

The Ones that Could Not Get Away: Immobility of Aspiring Emigrants, its Causes, Impact and Solutions

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International migration is a subject claimed by and studied in many disciplines. This makes it an interesting and also a challenging subject often throwing open new frontiers for research both within a discipline and also across disciplines. Scholars and researchers have looked into various aspects of international migration: types of migrations, factors that initiate and perpetuate migration, migration management, social costs of migration, and so on. In fact, so much has been written on migration, it is now said that there is a 'mobility bias in migration research' (Schewel, 2019) much to the neglect of the other side of this coin, that is *immobility*.

This charge of 'mobility bias in migration research' forms the basis of the present study. It takes up the issue of immobility and looks into the causes of one kind of immobility, that is, 'involuntary immobility' that aspiring emigrants who try to migrate through legal channels have to suffer. The paper attempts to investigate its causes and impact on aspiring migrants and their families and society at large with particular reference to Punjab (India). This paper also recommends measures to enhance the development potential of international migration both for the sending and the receiving country and migrants too.

Introduction

India is one of the developing countries that has been contributing in large measure to the migration of people to foreign countries, including European countries and in particular to the developed world – the U.S.A., Canada, and Australia. Migration from Punjab began during the colonial period and Punjab is one of the States that stands relatively ahead of others in this respect. Quite a few of the Punjabis are now well-settled in all walks of life in their adopted countries including in the developed west.

It is said that in Punjab, unlike in other parts of the country, international migration began with the recruitment of Jat-Sikhs, considered a martial race by the British rulers, as soldiers in their Indian army. Having been alienated from farming and village life owing to their service in the army, these soldiers, after their release from the army, moved abroad taking up jobs in the colonial masters' overseas colonies as watchmen and guards. With the passage of time, seeking to migrate abroad almost became a culture with the Punjabis and assumed the form of a movement (Judge, 2012:46). A large majority of these Punjabi emigrants are from the rural areas.

Aspiration to migrate abroad from Punjab including to Europe and the developed West has been going on even now (it certainly was till the Covid-19 scare was sounded) and definitely more vigorously if the number of service providers in Punjab in the emigration business - travel agents, *visa* and passport advisers, consultants for foreign education and jobs, coaching and career guidance institutes, organisers of foreign education fairs and so on - is any indication. One can see large hoardings by these service providers not only in the towns and cities but also in the rural areas of Punjab and their number has mushroomed manifold in recent years. Not only young men but also young women throng to them every day. Among the Punjabis, the dream of migrating abroad, particularly to the developed West, is so intense that almost every household in Punjab wants to see at least one of its members there at any cost.

But not all those who aspire to move abroad through regular channels are able to cross international borders successfully. Having an aspiration and achieving its fulfilment are two different things. There are many obstacles and also numerous cumbersome official formalities to be completed between the aspiration to move and its realization (Khadria, 2012). One must overcome these barriers and complete all necessary formalities to achieve international migration successfully. Undertaking pre-migration formalities requires not only good guidance but also much money and effort. This involves, among others, obtaining education-related or job-related information, completing all formalities for getting a passport, making satisfactory financial arrangements as required by the authorities of the destination country, fulfilling host-country's terms and conditions for getting a *visa* and so on. Of course, one can easily overcome all these barriers with the help of agents in this business who offer their services for a hefty fee. However, not everyone who aspires has the 'ability' to cross all these hurdles resulting in almost 95 per cent of the aspirants failing to go across the international borders legally.

According to the United Nations Population Division figures, only about 3.2 per cent of the world population, as of 2015, was living in a country other than their own (<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population>). In other words, about 96.8 per cent of the world population has not moved. Surely, some of these may have voluntarily chosen not to move but one can confidently say that many of these 96.8 per cent must have wanted to move but could not do so because of one reason or the other and thus are compelled to suffer what has been called 'forced immobility' (Malmberg, 1997). Considering the UN figures, one can safely conclude that the number of those who fail to emigrate at any point of time as regular migrants and have to endure a life of involuntary immobility, is certainly much higher than those who are successful in realizing their aspiration.

Gaps in Research

Much has been written on the emigration of people from Punjab over the years: how their emigration began and what changes it has undergone over the years, their personal traits, reasons for moving, their destinations, factors that help them succeed in migration, their contribution to their own and their host

countries, distribution of Punjabi migrants in various countries of the world, social costs of their migration, irregular migration from Punjab and so on. The list is not exhaustive but only indicative of the amount of attention 'mobility' in migration studies from Punjab has received. While so much has been written on 'mobility' from Punjab, there are only a few studies on 'involuntary immobility' of people from Punjab including a recent one by the author of this paper (Khurana, 2017). Thus, in so far as emigration studies from Punjab are concerned, we find much weight in Schewel's (2019) accusation that 'there is a mobility bias in migration research'.

When we look at this brief review of literature on overseas migration of people from Punjab, we find that there is little research on causes of immobility – particularly 'voluntary immobility' - of those who do not move and decide to stay where they are. 'Involuntary immobility' has also found a place in research but studies are limited to affirming, that too only indirectly by implication, that it is the lack of 'household capability' that prevents some people seeking to migrate legally across international borders (Nayyar 2002, 2008; Puran Singh, 2011). The earlier study by this author referred to above (Khurana, 2017) attempts to carry research forward to fill this gap in emigration studies on Punjab. It looks beyond household capability for reasons why some people who try to migrate legally fail to cross the international borders. It finds that in the case of Punjab, the main cause is lack of capability at the individual level that results in 'failed emigration' attempts, forcing the aspirants to suffer 'involuntary immobility'. The study identifies the main reason for 'failed emigrations' from Punjab and studies the success and failure of aspiring emigrants. Failed emigration is not a new term. It has already been used in migration literature by some writers. For example, the term 'Failed Migrants' has been used for 'returnees' migrants by some scholars (see Jean-Pierre Cassariono, 2004). This term may also be used to represent those categories of migrant that have already migrated internationally but have returned after some years or even those who are living in miserable conditions in their host countries. Some may even call 'failed migrants' as those migrants who cross the border with high aspirations but have to content with low level jobs that are usually not taken up by natives. But here the term 'failed emigration' is used to refer to those cases where the aspirants have the desire to go abroad through legal means and attempt to do so but are not able to go because they are not successful in meeting the current immigration policy conditions of their destination country.

In order to further fill this gap in research on emigration from Punjab, a study was undertaken to investigate the impact of this involuntary immobility on the aspiring migrants, their families, and society and its implications for policy planning. The study also sought to investigate if there had been any significant change in the profile, determinants of aspiration, and causes of involuntary immobility of aspiring migrants seeking to migrate to the developed west through legal routes between 2014, when the data for my earlier study was collected, and the beginning of 2019, the year of this study. This paper describes in brief the main highlights of this study and its findings.

We will first describe, in brief, procedural aspects adopted for the study and give a rationale for using this as an analytical tool. Next we will describe research objectives and methodology for data collection followed by our findings, discussion and conclusions.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used as an analytical tool for my earlier study referred to above was the Carling (2002) aspiration-ability framework but for this study we chose the revised version of the aspiration-capability framework proposed by Kerilyn Schewel (2019). This framework approaches immobility from two perspectives: as a result of structural constraints on the capability to migrate and as a reflection of the aspiration to stay. In addition to Carling's three mobility categories (mobility, involuntary immobility and voluntary immobility), Schewel introduces a fourth category that is termed 'acquiescent immobility' to highlight those who do not wish to migrate and also do not have the capability to do so. For clarity, these categories are defined briefly below:

Mobility: Those who have aspiration to migrate and also have capability to migrate.

Voluntary immobility: Those who have capability to migrate but have aspiration to stay or no aspiration to migrate.

Involuntary immobility: Those who have aspiration to migrate but no capability to migrate.

Acquiescent immobility: Those who have no capability to migrate and also no aspiration to migrate.

Although this framework derives its roots from the Carling (2002) aspiration-ability framework, it was considered more suitable for the purpose of this study in identifying the determinants of 'involuntary immobility' which happened to be the focus of our study, as distinct from voluntary immobility and acquiescent immobility.

The main objectives of the study were to:

- draw up a profile of the aspiring migrants with respect to age, gender, education, employment, family background; destination abroad;
- identify aspiration determinants for the developed West;
- determine constraints leading to involuntary immobility
- compare these with those found in our earlier study in 2014 and see if there had been any significant change in these trends over the years;
- study the socio-economic and psychological impact of involuntary immobility on the aspiring migrants and their families; and
- provide suggestions and recommendations to remedy the situation.

Data Collection

Data on international immigration from Punjab (India) is not available from any one single source and one has to capture it from a variety of secondary sources and that too only in respect of those who are successful in immigrating through legal channels. Some of these secondary sources, for example, are population registers and registers of foreigners, records of visas, residence and/or work permits issued, exit clearances given and so on. Each of these source has its own strengths and weaknesses as there is no one definition of 'citizen'. Some data is also available about those who attempt irregular migration through unscrupulous agents and get caught in the process for one reason or the other and criminal complaints are filed with the police authorities or those who reach their destination clandestinely and are caught and deported back. But there are no reliable data available regarding those who aspire to migrate and make an attempt(s) to migrate through legal channel but fail to cross the borders successfully and have to suffer involuntary immobility. Hence in order to achieve our objectives we undertook a field survey as detailed below.

The objectives of this study required collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Some of the information about emigration from Punjab is available from studies already done on this subject and other secondary sources. But an understanding of the present situation could be had only from the primary data collected during the field study done over a period of about five months from October 2018 to February 2019 using a questionnaire and personal discussion to seek the necessary information. These months were chosen as the candidates and their relatives and friends spread out during these winter months waiting for each other on the lawns attached to the venues where English a Language Proficiency test, an essential requirement for getting *visa* for studies or employment in the West, is conducted and it is easy at this time to enter into a dialogue with them and seek the information we need.

One of the objectives of the study was to investigate the economic, social and psychological impact of failed overseas migration on the individuals and their families and whether they would think of using illegal means of emigration if they 'failed' again. This being sensitive information, the usual method of data collection through a questionnaire could not be resorted to. There is stigma attached to 'failure' in the native culture. It is also very difficult to find out if the candidate would want to try illegal ways as irregular migration is a punishable offence. Again, assessing the impact of failure on the psyche of the candidate or their family members is an area difficult to investigate because the victim(s) may not be even be aware of any psychological impact or mental depression. This impact has to be carefully arrived at from any change in psycho-social behaviour of the victims in their interaction with family members, relatives and friends after failure. In view of this, while a traditional questionnaire was used to collect personal information of the aspirants, we chose to collect this information during an informal though carefully structured conversation with the 'failed' candidates, their parents, friends, class fellows or whoever accompanied them to the test venues and found squatted on the lawns to bask in the sun.

Findings, Analysis and Discussions

Aspiring Migrants' Profile

The study is limited to 102 aspiring emigrants from the state of Punjab, including those from the rural areas, as shown in Annexure 1, who aspired to migrate to the developed west, struggled to overcome the numerous obstacles that lay in their path but failed in their attempts to achieve their aspiration through legal means and thus had to suffer forced immobility. Among these 91 were those appearing for the second time and 11 who were attempting for the third or more times. The study does not include those who cross or try to cross borders illegally, get caught and are detained or deported and have to suffer 'involuntary immobility'.

The study finds that there has been no significant change in the trends between 2014 and 2019. In 2019 study too, the trends in overseas migration from Punjab were almost the same as those in 2014 described briefly as follows: The aspiring migrants are young school or college-going unskilled or semi-skilled professionals both boys and girls unemployed or under-employed in the age group of 18 to 35+ hoping to dream big like their role-models such as friends, relatives or just fellow-villagers who are already living abroad. These aspiring emigrants from Punjab are more likely to be from rural than urban areas; in our sample survey those from rural Punjab constituted about two and a half times more than those from urban areas.

Reasons for Emigration Aspiration

Many reasons have been identified – popularly called 'push' and 'pull' factors – that may give people an urge to aspire to migrate to other areas internally or internationally. These can be natural calamities, civil war, ethnic strife, environment degradation and so on. Some of the others are socio-economic factors such as poverty, low wages, unemployment or under-employment, low social status, risk aversion, risk diversification, and lack of access to quality health care and education at their existing place in comparison with correspondingly better quality of life assumed to exist at the other destination region.

But in Punjab today, in addition to some of the factors mentioned above, disenchantment with farming, which happens to be the primary occupation of the people in rural areas, is also pushing the youth of Punjab to seek greener pastures abroad. Other reasons include the fact that many are peasants farming leased lands or marginal farmers having small land-holdings. Availability of cheap migrant labour and mechanisation of farming also make it possible for one or two male members to manage the farming making it desirable for others to seek fortune abroad.

Whatever reasons they may give for their move, we find that their primary motive in emigrating to the developed West is to obtain a permanent residence

(PR) status in, as they love to call it, their 'dream country'. For Punjabi families, it is a matter of pride and prestige to have a family member residing abroad, preferably in the West, no matter what he or she is engaged in doing there. The aspiration for this move across the borders further receives a boost from 'the demonstration effect in terms of the improved economic conditions of the families of the emigrants' (Judge, 2012:46) who moved abroad in the past from their own or neighbouring areas. This aspiration is further nurtured by their networking with relatives, friends, and acquaintances abroad which has become cheaper, easier and so more frequent now with the revolution in the means of communication. Opportunities to study further and availability of part-time jobs to support themselves excites those who find it difficult to do so in their own region.

Causes of involuntary immobility

One of the reasons why some people have to endure involuntary immobility can be owing to the fact that the individual lacks the capability to move. Four types of capability constraints have been identified. These can be (1) political or legal as, for example, migration controls by the sending and/or receiving countries (Massey et.al., 1999); (2) economic as, for example, lack of financial capital to migrate (Van Hear, 2014); (3) social constraints owing to lack of human or social capital (Kothari, 2003); and (4) physical as, for example, border walls or detention centres (Turner, 2007).

Traditionally, it has been argued that there are two main factors that enable some people to migrate successfully and that this is true of people from Punjab too. These are individual talent and household capabilities. It is argued that these two 'capabilities' help people to migrate (Nayyar, 2002 and 2008; Puran Singh, 2011) and so we can conclude that lack of these results in failure. But we find that these capabilities might be essential but are not sufficient conditions for being allowed in by the host country.

We do not find any evidence of economic, social or physical factors restraining any one in Punjab from successful migration because several facets of these factors are taken care of by agents for a fee or by family members by raising loans from government or private sources and with some help from community members.

We find that political and legal capability constraint is the main factor that causes failed emigration in case of people from Punjab. The most common reason for failed emigrations resulting in forced immobility, we find is prospective migrants' inability to meet host countries' migration conditions and policies prevalent at the time. Although agents do take care of many political and legal requirements, yet there is one requirement that cannot be fulfilled easily by the agents and has to be met by the candidate himself/herself. This is found to be the most difficult for most Punjabi youths today particularly those from rural areas. This requirement pertains to the required grade ('band score' as it is called) in the English language proficiency test needed to obtain a *visa* for work or for studies in their dream country abroad in the West. For getting

this certificate of English language proficiency, they have to take International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test conducted by either of the two organisations: the British Council or the IDP Australia. While other conditions can be met by paying a fee to agents and emigration service providers, this test of English has to be taken by the candidate himself/herself resulting in large number of the aspirants from Punjab failing to score the required band. No doubt, as reported in the print media every now and then, there are attempts made at using unfair means including hiring of proxy candidates (see, for example, *The Tribune Amritsar*: 8 Jan., 9 Jan. and 6 May 2018) as in other high-stake examinations but these attempts do not appear to be always successful because post these instances the testing agencies have introduced biometric system of attendance and applicants verification to check such malpractices. This study thus reconfirms the findings made in our earlier study about the main cause of failed overseas migration from the state of Punjab.

Overseas migration has many advantages for the migrants and their families. These migrants also make a very important contribution both to the sending and the receiving countries including their communities, too, and these have been amply described in the literature on the subject. But while benefits and costs of successful overseas migrations have attracted attention, negative effects of failed emigrations have hardly found any mention in the literature on migration in general and from Punjab in particular. Among other negative effects, involuntary immobility is the result of these failed overseas migrations.

Effects of involuntary immobility

Forced immobility entails huge economic and social costs. In addition to giving rise to psychological problems to the aspirants, aspiring youth, particularly from the rural areas and comparatively poor families, spend a lot of money on preparing for completing emigration formalities including preparing for this English language test. They come to towns and cities, stay as paying guests, enroll themselves for coaching and guidance and seek help of the agents and other service providers. This enormous exercise costs them a tidy sum each time they take the test. The test fees during 2019 was Rs. 14000/-. According to a newspaper report (*Indian Express*, 5th November 2019) a candidate from rural Punjab coming to a city for coaching, guidance and other services has to spend Rs. 70,000 plus in addition to examination, visa fees. The total amount according to this report ranges between rupees 16-22 lakhs including admission fees for the college to which the aspirant gets admitted. In spite of failure to obtain the required band score, they keep reappearing – in some cases almost every week since the test is held every week by the testing agencies.

There are many reasons for this ‘try, try again’ exercise. Their capability in English language proficiency is not zero but just short of the required score. Hence they entertain the illusion that they would be lucky next time. Moreover, there is peer and family pressure. They are also goaded by agents and coaching centres and other vested interests into taking the test almost every week.

Several candidates are found attempting the test three or four or even more times with one or the other testing agency. Many are found to indulge in this weekly exercise in the same way as some had become addicted to buying lottery tickets before these lotteries were banned in some states including Punjab draining the meagre resources of their not so-well-off families. Some aspiring candidates do fall prey to unscrupulous middlemen engaged in managing irregular and unsafe migrations forcing their families to sell off or pawn their small land holdings to fulfil their dream of seeing at least one member of their family located abroad in the developed West.

Besides financial cost, repeated failures to cross the borders through regular means results in involuntary immobility and cause psychological problems both for the aspiring candidates and their families. Our study reveals that mental stress, anxiety, symptoms of depression, and loss of self-confidence are seen among those who have faced repeated failures. There is loss of self-esteem and so they tend to avoid facing their friends and relatives and tend to indulge in unhealthy and self-destructive activities. These problems show an increasing trend with every failed attempt. Psychological problems do have adverse effects on physical and spiritual health of the youth and can lead to unhealthy society.

Involuntary immobility also gives rise to several other socio-economic problems such as attempting irregular migrations, defrauding of prospective migrants, and human trafficking so prevalent in Punjab (Suneel Kumar, 2009; Malhotra and Malhotra, 2012; Bhawra, 2013) with tragic consequences such as the Malta Boat Tragedy of 1996 in which more than 150 of those who perished were from Punjab. Other measures such as sham marriages, fake adoptions and other forms of irregular migrations are resorted to. Instances of deserted wives and children by those who fail to manage emigration for their families, and separation of family members from their loved ones are not uncommon. Increasing drug addiction among the youth in Punjab so often lamented by many, to some extent, could be the direct consequence of forced immobility caused by failed emigrations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

What can be done to save the youth of Punjab and their families from becoming financial and psychological wreck in their craze for a 'PR in their dream country'? Should we blunt people's aspiration and thus deter migration or should they be empowered to migrate if and when they so wish? In the literature on migration the debate has hovered around these two diametrically opposite views depending upon whether one argues from the perspective of the migrant sending or the migrant receiving country.

If we look at our conceptual framework, we find that there are two possible areas for intervention: aspiration and capability. The debate on international migration that tends to focus on the receiving end of migration chooses the former and seeks to deter migration. Their argument is based on issues that are highly controversial in the literature on migration. These are that

- today we live in an age of unprecedented wave of migration;
- migration is caused by poverty and hence developing the source country can halt migration;
- development policies, development financial aid and trade liberalisation are the best instruments to develop the source country and help people stay where they are;
- states are able to stop migration;
- migrants' remittances lead to conspicuous consumption and unproductive investments;
- migrants' orientation towards their native country prevents social and economic integration in the receiving countries' societies; and last
- migration triggers emigration of not only unskilled labour but also of skilled professionals causing 'brain drain' which hampers the growth and development of the source country. Those who debate from the sending country's perspective call these 'myths' and not facts that have evolved in public perception and policy circles without having been critically examined or empirically tested. One such perspective is advanced by De Haas (2005) who in a thought-provoking paper titled, 'International Migration, Remittances and Development: myths and facts' critically examines these seven 'myths' and describes the facts behind them. It is said that some of these cannot stand critical scrutiny or empirical testing. For example, it is pointed out that the idea that today we live in 'the age of migration' (Castles and Miller, 1993) is not borne out by facts at least from global point of view. Writers have shown that 'there were periods of equal if not more drastic international migration over the 19th and (rest of the) 20th centuries' (Zlotnik, 1998: 14; Nyberg-Sørensen et al, 2002: 6–7).

Similarly, there seems little justification for the statement that states are able to control and stop migration. As Harzig et.al. (2012:8) states, 'the history of humanity is a history of migration', and there is hardly any state that has ever claimed to have completely stopped migration. It is pertinent to mention that state policies have become far more migrant selective. Developed countries have not completely stopped emigration of skilled professionals but there are no immigration policies for the less educated and unskilled people and hence they are prevented from entering legally.

De Haas (2005) rightly states that the focus on the receiving countries' end, 'obscures a proper understanding of the developing causes and consequences of migration at the sending end'. This is evident from the other two 'myths' that is that poverty is the cause of migration and that aid and trade can halt emigration of people. These two have since been subjected to critical scrutiny and empirical testing and found to be incorrect. Skeldon (2002) convincingly shows that absolute poverty and misery are not the root causes of labour migration. Migration costs a lot of money and hence it is not the poor people who aspire and have the capability to migrate. It is also not correct to believe that economic

development of the source country is the right remedy to stem or reduce migration in the short run. As Clemens (2014: abstract pg-iii) states, 'lengthy literature and recent data suggest something quite different: that over the course of a 'mobility transition', emigration generally rises with economic development until countries reach upper-middle income, and only thereafter falls'. This can take two to three generations of sustained development and hence development of the sending countries through development policies and aid and trade is not an effective tool for this purpose because of their various drawbacks. In the words of De Haas (2005: 1269) 'migration is inevitable because of its profound developmental roots and it is useless to think that migration can be halted or that aid and trade are short-cut 'solutions' to immigration'. Migrants' contribution combined with favourable policies for investment and productive purposes can sustain source country's development better than any amount of aid or trade.

It is this alternative, more effective and sustainable way of financing development of the sending countries advocated by some scholars debating from a sending country's perspective that has given rise to three main criticisms. First, it is said that migrants' remittances sent to people back home are mostly used for conspicuous expenses and not for any productive purposes. Second, that migrants' loyalty to their native country prevents them from integrating into the host society. Third, that migration from the sending countries does not remain limited to only labour but qualified professionals also tend to migrate thus entailing 'brain drain' in the sending country.

Immigration is a controversial issue. It has economic, social, cultural, political and even racial and security implications and divides host society in pro and anti-immigrants. All elected democratic governments face political constraints and, in their attempt, not to be seen soft on immigrants, governments go for selective immigration policies only or allow very little immigration. The economic and other arguments are hence overshadowed by the political constraints.

De Haas (2005) subjects to critical examination three 'myths' associated with immigration too and describes the facts behind them. He discusses their strong and weak points and argues that migrants' remittances contribute significantly to development and living conditions of the people in sending countries although he opines that migrants' remittances in themselves cannot be of much help unless certain measures are taken. We must enhance the vital contribution of migrants to the development of their home country through proper policies for productive development and attractive investment environment, to benefit from its full potential. In order to overcome the drawbacks of 'brain drain', he suggests framing of unrestricted immigration policies allowing for freer circulation to turn 'brain drain' into brain sharing instead of practicing restrictive policies to halt inevitable migration. At the same time, in view of the strong points in favour of remittances as a means of development and improving living conditions of their people in sending countries, it would be advisable to encourage remittances and also develop

proper policies for utilizing these remittances through attractive and conducive investment environment for the benefit of the people and the state.

De Haas (2005) examines these myths with particular reference to south-north labour migration and in the context of migration to European countries but his findings accurately sum up the scenario in Punjab. We have shown elsewhere (Khurana, 2016: 31-47) that Punjabi Diaspora remain firmly and deeply rooted to the land of their ancestors. As soon as they get comfortably settled abroad they start contributing both directly and indirectly to the development of their place of origin. This contribution is made through what Khadria (2002) calls the three 'M's' – money, machine, and man-hour in various fields: health, education, sports, water and sanitation, and even by adopting an entire village under 'integrated village development programme'. The role of Punjabi diaspora in the development of the land of their ancestors has been described in great detail by eminent scholars writing on this subject in the literature on emigrants' contribution (Thandi, 2006; Dusenbery and Tatla, 2009). Their loyalty and commitment to the land of their ancestors is not at the cost of their contribution to their host country. The diaspora act as a useful link between the governments of the source country and the adopted country. The greatest advantage of their contribution to their home country is that it is both 'bottom-up' as well as 'top-down' tool for development. It is 'bottom-up' in that it pours in through their family back home and local bodies including local religious bodies in their village and meeting their urgent needs as they perceive them. It is 'top-down' because it also comes through the state government that decides how to use it for the development of the state as a whole.

This view on migration from the sending country's perspective decides for us the area of intervention in Punjab. If migration is inevitable and cannot be halted and if it is so beneficial both for the sending and the receiving country, then instead of trying to suppress people's aspiration to halt migration, they should be empowered to migrate easily through legal channels. The function of the source country is to create suitable policies and machinery and leave the people free to decide whether to migrate or not and to which country and when. Both the sending and the receiving countries also have to create suitable policies for easy migration so as to encourage 'circular migration' to derive optimum benefit from this inevitable phenomenon. Empowering people and making migration and return migration easy will automatically check illegal migration and human trafficking across borders which often result in misery and suffering to innocent people and sometimes loss of life too.

The paper therefore does not suggest suppression of people's aspiration by halting migration. Instead, it suggests steps to enhance capabilities and freedoms of the people of the sending country including those of Punjab to enable them lead the life they value as suggested by Sen (1999).

Imparting quality education with emphasis on improving the teaching of English in Government Schools must be urgently considered to make youth lucratively employable within the state itself and also in other parts of the country. Attaining good level of proficiency in English language will help them get good band score in the language tests conducted by various agencies for

studies and jobs abroad particularly in Western European countries as well as making their mobility easy within the country to avail themselves of the best available opportunities in other regions.

In many states in India, there are government institutions that give coaching and training to candidates of reserved categories for appearing in examinations conducted for central services. Such special institutes can be set up in Punjab under skills development programme to give coaching and guidance in communication skills in English both in speaking and writing. We find that familiarity with the test format, training and practice in attempting such tests improves one's score. Along with these English language skills, other skills required for study and job abroad must also be imparted. Such special institutes can save the youth from being exploited by private players and also from falling into the hands of human traffickers which cannot be prevented by raising awareness campaigns alone, so often done in Punjab against the dangers of illegal migrations and emphasizing the benefits of legal channel.

At the macro level, the state must plan to develop enhanced facilities in important sectors like health, education, agriculture, industry and in infrastructure not just in urban but also in rural areas needed for creating jobs in the State by utilizing migrants' remittances to the greatest advantages by adopting favorable policies for investment. The Punjab Govt has Skill Development Mission Programme which imparts skills to enhance employability of the youth of the state. Punjabi NRIs can identify the skills and, if possible, can also collaborate in imparting the skills which are in demand in their respective countries for those who may still want to migrate. The labor resource country must also work out with the receiving countries easily accessible migration policies for genuine migration and encourage circular migration to derive maximum mutual benefit from migration.

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Annexure 1

Brief Summary of the Aspiring Emigrants facing Involuntary Immobility

- Total sample: 102 (Age group: 18 -35+; Male: 53; Female: 49. Rural: 72; Urban: 30)
- Aspirants attempt at migration: (2nd: 91; 3rd : 09; 4th: 02)
- Destination: Canada: 85; Australia: 15; NZ: 01; U.K. 01
- Relatives/friends in the destination country: Have: 75
Don't have: 27
- Education: Class XII doing/done: 29

Diploma:	08
Graduation doing:	21
Graduate:	27
PG doing:	09
Postgraduate:	08
- Subject of study/career

Not indicated: 23 (Mostly those who have just done or doing class XII)	
○ Medical/Para-medical: Nursing: 11; Doctor: 01; Pharma: 01; Medical Lab. Sc. 01; Bio-Technology: 01	
○ Management: Business Management: 10; Hotel Management: 02	
○ Engineering: 14	
○ Computers/I.T. : 15; Multimedia: 01	
○ Education/Teaching: 09	
○ Finance/Accounting: 08	
○ Agricultural Sc./Vocal Music: 02	
○ Law: 02	
○ Fashion Designing: 01	