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WORK AND DIASPORA: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTH ASIANS LIVING IN JAPAN

International migration has now become a central issue in today's world. There are few regions in the world which are not experiencing the movement of people across state boundaries. Interesting in this respect is the recent trend in the migration pattern of the Asia-Pacific region. While there is a growing shift amongst the South Asians in choosing their place of migration, that is, from an almost universal attraction of the West to the increasing interest in residing in the East Asian countries (from Singapore, South Korea to Japan), the composition of the population in terms of occupation, age and gender has witnessed a remarkable diversity, negating the possibility that the migrants have some common and well-defined grounds for migrating.

In this connection, equally problematic has been the enmeshing of migrants with refugees, particularly in the context of quality of life. That is, migrants are often found living a *life of a refugee* - amidst fear, uncertainty and hopelessness. In a situation like this, responses on the part of the receiving states become difficult, as the latter must operate within various constraints, from domestic (economic) requirements to international (humanitarian) pressures. In the case of East Asian countries, like Japan, with no historical antagonism towards South Asia, the resolution of problems arising from migratory movements becomes furthermore complicated.

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What is more interesting is the way in which such migration transforms itself into a *diaspora*.¹ That is, why and how new migrants, expatriates, refugees, guest-workers, exiles and the like, hardly knowing each other back home, regroup themselves and reproduce their very existence as a marginalised, alienated, but at the same time, served and cared community in a foreign land.² In this context, the movement of people from South Asia to Japan, particularly Bangladeshis, Indians, Nepalese, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans, stands out to be an interesting case. Not only is the migration of South Asians to Japan a very recent one, with spectacular rise in numbers, it also has all the diversities and the related complexities mentioned above. This should help us in understanding diaspora formation from a reliable proximity, if not more concretely. The present paper will concentrate on the role of *work* in organizing and reproducing a diaspora.

More specifically, the paper seeks to explore the relationship between work and diaspora formation, with particular reference to South Asians living in Japan. The paper is divided into five sections. In the first section, the paper conceptualizes 'work,' with special reference to diaspora. The second section reflects on the pre-migratory work, that is, activities that are necessary for migration. It will be argued that a diasporic consciousness starts taking roots in the midst of such activities. The third section will deal with the post-migratory milieu, mainly with issues relating to migrants' settling

1. The term is better explained by identifying its membership, which includes 'immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community.' See, James Clifford, 'Diasporas,' *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1994, p. 303. It could, however, be defined as a marginalised, alienated, but at the same time, served and cared community in a foreign land. See discussion below.
2. Some authors use the term 'diaspora' more loosely, referring to people who have been living in a country as proper citizens since birth, albeit in a marginalised, alienated state. See, Ronald Segal, *The Black Diaspora* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995).

down in Japan. The fourth and fifth sections will deal with the experience of 'working with the Japanese' and the so-called '3K jobs' respectively, reflecting thereby on the various aspects of the Japanese work paradigm as it relates to South Asian workers. Concluding remarks will be in the last section.

I. WORK AND DIASPORA

Conceptualizing 'work' has always been difficult, more so when viewed against diasporic practices. According to the third edition of *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the meaning of work includes:

Something to be done, or something to do; occupation, business, task, function. Action involving effort or exertion directed to a definite end, especially as a means of earning a livelihood; regular occupation or employment.

Much of this definition, however, is difficult to sustain when placed against diasporic practices. Three problem areas can easily be identified.

Firstly, the question of having 'regular' occupation or employment. This runs contrary to the actual experience of a diaspora, particularly at the early stage of its formation. In fact, it can be argued that diasporas are formed or fresh recruits found in them precisely because of the *absence* of regular occupation or employment. Moreover, occupation and/or employment, in so far as they mean two different things, could further complicate the meaning of work for some of the members of the diaspora. 'Occupation,' for instance, implies work in which one engages regularly especially as a result of training, whereas 'employment' implies work for which one has been engaged and is being paid by an employer.³ There are instances where new migrants end up working in areas with no previous training, which would then imply that they do not have any

3. See, *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 1996), p. 1363.

occupation. And with the term 'employment,' self-employed migrants will run into same kind of problems.

Secondly, the question of having some form of payment or income. The centrality of payment in work cannot be denied,⁴ and this is true with respect to both physical and mental work. The difficult part, however, is to calculate the amount that is paid, unless, of course, all members are involved in formal and regular paid work. Since the latter is less true with respect to diasporas, where members are often found working informally and illegally, and paid irregularly, it could give an impression that (illegal) migrants' work is no work at all. Moreover, payment or income implies that the work is done in the public realm and not at home. This is also difficult to sustain, particularly when low-income members are forced to do a host of things at their respective homes, from fixing electrical appliances to whitewashing the walls, without getting paid.

Lastly, the question of work having some 'definite end,' that is, it is useful or expedient. This can be understood in so far as it is distinguished from, as Ransome points out, "non-working activities such as 'play' or 'leisure'."⁵ Put differently, the conceptualization of work takes 'leisure' as a granted thing and a point of contrast to define itself.⁶ Again, this remains valid when regular paid job, with time divided between work, leisure, and sleeps, is involved. It becomes problematic where there is no leisure, but only work and sleep, as in the case of many migrants working 12 hours or more a day. It may not be out of place to point out here that in such cases one also comes to witness a smaller number of (predominantly, white-collar) migrants with more leisure-time monopolizing the social and

4. The centrality of income in work is well highlighted by Paul Ransome in his book, *The Work Paradigm: A theoretical investigation of concepts of work*, Avebury, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1996), pp. 16-23.

5. *Ibid.*

6. For a closer exposition, see, John T. Haworth, *Work, Leisure and Well-being* (London: Routledge, 1997).

political agendas of the diaspora, often reproducing the class-centric world-view in which they were brought up at home. This further complicates the field of leisure (and correspondingly the meaning of work) as 'leisure' might end up including something more than play, enjoyment or relaxation. With various activities (from cultural show to bringing out newspapers) restricted amongst the migrants, it could actually mean organizing and reproducing a diasporic community.

The meaning of 'work' in relation to diaspora, therefore, is more complex and problematic than the ones found and articulated in daily usage. But that is not all. Work, after all, is a social activity and, therefore, its meaning must carry the burden of the society.⁷ As C. Wright Mills, in his study of American middle classes, noted:

Apart from the technical operations and the skills involved, work is a source of income; the amount, level, and security of pay, and what one's income history has been are part of work's meaning. Work is also a means of gaining status, at the place of work and in the general community [W]ork also carries various sorts of power, over materials and tools and machines, but, more crucially now, over other people.⁸

Mills' inclusion of status and power with income not only salvaged the meaning of work from the pitfalls of economism but also laid the basis of including a society's *historical conjuncture* (i.e., the space and time in which work takes place) in any conceptualization of work. This has critical implications for diasporic communities. Let me explain this further.

The space or the place of work is as important as the working-person. A migrant, although skilled at home in some areas, might find

7. Ransome has (somewhat strangely) referred to this as the 'folk' definition of work. See, Ransome, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

8. See, C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 230.

him/her totally unskilled in the new environment. This has particularly been the case with some of the new migrants entering Japan. Put differently, the category of 'skilled' or 'unskilled' worker is a social construction, reflecting not so much the working person's capacity to work as society's incapacity to provide appropriate jobs. Moreover, the migrants must share the host country's work ethics and work within the confines of its management structure. In this context, migrants must come to learn and appreciate the scope and power of *gyosei shido* (i.e., administrative guidance), something which is so central to the managing of things in Japan.⁹ I will have more to say about this in section four.

Time is equally important in defining work, particularly when work itself has become *transitory* within the life-time of a working person. This is particularly true with respect to new migrants and refugees, whose nature of 'work' often changes dramatically between pre-migratory and post-migratory phases. Although there is a connection between the two phases in that the former is more of an investment to be utilized in the later phase, the kind of work that is done in the two phases is remarkably different and is easily distinguishable. Each phase, however, in its own way organizes and reproduces a precise kind of diaspora consciousness. Such consciousness, of course, deepens with migrants changing jobs, often out of compulsion and with dramatic shifts, in the post-migratory phase.

The inclusion of historical conjuncture, particularly in conceptualizing work *vis-a-vis* diasporic practices, raises an odd but interesting question: *how many sets of 'historical conjunctures' do migrants come to experience in their life-time?* It has already been suggested that new migrants go through at least two phases in the act

9. For a closer exposition, see Atsushi Ueda, "How Bureaucrats Manage Society," in Atsushi Ueda (ed.), *The Electric Geisha: Exploring Japan's Popular Culture* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1994), pp. 127-138.

of migration. Each of these phases is not only time-bound but also space-bound, implying thereby that the migrants must experience two precise sets of historical conjunctures. In relation to work, this amounts to migrants' working through two precise *work paradigms*, each with its own brand of pride and prejudices.

In the case of South Asians living in Japan, the situation is furthermore complex. This is because South Asians before arriving in Japan experienced country-specific historical conjunctures, with complex combinations of both conflict and cooperation. In fact, they land up in Japan more as 'Indians,' 'Pakistanis,' 'Bangladeshis,' 'Nepalese' and 'Sri Lankans' than anything else. Only gradually, with the post-migratory phase experience, they end up becoming 'South Asians' and living souls of the South Asian diaspora in Japan.

II. PRE-MIGRATORY WORK

If you take the entire population of South Asia (currently over 1.2 billion), not all but only some want to migrate, and a far fewer of them finally succeed in doing so. In fact, South Asia's contribution to international migration has been very low, less than half a million annually,¹⁰ that is, less than 0.04% of its total population. Of these, only a handful comes to Japan. The total number of South Asians currently living (legally and illegally) in Japan does not exceed more than 30,000.¹¹ These are the handful lots who wanted to migrate and

10. The bulk of South Asia's international migration is labour migration. See, Charles W. Stahl and Reginald T. Appleyard, "International Manpower Flows in Asia: An Overview," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3-4, 1992.

11. This is a rough estimate based on statistical data found in Hiromi Mori, *Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), pp. 24, 70 and 141; Haruo Shimada, *Japan's "Guest Workers": Issues and Public Policies* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994), p. 27, 29; and *1995 Statistics on Immigration Control* (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), pp. 12-30.

have made it to Japan in the last 50 years or so.¹² But wanting alone does not guarantee migration, it requires work of precise nature, most of which must begin long before migrants board the plane (or ship, for a tiny few). As stated above, largely because of this work, a precise kind of diasporic state of mind or consciousness begins to show up at this stage. A closer exposition will make this clear.

The first and the most critical factor in the formation of diasporic consciousness are the *distancing* of the would-be migrants from the social and political agendas of the local population. This begins with the former entering the so-called 'network' (mark the 'work' in the net!). The importance of network in international migration can hardly be underestimated. This is well described by Nigel Harris:

The networks are unseen by all except the participants; they mediate elaborate exchanges and interactions of people, goods, information and finance, thereby linking ... migrants, former migrants (and their descendants) and non-migrants through friendship, common experience and material transactions. What is extraordinary is that this common phenomenon is seen as unusual, a deviation from the norm of generations living a settled life in one place.¹³

The 'deviation,' of course, is perceived by those who do not want to migrate, thereby creating the first rupture between the non-

12. The earliest South Asian residents are former Indian National Army soldiers who fought side by side with the Japanese against the Allied Forces in World War II. They are estimated to be around 200 or so, mostly living in Kobe.

13. See, Nigel Harris, *The New Untouchables: Immigration and the New World Workers* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 132; Myron Weiner also makes the same point when he argues:

If there is a single 'law' in migration, it is that migration flow, once begun, induces its own flow. Migrants enable their friends and relatives back home to migrate by providing them with information about how to migrate, resources to facilitate movement, and assistance in finding jobs and housing (Cited from, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, p. 199).

migrants and the would-be migrants. The latter increasingly becomes less and less interested in the problems of the former or of the society as a whole.

In fact, the would-be migrants, in so far as they are interested in migrating, begins familiarizing with the land and life of the place they plan to migrate. During this planning period, the would-be migrants are not only apathetic to the issues at home but also doubly critical of things around. A search for rationalizing the impending migration is in order. This, however, comes back and haunts the migrants long after migration, a factor no less important in making the migrants diasporic. I shall have more to say about this later.

It is very difficult to say what motivated a person to migrate. Less difficult is to point out his/her entry into the migratory networks. There are at least three methods, particularly with reference to the migration of South Asians to Japan, by which one could enter the networks.

The first in line, and the most critical one to begin with, is *Japanese friends and acquaintances*. This has come about with Japanese working in South Asia, that is, in diplomatic missions, projects resulting from Japanese foreign direct investments, Japanese NGOs, etc.¹⁴ It is natural for many Japanese, friendly and hospitable as they are, to later provide information to their South Asian friends and colleagues regarding job or training prospect in Japan or even to

14. The spectacular growth of Japanese foreign direct investment, both in terms of 'number of investments' and 'value,' during 1980-84 and 1985-89 is also the period which saw a sudden rise in South Asian migration to Japan. See and compare Tables 17 and 18. One can also get an impression of the rise of South Asians coming to Japan from the number of South Asians (not necessarily overstayers) apprehended for illegal employment in Japan between 1982 and 1992, including those deported in 1989. See, Tables 15 and 16.

sponsor them.¹⁵ This is somewhat corroborated by the fact that the three top jobs of former migrants in their own country before migrating to Japan included 'Government service' (17%), 'Teacher' (14%) and 'Researcher' (11%) (see, Table 1), incidentally three areas where the possibility of having direct contact with some Japanese nationals remains the highest. The work that is involved here is less tedious, the would-be migrant simply has to keep communicating with his/her Japanese friend or colleague.

Table 1. Occupation in Home Country

Category	Number	% of total
Government service	16	16
Teacher	15	15
Researcher	14	14
Engineer	8	8
Student	6	6
Private service/business	5	5
Restaurant	2	2
International organization	1	1
Media	1	1
Medical doctor	1	1
Policeman	1	1
Veterinarian	1	1
Did not have jobs	25	25
Did not answer	5	5
Total	101	100

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

The second method to enter the network is through the benevolence of *former migrants*. This could come about in two ways, one, by communicating with relatives, and two, by communicating with friends and acquaintances, particularly those coming from the

15. At times, the 'bond of friendship' could result in bizarre outcomes. One Thai woman was caught at the Narita Airport while trying to enter Japan illegally. 'She was hiding in a suitcase which was carried by a Japanese woman.' See, 1995 *Statistics on Immigration Control* (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), p. 86.

same locality.¹⁶ Surprisingly, the communication process is not linear here, that is, the would-be migrant trying to get information from the former migrants. Rather, it is the latter which is found readily providing all the information, including encouragement, to the would-be migrants. Such a process is reproduced more by migrants involved in less skilled or blue-collar jobs than the ones having high-salaried white-collar jobs. If the latter is interested in securing the job just for him/herself and wants no competitor, the former wants additional members to bolster his or her own position in the workplace. The work for a would-be migrant starts getting hectic here, for often migration via this network involves pecuniary transaction between the former (sponsoring) migrant and the would-be migrant. At times, the would-be migrant also has to invest money and time in building skills (from cooking to handling construction materials) if asked by the sponsoring migrant. This necessarily puts the would-be migrant further away from the social life of fellow non-migrants.

The last method is the most tedious one, trying to migrate with the help of *manpower exporting agents or brokers*. It is the riskiest one also because people with dubious connections and reputations often dominate the network. As John Lie pointed out:

The *yakuza* (Japanese mafia) and the *boryokudan* (organized gangs) have been important actors in the international trafficking of human labor. The two major occupations of foreign workers - construction for men and sexual work for women - are enterprises closely associated with the *yakuza*. The *yakuza* engagement in business is similar to the mafia organization of cheap, immigrant labour for

16. Nigel Harris has highlighted this feature well with respect to South Asian migration to Britain. See, Harris, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-33. See also, Muinul Islam, "Bangladeshi Migration: An Impact Study," in Robin Cohen, ed., *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 360.

burgeoning industries in the late nineteenth-century United States.¹⁷

In the case of South Asians migrating to Japan this network is least used. Unlike South Asian migration to the Middle East, very few would-be migrants approach manpower agencies for migrating to Japan.¹⁸ The influence of *yakuza* on South Asian migration to Japan is also minimum, the reason being very few South Asian men are in the construction job (only 2%) and hardly any South Asian women in sexual work (see, Table 2).¹⁹ With more South Asians migrating and many more eager to migrate, and more importantly, with more governmental restrictions on immigration,²⁰ this network, including the role of *yakuza*, is bound to become more active in the future.²¹ Needless to say, all these networks, in so far as they demand close and continuous attention on the part of would-be migrants, go on to create a rupture between the latter and the masses of non-migrants.

17. See, John Lie, "The 'Problem' of Foreign Workers in Contemporary Japan," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Studies*, vol.26, No.3, July-September 1994, p. 6.

18. See, Hiromi Mori, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

19. So far I have 'heard' of only one case of a South Asian women in sexual work. But then it is more of a hearsay nature than validated by eye-witness or any survey.

20. See, *The Japan Times*, 5 and 19 April 1997.

21. Morita made an interesting comment in this context: "... the expansion of provisions for the punishment of the employers would only increase the potential for illegal labour and encourage the activities of the vicious brokers." See, Kiriro Morita with Toshio Iyotani, "Japan and the Problem of Foreign Workers," in Wilbert Gooneratne, *et.al.*, eds., *Regional Development Impacts of Labour Migration in Asia* (Nagoya: United Nations Centre for Regional Development, 1994), p. 202.

More interestingly, this may not only include members of Japanese mafia but also non-Japanese mafias. It may be pointed out here that amongst the non-Japanese mafia groups, Thais have been most active in bringing illegal migrants to Japan. See, Tables 19 and 20. The *yakuza* seems to be more active in helping (illegal) migrants from within Japan. See, Table 21.

Table 2. Present Occupation

Category	Number	% of total
Student	33	33
Student/Service	21	21
Service	11	11
Trainee/Govt. service	8	8
Researcher	6	6
Business	6	6
Media	3	3
Engineer	2	2
Consultant	2	2
Teacher	2	2
Analyst	1	1
Salary man	1	1
Construction	3	3
Did not answer	2	2
Total	101	100

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

But getting into the network alone does not ensure the would-be migrant an easy passage to Japan, although ensuring a job or admission to a training program through these networks does make him or her a prospective migrant. The would-be migrant now has to cross two more hurdles, both of which contribute to the nurturing of diasporic consciousness.

Overcoming home country's *governmental regulations* is next. Although the migrants come from different South Asian countries, they face essentially the same kind of pre-migratory problems from their respective governments. In fact, in all South Asian countries, governmental regulations or rather *restrictions*, particularly with respect to foreign travel and migration, is almost the same. This includes things ranging from signing bonds to giving up part of the

salary and other service privileges to getting a 'no-objection certificate' from the government.

Such regulations are more cumbersome for those who are working in governmental or government-financed autonomous institutions. An overwhelming number of South Asians now living in Japan (over 50%) worked in one of such institutions back home (see Table 1). Those working in such institutions are so heavily restricted from flying or overstaying abroad, not to mention from migrating, that often they simply have to lie to the concerned authority about their purpose of travelling abroad. And then, power corrupts. With all the regulations prohibiting an easy travel abroad, the would-be migrant simply resorts to bribing the concerned officials. Put differently, the regulations only help to reproduce a highly lucrative business for those who were given the task of keeping an eye on foreign travels.

The students, including those doing business or working in private companies, are not exempted from the power of governmental regulations. In fact, many serving in the government or related agencies show 'private service' in their passport. This enables them to pass the immigration counter without many hassles. For bona fide businesspersons, this often creates problems, for at times they have to 'convince' (sometimes by bribing) the immigration officer of their status. As for the students, apart from the serious ones, some manage 'government scholarships' through family or 'friendly' connections. Often these connections help bar more qualified candidates, at times even from applying. The amount of work that is involved in each of these cases is no less great than full time office work.

The last in line, which often goes side by side with the work required for overcoming governmental regulations, is *getting a visa*. This is the first, somewhat 'real', encounter with the rules and

regulations, including officials, of the country where the prospective migrant wants to migrate. This evidently gives birth to a mixed feeling, reproduced largely on the basis of would-be migrant's experience at the visa office. I must emphasize here, however, that not always would-be migrants meet foreign officials at the visa counter, most of the clerical dealings are done by hired locals. Often the latter tends to behave more 'royalist than the royal,' which at times leaves some would-be migrants with not so happy experiences at the visa office.

Japanese visa offices in South Asia also rely on hired locals with would-be migrants facing similar experiences. Such experiences, however, begin to contribute to diasporic consciousness more concretely when some manage to get the visa at the first go, while others face difficulties and make it only after applying several times. We are, of course, leaving out many more who fail to get a visa even after trying several times. Let us calculate here a little bit to make our point clear.

In thirteen years, between 1980-1993, 21,071 Bangladeshis entered Japan, mostly on short-term visas.²² This would imply that on the average 4.44 Bangladeshis entered Japan daily during that period. In any single day, the Japanese visa office in Dhaka will have approximately 20-25 applicants. Taking that only 4-5 persons get visas, while the remaining 15-20 do not (at least not on that day, and therefore must apply again), it is not difficult to contemplate the kind of mixed feeling, if not bitterness, each (first or second time) 'refused applicant' would come to hold *vis-à-vis* the Japanese visa office and correspondingly, Japan itself. It is in the midst of such experiences that diasporic consciousness begins to take roots.

22. For the number of Bangladeshis entering Japan, see Hiromi Mori, *op. cit.*, p.70.

Two things, therefore, emerge clearly from the pre-migratory work. Firstly, would-be migrants start living or experiencing a life (work-wise, that is) different from the masses of non-migrants. And secondly, would-be migrants face diverse kinds of work for making their migration a success, and that again, both with members of their own country and the country where they intend to migrate (from the time of building networks to finally getting governmental clearance and a visa). In both these instances, would-be migrants begin nurturing a diasporic mind, albeit on a very abstract level, while still residing in their own country. But this is only the beginning. The following three sections will reflect on post-migratory work and its contribution to the making of a South Asian diaspora.

III. SETTLING DOWN AND THE CITY LIFE SYNDROME

The bulk of the South Asian migrants are settled in one of the many highly-urbanized Japanese cities, with the majority of them living in the Kanto region, including Tokyo.²³ Many scholars argue that Tokyo attracts most of the migrants because of its role in the new global economy and its emergence as a 'world city.'²⁴ Yue-man Yeung best sums this up:

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23. It is difficult to point out the exact number of South Asians living in the Kanto region (including Tokyo), but judged from the number of South Asian restaurants, grocery shops, cultural activities, including the number of respondents in our survey (46% in the Kanto [Tokyo] region; see, Table 3), it can safely be said that this region has the largest number of South Asian migrants, both legal and illegal.
24. See, Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) and also her, "The Urban Complex in a World Economy," *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 139, pp. 43-62; D R Meyer, "Change in the World System of Metropolises: The Role of Business Intermediaries," *Urban Geography*, Vol. 12, No. 5, pp. 393-416; and M. Castells, *European Cities, the Informational Society, and the Global Society* (Amsterdam: Centre for Metropolitan Research, Amsterdam University, 1992).

A new type of urbanization and new type of city - world city - has emerged. Thus, in the 1980s, New York, London, Tokyo, Paris,.... among others, have discovered new roles and importance in the emergent global economy...

As world cities are internationally oriented, they are increasingly subject to the forces of international migration of population.... Tokyo has similarly experienced, for the first time, legal and illegal immigration, from neighbouring Asian countries, including those from South Asia. Immigration has become a new factor in Japanese urban life, with immigrants providing needed labour for menial and other jobs and occasionally becoming involved in the shady underworld of crime.²⁵

Much of this is understandable, however, from the standpoint of securing a job or better, the *type of job* that is available for international migrants. It is less convincing with respect to the question of the 'concentration' of migrants. Let me explain.

Firstly, 'cities,' particularly Tokyo, have always been subject to population pressure. In fact, until mid-1960s all major Japanese cities attracted 'large scale population migration from the countryside.'²⁶ As for Tokyo, it continued to attract domestic migration as late as 1988.²⁷ The flow, however, subsided gradually not for any lack of attraction but simply because the supply line got saturated. Even then, non-Tokyo people will still move to Tokyo if offered a better job. International migrants, on the other hand, would settle anywhere (from Tokyo to Tochigi) for *any kind of job*, from legal to illegal ones (see Tables 2, 3 and 4). Given the number of employment opportunities, it is easier for international migrants to secure a job in such cities, including Tokyo.

25. See, Yue-man Yeung, "Geography in the age of mega-cities," *International Social Science Journal*, Vol.151, March 1997, pp. 97-98.

26. See, Morita with Iyotani, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-193.

27. See, *Japan Almanac 1997* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 1997), p. 52.

Table 3. Age

Category	Number	% of total
21-30	50	50
31-40	40	40
41-50	8	8
51-60	1	1
Did not answer	2	2
Total	101	100

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

Secondly, if considered from the standpoint of overall population of Japan and the number of people living in Tokyo, the concentration of international migrants is more in appearance.²⁸ Relative to native population, international migrants are, in fact, more or less evenly dispersed in all the major cities of Japan (see, Table 4). It is often said that 'migrants are everywhere, even in the deserts.'²⁹ It will, indeed, be difficult to find a city in Japan with not a single migrant around. As to the question why migrants tend to concentrate in cities, particularly Tokyo, the answer lies elsewhere.

All international migrants upon their arrival at their respective destinations, and this is particularly true in the case of South Asians coming to Japan, suffer from (what I would call) *city life syndrome* (CLS). The latter refers to the paranoia and a sense of alienation caused by the very organization of city life. This does not mean that the bulk of the migrants come from rural areas. On the contrary, looking at migrants' occupation back home (see, Table 1), almost all of them resided in cities, and some of these cities in terms of

28. I am thankful to late Professor Shoji Ito of Yokohama City University for pointing this out.

29. This, I believe, was intended to be a joke, but there is an element of truth in the statement. Guest-workers have been found working in the Middle East in the desert.

population are quite big (like, Calcutta, Bombay, Karachi and Delhi), although admittedly not as big as Tokyo (see, Table 5). What is important to keep in mind here is that merely by changing cities,

Table 4. Classification by Place (Prefecture) of Work
(All Apprehended Illegal Foreign Workers)

Rank	Prefecture	Total	Men	Women
1	Tokyo	16,824	11,081	5,743
2	Saitama	5,255	3,874	1,381
3	Chiba	4,150	2,493	1,657
4	Osaka	3,934	2,348	1,586
5	Kanagawa	3,797	2,456	1,341
6	Ibaragi	2,689	1,556	1,133
7	Aichi	2,478	1,642	836
8	Nagano	1,249	609	640
9	Gunma	1,218	864	354
10	Tochigi	1,154	763	391
11	Hyogo	877	557	320
12	Mie	797	527	270
13	Shizuoka	637	362	275
14	Gifu	568	346	222
15	Yamanashi	496	300	196
16	Kyoto	262	185	77
17	Fukuoka	251	159	92
18	Niigata	230	120	110
19	Hiroshima	149	102	45
20	Wakayama	130	44	86
	Others	2,291	1,718	573
GRAND TOTAL		49,434	32,106	17,328

Source: 1995 Statistics on Immigration Control (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), p.99.

Table 5. South Asian/Japanese cities, 1950-2000

Mega-city	Population (in million)				Average growth	% of country's total pop. 1990
	1950	1980	1990	2000		
Bangalore	0.8	2.8	5.0	8.2	5.7	2.2
Bombay	2.9	8.1	11.2	15.4	3.3	4.9
Calcutta	4.4	9.0	11.8	15.7	2.7	5.1
Dhaka	0.4	3.3	6.6	12.2	7.0	5.0
Delhi	1.4	5.6	8.8	13.2	4.6	3.8
Karachi	1.0	4.9	7.7	11.7	4.4	5.6
Osaka	3.8	8.3	8.5	8.6	0.2	9.0
Greater Tokyo*	6.7	16.9	18.1	19.0	0.7	19.1

Sources: United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects 1990* (New York, 1991) and *Japan Almanac 1997* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 1997).

* This not only includes Tokyo's 23 wards but also its surrounding areas. It may be mentioned that the population of Tokyo within 50 km radius is 29.5 million or 23.7% of Japan's total population. Similarly, Osaka's population within 50km radius is 16 million or 12.9% of Japan's total population.

particularly moving to ones more technologically advanced and populated by people with a different language, work-ethics, culture and lifestyle, one can become exposed to CLS. Interestingly, the CLS, while haunting each and every individual migrant, brings the migrants together. A closer exposition will make this clear.

Migration, to be precise, is not merely an economic thing but also, and more importantly, a *social* thing. That is, one does not migrate simply for the sake of accumulating money, rather one migrates for ensuring a better *life*; and that again, not just for one's self but for the entire family, including the family in the making. As a social thing, migration includes everything in life - eating, drinking, profiting, sleeping, and so on. It is natural for a new migrant, therefore, to seek people with whom he or she can relate quite readily - socially, culturally, sexually, even intellectually. In a new city, this is possible by way of meeting fellow migrants, particularly those with similar social and cultural backgrounds and coming from the same country or (socially and culturally similar) region.

For the migrants, working in Japanese cities is like working alone in silence. In this context, Seidensticker's description of Tokyo can hardly be disputed:

Tokyo remains a very insular city. Its inhabitants are far from ready to accept the pluralism of a New York. It has not changed so very much since the centuries when the shoguns kept almost all foreigners out. No one would dream of excluding them today; yet in many ways they are effectively excluded. They are in no significant way a part of its life, and it sometimes seems that the workings of the international economy, making it possible for the Japanese to buy the world and next to impossible for the world to buy the tiniest part of Japan, may work toward seclusion every bit as successfully as the policies of the shoguns did.³⁰

But Tokyo alone need not be burdened with all the blames of ill-feeling toward foreign workers, as one Japanese critic so poignantly remarked:

[F]oreign workers are not discriminated against simply in terms of low wages and types of occupation characterized by difficult working conditions. Facing racial discrimination, they are also socially isolated....

In particular, Japanese have a deep-rooted discrimination against foreigners, especially Asians.... Up to now, most Japanese have very little experience in accepting foreigners and living together as neighbours, as fellow citizens, and do not understand how to do so.³¹

It is, indeed, in the midst of such social conditions prevailing all over Japan that migrants must begin settling down and continue working. There are, however, two critical factors that contribute to the bonding of South Asian migrants, particularly at the phase of settling down.

30. See, Edward Seidensticker, *Tokyo Rising: The City Since the Great Earthquake* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991).

31. See, Kiriro Morita with Toshio Iyotani, *op. cit.*, pp.198-199.

First is the issue of *language*. There are two sides to this issue. Most of the new South Asian migrants not knowing or knowing little Japanese is one thing. In fact, amongst the many problems faced by migrants at working place, language ranked first (29%), followed by the relationship with co-worker (only 10%) (see, Table 6). With little or no knowledge of Japanese, the new migrant is somewhat forced to seek support from people with whom he or she can communicate. Often such people turn out to be migrants from the same nationality or region. And this brings us to the second side of the issue.

Migrating South Asians, particularly those coming to Japan, invariably have a working knowledge, if not better, of English.³² More noteworthy is the fact that those coming to Japan are on the whole well educated, with 32% having bachelor degree, 46% masters, 5% doctorate, and the remaining lot (11%) high school or under (see, Table 7). All were exposed to English teaching at some point of their education. Not knowing Japanese but knowing English creates conditions for a Bangladeshi (for instance) to search for and communicate with an Indian or a Pakistani or a Sri Lankan and vice versa. Put differently, little or no knowledge of one language (Japanese) but adequate or more knowledge of another (English) cements the South Asian migrants together, although each of them may be speaking quite different languages (Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, Pushto, Urdu, Sinhalese, and many more) at home.

The relationship between verbal communication and physical communication is a critical one. Without the former the latter becomes a handicap. This is particularly true from the standpoint of a new migrant trying to settle down in the least known place. In fact, from getting an accommodation to familiarizing oneself with the

32. It may be mentioned here that in South Asia 'English' is still the predominant working language. It is also the 'official language' of all South Asian regional bodies, including the main regional economic body - South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Table 6. Problems at Working Place (Multiple response)

Category	Number	% of total
Boss	2	2
Equipment	2	2
Communication	2	2
Financial	3	4
Cultural	5	6
Subordinates (for self-employed)	3	4
Language	30	37
Co-worker	8	10
No problem	19	23
Other	8	10

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

Table 7. Education (Last degree)

Category	Number	% of total
High school or under	9	9
Bachelor	31	31
Master	48	48
Ph.D.	6	6
Did not answer	7	7
Total	101	100

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

transport system to knowing where to buy affordable things, including culture cum religion-specific foodstuff, a new migrant often seeks support from an old migrant with whom he or she can easily (or precisely, readily) communicate.

The second factor contributing to the bonding of South Asian migrants is the *nature of occupation*. It is not unnatural to find migrants working in one particular sector (for instance, restaurant or research institution) cooperating with each other not only during the work but also after the work. A bond of friendship develops between migrants engaged in identical or similar occupation.

More interestingly, the city itself becomes meaningful from the standpoint of the migrant's work. That is, those working in the restaurant will be familiar with that side of the city that concerns them the most. This could range from finding affordable housing (for instance, Ikebukuro or north Shinjuku) to places where they regularly meet without costing them much (certain parks or subway stations, like Yoyogi or Takadanobaba). Similarly, corporate officials will be familiar with governmental and commercial buildings, good dining places, including roads and highways they travel most. Students likewise will be familiar with educational institutions, libraries, books stores, affordable dormitories, certain railway routes, etc. Members of one occupation, in the light of their initial experience, will hesitate to venture around some other 'unknown' location. Put differently, each migrant suffers from CLS almost occupationally.³³

This might give a picture of a fragmented migrant community in the making (which is partly true), but what is really happening at the same time is that migrants are being *consolidated* within their respective social groups. If an element of tension exists in the process, particularly in fomenting inter-group relationship, it need not concern us at this stage. Further consolidation of the migrant community occurs at the *workplace*, the subject matter of the last two sections.

33. This may not be a problem specific to migrants. I came across a Japanese (woman) academician who *never heard* of the 'Keikyu line' (i.e., the railway line between Yokohama and Tokyo). The most likely reason is that she resides in north Tokyo (near her University) and never needs to commute to the Yokohama side of Tokyo.

IV. WORKING WITH THE JAPANESE

This is the first time (and possibly the only time) the migrant comes face to face with the Japanese in a *big way*, both number and time-wise. It must be kept in mind here that in other daily activities, from getting on to a commuter train to buying *bento* (boxed lunch) at a food stall, the migrant seldom needs to communicate with the Japanese. This is because in most of these activities the migrant is helped by easily understood signs, markings, models and pictures. The workplace, however, is predominantly Japanese. In a survey on illegal workers it was found that over 80% of the illegal workers had Japanese co-workers at their respective workplace, although the majority of them (45.7%) had 5 or less Japanese working with them (see, Table 8). While the latter suggests that the bulk of the migrants,

Table 8. Classification by Number of Employees (Japanese)
(Of All Apprehended Illegal Foreign Workers)

Category	Number	%
None	5,763	11.7
5 or less	22,599	45.7
10 or less	10,809	21.9
30 or less	5,528	11.2
50 or less	863	1.7
More than 50	929	1.9
Unknown	2,943	6.0
Total	49,434	

Source: 1995 Statistics on Immigration Control (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), p.105

particularly the illegal ones, work in small offices or places, they are also mostly employed by the Japanese (again over 80%; see, Table 9). This brings them in direct contact not only with the Japanese people

but also with the Japanese management system so revered by the Japanese employers and employees alike.

Table 9. Classification by Nationality of Employer
(Of All Apprehended Illegal Foreign Workers)

Nationality	Number	%
Japan	41,027	83.0
Korea	4,233	8.6
China	917	1.9
Others	1,090	2.2
Unknown	965	2.0
None	1,202	2.4
Total	49,434	

Source: 1995 Statistics on Immigration Control (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), p.103.

Scholars (both Japanese and non-Japanese) have already referred to the unique quality of the Japanese management system in both public and private offices.³⁴ The system, however, runs much deeper. In fact, it remains thoroughly diffused in almost all spheres of economic life, including restaurants and convenient stores.

One of the critical features of the management system, as we indicated earlier, is the practice of *gyosei shido* or administrative guidance. Atsushi Ueda provides an interesting account of the latter, although he limits his case mainly to public offices :

34. For a closer exposition, see Bhaskar Chatterjee, *Japanese Management: Maruti and the Indian Experience* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990); pp. 5-36; Atsushi Ueda, *op. cit.*; pp.127-38; Robert C. Christopher, *The Japanese Mind: The Goliath Explained* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1983); Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese Today: Change and Continuity* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1988), pp. 331-342; Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Self: The Individual Versus Society* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1986), pp. 48-57. Karel van Wolferen, *The Enigma of Japanese Power: People and Politics in a Stateless Nation* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 314-346.

[Administrative guidance] affords public officials a great deal of leeway in terms of using their own discretion to 'make allowance' for circumstance....

A good illustration of the way administrative guidance works may be seen in the handling of speeding and parking violations. The regulations here are so strict it would be unrealistic to try to enforce them in full; the extent to which they are enforced is left entirely to the discretion of the officials concerned. Armed with these laws and regulations, they are free to clamp down on some people and be lenient with others, as they see fit....

So, on what basis do public servants make their case-by-case judgments?

I believe the answer to this question may be found in the ethic, "Don't be concerned about poverty, but inequality." Japanese officials do not believe that society can be managed by inflexible regulations alone. Instead, they use the extraordinary measure of administrative guidance to practice a kind of socialism that combats inequality. In a nutshell, poor people and struggling businesses can expect more lenient treatment than affluent people or successful businesses. Japan is a constitutional state, but the law is not everything; the role of administrative guidance gives the Japanese bureaucracy its distinctive character.³⁵

It must be quickly added here that the power of administrative guidance is reproduced by innovatively nurturing three socializing qualities - 'trust,' 'subtlety' and 'intimacy.'³⁶ If one of these qualities fails to mature or breaks down, *misguidance* takes over or, even worse, the 'guide' simply begins to lose his/her benevolent character. Not surprisingly, Ueda refers to the system (for want of a better word) 'feudalistic.' I guess one could also refer to it as, *benevolent despotism*.

A management system informed by feudal practices or benevolent despotism is nothing new, it existed in Japan even during

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.

36. See, Bhaskar Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, pp.20-21.

the Shogunate (1192-1868).³⁷ In fact, it is alleged that the Japanese management system 'shifted away from one kind of feudal system and reemerged in a different form.'³⁸ This only goes on to show that the system is deeply entrenched in the Japanese psyche, irrespective of the size of the workplace or individual's position there. Its impact on migrant workers can hardly be exaggerated.

The relationship between South Asian workers and their Japanese counterparts is almost free from any serious complaints. In fact, when migrants were asked about their relationship with (Japanese) co-workers, more than 55% answered 'friendly' (see, Table 10). Similarly, when asked about the kind of problems they faced at the workplace, only 10% identified 'co-worker' and barely 4% said 'boss' (see, Table 6). Most of the migrants described their present job either as 'adequate' or 'very attractive' (43% and 41% respectively, see, Table 11). Only 10% wanted to change. More interestingly, over 20% of the migrants did not have any problems at the workplace (see, Table 6).

Table 10. Relationship with Your Co-workers

Category	Number	% of total
Friendly	52	63%
Very official	13	16%
Not applicable	13	16%
Not so good	5	6%
Total	83	100%

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

What turns them diasporic then? It cannot just simply be 'language'. The latter, as we indicated earlier, ranked the highest in

37. See, Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 285-87.

38. Ueda, *op. cit.*, p.132.

the problem category (29%; see, Table 6) and does play a critical role in bringing migrants together at the time of settling down. But language gradually becomes less an obstacle as one can speak Japanese quite fluently (as some Japanese-speaking South Asian migrants pointed out) in 2-3 years time. Evidently, there are other issues involved.

Table 11. How do you describe your present job?

Category	Number	% of total
Adequate	35	45%
Like to change, if possible	10	13%
On the stage of changing	1	1%
Very attractive	31	40%
Total	77	100%

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

Much of the above-stated positive impression comes from the migrants' direct and first time experience with the Japanese management system at the workplace, particularly the practice of administrative guidance. There is no question that the bulk of the South Asian migrants, given its recent entry to Japan, is ready and more than willing to be *guided* by a mainstream Japanese. It is important to keep in mind here that no new South Asian migrant seriously contemplates of becoming a boss or an employer soon after his/her arrival in Japan. The percentage of self-employed, mostly in the business sector (restaurant, trading, or selling pictures or jewelers on the street), is not that high (only 8% according to our survey; see, Table 2).³⁹

39. A survey carried out by the Japanese Immigration Association found out that only 2.4% of the illegal workers (that is, out of 49,434 of those apprehended) were working alone without employers. See, Table 9.

The experience of the Japanese management system is, no doubt, refreshing for most of the South Asian migrants when contrasted with the management system of the home country. The amount of trust and intimacy that binds an employer and employee in Japan is in direct contrast to the migrant's experience back home. Most of the migrants worked in South Asia in the midst of ruthless competition and social cum official hooliganism. Such contrasting work experiences have critical bearings on the reproduction of diasporic consciousness.

I have already pointed out that a diaspora is constructed from *double*, if not multiple, *distancing*. One is its distancing from the home country, while the other, from the host country. The positive work experience in Japan helps the migrants rationalize their migration, which in turn makes them work more enthusiastically, even with (almost guaranteed life-time) subordinate positions, in the host country. As a result, a further distancing takes place between the migrants and the home country.

Interestingly, this is valid not only for legal migrants but also (and, at times, more profoundly) for illegal migrants. Since in virtually all cases, the Japanese employer *knowingly* employs and *guides* an illegal worker, the latter becomes doubly beholden to the employer. Needless to say, a high degree of trust and intimacy between the (legal) employer and the (illegal) employee remains critical here. This is one kind of experience the illegal worker, even with all the hardships, can hardly match in his/her home country. Distancing from the home country thus becomes even more entrenched.

But all the good relationship between migrant workers and the Japanese employers/co-workers at the workplace fails to check migrants from becoming diasporic. This is because such a relationship ceases to continue *after* work. The Japanese and South Asian workers, as they walk out of the workplace, merge into separate

and precise kind of living spaces - socially, culturally, even spiritually, the subject-matter of which need not concern us here. More importantly for our current theme, what mars this otherwise benevolent relationship is the *type of work* the migrant does in Japan. The latter is, indeed, what makes 'work' in the host country a critical factor in diaspora formation.

V. THE 3K JOBS

The 3K - *kitsui, kitanai and kiken* (i.e., difficult, dirty and dangerous) - jobs were once done mainly by rural or female Japanese workers.⁴⁰ But as we indicated earlier, the supply of rural workers (both male and female) began to decline by mid-1960s in most Japanese cities, while for Tokyo the supply ceased by the end of 1980s. A space for 3K jobs was further created when young Japanese, living in the midst of affluence and getting job offers that were socially more respectable, began to abhor such jobs.⁴¹ Migrants, willing to take up any jobs for survival and pecuniary reasons, if not to prolong their stay in Japan, became the ready-made successor to 3K jobs.

A sizeable portion of South Asian migrants seems to be engaged in 3K jobs. This would include mainly those who are working in service and construction sectors (40% and 2% respectively; see Table 2). It may be pointed out here that significant portions of those working in the service sector are students (24%; see Table 2). Put differently, only 16% non-student South Asians work in the service sector, and by extension, 3K jobs. It must be admitted, however, that all jobs in the service sector are not necessarily 3K-ish. This would imply a reduced percentage of South Asians (although we have no means to verify) working in 3K jobs. Furthermore, for most students

40. John Lie, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

41. See, Haruo Shimada, *op. cit.*, p. 205; Hiromi Mori, *op. cit.*, p.67.

it is a temporary job and may not be a source of earning for more than 3-4 years.

But number alone is not everything here; more critical is the job itself. This is because 3K jobs, in so far as these have become predominantly migrant jobs, invariably create a rupture between the 'takers' (i.e., the migrants) and the 'non-takers' (i.e., the Japanese). The latter comes to look down upon the former. The situation probably would have differed if both migrants and Japanese shared 3K jobs alike. But this is rapidly ceasing to be the case now. Moreover, the job restricts the migrants from sharing the life and lifestyles of Japanese. This is not difficult to understand.

Low wages and greater working hours mark the 3K jobs. According to our survey, the monthly income of over 65% of the South Asian migrants is Yen 300,000 or less, with 44% earning less than Yen 200,000 monthly (see, Table 12). This would imply that the daily wages of the above 65% is Yen 10,000 or less.

Table 12. Monthly Income

Category	Number	% of total
100,000 or less	10	13
100,001-200,000	38	49
200,001-300,000	10	13
300,001-400,000	9	12
400,001-500,000	2	3
500,001-600,000	2	3
600,001-700,000	1	1
800,001-900,000	1	1
900,001-1,000,000	1	1
More than 1,000,001	3	4
None	1	1
Total	78	100

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

Interestingly, according to a survey carried out by the Japan Immigration Association, the daily wages of more than 80% of all (apprehended) illegal workers is Yen 10,000 or less (see, Table 13). This could mean two things. One, there are less number of South Asian migrants working in 3K jobs. And two, the apprehended illegal workers did not provide actual income for fear of parting with them. But then, income may not be the right way to determine 3K jobs. There could be many part-timers as well, or inversely, some could be working in 3K jobs with monthly income of more than Yen 300,000. I will have more to say about this shortly.

Table 13. Classification by Daily Wages
(All Apprehended Illegal Foreign Workers)

Wages (Yen)	Number	%
Not exceeding 3,000	599	1.2
Not exceeding 5,000	4,670	9.4
Not exceeding 7,000	12,280	24.8
Not exceeding 10,000	23,264	47.1
Not exceeding 30,000	7,283	14.7
Over 30,000	193	0.4
Unknown	1,145	2.3
Total	49,434	

Source: 1995 Statistics on Immigration Control (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), p.101.

Working hours seem to be better criteria in figuring out the number of people in 3K jobs. According to our survey, 27% of South Asian migrants work 61 hours or more weekly (see, Table 14). This probably is a better figure of the number of South Asians working in

3K jobs. Another 11% working 51-60 hours weekly could also be included in this category, which would increase the percentage to 38 (see, Table 14). If combined with wages, the most likely percentage of South Asians working in 3K jobs would be around 40%.

Wages and working hours, either independently or in combination, are sufficient to create a rupture between the migrants and the Japanese. As one South Asian illegal worker, while earning Yen 450,000 monthly in a Japanese-style pub, complained:

I worked almost everyday from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. without a break. The company has not given me any paid holidays and paid no special allowance for late-night work.⁴²

Table 14. Classification by Daily Wages

Category	Number	% of total
20 hours or less	9	11
21-30 hours	8	10
31-40 hours	13	16
41-50 hours	22	28
51-60 hours	13	16
61 hours and more	14	18
Total	79	100

Source: Author's Survey, 1997

Needless to say, anyone working 12 hours daily is structurally isolated from the society.

Furthermore, some employers, finding illegal workers vulnerable, try to exploit them in every possible ways. For instance, with regard to income tax, as per rule, 20% of income is withheld on wages as tax on a foreign worker in the first year of work in Japan.

42. The Japan Times, 5 April 1997.

The rate is reduced to 10% from the second year. But some employers flout this rule by charging illegal workers 20% even after their first year of employment.⁴³ Unless put into a desperate situation, few trouble to complain.

It may be mentioned here that recently in a 'landmark decision,' the Supreme Court ordered a company to pay Yen 2.2 million to a South Asian worker who sustained injury during working *illegally* in Japan.⁴⁴ Such an award was first of its kind. In this context, it may be worth pointing out that under Japan's Labor Standards Law, a worker's rights are guaranteed regardless of nationality, and in the case of foreigners, irrespective of the fact whether their stay in Japan is legal or illegal. The Supreme Court's decision only validated these rights further. But as pointed out earlier, unless put into a desperate situation, few illegal workers will take up the issue to the Court.

It may not be out of place to point out that the benevolent relationship between migrant workers and Japanese employers begins to break down, particularly with the illegal workers, under circumstances of economic decline (i.e., company's poor profit margin) and when 'guided' by the government to disemploy illegal workers (see, Tables 15 and 16). The worst sufferers are those in 3K jobs. As one illegal worker, fired on grounds of having no working visa, commented:

[Company's] claims are nonsense. Though they knew we don't have working visas, they hired us. But they forced us to quit and didn't bother to give us enough time.⁴⁵

With new amendments to the Immigration Law, which stipulates heavier penalty on employers hiring illegal migrants (from 5-10 years imprisonment to Yen 3-10 million fine),⁴⁶ the situation is destined to deteriorate even further.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *The Japan Times*, 29 January 1997.

45. *The Japan Times*, 5 April 1997.

46. See, *The Japan Times*, 5 April 1997 and 19 April 1997.

Table 15. South Asians (Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) apprehended for illegal employment in Japan (1982-1992)

Nationality	1982	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Bangladesh	-	58	438	2,942	2,277	5,925	293	390
Pakistan	7	196	905	2,497	3,170	3,886	793	1,072
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	20	90	831	307	451
Sub-total	7	254	1343	5459	5537	10642	1393	1913
Total aliens	1889	8131	11307	14314	16608	29884	32908	62161
% of South Asians	0.4	3.1	11.9	38.1	33.3	35.6	4.2	3.0

Source: Calculated from Haruo Shimada, *Japan's "Guest Workers": Issues and Public Policies* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994), pp. 28-29.

Note: Figures for 1982 and 1988-90 represent totals of illegal overstayers engaged in activities + persons engaged in such activities though not overstayers.

Table 16. South Asians workers deported in 1989

Countries	Number
Bangladesh	3116
India	86
Nepal	11
Pakistan	2664
Sri Lanka	25
Sub-tota	5902
Total aliens deported	17157
% of South Asians deported	34.4

Source: Calculated from Syed Noor Hossain, *Japan Not in the West: A South Asian Perception of Japan Today* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1993).

Table 17. Japan Foreign Direct Investment (in million US \$)

Item	1975-1979		1980-1984		1985-1989		1990-1994		Total FDI until 1994**	
	NOI*	Value	NOI	Value	NOI	Value	NOI	Value	NOI	Value
South Asia Total	27	28	99	128	92	195	123	534	483	1010
Japan's Total Investment	10091	19141	12806	39627	23059	182463	20134	209709	77507	463606
South Asia's Share %	0.3	0.1	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.2

Source: Calculated from *Foreign Direct Investment Record* (Tokyo, 1975-1994).

*Number of Investments.

** The figure includes pre-1975 investments also.

But even those migrants who work and enjoy the benevolence of the Japanese cannot avoid being diasporic. This is because in many of the cases the migrants, particularly those coming from South Asia and now working in 3K jobs, had the misfortune of being transformed from 'skilled persons' to 'unskilled workers.' As I have indicated earlier, over 80% of the South Asian migrants are graduates, having bachelor degree or over (see, Table 7). Moreover, looking at the occupation in home country, only 3% worked in restaurants (see, table 1). Even if we include the student community (i.e., 48%, although some of them had 'skilled' jobs back home; see and compare, Tables 1 and 2), it would still leave a sizeable portion of South Asian migrants (at least around 34%, if not more)⁴⁷ who had a qualitative transformation in their work career - from being *skilled* in the home country to *unskilled* in the host country. A better income is not going to rub off the (mental and physical) pain that one goes through in such transformation of careers. Indeed, to the extent that these (formerly skilled) migrants must now work in 3K jobs, it puts them into an *over-skilled/under-employed* situation (eg. a former 'teacher' working in the restaurant as a 'service boy'), something which is bound to alienate them further from the mainstream Japanese community.

The 3K job workers need not always be isolated from the rest of the migrant community. Although there is constant tension between white-collar and 3K migrant workers, the former is often found

47. This calculation has been done on the following basis. Table 1 (i.e., Occupation in Home Country) shows that 6% were 'students' and 25% 'did not have jobs.' If we take that the latter 25% just graduated and still did not find employment, it would make 31% students (that is, as occupation in the home country). Now, if we look at Table 2 (i.e., Present Occupation), we see that 54% are students. This would mean another 23% non-students (who had skilled jobs back home) became 'students' after coming to Japan. If we add this 23% with the 9% in the service sector (keeping in mind that 2% worked in restaurants in the home country), it would mean that 32% migrants had qualitative transformation in their work career.

Table 18. Registered South Asians (Bangladesh and India) in Japan (1960-1989)

	1960	1970	1980	1985	1989
Bangladesh	-	-	260	684	2205
India	783	1266	1944	2546	2926
Total aliens	650,566	708,458	782,910	850,612	984,455
Total Japan population	94,096,000	104,331,000	116,807,000	120,837,000	122,982,000
BD/India % of total aliens	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5
BD/India % of total Japan population	0.0008	0.001	0.002	0.003	0.004

Source: Calculated from Helmut Loiskandl, "Illegal Migrant Workers in Japan," in Robin Cohen, ed., *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.372.

Table 19. Classification by Connections with the Gang (of All Apprehended Illegal Foreign Workers)

Nationality	Number	%
Thailand	340	39.4
Philippines	143	16.6
Korea	119	13.8
China	72	8.3
Peru	39	4.5
Others	150	17.4
Total	863	

Source: *1995 Statistics on Immigration Control* (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), p.104

Table 20. Classification by Broker's Service (outside of Japan)
(Of All Apprehended Illegal Foreign Workers)

Nationality	Number	%
Thailand	2,125	42.0
Philippines	1,002	19.8
China	612	12.1
Korea	272	5.4
Japan	197	3.9
Others	855	16.9
Total	5,063	

Source: 1995 Statistics on Immigration Control (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), p.108.

Table 21. Classification by Broker's Service (in Japan)
(of All Apprehended Illegal Foreign Workers)

Nationality	Number	%
Japan	982	32.6
Thailand	883	29.3
China	451	15.0
Philippines	223	7.4
Korea	153	5.1
Others	322	10.7
Total	3,014	

Source: 1995 Statistics on Immigration Control (Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 1996), p.109.

sympathizing with the cause of the 3K workers simply for the reason of being 'fellow nationals' or coming from the same region. This is further consolidated when migrant workers are found ill treated by the host community. By then, however, a diaspora has already come into being.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

With international migration, are we then faced with the inevitability of diasporic communities in host countries, including Japan? A quick answer would be in the affirmative, particularly in the context of the recent trends and the underlying reasons for migration. Put differently, if migration was carried out with ease, almost like shifting residence, the situation could have been different. Obstacles and contradictions always give birth to new things. The construction of diasporic communities is no exception.

The host country, however, need not be blamed for everything. As discussed in the section on pre-migratory work, the home country is also, if not equally, responsible for making would-be migrants diasporic. It is here that one must understand that migration is less a voluntary act which migrants undertake freely. In fact, voluntarism ends with the 'decision' to migrate. The rest of the times the migrants are burdened with all involuntary tasks, something which changes them forever; indeed, they become *alienated and marginalised members* in the world.

In becoming something of a new person, it matters little whether the migrant is legal or illegal in the host country. The commonsensical notion that illegal workers are more prone to becoming diasporic, because of the hardship that they go through, does not always hold true. In this context, I am reminded of Goethe's line in the *Faust*: 'The doer is always conscienceless, no one has a conscience except the spectator.' More often legal workers, with secured jobs and more time for 'leisure work' are in a better position

to contribute towards the task of organizing and reproducing a diaspora. But this may not be (and surely is not) always bad.

Diasporas could be *creative* as well as *uncreative*. If the latter stands for conflict and violence, the former stands for imaginative contribution in all spheres of life. In this context, the organization of benevolent relationship at the workplace, including enacting rules and regulations to protect the rights of the migrants could make a difference. After all, without fear of losing jobs and with some certainty in livelihood, migrants would be better able to harness their energies more creatively.