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# MUSLIM MIGRATION TO THE WEST: THE CASE OF THE MUSLIM MINORITY IN INDIA<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

*International migration has drawn much attention from social scientists in recent decades and large-scale migration has become a permanent and substantive part of global socio-economic development. There are many kinds of migration, from refugees to skilled migrants. The migration of highly skilled people from developing to developed countries is known as the brain drain, a form of diaspora based on high education, skills and talents that has been a major point of discussion among different disciplines in the social sciences. India has a very long history of high-skilled migration, being one of the top three sources of migration today. This paper aims to reveal the Muslim brain drain among Indian Muslims since the abolition of 'License Raj' in 1990. To understand the patterns of brain drain among Indian Muslims, literature searches were conducted to obtain relevant data in two ways: (1) describing the nature and consequences of brain drain on both home and host countries; and (2) delineating the push-pull factors that lead high skilled individuals to migrate to developed countries. The findings revealed that many Muslims from India have migrated to UK and US over the last three decades. Indian Muslims constitute a very considerable proportion of population in the above-mentioned countries, with a net population of about 200,000 in the UK, and in the US 4% of the total Muslim population are Indian Muslims. Indian Muslim brain drain is driven more by push-factors in India, including religious discrimination and corruption in the public sector, alongside pull-factors in the West, like political stability,*

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*economic development, better career opportunity, high wages and balanced workload. Finally, the study indicates that data available on brain drain from various aspects are insufficient. More studies are needed to increase the understanding of migration, which is now becoming more complex among the Muslim communities.*

**Keywords:** Expatriates, High-skilled migration, Host countries, Minority, Social capital

## 1. Introduction

Migration is generally known as a permanent or quasi-permanent relocation of an individual or group of individuals from their place of origin to a new place, which may be a transit to a further destination. 'Mobility' and 'population movement' are also used to describe this phenomenon. Migration may be within a country, like rural-urban movements, or international, usually from developing or unstable countries to developed and more stable ones. Migration may be voluntary or involuntary, but the difference between the two is very subtle and unclear.<sup>2</sup>

Migration or population movement is as old as humanity itself and has always been a fundamental phenomenon in human civilization. In modern times, international labour migration and associated movements have assumed significant proportions. Our world is characterized in terms of 'Scapes' and 'Flows'. Skill, people, wealth, capital, information and ideas seem to move along various lines, structured through intricate interconnecting networks, situated both within and across different societies.<sup>3</sup> The rate of migration has increased massively over recent decades, from 154 million in 1990 to 175 million in 2000, and 232 million in 2013, representing 3.2% of the total global population.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Mike Parnwell, *Population Movements and the Third World*, (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> John Urry, "Mobile sociology," *The British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1, (2000): 185-203.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *International Migration Report 2013* (New York, United Nations, Sep 2013).

Migration of highly-skilled people from underdeveloped countries to developed or richer ones, with the net flow of expertise heavily in one direction, is known as the brain drain.<sup>5</sup> According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary Brain Drain is "the movement of highly-skilled and qualified people to a country where they can work in better conditions and earn money". The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "when a large number of well-educated and very skilled people leave their own country to live and work in another one where wages and conditions are better". It is also described as "human capital flight" in socio-economic terms.

The term brain drain was first devised by the British Royal Society to define the outflow of high-educated people like scientists, technologists and doctors to US and Canada from the UK and other European countries after World War II, especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>6</sup> Later it was defined as South-North or developing-developed countries migration.<sup>7</sup> The migration of knowledge workers has also accelerated in recent decades, and rates of migration to high-income countries have tripled since 1960.<sup>8</sup>

The migration of skilled people has attracted enormous attention in recent decades as developed countries have increasingly and unequivocally continued the recruitment of highly-talented individuals from poor and developing countries. Subsequently, brain drain is a mechanism by which developing countries are deprived of their human capital, which further retards their socio-economic development.<sup>9</sup> A notable example is the use of H1-B visas by the US in the 1990s to import skilled workers, mostly from India. For developed countries it is much cheaper to poach highly skilled

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<sup>5</sup> John Salt, "International Movements of the Highly Skilled," *OECD Occasional Paper* 3, (1997).

<sup>6</sup> Gordon Sutherland, *Emigration of Scientists from the United Kingdom* (London: Royal Society, 1963).

<sup>7</sup> William M Carrington and Detragiache Enrica, "How Big is the Brain Drain?" *International Monetary Fund* No. 98-101, (1998).

<sup>8</sup> Frédéric Docquier and Rapoport Hillel, "Globalization, Brain Drain, and Development," *Journal of Economic Literature* 50, no. 3, (2012):681-730.

<sup>9</sup> Frédéric Docquier, Lohest Olivier and Marfouk Abdeslam, "Brain Drain in Developing Countries," *The World Bank Economic Review* 21, no. 2, (2007):193-218.

workers from developing countries, where wages cannot compete with those on offer in the developed world. Consequently developing countries often bear the financial burden of subsidising education for essential workers (particularly in healthcare), perhaps using international interest-bearing loans from developed countries, only for qualified personnel to then be airlifted to such developed countries, leaving the developing world with debts and deprived socio-economic and health status.

Debates about the dubious ethical nature of the international movement of highly-skilled people are not restricted to popular media or academia only. Many international organisations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the International Organization of Migration (IOM) have showed their concern about it. The Indian diaspora is a particularly important example of this phenomenon; India has the largest diaspora community in the world, estimated at over 15 million people.<sup>10</sup>

Indian migrants constitute a considerable amount of population of many countries throughout the world; 70% of the population of Mauritius is Indian, and 48% of the total population of Fiji. According to statistics provided by the Government of India, there are over 30 million people of Indian origin living outside India.

The history of Indian migration dates back to time immemorial, but extensive emigration in the modern period dates from 19<sup>th</sup>-century British colonialism. British policies and trade instigated massive movements of indentured laborers (e.g. the *Kanganisystem*), traders, professionals, and employees circulating through the British, French, and Dutch colonies in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. For instance, the British used educated Indians to administer their African possessions, dumping them when they were no longer useful, such as the British Asian community in Uganda who were famously abandoned by the mother country when

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<sup>10</sup> World Economic Forum, “Which Country Has the Largest Diaspora?” accessed October 20, 2018, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/which-country-has-the-largest-diaspora>



they were expelled by Idi Amin during the 1970s.<sup>11</sup> Many educated Indians were welcomed in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand following the World War II, and subsequently to the GCC nations.

India, according to International Organization of Migration's 'World Migration Report 2013', stands among the top four migrant-sending countries and the top three sources of brain drain in the world.<sup>12</sup> The US, UK, Canada, and Australia are among the major destinations of highly skilled Indians migrating from their home-country. As for the drivers and determinants of migration and brain drain, there are many theories which have tried to explain this phenomenon. Muslims have been increasingly heading westwards over recent decades to escape encroaching nativism in India and other Asian and African countries. This paper examines the trends of brain drain, especially for Indian Muslims who have been migrating westwards for a few decades in substantial numbers.

## **2. Overview of Migration in India**

### ***2.1 History of Migration from India***

Migration from India to other countries, especially European and African countries, can be traced back to pre-historic times. Scriptures describe how the Prophet-King Solomon's palace and temple were adorned with Indian products, including ivory, apes, and peacocks, as well as how he was given spices imported from India by the Queen of Sheba. The pepper of Malabar Coast (Kerala) was very famous among ancient merchants.<sup>13</sup> The pre-modern Arab maritime civilization included permanent diaspora settlements founded by merchant colonies in the ports of East Africa, Arabia, India, Southeast Asia and China, based on trade, including Indian migrants

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<sup>11</sup> Chibuike Uche, "The British Government, Idi Amin and the Expulsion of British Asians from Uganda," *Interventions* 19, no. 6, (2017): 818-836.

<sup>12</sup> Frank Laczko and Gervais Appave, *World Migration Report 2013* (Switzerland: International Organization for Migration, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> George Abraham, "Indians in South-East Asia and the Singapore Experience," in *Global Indian Diaspora: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, eds. Jagat K. Motwani et al. (New York: Global organization of people of Indian Origin, 1993), 267-281.

in all of these regions, and the history of ancient India is replete with mendicant Buddhist *bhikkhus* (monks) travelling to far-off regions of Central and Eastern Asia to preach the teachings of Buddha, and many settled there for good.<sup>14</sup> The campaigns of King Ashoka in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE continued the links between South and Central Asia. India has experienced a very long history of commercial relationship with Southeast Asian countries, and Indian traders sailed to those islands from earlier than sixth century BCE in search of gold and tin,<sup>15</sup> and contributed to the development of their civilizations and the acculturation of Indian culture.<sup>16</sup>

Maritime trade with East Africa is also primordial, and when Alexandra the Great (356-323 BCE) conquered Sokotra Island he found Indians living and trading there.<sup>17</sup> McNeill notes: ‘there is some reason to think that a colony of Indian merchants lived permanently in Memphis, Egypt from about 500 B.C.; later, several traders and manufacturers were concentrated in Zanzibar Island, who were mainly Indian Muslims. Also, Indian traders, laborers, adventurers and junior administrators partook in the Portuguese penetration into the interior.’<sup>18</sup>

These ancient demographic patterns were accelerated and intensified following European colonialism in India and the rest of the world, and imperialist expansion led to massive movements of migration in large numbers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Almost 28 million Indians migrated to the colonies of Britain, France, and the Netherlands between 1846 and 1932, mainly under the auspices of the British Empire. There are three kinds of distinct patterns of Indian

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<sup>14</sup> Jagat K. Motwani, Gosine Mahin, and Barot-Motwani Jyoti, *Global Indian Diaspora: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (New York: Global Organization of People of Indian Origin, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Brian Harrison, *South-east Asia: A Short History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966).

<sup>16</sup> Osborne E. Milton, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1979).

<sup>17</sup> Richard Pankhurst, “The Banyan or Indian Presence at Massawa, the Dahlak Islands and the Horn of Africa,” *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 12, no. 1, (1974): 185-212.

<sup>18</sup> Niranjana Desai, “The Asian Influence in East Africa,” in *Global Indian Diaspora: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, eds. Jagat K. Motwani et al. (New York: Global organization of people of Indian Origin, 1993): 118-26.

emigration found during the colonial period: (i) indentured labor emigration; (ii) *Kangani* and *maistry* labor emigration; and (iii) free or passage emigration.

New industrial developments and the progressive abolition of slavery in Europe and its colonies from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards caused a severe shortage of labor. To fulfill the colossal demand for labor, the European authorities introduced a system of indentured labor in India in 1834. A large number of labor emigrants were recruited from North India based on contract for five years on a basic wage, including housing, food consignments, and medical services. At the end of five years, the emigrants were free to re-indenture or to work elsewhere in the same colony. Finally, at the end of ten years, they were free to continue or return to their home country.<sup>19</sup> The indentured were generally young males aged 25-20, who went to destinations including Mauritius, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Japan, Fiji, Burma, and Canada.

The *Kangani* system was a program of indentured labor specifically instituted for the recruitment of laborers to work on British plantations in Sri Lanka and the Straits Settlements.<sup>20</sup> This was also a kind of contract labor. A variation of *kangani* was 'Maistry' which was used for recruitment of labor for Burma. Under these systems of migration, recruited families of Tamil laborers from villages in the former Madras Presidency were spread far and wide in Southeast Asia. In contrast to normal indentured laborers, migrants under these systems were largely free, without any conditional periods. The numbers of Indians who migrated to Ceylon, Malaya, and Burma between 1852 and 1937 were 1.5 million, 2 million, and 2.5 million, respectively.<sup>21</sup>

The third kind of migration in that era was free or passage migration. Unlike the previous system, which was mainly for labor drafts among the lower castes, these were traders coming from upper castes, including Baniyas from the United Provinces, Marwari from

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<sup>19</sup> Colin Clarke, Peach Ceri and Vertovec Steven, *South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Kingsley Davis, *The Population of India and Pakistan* (Princeton: University Press, 1951).

Rajputana, Pathans from the North West Frontier, and Gujaratis and Punjabis. They funded their own 'passage', and were free in the sense that they were not restricted by any contracts. Essentially they were considered subjects of the British Crown and generally had liberty to settle trade and work in British colonies, subject to local laws and regulations (e.g. the proto-apartheid system in the Cape Colony that turned Gandhi against British imperialism).

After World War II a new kind of migration emerged, often described as 'migration of talent' and 'brain drain'. Those who migrated under this pattern were mainly from urban middle-class families and were sophisticated, highly skilled and professionally trained. They represented a new trend of Indian migrants and maintained an enduring relationship with their home country. Countries like the US, UK, Australia, and Canada were the main beneficiaries of this brain drain. This was accelerated during the 1970s and 1980s with the Indian brain drain to the newly opulent GCC countries, which were desperate for Indian expertise in all fields.<sup>22, 23</sup> Recently, the biggest number of Indian emigrants travelling to such countries are mainly unskilled, and unlike historical norms, both unskilled laborers and highly skilled professionals have little prospect of a humane settlement regime, rather they are liable to immediate deportation if their short-term contracts are not renewed.

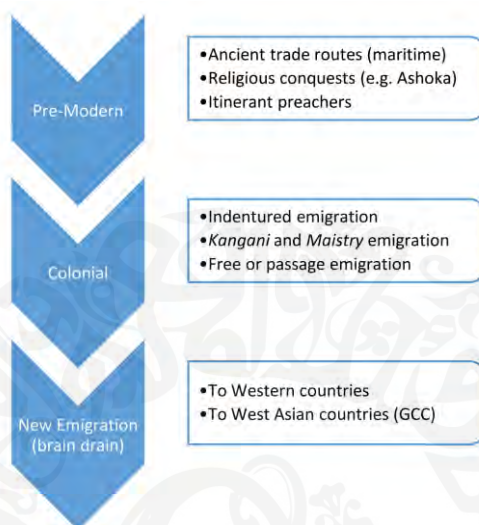
Figure 1 summarizes the phases of Indian emigration in history.

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<sup>22</sup> Binod Khadria, "Skilled Labour Migration from Developing Countries: Study on India," in *International Migration Papers* (Geneva: ILO, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Myron Weiner, "International Migration and Development: Indians in the Persian Gulf," *Population and Development Review* 8 (1982): 1-36.

Figure 1: History of Indian emigration.



## 2.2 Effects of Migration

The discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of skilled migration for sending and receiving countries is hotly debated in the literature. Since the late 1960s, two opposite approaches have emerged based on the positions of two eminent economists. The first view was developed by Harry Johnson, which he described as the ‘cosmopolitan liberal position’. According to him, the policy reference is the world as whole, not particular nation-states. Different states are designed and developed by humans themselves. The international flow of human capital is favorable for the global economy and expresses the free choice of the individuals who choose to migrate.<sup>24</sup> He also stressed that citizens are not a property of any country wherein they are born, and thus there is no justification of compensation to sending states for the outflow of skilled migrants.

On the other hand, an alternative ‘nationalist’ position was suggested by Don Patinkin. He disagreed with the notion that ‘the

<sup>24</sup> Harold Johnson, “An ‘Internationalist’ Model,” in *The Brain Drain*, ed. William Adams (New York: Macmillan, 1968): 69-91.

world' should be considered as a single whole from the welfare point of view, as nations and national populations clearly exist, and governments cannot serve their needs if the whole premise of nation states is disregarded in a supranational, macro-economic worldview.<sup>25</sup>

Johnsons' 'cosmopolitan liberal position' was criticized by Ellerman,<sup>26</sup> who noted that one of the flaws of this approach was that the theory was biased in favor of neoliberal political interests, and it opposed the idea of restrictions on out-migration (i.e. from developing to developed countries), but not nativist restrictions on in-migration (e.g. racist immigration policies in developed countries). Ellerman compares the Johnson-Patinkin dilemma with two different models of management: the Anglo-American logic of exit and the Japanese logic of commitment.

Early analyses of the brain drain drew on standard trade-theoretical frameworks, and concluded that the brain drain has a neutral impact on sending countries and benefits the receiving countries, and eventually the whole world economy.<sup>27</sup> Neoclassical economics sees the brain drain as ultimately harmless for developing countries in the long term.

The second course of literature emphasises the negative impacts of the brain drain on sending countries and puts forth some alternative methods to recover the loss.<sup>28</sup> New growth theory also

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<sup>25</sup> Don Patinkin, "A 'Nationalist' Model," in *The Brain Drain*, eds. William. Adams (New York: Macmillan, 1968): 92-108.

<sup>26</sup> David Ellerman, "The Dynamics of Migration of the Highly Skilled: A Survey of the Literature," in *Diaspora Networks and the International Migration of Skills: How Countries Can Draw on Their Talent Abroad* (Washington, DC: World Bank Institute, 2006): 21-57.

<sup>27</sup> B. Herbert Grubel and Scott D. Anthony, "The International Flow of Human Capital," *The American Economic Review* 56, no. 1/2 (1966): 268-274; Albert R. Berry and Soligo Ronald, "Some Welfare Aspects of International Migration," *Journal of Political Economy* 77, no. 5, (1969): 778-794.

<sup>28</sup> Jagdish Bhagwati and Hamada Koichi Hamada, "The Brain Drain, International Integration of Markets for Professionals and Unemployment: A Theoretical Analysis," *Journal of Development Economics* 1, no. 1, (1974): 19-42; Rachel McCulloch and Yellen L. Janet, "Factor Mobility, Regional Development, and the Distribution of Income," *Journal of Political Economy* 85, no. 1 (1977): 79-96.

sees the brain drain as detrimental to sending countries.<sup>29</sup> In the late 1990s, a new trend emerged in the literature on brain drain that took into consideration the theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon and squared it with empirical data to understand the real impacts, presenting a new theoretical paradigm to illustrate circumstances where brain drain can be proven to be beneficial.

Since the late 1990s, a new discussion began in the field of migration of highly-skilled people relying more on empirical data and studies. Apologists for the brain drain portray it in positive terms, referring to Brain Gain and Brain Circulation, which essentially re-hashes classical capitalist theories on the free movement of labour to where it is more needed. They argue that brain circulation helps in the creation, dissemination and adaptation of new knowledge.<sup>30</sup> It was even claimed by some that the brain drain could prove to be very productive and beneficial for sending countries in the long term.<sup>31</sup>

### **2.3 Determinants of Migration**

“Migration is a subject that cries out for an interdisciplinary approach”.<sup>32</sup> Migration has been studied from various perspectives in different social science disciplines. Several theories have been

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<sup>29</sup> Kaz Miyagiwa, “Scale Economies in Education and the Brain Drain Problem,” *International Economic Review* 32, no. 3, (1991): 743-759; Nadeem U. Haque and Kim Se-Jik Kim, “Human Capital Flight: Impact of Migration on Income and Growth,” *Staff Papers* 42, no. 3 (1995): 577-607.

<sup>30</sup> Anne Marie Gaillard and Jacques Gaillard, “The International Circulation of Scientists and Technologists: A Win-lose or Win-win Situation?” *Science Communication* 20, no. 1 (1998): 106-115; Baptiste J. Meyer, Kaplan David and Charum Jorge Charum, “Scientific Nomadism and the New Geopolitics of Knowledge,” *International Social Science Journal* 53, no. 168 (2001): 309-321; Anna Lee Saxenian, “International Mobility of Engineers and the Rise of Entrepreneurship in the Periphery,” *Research Paper, UNU-WIDER* (United Nations University (UNU), 2006).

<sup>31</sup> Uwe Hunger, “The “Brain Gain” Hypothesis: Third World Elites in Industrialized Countries and Socioeconomic Development in their Home Country,” *Center for Comparative Immigration Studies*, USCD, San Diego, California, (2002); Binod Khadria, “Skilled Labour Migration from Developing Countries. . .”

<sup>32</sup> Caroline B. Brettell and Hollifield F. James, *Migration Theory Talking across Disciplines* (New York: Routledge, 2008), vii.

introduced since the Ravenstein's famous "laws of migration".<sup>33</sup> Neo-classical theory draws on economic paradigms assuming that individuals maximize the utility, but this approach has been criticized as simplistic and inefficient in explaining actual factors of migration.<sup>34</sup> The 'new economics of labor migration', which adds some other factors in neo-classical theory like security, availability of capital, and risk management plans.<sup>35</sup> Transnational theory considers the increasingly globalized dimensions of economic and political systems.

Another theory is the historical-structural approach, which derives from neo-Marxist political economy analyses. It stresses the unequal allocation of political power in the world economy, thus migration is seen as a way of mobilizing cheap labor for capital. This theory was intensely criticized by many because it overlooked individual and groups and overemphasized the interests of capital.<sup>36</sup> Finally, a new approach emerged called migration system theory, which emphasized the existence of historical connections between sending and host countries regarding factors such as colonial history, political influence, trade, investment, and cultural similarity.

The key causes of increasing migration are economic inequalities, and political, ecological and demographic pressures,<sup>37</sup> alongside related issues such as conflicts, free market factors, globalization, a lack of social capital, policies, and colonialism. The current geopolitical framework in which mass migration occurs has been characterized as a division between a rich North and poor South. Geography and biogeography contribute to increasing migration, especially of highly-skilled people. From an

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<sup>33</sup> Douglas S. Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal," *Population and Development Review* 19, no. 3 (1993): 431-466.

<sup>34</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: The New Press, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> Oded Stark and Bloom E. David, "The New Economics of Labor Migration," *The American Economic Review* 75, no. 2 (1985): 173-178.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



anthropological perspective, geography and biogeography are the fundamental determinants of migration.

Mayda<sup>38</sup> concluded that in international migration the impact of push factors is comparatively smaller than that of pull factors. Similar results were proposed by Docquier, Lohest and Marfouk.<sup>39</sup> Miyagiwa<sup>40</sup> discussed the reasons why developed countries attract highly skilled people from less developed countries and articulated that home countries are less aware about the appropriate level of wages for skilled workers, while host countries offer attractive wages and other benefits in some cases. This situation may affect emigration decisions. In addition, five main factors have been mentioned that make skilled people to migrate to other (developed) countries: wage, employment, professional development, network, and socioeconomic and political conditions.<sup>41</sup> In the context of developing countries like India, Parnwell<sup>42</sup> placed more emphasis on push factors, like failure of economic growth, changes in mode of production, overpopulation causing displacement of people and pushing 'land-hungry' people to move out, and sometimes religious fractionalization as well.

#### **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

This study uses a theoretical framework comprising transnational theory and Lee's micro-level theory. Transnational theory suggests that in the new, emerging world migration is a result of prior links

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<sup>38</sup> Anna Maria Mayda, "International Migration: A Panel Data Analysis of the Determinants of Bilateral Flows," *Journal of Population Economics* 23, no. 4 (2010): 1249-1274.

<sup>39</sup> Frédéric Docquier, Lohest Olivier, and Marfouk Abdeslam, "Brain Drain in Developing Countries," *The World Bank Economic Review* 21, no. 2 (2007): 193-218.

<sup>40</sup> Kaz Miyagiwa, "Scale Economies in Education and the Brain Drain Problem," *International Economic Review* (1991): 743-759.

<sup>41</sup> Alex Glennie and Chappell Laura, "Jamaica: From Diverse Beginning to Diaspora in the Developed World," *Migration Information Source* (2010), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/jamaica-diverse-beginning-diaspora-developed-world/>

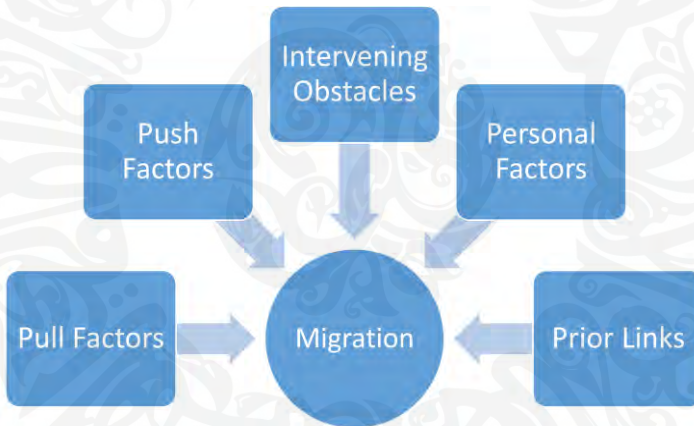
<sup>42</sup> Mike Parnwell, *Population movements and the Third World* (London: Routledge, 2006).

between sending countries and receiving countries at both the macro and micro levels. However, this study will be limited to the micro level prior links between sending and receiving countries. On the other hand, Lee's migration theory provides four factors to analyze the migration of people:

- Factors associated with the area of origin (push factors).
- Factors associated with the area of destination (pull factors).
- Intervening obstacles.
- Personal factors.

Hence, this study investigates prior links of the prospective migrants as well as other factors mentioned in Lee's theory of migration; the instrumental factors are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Migration factors.



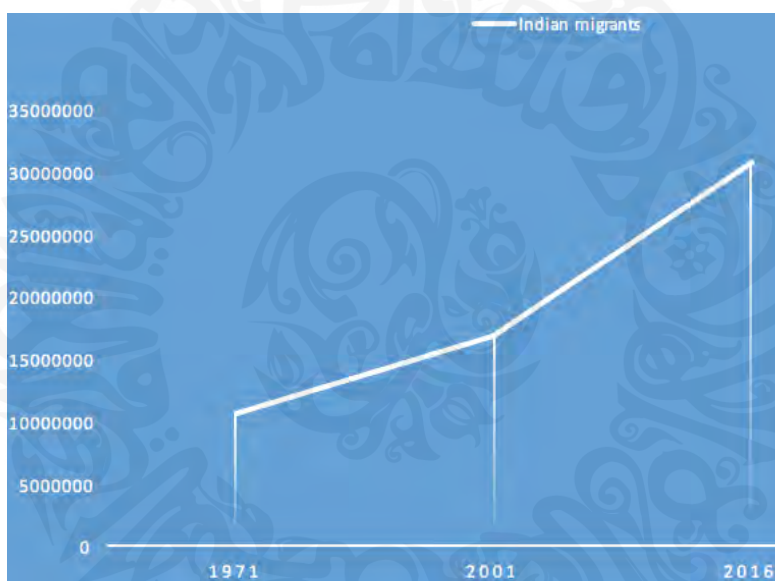
### 3. Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature, employing secondary data obtained from UK Census Reports in 1991, 2001 and 2011. Data were also derived from the Indian Diaspora reported by the Indian Council of World Affairs in 2001 and 2016. In addition, a survey report from PEW Research was also used. Apart from this, 35 studies were reviewed, starting from the beginning of analysis of the brain drain in the 1960s, in order to understand brain drain phenomena relating to Indian Muslims over the long term.

#### 4. Findings

In general, India has shown an increasing rate of emigration since World War II. Figure 3 shows the net migration from India from 1971 to 2016, including Non-Resident Indian citizens (NRIs) and the foreign Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs). The number of migrants from India has tripled since 1971. These migrants belong to almost every country in the world, having more concentration in the GCC, the US, the UK, Australia, and Canada and so on.

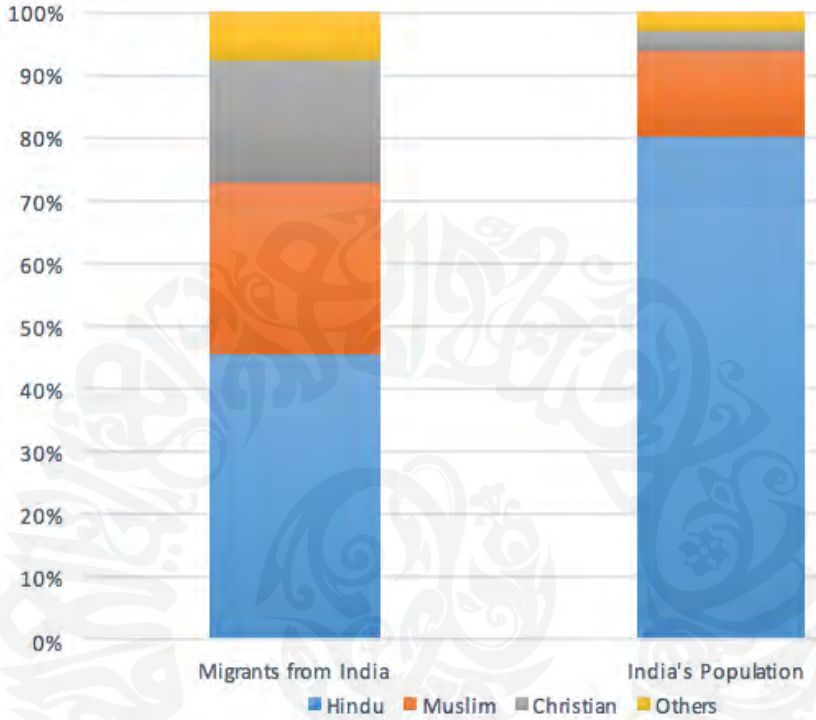
Figure 3: Indian migrants (NRIS and PIOS).



Source: ICWA, Report of the High-Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, New Delhi, Indian Council of World Affairs.

According to the PEW Research Centre, minorities are more likely to migrate from India compared to other (majority) groups. Muslims constitute only 13% of the Indian population but they represent 27% of total migrants from India, and Christians, who are only 3% of the national population, comprise 19% of total migrants. The Hindu majority (80% of the net population) comprise only 25% of overall migrants, as depicted in Figure 4.

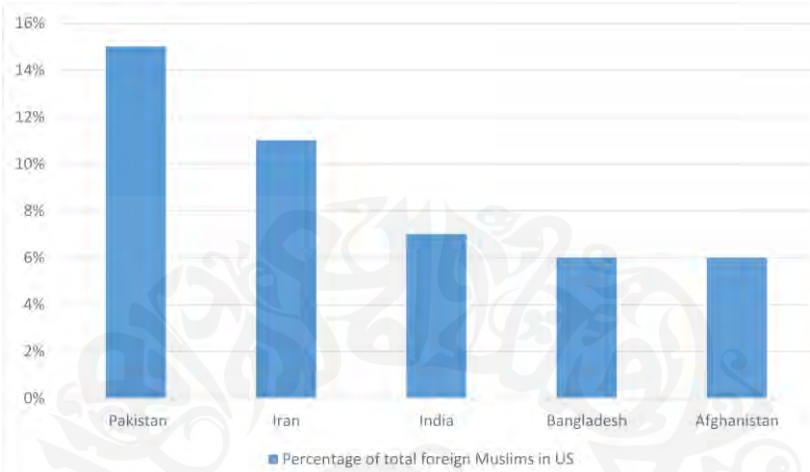
Figure 4: Distribution of Indian emigrants and India population.



Source: PEW Research Centre (2010).

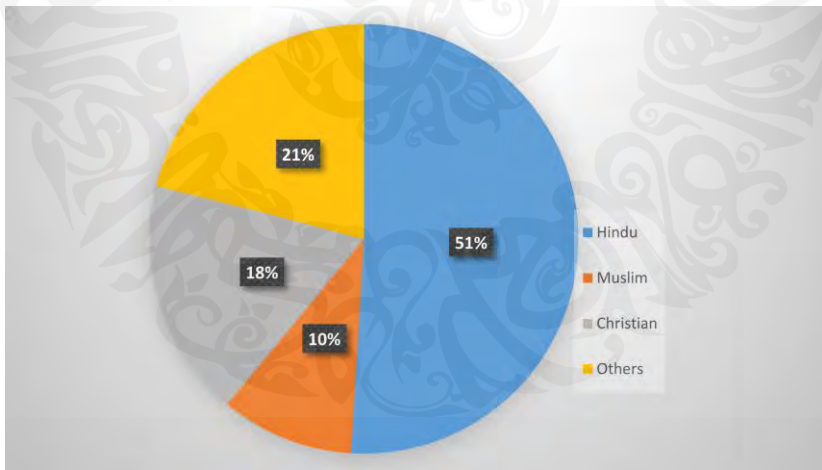
In the US, Indian Muslims are the third largest Muslim community, after Pakistanis and Iranians, albeit they constitute only 4% of the total Muslim population and 7% of the foreign-born Muslim population in the US. Figure 5 shows the five largest foreign Muslim communities in the US, with their percentage of the total Muslim community in the US. Moreover, 10% of all Indians in the US are Muslim, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 5: Top 5 largest Muslim communities in the US.



Source: PEW Research Center (2017).

Figure 6: Indian religions in the US.

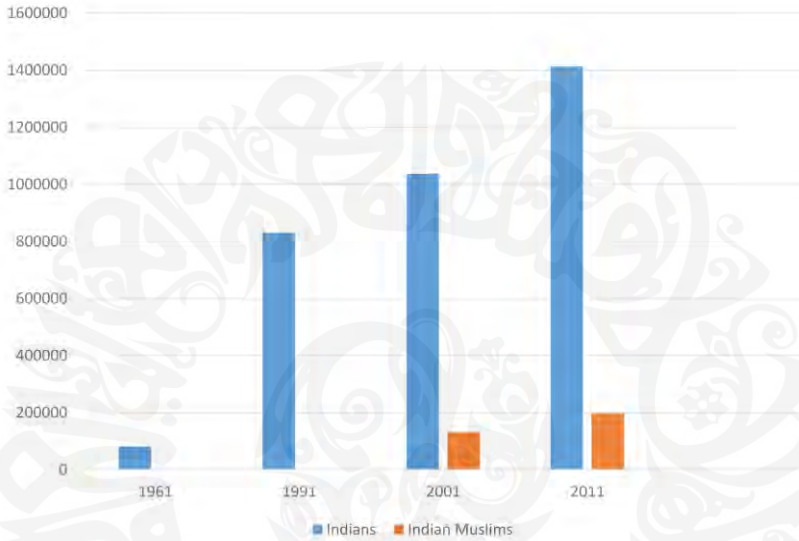


Source: PEW Research Center (2012).

In the UK, the total number of Indian Muslims as per census data from 2011 was 197,161, more than twice the total number of Indians in 1961, and rising substantially from 131,662 in 2001.

Before the 2001 Census, separate data concerning Indian Muslims was not considered in the UK. Figure 7 presents the population of Indians in the UK in 1961, 1991, 2001, and 2011, including the Indian Muslim population in 2001 and 2011.

Figure 7: Indians in the UK.



Source: UK Census Data (1961, 1991, 2001, 2011).

## 5. Discussion

Indian Muslims are among the most prolific Indian emigrant groups. There are two discernible migration trends among Indian Muslims: one moving towards West Asia (i.e. the GCC) and the other towards Western, developed countries. Even though the discussion about the conceptualization of high-skilled migration has been very long, there is still no universally agreed definition in this context.<sup>43</sup> However, looking at the general trends and methods of selection and providing visas, some have suggested categorising Indian migrants into two types: skilled manpower migrating to developed countries; and unskilled labour going to the GCC.<sup>44</sup> Indian Muslims are at the

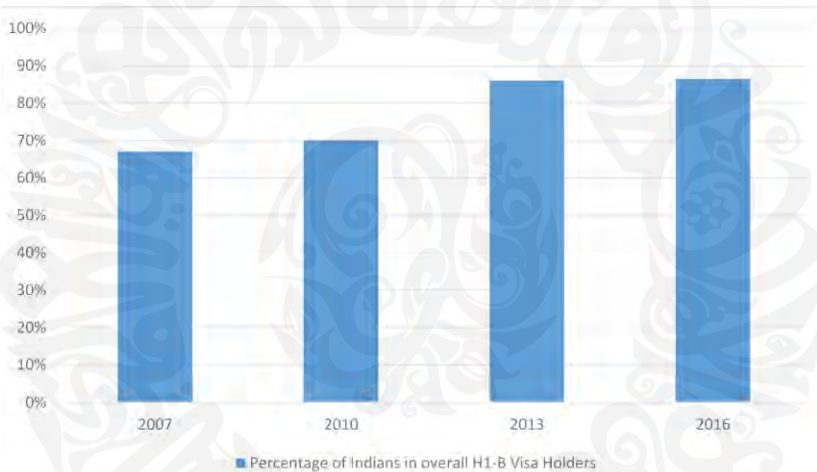
<sup>43</sup> John Salt, “International Movements of the Highly Skilled”

<sup>44</sup> Binod Khadria, “Skilled Labour Migration from Developing Countries . . .”

forefront of both trends, representing the overall picture of migration from India.

Indians comprise one of the largest reserves of human resources in the world, and Indian personnel cherish the chance of employment in the developed countries. Consequently Indians are the top immigrants in achieving the H1-B visa from the US, which is provided to the highly talented workers in key occupations related to computers, IT, medicine, engineering, architecture, management and so on. Out of 2,634,328 H1-B visas issued from 2007 to 2017, 2,183,112 were to Indians (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Indians holding the H1-B Visa in the US.



Source: US Citizenship and Immigration Service.

Similarly, Indians in UK, according to the UK Census of 2001, are 15% more likely than average to get first-class employment. Although separate data on Indian Muslims is not available in this regard, it is enough to indicate the Indians, regardless of sub-ethnicity, are clearly distinguished in developed countries for their rich human resources and capabilities. However, there are two important reasons for the increasing migration of Indian Muslims since 1990s: the first is common to all Indians, which is the abolition of the License Raj and barriers on movements of people across countries; and the other is specific to Muslims, namely the increasing political power of Hindu fundamentalism, most notably in the

Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), which has built political capital since the 1990s by stoking enmity to Muslims. Muslims increasingly feel insecure and unsafe. Other reasons behind the migration of Indians to developed countries include economic regression, corruption, and inefficient government policies in education and employment.

Moreover, one of the main factors of Muslim migration to developed countries is their very low participation in the public and private sectors. According to a survey, only 3% of total IAS's (Indian Administrative Services) are Muslims, whereas the total population of Muslims in India is 14%. In other civil service departments the situation is similar. Muslims constitute 4%, 4.4%, 6.5%, and 7.8% of the workforce of the IPS (Indian Police Service), Indian Railway, educational sector, and judiciary, respectively. As shown in findings section, Muslims are well-educated and well-settled in any country they migrate to, but in India their proportion out of total Muslims in jobs is lower than of all other communities. Only 32% of all Muslims are employed in government jobs. In 2006 the government initiated a commission to find out and explore the conditions of Muslims in India, known as the Sachar Report. It found that Muslims are the most deprived community in India in terms of education as well as jobs and employment. One of the reasons behind this low participation of Muslims in employment is religious discrimination and racism.

These are the push factors which predominantly cause Muslims to migrate from India. One more aspect of the theoretical framework of brain drain which is less deliberated is personal factors conditioned by a certain culture. There are many Muslims, especially from Hyderabad, who are migrating to the western countries out of their passion and ambition of living abroad, experiencing different lifestyles and being considered as expats in their family and friend circle. Generally migrants do not return to their countries of origin over the long term, as they build their lives elsewhere with improved employment and lifestyle factors.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Syed Ali, "Go West Young Man: The Culture of Migration Among Muslims in Hyderabad, India," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33, no. 1 (2007): 37-58.



## Conclusion

Migration of highly skilled people from underdeveloped countries to developed ones has been assessed only in terms of country-specific studies, namely in terms of either sending or receiving countries. In particular, the negative impacts on sending countries are often ignored. This serves to disguise the impacts of domestic political regimes in sending countries, which in the case of India – one of the most important economic powers in the world – includes religious fractionalization and ethnic discrimination. This is manifest in the exodus of skilled Muslim professionals from India to other countries, exacerbating the plight of their less educated co-religionists left behind to face the rising tide of Hindu nativism, as well as the situation of all Indians in general, who suffer the loss of such skilled professionals.

The 200,000 Indian Muslims living in the UK experience a superior quality of life and a high rate of employment, and 70% of them earn above the UK medium income, thus outperforming the native population in socio-economic terms and contributing significantly to the British economy (Communities and Local Government, *The Indian Muslim Community in England*, 2009). However, some recent developments show an increasing tendency among Indian Muslims to return as a brain gain to India to serve their country and community, and to live in dignity as equal Indians rather than as a despised minority in the UK, subject to rabid nativist xenophobia and social discrimination from the native population, the media, and the political establishment, with its 'hostile environment' being particularly targeted to South Asians. The rise of nativist and far-right political movements across the developed world could produce similar phenomena elsewhere. Future studies are necessary to further explore the issue of brain gain among Indian Muslims, but there are burgeoning indicators that they prefer to live as equal citizens of India and to contribute their skills and abilities to improving their homeland, relative to ongoing geopolitical and socioeconomic development in the context of uncertainty in the face of the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

# AL-SHAJARA

Special Issue

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