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SKILLED LABOUR MIGRATION FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Abstract

Skilled labour migration from developing countries to the developed world has increased exponentially in recent years. The pattern of immigration has changed enormously over the course of time in some particular cases. Developing countries experienced group migration in the form of indentured labourers from 19th century to the First World War. Free migration commenced after this period. The causes of immigration from the developing countries have been attributed to the push and pull factors which are related to economic, political, cultural and the environmental issues. Today, migration has become a social and political phenomenon of major concern to political leaders and policy makers in these countries. Advancements in technology, information and transportation have contributed to the enhanced rate and pace of immigration. This paper examines the impact of skilled labour migration from the developing countries which often played a vital role in supplying labour to the developed world and this is expected to continue. It shows that this phenomenon has social and political impact in sending countries including loss of leadership and educated people, impacting the political process of registering candidature for national elections. The paper, taking up the example of Fiji, argues that the return of migrants with enhanced human capital and technology, remittances, loss of educated people, poor quality of candidates standing for elections and increased indigenous Fijian dominance are some of the social and political impacts of immigration in this particular case.

1.   Introduction

Migration is one of the most talked about subjects these days. Whether it is the most renowned academic, politician or the community at large, everyone seems to have a view on its merits. Immigration, a particular variant of migration, is essentially the act of leaving one place for another for any length of time. The time

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does not have to be specified but the intention is to relocate from one place to another. Immigration of skilled persons from the developing to developed countries has increased over time. It is one of the most pressing issues in the modern globalised world. The United Nations estimates that over 175 million people, or roughly 3 per cent of the world's total population, now reside in a country where they were not born.[1] Throughout history, humans have migrated widely. The movement of people across the international boundaries has continued both as voluntary migration within one's region or further and involuntary migration such as slave trade and mass exodus due to ethnic or racial cleansing. In order to understand the causes and consequences of such migration, this paper takes up the example of Fiji – a country which has long been an important player in the supply of almost all categories of qualified and experienced personnel.

There has been a huge change in the patterns of migration from the developing countries over the past century. In the early days, migration involved permanent rupture, because people did not have the technology to be able to keep in touch with their homeland. It was essentially a permanent migration. However, there has been a movement away from that kind of a permanent rupture to trans-migration, which has enabled people who lived overseas to have business or social connections back home. Thus, immigration has now become a much more fluid process. The assimilationist ideology which required one to completely assimilate oneself in the overseas lifestyle to be considered as a true overseas citizen has gone. People are much more at home displaying dual loyalties without necessarily being accused of being disloyal or unfaithful to the country of residence. This has increased as a result of the explosive growth in information and communications technology (ICT). Since the world is getting smaller with advanced technologies, finding required labour around the globe has become much easier than ever before.[2] Distance is now really an imaginary phenomenon rather than a physical one.

The aim of the paper is to study the impact of skilled labour immigration from the developing countries to the developed ones, taking up the example of Fiji as a case study. The paper is organised into six sections. After the introduction, the second section examines the patterns and nature of immigration in Fiji from historical perspective. The third reviews the causes of immigration and the fourth section discusses the impacts of skilled labour immigration from Fiji. Future trends are identified in section five. Section six draws conclusion.

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[1] United Nations, *International Migration*, New York: Population Division, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 2000.

[2] J. R H. Choi, Woods and S. K. Murrmann, "International Labor Markets and the Migration of Labor Forces as an Alternative Solution for Labor Shortages in the Hospitality Sector", *International Journal of Contemporary Management*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2000, pp. 61-66.

2.   Brief History of Immigration in Developing Countries: The Case of Fiji

Fiji is a multi-ethnic nation of 8,27,900 population according to the 2007 population census. Fiji became a British Crown Colony in 1874 and an independent nation in 1970. Generally, labour migration in Fiji could be classified in three phases: mass immigration from 1879-1919 and 1920-1936, permanent labour migration from 1970 onwards, and temporary labour migration and modern immigration since early 1990s. The history of migration in Fiji, from the late 19th century to the First World War, saw the migration of Indian immigrants, called 'girmitiyas', who came to Fiji in 1879 to work on sugarcane plantations. Between 1879 and 1916, 60,000 Indian migrants arrived in Fiji and their work helped create the foundations of Fiji's sugar-based economy.[3] This was a form of group migration known as the indentured migration. People were contracted for a period of service, employed by the Colonial Sugar Refining (CSR) Company or the government or other employers. At the end of their term of service, the immigrants could go back to India after five years paying their own fare or after ten years without paying for transportation. Eventually about 24,000 went back to India. The majority stayed on. As these labourers were illiterate, and left India in sorry circumstances and did not have enough money due to settlement costs in Fiji with their families, physical contact with India decreased. They also lost contact with their families and had no precise knowledge of where their forefathers had come from. They only kept in touch with India vicariously, through movies, newspapers and periodic visits by missionaries from India. Thus, in these cases the rupture was fairly complete. The system of indentured labourer formally came to an end in 1920. Their descendants constitute the bulk of the present Indo-Fijian population, the rest being descendants of Gujarati traders and Punjabi agriculturalists who arrived in Fiji in the 1920s.[4]

The end of the First World War saw the beginning of free migration with the arrival of Gujarati migrants in 1904. The first Chinese settlement was recorded in Levuka (the old capital of Fiji) in the 1870s, its occupants being gold miners from Victoria, Australia who came to Fiji when the mines were depleted.[5] However, a 'large-scale' migration took place in the 1920s throughout the 1960s where free migrants were coming from Gujarat, principally from Surat and Navsari districts and Punjab, principally from Jalundar and Hoshyarpur districts. They were mostly farmers, traders and merchants from India. Their arrival, together with the Asians, saw the growth of businesses and trade in Fiji. They were mostly individual migrants who kept in touch with their families and even brought them to Fiji after a certain period or went back home to get their children married. Thus, the frequency and intensity of contact was far greater than with the case of indentured migrants. This also caused controversy locally about the commitments of these free migrants who had come to Fiji. The Europeans also exploited this. There were also some conflicts between free

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[3] B. V. Lal, "Fiji Islands: From Immigration to Emigration", Washington D.C: Migration Policy Institute, 2003.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] S. J. Yee, *The Chinese in the Pacific*, Suva, Fiji: The South Pacific Social Sciences in Association with the United Nations Development Programme, 1974.

migrants and the descendants of the "girmitiyas". But whether people who came to Fiji as free migrants or indentured migrants, they all saw Fiji as their home, established themselves there and developed businesses. It did not seem that there was a sense at that time to immigrate elsewhere using Fiji as a stopover.

This began to change in the 1960s when small numbers of people started going to the United Kingdom and Australia. However, there were restrictions in the case of Australia because of the White Australia Policy. There were also attempts by the then Governor of Fiji, Sir Derek Jakeway, to stop the outward migration of Indians due to the loss of skills from Fiji. This attempt was futile as it was seen as interfering with persons' freewill and infringement of human rights. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the pace of immigration increased and bulk of migrants went to Canada and the US. A process of permanent emigration started during and after independence in 1970 and it has been building momentum since then. In the immediate post-independent years, Indo-Fijians were beginning to feel insecure and excluded from power. In the 1970s, there was a sense of anxiety, exclusion and uncertainty in their minds about their future in that country. With the advent of discriminatory legislations in affirmative action, education and so forth, people were beginning to feel apprehensive. In the early 1980s, about 60 per cent of the Fiji emigrants went to Canada and the west coast of the United States, and the bulk of the rest to Australia and New Zealand.[6]

People, especially Indo-Fijians, began immigrating in smaller numbers but the trickle turned into torrent after 1987. Table 1 shows a huge increase in emigration from 1986 onwards. Interestingly, the move was to Canada, Australia and particularly New Zealand due to the then Prime Minister David Lange's more positive response to the plight of Indo-Fijians (see, Figure 1). The total official outflow from Fiji was over 91,000 between 1987 and 2004.[7] In the 1990s, about two-thirds of the population who left Fiji went to Australia which became the preferred destination for the important reason of physical proximity compared to Canada or the US. Other factors included demand for skills, family reunion and better opportunities. All four destinations now remain very popular for immigration. Despite the loss of skilled people, immigration has been a desirable means by which people can expand opportunities and gain experience in a wider global setting.

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[6] B. V. Lal, *op. cit.*
[7] Paper presented by M. Mohanty on "Globalisation, New Labour Migration and Development in Fiji Islands", in the Conference on *Globalisation, Governance and the Pacific Islands*, 2005, Canberra.

Table 1: Fiji Citizen Immigration	
Year	Total Departure
1986	2799
1987	5118
1988	5496
1999	5510
1990	5650
1991	5432
1992	4621
1993	4107
1994	4155
1995	4931
1996	5030
1997	4493
1998	4829
1999	4837
2000	5275
2001	6316
2002	5480
2003	5771

Source: Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics[8]

Figure 1: The Direction of Movement of Fiji Emigrants – 2003
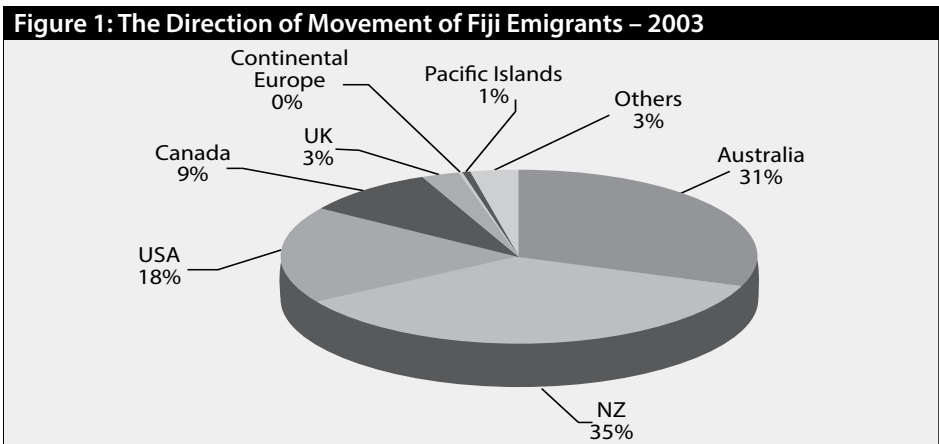
3. The Causes of Immigration

The usual process of migration from the developing to the developed countries reveals that most people move for economic reasons in general to take

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[8] Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, *Fiji Tourism and Migration Statistics (various issues)*, Suva, Fiji.

better-paying jobs or to search for jobs in new areas.[9] Whatever the reasons, migrants move to seek better lives for themselves and their children. For each individual, there is a net gain wherever the benefits of life in the destination country exceed those in the country of origin and the difference between the two is not swallowed up by the costs of moving.[10] Industrialisation and globalisation has also influenced migration by significantly improving transportation techniques.

As for Fiji, Indo-Fijians make up most of the emigrants from Fiji. According to Mohanty[11], the permanent emigration process is dominated by Indo-Fijians (88-89 per cent). However, the number of indigenous Fijian emigrants has also increased recently. Some estimate that as much as 10 per cent of the migrants from Fiji are indigenous Fijians, members of an improving and increasing middle class seeking better opportunities for themselves and their children.[12] This indicates that Fiji's push and international pull factors have an impact on numerous sections of the community. Therefore, the causes of immigration in Fiji could be attributed to the push and pull factors. Push and pull factors are those that either forcefully push people to immigrate or attracts them and are related to economic, political, cultural and environmental causes. Push factors which relate to Fiji in this case include essentially the political upheaval and fear, the sense of exclusion from power, the sense of persecution, the glass ceiling in the public service, corruption, mismanagement and racial discrimination in the public sector, poor medical and public services, diminishing employment opportunities, mistreatment, rise in criminal activities, tensions in society between majorities and minorities followed by local struggles, racism and racial discrimination. The consequences of Fiji's military coups since 1987 have been deep and irreversible causing massive brain drain from the country. Notably, the level of out-migration doubles from around 2,400 each year to over 5,000.[13] Non-renewal of land leases and the deteriorating state of the sugar industry are also uprooting people and have created the mindset for them to emigrate. Since 1987, thousands of Indo-Fijian farmers' land leases under Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act have not been renewed mainly due to political ploys by indigenous Fijian leaders. Fiji has also lost economic growth potential of more than 5 per cent since 1987.[14]

Pull factors which relate to overseas countries include better and fairer opportunities, better living standards, education, enjoyment, better medical care and public services, equal rights, stability, security and family links. Pull factors could also be looked at a manner in which people have adapted themselves. Migrants from Fiji have adapted well to foreign lands. They are talented and culturally well equipped to participate in the foreign workforce. They are hard-working, understand the basics of

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[9] World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), *Travel and Tourism: Progress and Priorities*, 1995.
[10] N. Hall, "Brain Drains and Brain Gains: Causes, Consequences, Policy", *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol. 32, No. 11, 2005, pp. 939-950.
[11] M. Mohanty, *op. cit.*
[12] B. V. Lal, *Turnings: Fiji Factions*, Lautoka, Fiji: Fiji Institute of Applied Sciences, 2008a.
[13] V. Naidu, "Social Consequence of the Coups", in B Lal, G Chand and V Naidu (eds.), *1987 Fiji Twenty Years On*, Lautoka, Fiji: Fiji Institute of Applied Science, 2008.
[14] B. V. Lal, "The Loss of Innocence", in *ibid*.

western culture and have the skills and knowledge and do well overall. What sometimes is not seen is the hardship that people have to endure in the process of adapting because they carry with them the ethos and values which are appropriate in indigenous context but not necessarily in a foreign context. Thus, the pain, hardships and suffering they encounter are beneath the surface. Citizens from Fiji also have communities in overseas countries, establish networks, have cultural institutions, and they do not feel like completely new migrants or in an unfamiliar community. Most immigrants also visit Fiji on regular basis; thus, they are acquainted with their home country as well.

4.   Political and Social Impacts of Immigration

Given the magnitude and importance of immigration, one cannot ignore its impact on the developing countries. It will be fair to say that the best and the brightest Fijians have either left, or are leaving or will leave sooner or later. Fiji has lost over 3,800 professionals, technical and related workers since the coup in 2000.[15] This represents over half of Fiji's stock of middle to high level workers.[16] The Fiji National Provident Fund processed 741 applications for migration purposes which amounted to US$ 6.28 million in the first quarter of 2008 and for the period January to December 2007, withdrawal for migration purposes was US$ 19.74 million. What is left behind are mostly the desperate or the desperately poor that have inadequate skills to immigrate. Lal commented that there was hardly a single Indo-Fijian family in Fiji which did not have at least one member abroad.[17] This phenomenon is remarkable and is certainly true in the case of Fiji. The gravity of focus is now shifted to either 'I will go one day or I want my children to be there'. Most migrants tend to be young adults who are often educated and more ambitious and in this sense there is a loss of educated leadership, skills and young productive people at village level. Families also tend to be socially and culturally rooted in their country of birth which may be difficult to overcome.

Immigration also has demographic consequences such as changes in population distribution and demographic crises such as aging population due to the loss of the young and productive group. This drain of skill and talent of professionals such as doctors, nurses, teachers, accountants and others has been deeply felt by people affecting their well being. Together with their families, these people 1,30,000 to 1,50,000, accounted for 10-12 per cent of the country's population in 2000.[18] Most of these migrants also represent the reproductive ages; thus, there is a chance of continued decline in population in the future. This in turn can be followed by economic problems. It is estimated that Fiji has been losing US$ 19.35 million annually since 1987.[19] These people have taken their skills, their earning and taxpaying capacities,

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[15] M. Mohanty, *op. cit.*

[16] Government of Fiji, *Annual Reports – 2000 and 2001*, Suva, Fiji: Immigration Department, 2002a.

[17] B. V. Lal, 2008a, *op. cit.*

[18] V. Naidu, *op. cit.*

[19] *Ibid*.

their life savings and their purchasing power to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States.[20] Many local investors have also moved their savings abroad to prevent any risks. Several sectors of the economy also lack quality and efficient services due to the emigration of professional people. There is also a visible decline in population of Indo-Fijian settlements in Fiji. Many farms are deserted and settlements abandoned constituting a major socio-cultural rupture. It is said that over the last 20 years the largest town in Vavua Levu has lost is dynamism and is heading to becoming a 'ghost town'.

Institutionalised racism has also become widespread in the public sector due to the continuous migration of Indo-Fijians causing social divide and further segregation of people in Fiji. With no regard to ethnic balance, merits or proper credentials, indigenous Fijians were recruited and promoted in virtually all top government positions. Virtually all top public service positions have been held by indigenous Fijians and they hold nearly 70 per cent of the remainder.[21]

On the other hand, people who migrate also have attachments with their communities. There is transfer of technology, return of migrants who have learned new technologies and managerial techniques and enhanced human capital to the home country by boosting productivity and economic development. They also contribute through remittances; assist in family or community-based projects or cash and kind during natural disasters which are quite significant. Thus, the flow on effect is continued. People also see migration as a multinational activity as they may select someone to emigrate in the expectation that overtime that person would contribute and help their families in Fiji.

Remittances particularly are amongst the major positive impacts of migration. There has been a rapid increase in remittances from people living abroad. When money is received locally, remittances play a crucial role in supplementing the national savings rate in many developing countries around the world. Remittances also assist in reducing poverty if they are effectively utilised by the locals. In the early 1990s, the amount of remittances in Fiji was very low. However, this significantly increased since 2000 as depicted in Table 2. Between 1993-1999, remittances had a low growth of only 38.4 per cent with an annual average rate of US$ 23.81 million per year. This increased to 218.3 per cent during 2000-2004 with an annual average rate of US$ 99.07 million a year. There was a remarkable rise in the flow of personal remittances which amounted to over a billion Fijian dollars during the period 2000-2004. According to Mohanty,[22] this dramatic rise was mainly due to the remittances generated through the salaries and allowances by the peacekeeping forces abroad and forces working in the United Kingdom.

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[20] M Reddy, M. Mohanty and V. Naidu, "Economic Cost of Human Capital Loss from Fiji: Implications for Sustainable Development", *International Migration Review*, 2004.
[21] V. Naidu, *op. cit.*
[22] M. Mohanty, *op. cit.*

Table 2: Trends in Personal Remittances in Fiji, 1993-2004			
Period	**Total Personal Remittance (US$ million)**	**Annual Average Rate (US$ million)**	**% Change**
1993-1999	166.64 (F$ 344.32)	23.81 (F$ 49.2)	+38.4
2000-2004	495.36 (F$ 1, 023.50)	99.07 (F$ 204.7)	+218.3
1993-2004	662.01 (F$ 1, 367.82)	55.17 (F$ 114.0)	+726.2

Source: Reserve Bank of Fiji.[23]

There is also debate over the extent to which remittances actually improve the economy since they are mostly used for consumption purposes that do little to boost domestic production, employment or exports rather than investment. Macmillan outlines some of the negative consequences if remittances are used in this way.[24] These include an increase in the price level and imports, an overvalued exchange rate and a dependence on remittances which may delay long-term economic policies, especially if they cannot be guaranteed due to economic fluctuations. There may also be cases of unknown or unreported remittances; thus, its actual contribution is not known.

Fiji's recent political turbulence sets the context for understanding the complex dynamics of its citizen's emigration. Since the coups, emigration from Fiji has exhibited two main characteristics. The first is the dynamic increase in emigration since the coups of 1987. Between 1978 and 1986, 20,703 Fijian citizens emigrated at an annual average rate of 2,300. Between 1987 and 1996, the number increased to 50,050 at an annual average rate of 5,005. Between 1997 and 2000 alone, 16,825 people migrated. And the numbers are increasing daily. The second characteristic is that the bulk of the emigrants – about 90 per cent – have been Indo-Fijians.[25]

Political instability is a major cause of migration from Fiji, making this demographic transition enormously important politically. The Reserve Bank of Fiji Quarterly Review noted "it is quite clear that the political instability generated by events of 1987 and 2000 gave greater impetus to the emigration process."[26] In the 1970s and 1980s and even before, there was a powerful emotion in the indigenous community that unless Fijians were united against Indo-Fijians, Indians would take their land or future away. These comments seem to be a political tool to keep the country divided for personal gains. Land laws cannot be changed unless Fijians themselves want to change them. It is very solidly entrenched in the constitution. It is essential to keep politics out of land issues, as land is a huge economic resource which will benefit landowners, farmers and Fiji as a whole. Apparently, no land has

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[23] Reserve Bank of Fiji, *Statistics on Personal Remittances*, Economics Department, Reserve Bank of Fiji, Suva, Fiji, 2005.

[24] M. Macmillen, "The Economic Effects of International Migration", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 20, 1982, pp. 245-267.

[25] B.V. Lal, 2003, *op. cit.*

[26] Government of Fiji, "Impact of Brain Drain in Fiji", *RBF Quarterly Review*, Suva, Fiji, December, 2002b pp. 40-45.

ever been taken away by the Indian community over the last 129 years since the two communities have been living in Fiji. The fact that indigenous Fijians make up little over 57 per cent of the total population, the fear that Indo-Fijians might dispose them of their heritage or the fear of Indo-Fijian dominance has diminished. Migration has a big role to play in this, allaying Fijian fears. With this fear gone, there is now more room for debate and discussion among indigenous Fijians. Numerous political parties in the 1990s came up to the fore partly as a result of the absence of this fear. Indigenous Fijian concerns and issues will acquire a more prominent place in the public discourse than was the case in the past.

There is also the loss of educated people through migration who perhaps had a more genuine and vested interest in the long-term future in this country. This is of immense concern as good quality of people is the key building block for any country. For instance, the drain of talent and experience is one problem plaguing the civil service. Another is its collapsing morale.[27] Those who are left behind are gullible, desperate and open to manipulation by political leaders. They have given up and there seems a sense of resignation.

The cost of emigration in Fiji is also high. According to Lal,[28] Fiji is estimated to lose, on average, US$ 21.53 million annually due to emigration, mainly through loss of skill, re-training new appointees and delayed appointments. The figure is much higher – US$ 133 million – if account is taken of the output lost if the emigrant's work is not carried out by a replacement. Another study by Reddy, Mohanty and Naidu[29] estimates the country lost directly and indirectly about US$ 21.77 million annually through its human capital loss.

The other manifestation of this lack of educated commitment in Fiji is in the calibre of candidates who stand for elections. In the past two decades, there has been a significant change in the quality Indo-Fijian parliamentarians compared to their Fijian counterparts.[30] There was a time when highly educated and respected people used to contest the general elections and they showed commitment to and passion for politics. This has essentially vanished. The people who contest for elections now are retired and low-level civil servants, faded faces, disgruntled and defeated politicians and some political retreads hoping for a second career to enjoy a last moment of glory and to make the most of the opportunity while it lasts for personal gains before the candle blows out. They do not really have anything to contribute or they may not be particularly well educated for the job. The educated class of the society remain non-participative as they have either made up their minds to immigrate, fear travel bans and other international sanctions and unfavourable policies or simply do not want to get involved with the messness of local politics. Also the sense and fear of coup

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[27] B. V. Lal, "Aftermath of the 2006 Coup", *Fijian Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2007, pp. 89-123.

[28] B.V. Lal, 2003, *op. cit.*

[29] M. Reddy, M. Mohanty and V. Naidu, *op. cit.*

[30] B. V. Lal, 2008b, *op. cit.*

culture recurring and the culture of racial patronage is a very effective deterrent for people to participate: 'why sacrifice when there will be another coup?' Coups do not solve problems, they compound them.

On the other side, it can now be seen that the calibre of Fijians in politics is far better or higher because they see a future in politics whereas Indo-Fijians do not. This demographic transition has huge ethnic and political implications. People have not sufficiently appreciated the magnitude of the change that has occurred. Many people who emigrate feel deeply embittered about the coups, upheavals and other problems. They sometimes exercise 'soft power', that is they create an awareness of their parties or their community's predicaments in an overseas country. Many write from overseas in support for particular political parties or sometimes become the milking cow for political parties as they do fundraising and other activities in support of them.

It may also be worthy to mention here that race-based politics has hobbled Fiji's future. Despite the potential and opportunities, Fiji has been struggling over the past two decades with adversities that are both complex and deep rooted. In the wake of consecutive coups since 1987, Fiji has lost enormously as a result of bad political and economic governance. Deeply divisive race based politics and the loss of development opportunities have been immense. From 1970, Fiji started its journey as a nation with a race-based political climate. Fiji's politics and overall governance have been conquered and mired in divisive, race-based policies and institutions for decades. This has caused severe ruptures in Fiji's developments resulting in the hampering of developmental progress and prosperity. Fiji has suffered years of lost development opportunities. This has had a huge impact on Fiji as a whole and has contributed largely to the significant loss of skilled and talented people. The coups and their impact have heightened and magnified the dominance of race-based politics and governance resulting in a huge flight of trained and talented people, mainly Indo-Fijians, going abroad.

Racial politics will have no future in Fiji particularly in the minority communities. The 19 reserved seats for the Indo-Fijian community are also not in proportion with the severe decline in the Indo-Fijian population size. Initially, there was proportionality when the number of seats was tiered to the population size. It is also irrational to have racial-based seats for the indigenous Fijian community which makes up little over 57 per cent of the total population. Another implication of this demographic transition is that minority group leaders will have to integrate themselves politically with Fijians. Fiji's future does not lie in ethnic separation, in separate seats but in forging political alliances with the indigenous community. It is suggested that all the ethnically reserved seats should eventually be taken away so that Fiji can have a political culture which is non-racial. Fijian citizens should move away from the obsession that only their own ethnic candidate can look after their interests to one which they

can trust whomever they elect to represent their interests. Leaders also have a huge responsibility towards this by being fair to all communities. Fiji-born immigrants have no problem in voting for candidates from diverse ethnicities in overseas countries. The smallest minority in society is an individual and if individual's rights are protected then everyone's rights are also protected. The communal system and the ethnicity question in Fiji are fundamental issues that have contributed towards agitation, race-based affirmative action policies, racial divide and the coups. Getting rid of this will be a major step towards moving away from the politics of race to the politics of non-racialism. The biggest challenges would be to deal with the coup culture, function and place of traditional Fijian institutions in modern 21st century politics, non-renewal of expiring land leases under Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act and the country's obsession with racial politics. Political leaders will have to deal with these problems now through dedication, commitment and effective visionary leadership and not pass it on to the next generation.

Fiji has also inherited a political culture of distrust and suspicion because at every turn people are reminded of their race. For instance, one has to indicate one's race when applying for jobs or filling out certain documents. Thus, public memory is racially archived and people cannot think outside the box. This has also fragmented Fiji by keeping people divided. People see each other through the prism of prejudice and racial stereotyping as there was never a non-racial system of politics in Fiji. The present system provides all the incentives for ethnic chauvinism, not racial or political moderation. Fiji residents have different cultural heritages but they are all citizens of one country. Gradually, this has to change and eventually abolished altogether as racial seats seem a big hindrance to nation building. There should be politics based on ideology not primordial affections. Politicians will adapt to any incentive in this system.

5.   Future Trends

As it is evident in many developing countries, the international mobility of skilled workers including from Fiji is likely to increase in the future. Amongst other factors mentioned, technological advancements have predestined an upward trend. Most of the immigrants from Fiji have been Indo-Fijians and their magnitude of migration has been remarkable. At one stage, Indo-Fijians were 51 per cent of the population. By the end of World War II, Indo-Fijians outnumbered the indigenous Fijians in the total population.[31] In an interview on 03 January 2008, Professor Brij Lal mentioned that at one stage Indo-Fijians were 51 per cent of the population, in 1987 they were about 49 per cent of the population, in 1996 they were about 45 per cent of the population, now it is just over 37 per cent of the population. This is a substantial drop in numbers. Based on this trend, Indo-Fijian numbers will go down even further with time. Scholars may come to Fiji and have difficulty in believing that there was a time in Fiji's history when 50 per cent of the population was Indo-Fijians.

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[31] B. V. Lal, 2003, *op. cit.*

Certainly, Indo-Fijians feel uprooted and unwanted and given the chance, they would all go. Emotionally, they are now preparing for migration due to the continuous instability and conflicts over constitution, land and politics. There may be some who cannot migrate due to the love for the local lifestyle and jobs that they may be doing but this may be very small in number. Indo-Fijians are a minority community and they feel that they are being victimised by the majority community. Lal states that the political culture of racial patronage and coups spawned effectively marginalised the community.[32] They see their future as very unstable given the problems from the past decades. They also see the lifestyles of their own kinsmen who have gone overseas and established themselves well. Their children are also pursuing courses at tertiary institutions that would accumulate points for them to emigrate. Many believe that people emigrating from Fiji should not be blamed as one should look at the reasons why people immigrate, mainly due to diminishing opportunities, unequal rights and political instability.

There is a creation of a Fiji diaspora mainly in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US. People may come back and live in Fiji but not necessarily as citizens. However, no one seems to really care that so many of Fiji's best and brightest are leaving. Some Fijian nationalists actually want the country emptied of Indo-Fijians.[33] The response to the Indo-Fijian emigration has been varied. On the one side, it seems regrettable that there is enormous amount of brain-drain of skilled and talented people from Fiji. At another, there is a feeling of relief to have everything amongst the indigenous community. Fijian nationalists applaud their departure as a necessary first step in the "Fijianisation" of their country, a price the country "must" pay to reclaim its indigenous soul.[34] The ones who have left are regarded as disloyal or unfaithful to Fiji, yet by staying back they are regarded as second-class citizens by Fijian nationalists. Whatever the views, Indo-Fijians have contributed significantly since the colonial economy to bring Fiji to where it is today. It is now really up to the government of the day to try and see how they can harness the resources of the diaspora for Fiji's development. Lot of people who emigrated still consider Fiji as part of them at least for the first generation. However, large number of Fiji emigrants may never have any desire to ever come back to Fiji to live.

It is also important to mention that the development of a Fijian middle class which is well educated and trained will increase over time. Indo-Fijians had the feeling that they are the educated ones only but this has certainly changed. The gap would be filled by people with skills and talent from the indigenous community. Indo-Fijians departure will certainly make an impact in the short run but not necessarily in the long run.

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[32] *Ibid.*

[33] B. V. Lal, 2008a, *op. cit.*

[34] B. V. Lal, 2003, *op. cit.*

## 6.	Conclusion

This paper examined the impact of skilled labour migration from the developing countries exploring the case of Fiji. Fiji has played a vital role in supplying labour to the developed countries and this is expected to continue. Advancements in technology, information and transportation have contributed to the enhanced rate and pace of immigration from Fiji. Labour demand and supply has now become more globally accessible, with individuals and organisations fulfilling their needs more effectively and efficiently.

The causes of immigration from any developing country could be attributed to the push and pull factors which are related to economic, political, cultural and environmental causes. These factors also have huge social and political impacts, some of which are positive while others remain negative or undesirable. Higher remittances and return of immigrants with technology and human capital are some of the positive outcomes, while in some cases, the loss of leadership and educated people emerge as undesirable results. If the trend continues, some developing countries including Fiji will be left with a large pool of poorly educated, unskilled workforce with disastrous consequences on social and economic infrastructure and levels of investment adversely affecting industries, standard of education and health services, and efficiency of civil service. It can be suggested that developing countries should address their governance problems and take initiatives for democratic consolidation for nation-building process. The divisive forces in the society need to be eradicated and better opportunities have to be created through economic advancement that will in turn make immigration to a foreign country less attractive, thereby benefitting the developing countries in their development efforts.

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