, later, leading to coming to the fore of the different ethnic/religious groups that lay latent initially.

Since 1940s people from the subcontinent jumped ships in England at some ports and seemed to have been welcomed to work in low class jobs which many *natives* shunned due to the hard work and lack of dignity attached to those vocations. These people were from different regions of the subcontinent. They from the North West Frontier Province, the Punjab, Sindh and Mirpur (all these places, including the western part of the partitioned Punjab, are in present day Pakistan). Then there were people from Kutch and Punjab (Indian side). From eastern India people were mainly from Sylhet and the maritime areas (presently in Bangladesh).

Almost all who landed up in Bradford, for instance, were exclusively single male migrants and inhabited the Howard Street. This street was earlier occupied by Poles and Ukrainians, and prior to them by Irish and the *native* whites during 1920s and 1930s. However, the influx in Bradford, in the form of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, occurred after the Second World War. These single men stayed as *lodgers* and worked three shifts. At times there were two or three people to a bed (*a la* musical chairs) as they worked the different shifts.

They all were there to fill the gaps in lower order of British labour market. Most were unskilled and came from specific areas of origin, at times even from groups of villages showing a high degree of networking. Main motive of being in England undoubtedly

was to meet financial targets set by extended families in their villages/towns of origin. They were all economic transients.

These men displayed a *relay* phenomenon – a person would go back home after working for a few years and either his brother or son would come and that son would go back and another sibling/cousin would land up.

During the 1960s the British imposed restrictions on immigrants. Those who had already landed there stayed back, brought in wives, children, parents and siblings and began changing their status and worked towards becoming settlers from the erstwhile *sojourners*. Demographic and family reproduction started locally, that is, in Britain. Meanwhile, events at home, that is, what transpired in British India in 1947as regards the Independence of India and the dawn of Pakistan, gradually impacted the people from erstwhile British India. The nascent Pakistanis and Indians started emphasising their different identities that were not just of the citizenship kind but also of the religious sort. Hindu and Muslim identity came to the fore. Muslims from India had a rather tough choice as regards where to pitch their tent? With the Pakistanis on the religious platform or with Indians (Hindus) on the national one! Also, over a period of time the settlement pattern among them started changing.

The genesis of Bangladesh in 1971 further complicated the ethnic and identity scene in Bradford. The inherent tenuous coexistence and tie-up that the people from the erstwhile East Pakistan had as co-Pakistanis with those from the western wing, broke rather easily and a new identity and citizenship as *Bangladeshis* emerged. This too led to an altered settlement pattern yet again. Thus, events in the subcontinent led to different kinds of schisms from earlier phase of a degree of integration that had occurred, both in the subcontinent and in Bradford, before India's Independence and the birth of Pakistan.

Nothing much changed in England or Bradford per se, but the changes that occurred were due to the impact of what was happening as regards the national geographic boundaries being redrawn back home in the subcontinent. Spatial mobility to newer areas changed the layout of the place for years and kept changing. Gradually more and more religious, socio-cultural structures, objects/ideas from home started getting established in Bradford and elsewhere where there were immigrants from the

subcontinent. The number of religious structures, mosques, temples, gurdwaras, increased among all the religious sections.

A look at the composition of the migrants to Bradford from the subcontinent shows us as to how dense the ethnicities and identities of these groups are. From among those who migrated to Bradford from Pakistan, almost all of them Muslims, the different groups are:

Pathans, a majority of them are drawn from the North West Frontier Province and speak Pushto, and some speak Hindko which is a dialect of Punjabi. A few speak the Chacchi dialect. The others from Pakistan are the Punjabi, Sindhi, Saraiki, Baluchi (Balochi, Brahui), and the Mirpuris who of late have resorted to calling themselves (so-called) *Azad Kashmiris*.

In all this, separate identity for instance for the five plus one nationalities (*Punjabi, Pathan, Sindhi, Baluchi*, plus the *Mohajir*) of Pakistan meant a *Critical Demographic Scale* being reached for forming an *own group*. So, this saw the emergence of *others* from within what was once a *unitary* Pakistani ethnicity. The transformation was on the lines of Indians to Pakistanis and then gradually on to *Punjabi, Pathan, Sindhi, Baluchi, Saraiki* (*Multani*), *Mirpuri*, plus *Mohajir*.

Reaching this significant point, *Critical Demographic Scale*, is crucial in constructing boundaries/markers and their emergence into different sections/groups by reclaiming and reconstructing the erstwhile/already existing ethnic identity, that is, what existed prior to the migration process.

Interesting fact is that these different ethnicities from Pakistan, who refer to themselves as *qaum* (nationalities) do not understand each other's language. In Bradford they, at times, resort to English to communicate with each other. In Pakistan they fall back on Urdu, which incidentally, is not the mother tongue of any of these groups. In Pakistan Urdu is spoken as mother tongue only by the Mohajirs, Muslim migrants predominantly from the UP and Bihar area of India, who crossed over to Pakistan at the time of partition or soon after that. There are, no doubt, a few Mohajirs too in Bradford but generally they are from a better socio-economic background and stay in the suburbs and are not part of the inner-city area clusters of the Pakistani community which comprises mainly of the Pathans and Punjabis. The other smaller ethnicities, or

qaums, are not so apparent as compared to the other two groups but do form their own *Biraderis* (described below) wherever they have sufficient numbers.

Those from India in Bradford are both Hindus and Muslims and speak mainly Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Bangla, and a few who speak South Indian Languages. Almost all people from Bangladesh, predominantly Muslims, almost exclusively speak Bangla. The Bradford Metropolitan Council, for a better reach with its constituents, brings out notices and handbills in all the above-mentioned Asian languages except the South Indian ones as the numbers of the latter are negligible. The South East Asians in Bradford are from Malaysia and Indonesia, and then we have a not very significant Muslim group from Arab countries and the Gulf.

Since the mother tongues of these Muslim groups, drawn from various parts of the world, are so many and so different, English is resorted to quite often to communicate with each other. But as English is the language of the *other*, concerted attempts are made by these Muslim immigrants to Bradford, particularly the south Asian ones, to use another linguistic medium. And that is where Urdu has gained importance among them as an alternative platform[3]. In the Indian subcontinent religious discourses have Arabic as the core. But in the context of Bradford it is Urdu that has emerged as the alternative to Arabic for religious discourse. The regular prayers, however, are conducted with Arabic verses.

The way a group of migrants works its way up or out in a given context depends so much on their composition in terms of the initially latent internal divisions among them that do not come to the fore for years together. When the internal divisions do start emerging and become manifest, it often is due to the growing population of the group on the one hand, and also emerging class divisions among them. This inevitably leads to change in the settlement patterns due to different communal groups desiring to find their own separate niches, as also due to movement of people to better residential areas due to class differences. *Critical Demographic Scale* operates in both these cases. A good example of this sort of phenomenon is observed, as has been discussed above, in Bradford.

---

[3] As an aside we can look at what is obtained in Nagaland: the 16 officially-recognised Naga groups located within Nagaland and some Naga groups in the adjacent states of Manipur and Assam who are not officially recognised (by Nagaland) and are not part of the former 16, all speak distinct and different languages. They do not understand each other's language at all. Hence, they resort either to English or Nagamese (a dialect developed with words from different Naga languages and Assamese) for inter-Naga discourses.

An important factor about settling in has to do with the dead and their disposal. Initially, during the early phase of migration, all attempts are made to take the body back home to their places (countries too) of origin. However, after a certain critical point they start burying/cremating the dead in the places they have migrated to. This has to do with reaching the *Critical Demographic Scale* and how long and how much of space they are able to garner in the place migrated to.

When burials started taking place in England it meant attempts towards a permanent stay as opposed to when dead bodies used to get flown back home.

Death assumes a lot of importance in the lives of people, and has been something that plays up significantly in people's emotions and thoughts. Kalam has shown that

> Quite frequently we come across people expressing a desire to die and be buried in their place of birth. On many an occasion respondents have expressed a deep sense of fear about dying in an alien area. They are concerned not necessarily with death itself but with what would happen if they died in strange surroundings, for a corpse has to be attended by kith and kin, and certain rituals must be performed before as well as after burial/cremation…. Inherent in this expression is the thought that one in death. wishes to be with his kith and kin not only in life but also in death. Quite often respondents express the desire that there should be someone to cry when the die (1997: 82).

Besides, some important characteristics about settling in more permanently in a locale are expressed through the import of ideas and things from home; particularly religious structures in the form of gods/goddesses/shrines/religious motifs.

Spouses

Where people look for spouses for themselves and their children depends on the *Critical Demographic Scale* reached in different contexts. How large is the marriage pool in the migrant context and the scare of who the *others* are in the given situation? For instance, in the US context Bhaichand Patel has expounded on this in his "New York Diary" in the weekly magazine, *Outlook*:

> Most Hindus in the diaspora have long reconciled to the fact that their kids are unlikely to marry someone of their community, a Punjabi or a Gujrati. Now any Hindu would do. What they dread most is that their child will end up marrying a BMW: a black, a Muslim or white. I asked a Modi-supporting matron at the party which of the three categories was the least desirable for her daughter. If you guessed "Muslim", you guessed wrong (Patel 2017).

Besides, if you are looking for a spouse in your own group in terms of region/caste/religion/language/ and so on, the pool may not be big enough. So, going back home for a spouse is still widely practised, particularly by the Pakistanis in Bradford. But the construction and existence of a *Biraderi* is of significance among the Pakistanis in England.

Biraderi

One of the classic illustrations of networking comes from among the Pakistanis wherever they are. This is in the form of the construction/formation of the *Biraderi* network (see Gilmartin1998).

The definition of *Biraderi* varies depending on the context but a simple or basic one is: a group that includes consanguineal and affinal relatives, marriages may take place between them, they exchange constant and frequent visits, there is interaction between members, fresh members can be part of it, help each other in various ways including during good and bad times, and so on. [It is common for those Muslims who speak Urdu/Punjabi/Pushto/Sindhi and other languages/dialects spoken in Pakistan to marry both cross cousins as well as parallel ones, whereas those who speak Dravidian languages marry only their cross cousins].

Here is quite a revealing example as to how *Biraderi* network operates in Bradford:

Our next-door neighbour R, a Pakistani, had two brothers who both had moved to London from Bradford. One morning R introduced me to S as his brother. I asked him when he came from London. He said he has never been there. So, I turned to R and said your brother lives in London, doesn't he? He said "yes, two of my brothers live there". I was confused a bit but left it at that. When we next met a couple of days later I asked him how his brother was doing? He said, "haven't heard from them for a while. Must be doing fine". I next asked him "how is S?". He said "he is fine. Just saw him a while ago. Nice chap, from my own village, my *Biraderi*, came here recently from my village to join his wife, who was born here in Bradford. Took six years for him after marriage to come here. Wife used to visit him in Pakistan. Got two kids".

R and S always referred to each other as *brothers*.

Such networking exists among other communities too in different forms, or is constructed if it does not already exist in the migrant situation. Through such networks a whole lot of things are worked out and achieved.

The newly arrived are helped in finding accommodation; at times it is already arranged before they land up. But normally they are invited to stay with the family of a kin/acquaintance till they set up their own place.

A different kind of networking that can be described is as regards what happened to me when I landed up in England to carry on anthropological fieldwork among south Asians in Bradford:

I arrived in London with my wife and daughter and stayed with friends in London and Chatham. Then I went to Bradford to find accommodation there as my fieldwork was to be carried out there. We were to live in the inner-city area dominated by Punjabi and Pathan families from Pakistan. I got introduced to Dr. Waqar Ahmed, Punjabi Pakistani, in the sociology department at the University of Bradford. With his help we found accommodation in half-an-hour through his contacts at a video shop that was full of Indian movie videos. (Pakistanis hardly watched Pakistani movies; if they did at all, it was done surreptitiously. It was infra dig to do so and was considered to be demeaning to be caught watching a Pakistani movie!).

When we landed up in Bradford after about a fortnight's stay in London/Chatham, Waqar Ahmed picked us up from the Bradford interchange and took us straight to his home. When we told him to drop us at our rented place, he said, "we do not allow fresh arrivals to go straight to their places. They have to get used to the place and learn about the place by staying with older residents. They have to learn where to shop and market and know about cheap and moderate priced shops". We ended up staying for about a week with Waqar Ahmed and his family (wife and two sons). If something like this happens to almost strangers one can imagine how things work out in a *Biraderi* network and how strong the ties and bonds are in such contexts.

Muslims and Hindus

Indian Muslims feel closer to Pakistanis than to the Hindus particularly post-1992 December demolition of the Babri masjid and increasing fundamentalism and militant Hinduism among Indians in England (Kalam 2017a).

Moreover, the average Indian in England wants an identity as Hindu. This can be seen also among Indians in the USA during and post the presidential election in the US. This Hindu identity clamour has become strident from the 2014 elections in India that elected Modi as the PM.

Upward Mobility

Gradually there emerged from among both Indians and Pakistanis, in Bradford as also all over England, a *post-lower class* and *post-labour class*, who could still be conceived of as much closer to the lower or labour classes. They did not exactly become *middle classes* for quite a while but they were perceptibly different from their erstwhile lowly existence. That also led to spatial mobility as upward economic mobility, however little or however gradual, does lead to residential mobility.

The decision-making to move from inner city to suburbs has its own interesting facets and dynamics as spatial mobility of this kind has embedded in it a host of different subtleties and undercurrents. The space that gets given to women and their sexuality, as also the decision to send girls for higher education, assumes a huge role in the move from inner city to suburbs. What also, comes into play is the aspect of *purdah* for the women in the suburbs. In general women who move to the suburbs are more relaxed in their adherence to *purdah*. *Purdah* itself takes different forms from the fully covered *burqa* to the partially covered face, to just the covering of the head, the *hijab*.

Indians in Sri Lanka

An interesting instance of schism among Indians overseas comes from Sri Lanka. In the eastern provinces of Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee there are Tamil speakers of Indian origin who are both Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus in these areas and in Jaffna, in the north, who refer to themselves as *Tamils*, and refer to the other Tamil speakers, the Muslims, as *Muslims*. So, the Tamil identity is appropriated solely by the Hindus. They exclude the Tamil-speaking Muslims from their ambit. Also, they further identify themselves as *Jaffna Tamils* or as *Sri Lankan Tamils*. Yet another Tamil-speaking Indian origin group, the plantations workers in the main, are referred to as *Plantation Tamils* or *Indian Tamils*. It is quite ironical, in a way, that those who call themselves *Jaffna Tamils* or *Sri Lankan Tamils* are the ones who do not want to be part of Sri Lanka and want an independent state for themselves – the *Tamil Eelam*!

Dissolution of caste overseas

Indentured labour taken from India to various places to work in plantations and other sectors lost caste identity and overall ethnicity, save at most for their language, some religious features and some cultural traits, over a period of time. Wat seems important to retain caste undoubtedly is the presence of women in a given community. That did not happen in indenture. Women were conspicuous by their absence among indentured labour. A durable spouse pool is indeed a requirement for accessing wives and husbands. In the absence of such a pool it is difficult to expect caste to survive. And that is exactly what happened in the indentured context. Subsequent to losing caste, a sort of integration happened among the indentured labour and a kind of singular Indian identity emerged among them (see Naipaul's quote above as cited by Saxenian in the context of the Silicon Valley Indian networking).

Hira Singh, a social historian, who has first-hand field experience both in South Africa and the West Indies, says, "some awareness of caste [stereotype] seems to exist, but no caste in the West Indies or South Africa…. The structural conditions resulting in the dissolution of caste were the same in all colonies where indentured Indians went and settled" (personal communication: 24 August 2018).

On the other hand, caste and other ethnic facets at one point, that is, initially, may stay latent but spring up as and when family formation and family reproduction happen and the demographic level (CDS) reaches a certain point. The different groups that had stayed integrated begin to emphasise their identity and eventually schism comes in. This can be easily seen from the data that we have from England due to people joining in from the homeland in a kind of constant flow from the subcontinent that also provided a spouse pool besides enabling family formation and reproduction. But the indentured labour did not have this advantage. Once the left the Indian shores, it was like going away for ever and no contacts were maintained with the homeland for family reproduction or was there chance of members from their village, caste or kin group joining them. It was a classic case of a journey with no return ticket. Given that local reproduction had to happen with whoever they came across for the spouse pool, there was hardly any chance of retaining caste features or recreating them with local women or men, irrespective of where they were taken by the colonial masters.

Conclusion

Migrations come about due to various reasons but what is inherent in migrations is the economic pursuit. Migrations happen both in the internal and international contexts. How events unfold in the places of destination depends on the nature of migrations and the composition of the migrants.

From British India, at the time of India's Independence we saw the emergence of first Pakistan and then that of Bangladesh. These transformations in the subcontinent had effects on the people themselves as well as their networking and settlement patterns. New kinds of solidarities emerged due to changes in the subcontinent. An earlier networked group subsequently showed schism as has been seen in Bradford.

Further schism as Indian-to-Pakistani-to-Bangladeshi citizenship occurred. Interesting dynamics were as to how they surrendered erstwhile passports in order to become new citizens. But those who had obtained British citizenship could keep both, their original citizenship as well as the nascent one, except in the case of those from India. India does not allow dual citizenship (see Kalam 2005c). Also, from the Indian perspective there were no Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)/Person of Indian Origin (PIO) cards at that time.

A tenuously existing "superficial solidarity" among the Pakistanis from the Eastern and Western wings gave rise almost overnight to schism in 1971. The tense linguistic disparity between them gave rise to rift and rupture. Subsequently Bangladesh came into existence.

South Asians in Bradford show solidarity by coming together on a common platform constructed around a language, Urdu. This is because in general the different ethnic groups among the Pakistanis do not understand each other's language unless they resort to English or Urdu. But since English is the language of the *other* who also happens in some way to be the oppressor in the English context due to discrimination and rampant racism, they have to be on the Urdu platform, which incidentally, is the national language of Pakistan. Other south Asians too rally around the Urdu platform.

Those who were taken from India as indenture labour gradually lost their caste/ethnic background and have shown a common Indian identity that has overridden religion and caste.

References

Anthony, D.W. 1990, "Migration in Archaeology: The Baby and the Bathwater", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 92, No. 4

Garg, I.S. 2018, "Revisiting the Nationality Question in Assam: The EPW 1980-81 Debate", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol LIII No. 22, 2 June

Gilmartin, D. 1988. *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of the Pakistan*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Kalam, M.A. 2017a "A Winter of Anguish: On Ayodhya From Bradford" The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy: 9 December 2017 http://www.thehinducentre.com/the-arena/current-issues/article9980947.ece

2017b "Spatial Segregation, Discrimination, and allied Dynamics in Internal and International Migrations", *Kerala Sociologist*, 45 (1), June

2017c "Indian Diaspora Entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley and IT hubs and startups in South India" Paper presented at the Global Conference on Diaspora Studies and Policies, Institute of International Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands, 5-7 October

2014a "The Xenophobia of Patriots" *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XLIX No. 40, October 4

2014b "Indian Model of Managing Diaspora (Non-Resident Indians)" in *Potentials and Prospects of Pakistani Diaspora*, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Pakistan, and Hanns Seidel Foundation, Germany

2005a "South Asian Identity as *Islamic* Identity in England" *Islam and Muslim Societies: A Social Science Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1

2005b "Identity, Space and Territory in India: An Anthropological Perspective" in P. Gervais-Lambony, F. Landy, S. Oldfield (ed), *Reconfiguring Identities and Building Territories I India and South Africa*, New Delhi, Manohar

2005c "The Dual Citizenship Muddle: From Exclusive Elitism to Reluctant Inclusion" Paper presented at the International conference on "**Indian Diaspora: Trends, Issues and Concern**", UGC Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, 24-26 February

2002 "The Diaspora Bandwagon: Are Indians Part of the Journey?" In *Indian Society: Continuity, Change and Development* / Reddy P.S. and V. Gangadhar (eds); New Delhi: Commonwealth

1997 "Moorings and Mobility in an Indian Context: An Anthropological Perspective" In: *Peasant Moorings: Village ties and Mobility Rationales in South India* / Jean-Luc Racine (ed.); New Delhi: Sage Publications

Landy, Frederic 1997 "Migration and Moorings in the Maidan" In: Racine, Jean-Luc (ed.) *Peasant Moorings: Village ties and Mobility Rationales in South India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications

Mhaskar, Sumeet 2018 "Ghettoisation of Economic Choices in a Global City: A Case Study of Mumbai", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol LIII No. 29, July 21

Patel, Bhaichand 2017, "New York Diary", *Outlook,* July 31

Racine, Jean-Luc 1997 "The Roots of Man" In: Jean-Luc Racine (ed.), *Peasant Moorings: Village ties and Mobility Rationales in South India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications

Saxenian, AnnaLee 1999, *Silicon Valley's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs*, Public Policy Institute of California, at
http://wee.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_699ASR.pdf accessed on 14 August 2018

The Hindu 2018 "Violence in the hills: on Shillong unrest", 8 June

Weiner, M. 1978, *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press