

# Migration vs security of movement

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Amid the growing difficulties of people moving across borders, there is a strong need to look at the socio-political impact of migration that breaches the fundamental right to security of movement. Compounding and complicating legal migration channels and strict visa regimes lead to illegal migration and the organised crime of human trafficking.

Migration is a human right and a legal activity. It is not at all negative; it has been made difficult with negative impacts that cause institutionalised exploitation of migrants. There is widespread abuse and exploitation in all forms of the global migration system. Living and working conditions of migrant workers, particularly women, become highly precarious once they have migrated. However, undocumented migration is considered to be an illegal activity that is a cause of concern. It could be checked by expanding labour markets and rationalising the unnecessary restrictions on security of movement of people, a universally accepted right.

All human rights charters and agreements are derived from natural law that gives people the right to move. In the human rights covenants designed by the United Nations, by the European Union or by any other international body, security of people's movement is duly recognized as a key issue. When we talk about international law or convention, we know that these conventions are not made by democratically elected people as the United Nations is not a forum of democratically elected people, so we have no say in any international agreement. Our say is only possible if these guarantee the natural law, which is the law by birth to move freely. So no country has the right to check or restrict the movement of people.

Generally, movement of people is taking place in both developed, developing and modern societies. The nationals of the developed world are enjoying free movement which is the real spirit of globalisation, whereas in the South, most of the developing countries restrict the movement of their own people within their regions. The people of South Asia can't easily move across Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Maldives as these countries have strict laws.

If we look at the border security pre and post 9/11, we find that the situation back in 1983, Pakistanis didn't have to get a visa even for Britain, but now they need a visa even if they are in transit in UK for taking a connecting flight. Such restrictions limit people's movement. Security does matter and every country must adopt a security regime that suits it, but this security should not discourage people from moving freely or it should not unduly target people. Countries should develop certain mechanism to check such threats rather insulting the people, a practice prevailing in almost all countries after 9/11. Border security has become too critical and tiresome.

Migration of people from one place to another can take different forms. Varied dimensions are attached to it. Political dimension of migration results into movements of people as refugees/displaced persons and asylum-seekers. Migration and trafficking are closely interlinked and migration in new millennium has become highly politicised and is a burning issue in both national and international politics.

The 'migration crisis' trumpeted by the North should be analysed in the light of what Stephen Castles has viewed as: "So-called migration crisis arises because of the vast imbalance between North and South with regard to economic conditions, social well being and human rights". The countries of

North over the years have developed a weird perspective about migration, which is part of global politics of migration. The northern perspective is based on concerns of European, Americans and Australians who believe that their countries were being besieged by asylum-seekers and 'illegal' immigrants.

At the same time there is another perspective, which says that the much-feared mass influxes from South and East to North and West never happened. From East, people returned to their ancestral homelands after break up of Eastern Europe; other migrants usually came only if they could link up with existing social networks of previous migrants who helped them find work and housing.

Stephen Castles claims that migration has stabilized and declined. According to UN Population Report 2002, 175 million people live outside their homeland, which means that only three percent of the world's population is of migrants. It proves that all the fear and hue and cry is artificial and highly exaggerated by the West. Such small number of people could hardly cause panic. Today's globalised world cannot function properly in the presence of barriers to migration as both migration and globalisation are run through a mechanism of free flow of people, technology, information and capital.

If the politics of migration continues to hamper the people's security of movement in the name of the so-called security paradigm after 9/11, the world seriously faces a human resource crisis that will further widen the power imbalance and gap between the rich and the poor countries. To avoid such a situation, we need to ensure replacing unnecessary restrictions on movement of people with relaxed immigration policies, flexibility in labour movement from South to North as the South is labour intensive and the North is capital/investment intensive.

The 9/11 trauma should not be made a tool to discriminate or exploit any migrant or intending migrants. There is a need to enter into more multilateral and bilateral agreements for import/export of skilled and unskilled labour to avoid illegal migration. Forced migrants/ genuine asylum seekers should not be discriminated. Trafficked victims should be protected as migrants under ILO conventions.

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