

The History and Pattern of Migration from Punjab to West: Colonial to Global Punjab

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Abstract : This paper presents an in-depth analysis of the problem of migration from Punjab to the West while analyzing the history and patterns of generations of migration of Punjabis to the West. A special emphasis is given to link the present socio-economic and political crisis with the historical pattern of Punjabis' migration to the West from colonial India to Independent Bharat, along with the stories of the success and failures of Western aspirants' youth from Punjab. The roots of the migration from Punjab to the West have been traced from the invasion of the British in Punjab, resulting in the socio-economic and political dismantling of the Punjabi society, which resulted in the migration of the Punjabis to the other colonies of the British Empire. The grim position at home despite of all the efforts and hard work by the majority of the Punjabis, particularly from the farmer community and the shining lifestyle of some families of the village or vicinity who have some relatives in the West have encouraged the large number of Punjabis to change their fortune by working in West. However, the Visa and Work Permit regime has closed the doors of the West for those who are unskilled, semi-skilled and not qualified for the visa and work permit norms, but their inspiration to change their fortune by working abroad at any cost has resulted into the development of big business fraud of immigration agent and firms in Punjab that resulted into the loss of the thousands lives, imprisonment in the foreign and selling of the properties of the Punjabis. The greed for the greener pastures in the West and, the plight of the deserted wives of NRIs and the illegal routes adopted by the Punjabi youth due to the non-availability of visas and work permits are dealt in a comprehensive method. The rise and fall of Punjab as a land of the breadbasket of Bharat and the marginalization of the farmers with middle and small holdings due to the capital-intensive techniques are linked with the forced migration of the Punjabis. The failure of the government to address and respond to the rampant corruption, agriculture failure and the resulting problems of law and order before and after the troubled period of militancy in Punjab and the resulting migration to the West are comprehensively covered. The new trend of the Student Visa and Study abroad, particularly in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, despite of the availability of quality education at very low cost in India. The early success of some students in getting study visas from Australia, Canada, New Zealand etc. and getting permanent immigration to these countries have encouraged the majority of Punjabi youth to leave their motherland for better opportunities in the prosperous lands, that is, again, failed as these countries are flooded with the Punjabi students. Moreover, the total failure of the political leadership of Punjab to address the basic needs of society, like law and order and stop the drug menace issues in the post-militancy Punjab is also done to understand the problem.

Keywords : Punjab, migration, West, agriculture

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