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# Migration as Subtle Catalyst: Institution Building in India

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## Introduction:

This research paper captures role of immigrants in building political, social, religious and economic institutes in India. Their role is in all spheres of building institutes ranging from intellectual, social, political, educational, financial and physical contribution. The institutes in which they played a role are of wide range; Indian National Congress and Constitution of India, Indian Independence Movement and many political institutes are few of them. President of India rightly said in his inaugural address during an event in 2011, "India has an extensive diaspora network that has gone to every part of the world and made India proud through their hardwork and way of life. It is important for India to engage with diaspora and seek their contribution towards India's development. It is appropriate that this event is also being held in Kerala as the state has signified in many ways how the diaspora can contribute to the welfare of the state with which they are so closely linked. Hundreds of thousands of workers and professionals from this state have migrated abroad, particularly to Gulf countries and their contribution to the welfare of the state has been remarkable. They have also played a significant role in advancing the cause of the society by making it a state that has some of the best indices in the human development index. Roots of 5 Heads of States or Governments and over 70 senior political leaders in various countries are in India."

Migration or travelling in general has played a pivotal role in the lives of great scholars of the past and present. Great Indian thinkers and activists, including many leaders of India's struggle for freedom, benefited greatly from foreign exposure and education. It affected their thinking and the choices they made in their lives, and ultimately it is also responsible in a large part for the respectable position that India as a nation has achieved in the world; this is quite evident from their letters and literary works. Mark Twain's famous quote, 'Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts.

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Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime' (Twain 1869) was recently validated through an experimental study (Cao et. al., 2013).

The brain gain approach emphasizes the contributions of skilled migrants make from a distance through diaspora linkages, and the eventual physical return to the country of origin. On the one hand, since the early 1990s, recognition of the diaspora's propensity to create multiple associations and long-distance connections (Meyer, 2001, 2010) that could benefit the country of origin has replaced the classical emphasis of the brain drain approach, which saw skilled migration as a permanent loss. The diaspora option views skilled migrants as carriers of a social capital that is waiting to be organized and harnessed for the advantage of the home country, leading to the rise of a new agent in development discourse: migrants, diasporas, or transnational communities. Swami Vivekananda and other spiritual leaders left footprint of great institutes like Ramkrishna Mission and ISKON blending their Indian philosophy with Western scientific rationale.

The vast and diverse overseas Indian community (known as NRI or Non-Resident Indians) grew for a variety of reasons attributable mainly to mercantilism, colonialism and globalization. The divergent patterns of settlement, the varying degrees of integration with their new homelands and the emergence of new identities and ethos make the Indian Diaspora unique in many respects. More than 25 million Indians residing in 120 nations have made significant socio-economic impact in and outside India. This migration is since time memorial. According to a study published by the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvunanthapuram, in 2011, approximately Rs. 496 billion was remitted by emigrants from Kerala, only one state of India. As per a World Bank report, India is the largest recipient of migrants' remittances in the world, receiving over \$ 50 billion in 2010, from nearly ten million emigrants. An estimated 15% of these inflows or roughly \$ 8 billion originate from European Union (EU) countries which host about a million Indian emigrants, a figure around 0.6 % of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). India is the largest recipient of migrants' remittances in the world, receiving over \$ 50 billion in 2010, from nearly ten million emigrants

As per census of India in 1911, around 4,000 Indians lived in Britain: 1,000 students and 2,500 persons working in navigation related activities. Recent data from the Office of National Statistics in the UK report nearly 700,000 people in the UK born in India in 2010 (ONS 2011).

Non-resident Indians (NRIs) have been allowed to invest in Indian companies. In fact, India has skilfully used the clan of non-resident Indians to generate foreign deposits and investments into the country. Indian institutions have responded to external and internal political uncertainties that have affected the country's ratings and markets by evolving market-based deposit schemes for non-resident Indians. The NRIs have come forward with several non-governmental organizations in India helping in array of developmental, educational and social projects.

It has been observed that large number of NRIs is actively taking part in several welfare programs in India. They have registered many NGOs to encourage education, health care and developmental activities such as water management, rural development and self-help programs etc.

Remittance from migrant is not the quantum of money, but the power of foreign currency is higher than its worth. The substantial remittances are in the form of dollars and thus substantially reducing India's currency risks. 23 years ago, India was practically bankrupt with Manmohan taking whatever little gold India had to London and get the precious dollars. Those dollars are needed to buy crude oil, machinery, vegetable oil etc. NRIs make sure such a dollar shortage never happened after that.

### **Indian National Congress:**

Indian National Congress (INC), broadly based political party of India was formed in 1885 by Indian and British members of the Theosophical Society movement and Scotsman Allan Octavian Hume. Dadabhai Navroji, Mahatma Gandhi, M.A. Zinha, Jawaharlala Nehru, Sardar Vallbhbhai Patel were prominent leaders who studied and worked outside India. Members like Annie Besant gave initial momentum as foreigner. The Indian National Congress dominated the Indian movement for independence from Great Britain and has formed most of India's governments from the time of independence. The majority of the founding members of

Congress has been educated or lived in Britain, including of course Allan Octavian Hume. Badruddin Tyabji, W. C. Bonnerjee, Surendranath Banerjea, Pherozeshah Mehta, and the brothers Manomohun and Lalmohan Ghose had all studied in London, and had all fallen under the influence of Dadabhai Naoroji.

As Congress came under the influence of M. K. Gandhi in the 1920s, further former-students from Britain became prominent within the party such as Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. Congress was transformed from an assembly dominated by Western-educated elites to a mass organization that appealed to diverse sections of the Indian public in these decades.

NRIs bring the best practices of the rest of the world back home. Gandhi, Nehru, Netaji and Patel were NRIs during independence movement. Current President Sonia Gandhi is Italian born Indian citizen. The ideology, depth of institutionalism and momentum of its liberal stand was rooted in those migrants who witnessed fruits of democracy and liberal ideology. INC remained highly influenced by migrants, viz. Europeans migrated to India and returned Indians migrated to Europe.

### **Constitution of India:**

Independent India's constitution was greatly influenced by migrants of both the categories; Europeans migrated to India and returned Indians migrated to Europe. The Indian National Congress accepted the challenge and convened an All Parties Conference in 1928 which appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru 'to determine the principles of Constitution for India'. The Nehru Report submitted on 10th August 1928 was in effect an outline of a draft Constitution of India. Subsequent committees' positions were occupied by Indians who studied in Europe. The people who drafted Constitutional Law of India, many of them like Nehru, Patel and many more took their education in England. The Constitution took its root from Government of India Act 1935 and philosophy of Gandhi. The Government of India Act 1935 was work of migrant British officials in India. Drafting Committee headed by Dr. Ambedkar was key to institutionalize India's democratic charter. Dr. Ambedkar studied in USA & UK. Dr. Ambedkar secured multiple degrees in law, economics and political science. He

studied at Columbia University, the London School of Economics and the University of London. His influence on Constitution of India is paramount.

### **Parliament:**

Parliament building and its characters as an institute are built and influenced by migrants. House of Parliament, it was designed by the British architect Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker; both born in UK. The concept of Indian parliament is very similar to UK and the founding members as well many subsequent members were migrants. . On January 26, 1950, a New York Times editorial welcomed the newly-minted Republic of India to the fold of sovereign democratic nations. Referring to the new Indian constitution as a great document, that was “starting a new era”, the Times wrote that the Constitution “is a document in which Britons, especially, can take pride, for it is British liberal parliamentary ideas and practices that form the primary basis for the new federation. The current members like Manmohan Singh and Shashi Tharur are migrants who worked many years outside India.

Empirical studies illustrate diverse practical ways in which countries of origin can benefit from skilled migration through both the diaspora and returnees. The prospect of reaping potential gains is associated with two groups of factors. The first group are factors related to the individual profiles and social capital of migrants (age, activity profile and type of skills, sector of employment, length of stay abroad, network of contacts, etc.) while the second group includes factors that are related to the structural and institutional context of the countries concerned (infrastructure level, job opportunities and professional prospects, incentive policies for engagement, social inequality, etc.). Here, the development effects are associated on the one hand with specific host-country environments that influence diaspora linkages with the community left behind, and on the other, with the structural setting to which migrants return in the home country, which influences their propensity to transfer their skills and knowledge gained abroad to the local people.

India represents a good case in point in this context because of the significant presence of Indian skilled professionals in western countries, which often feeds into national pride, but also

creates many concerns. In recent years, India's gains in the form of reverse flows of expertise, investment and business leads, knowledge and technology, and the world's highest financial remittances have resulted in a more positive view of the influence that the diaspora can have on the economic progress of India. Furthermore, India has also recently experienced an increase in the number of skilled professionals returning home from the USA and the UK and other European countries as gaps in economic and career opportunities have narrowed between host and home nations, and this is usually supplemented by familial and cultural ties, together with push factors, such as economic downturn in the destination countries resulting in job insecurity, as well as the completion of such skilled professionals' temporary contracts.

### **Reserve Bank of India:**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) commenced its operations on 1 April 1935 during the British Rule; the migrants. RBI as banker's bank was originally set up based on the recommendations of the 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton-Young Commission. Current Governor of RBI, Rajan is NRI.

### **Indian Institute of Management:**

Indian Institute of Management (IIM) is common name to series of IIMs in India as apex management education institute, was conceptualized by Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, a scientist who studied in UK. The Planning Commission in 1959 invited Professor George Robbins of the University of California to help in setting up an All India Institute of Management Studies. Based on his recommendations, IIM was founded. Currently 19 IIMs are working in different part of the country. Current director of IIM Ahmedabad, Prof. Ashish Nanda is NRI. Many distinguished professors worked in IIMs are NRIs, and many of their students migrated to USA and Europe are contributing building institutes.

### **Indian Institute of Technology:**

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) are governed by the Institutes of Technology Act, 1961 which has declared them as institutions of national importance, and lays down their powers, duties, and framework for governance. The history of the IIT system dates back to 1946 when

Sir Jogendra Singh of the Viceroy's Executive Council set up a committee whose task was to consider the creation of Higher Technical Institutions for post-war industrial development in India. The 22-member committee, headed by Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, recommended the establishment of these institutions in various parts of India, with affiliated secondary institutions. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai was one of the influences in IITs initial formation. Mr. Sarkar was born in Dhaka, and Dr. Vikram was educated in England. Several NRI and migrant faculty members served in IITs. Now there are 23 IITs in India.

**ISRO:**

The Indian Space Research Organisation, is the space agency of the Indian government headquartered in the city of Bengaluru; housed in many other cities like Ahmedabad. ISRO was conceptualized by Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, a scientist who studied in UK.

It is evident from several studies that the strong professional and personal ties that overseas-based Indian skilled professionals maintain with India. The diaspora networks have often contributed to the innovative and entrepreneurial capacity of India with contributions in the form of business and investment leads and financing emphasizes the strong influence that the Indian diaspora had on India's rise in the global IT sector during the 1990s and after. Indian IT professionals have gained increasing consideration as they have come to be seen as a transnational class of professionals eagerly involved in enhancing the national economy and making India a global player.

Return migration is seen as another powerful tool for development in India. Various studies have shown how Indian skilled professionals have a significant role to play in the local context after they return, pointing to the transfer of technical skills, managerial know-how, and financial assets deployed through their professional activities and entrepreneurial ventures and investments, and the generation of new jobs.

Structural factors associated with links to India in the form of professional and philanthropic ties and temporary visits seem to have an influence on the development motivation of skilled Indian migrants. Those with professional and philanthropic ties and those who are on only short



trips to host countries or who visit India at regular intervals care more about the development of India than those without any such contacts or those who rarely or never visit the country.

With respect to returnees recognising themselves as agents of development and change at a collective and interpersonal level, we find that being a member of any organisation which positively contributes to society enhances the returnees' likelihood of experiencing a very positive change in their social position. Being part of an organisation is a significant indicator of a person's social engagement and it can be understood as a proof of the agency role of individual returnees in their immediate social and professional circles. Women and highly educated returnees tend to exercise a lot of influence at an interpersonal level, while coming from a religious minority reduces the likelihood of returnees having a lot of influence on the people around them. This may be partly due to the people around them not having sufficient human capital formation to be able to effectively receive and absorb the skills that the returnees have acquired overseas. The education and scientific institutes as aforesaid took present shape and colour in its organizational culture from migrants learning from a distant land and culture.

#### **Ram Krishna Mission:**

Ramakrishna Movement is an Indian religious organization which forms the core of a worldwide spiritual movement. The mission is a philanthropic, volunteer organisation founded by Ramakrishna's chief disciple Vivekananda on 1 May 1897. Vivekananda travelled to America in 1893 to address Parliament of the World's Religions. The mission received service of several prominent NRIs to build its international image as spiritual and philanthropic institute.

#### **ISKON:**

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), run five hundred major centers, temples and rural communities, nearly one hundred affiliated vegetarian restaurants, thousands of local meeting groups, a wide variety of community projects, and millions of congregational members worldwide. Although less than fifty years on the global stage, ISKCON has expanded widely since its founding by a migrant A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, in New York City

in 1966. ISKON and their sister concern manage suppliers of mid-day-meal scheme have brought revolution in rural primary education by supplying hygienic food to thousands of students at affordable price.

### **Missionaries of Charity:**

Missionaries of Charity (MoC), Kolkata run hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis; soup kitchens; dispensaries and mobile clinics; children's and family counselling programmes; orphanages; and schools. MoC was founded by Mother Teresa; a Nobel Laureate was born in Republic of Macedonia. Mother Teresa said "By blood, I am Albanian, by citizenship, an Indian, by faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus. MoC works for poorest of poor.

### **Telecom Institutes:**

There were technocrats like Sam Pitroda, a notable NRI who helped India open up telecom sector. Pitroda launched the Center for the Development of Telematics (C-DOT), and served as Advisor to the Prime Minister on Technology Missions related to water, literacy, immunization, oil seeds, telecom, and dairy. He is also the founding Chairman of India's Telecom Commission.

### **National Knowledge Commission:**

National Knowledge Commission, is an Indian think-tank charged with considering possible policies that might sharpen India's comparative advantage in the knowledge-intensive service sectors. It is headed by Sam Pitroda.

### **National Innovation Council:**

National Innovation Council (NIC), is headed by Sam Pitroda. NIC works as launch pad to industry innovation and as the think-tank council of India to discuss, analyse and help implement strategies for innovation in India and suggest a Roadmap for Innovation 2010-2020.

### **Information Technology (IT) Industry:**

India's major export industry is in IT. IT tycoon companies like Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro and many others are promoted by NRIs like Narayan Moorthy. Tata chairman Cyrus Mistry is Irish Indian. Azim Premji of WIPRO studied in America. Many IT industry professionals including current Infosys chairman Mr. Sikka is NRI. IT industry in general is output of several migrants on both the side, Indians who studied and returned to work and people of other countries who worked in Indian IT industry.

NRIs help bring tourism. Plenty of NRIs take their US friends back home for weddings or just showing them around. They also help pique people's interest outside.

Indo-Caribbeans, Indo-Fijians and other communities have contributed a lot in social service in India. Many of them have come forward to support their schools and colleges where they studied in India. Some have also launched schools and colleges in their ancestral villages and towns. They are also assisting in social and environmental problems in India.

#### **Financial Institutes:**

Many financial institutes are influenced by NRIs. NRIs are investing money in Indian stock exchange, banks and real estate. These institutes are shaping their policy to meet migrants' expectations. India receives accounted and non-accounted remittances from across the globe. Migrant's distinguished expectations and volume shapes Indian Financial Institute's policy. Around 75% of the flows from the EU to India, or \$ 6 billion, originate from the United Kingdom (UK). Migrants' remittances to India constitute about 4% of total extra-EU remittance outflows. Indian emigrants in the EU held over \$ 8 billion worth Non-Resident Indian (NRI) deposits, forming nearly 20% of NRI deposits in the Indian banking system. Emigrants in UK and Germany held 70% and 20% of NRI deposits held by Indian emigrants in the EU.

#### **Other Institutions:**

Migrants influenced many others and unnamed numerous institutes in invisible manner, through their financial strength, transfer of knowledge, skill and ideology. NRIs investment and charity have subtle influence in shaping institutions and processes. Remittance flows as unrequited transfers and emigrant capital flows substantially bolster India's balance of

payments at the macro level and support household consumption plans and investments choices at the micro level. In turn these influence trade mechanism by taking colour from migrant's diverse culture. Migration is as old as human civilization. It is human tendency to migrate to better places, a rationale. Migration has been described by scholars in many ways. Migration in general refers to permanent living in other regions than origin of birth. In the current time, migration has become necessity for economic, social and political reason. In recent time, migration is also influenced by technology war. Migration is helping both, the original and destination country. The patterns of the flow of people between countries are widely influenced by international economic, political and cultural interrelations. International economic disparities, poverty and environmental degradation, combined with the absence of peace and security and human rights violations are all factors affecting international migration.

Migration is some time mandatory and unplanned, but some time voluntary and planned. Migrants some time lived in foreign country for short duration and sometime generations. Both brings different colour to influence local policy and institutes. Those who are recent migrants have deep root of India and their connections are live. So their influence is large event they have gained little from foreign culture. On the contrary, who have migrated long back take foreign culture in bulk, but their Indian connections become diluted. In either case, their influence in shaping small or big institutes in India remains, as catalyst, in subtle manner.

Residing in distant lands, its members have succeeded spectacularly in their chosen profession by dint of their single minded dedication & hard work. What is more important they have retained their emotional, cultural and spiritual links with the country of origin. These ingredients influence in shaping local institutes at village and town level.

Winters and Walmsley's estimate after extensive analyses that international migration can have positive impacts on both the communities of origin and the communities of destination, providing the former with remittances and the latter with needed human resources. International migration also has the potential of facilitating the transfer of skills and contributing to cultural enrichment. This said, one should also maintain that international

migration entails the loss of human resources for many countries of origin and may give rise to political, economic or social tensions in countries of destination.

The immigrants bring home the cultural, religious, or political organisations, professional field, and higher level of education from the destination country. Great Indian thinkers and activists, including many leaders of India's struggle for freedom, benefited greatly from foreign exposure and education. It affected their thinking and the choices they made in their lives, and ultimately it is also responsible in a large part for the respectable position that India as a nation has achieved in the world; this is quite evident from their letters and literary works.

The increasing volume of remittances generated by the migrant workers and the impact of this financial flow on the development and poverty reduction in the sending countries seems to justify Winters and Walmsley' assumption. According to the World Bank, the annual value of formally transferred remittances in 2004 was about 150 billion US Dollars, representing a 50 % increase in just five years. Almost half of these remittances are transferred between countries in the developing world. The leading recipients of remittances in 2004 were Mexico with 16 billion US Dollars a year, India with 9.9 billion US Dollars and the remittances now play an essential role in sustaining national and local economies in many recipient countries. Remittances provide an important source of foreign exchange to recipient countries, boost the capacity of the financial sector and help to attract subsequent investment. Remittances evidently provide the most direct and immediate benefits to the people who receive them, many of whom, the World Bank has established, are amongst the poorest members of society. Remittances help to lift recipients out of poverty, increase and diversify household incomes, provide an insurance against risk, enable family members to benefit from educational and training opportunities and provide a source of capital for the establishment of small businesses. Many NRIs have donated money to start village and town level schools, libraries and other social institutes like community and convention halls.

M.K. Gandhi writes that in 1890, during his studying law in London, there were not many Indians in Britain. He mentioned very few students, workers & elite princes were living there. He further writes when in South Africa, about the year 1860 the Europeans in Natal, finding

that there was considerable scope for sugar-cane cultivation; felt them in need of labour. Without outside labour the cultivation of cane and the manufacture of sugar were impossible, as the Natal Zulus were not suited to this form of work. The Natal Government therefore corresponded with the Indian Government, and secured their permission to recruit Indian labour. These recruits were sign an indenture to work in Natal for five years, and at the end of the term they wee be at liberty to settle there and to have full rights of ownership of land. Those were inducements held out to them, for the whites then had looked forward to improving their agriculture by the industry of the Indian labourers after the term of their indentures had expired. (M. K. Gandhi 'The Story of my experiments with truth', p143)

But the Indians gave more than had been expected of them. They grew quantities of vegetables. They introduced number of Indian varieties and made it possible to grow local varieties cheaper. They introduced the mango. Nor did their enterprise stopped at agriculture. They entered trade. They purchased land for building, and many rose from labour to status of owners of land and buildings. Merchants from India followed them and settled there for trdae. The Sheth Abubakar Amod was first among them. He soon built up an expensive business. The white traders were alarmed. When they first welcomed the Indian labourers, they had not reckoned with their business skill. They might be tolerated as independent agriculturists, but their competition in trade could not be brooked. These years of struggle have made them entrepreneurs, skillful and social leaders. It is transmitted over years in institutionalizing India's plural and vibrant institutes.

By 'development' we mean expansion of the realm of human agency and freedom, both as an end in itself and as a means of further expansion of freedom. Such a concept encompasses social, human, and cultural development, improvement in people's quality of life, and the expansion of human capacities and basic liberties. Under this perspective, the 'development contributions' of skilled migrants are seen as a transformation of social or technological structures in a way that expands frontiers for the individual's agency. Alternatively, skilled migrants' knowledge and skills earned abroad help to expand their generalized trust as an

effective indicator of social capital and freedom to pursue and achieve whatever goals or values people around them regard as important.

Such a consideration of development is particularly pertinent for one of the world's fastest growing economies, which has massive economic and social gaps in terms of class, caste, gender, and social privilege, particularly during the last two decades of high economic growth. Indeed, India has remained far behind its low-income neighbours in south Asia with regard to many social indicators. Even in the discourse on migration and development, the lion's share of attention is placed on physical economic aspects such as diaspora investment, foreign exchange, and remittances that directly affect economic growth but which may do little good to development as we perceive it. It is in this regard that India is often seen as a country that benefits from the positive effects of skilled migration. Our objective here is to examine the role that skilled migrants can play in spurring the broad-based development that we referred to earlier, in other words to see whether there is a possibility that diasporas and returnees with their knowledge and abilities attained abroad can contribute to improving the quality of life of the neediest segment of society. This sees us concerned with understanding two things mainly: first, the extent to which overseas-based Indian skilled migrants and returnees feel an obligation towards their home country in the form of improving the lives of their countrymen, especially the most marginalized sections of Indian society, and to understand the factors that lead them to do so; second, if they are truly engaged in one way or another in generating benefits for the development of Indian society.

Over recent years, the migration and development nexus has acquired relevance in both academic research and the policy debate, with discussions showing that skilled migrants can undertake an agency role, act as bridges, and help to encourage transfers of knowledge and skills between countries. Several empirical studies underline the possibility of migrants acting as agents of development and as a source of contributions to their countries of origin through financial and social remittances, knowledge transfers, investment ventures and the like and attempt to identify the conditions and factors that are necessary for positive impacts to be generated. Skilled migrants in host countries often undertake activities through entrepreneurial

and investment projects or through scientific and academic collaborations all of which benefit, from a distance, the communities they have left behind. If they decide to return to their home country, their foreign exposure may lead to them bringing back with them improved levels of knowledge and technical skills and a further accumulation of human capital, thereby providing them with the potential to assume a leadership role within society and in their place of work. Return migration could be viewed as a feedback effect of skilled migration because it can generate employment and raise productivity.

Many studies focus on the gains from financial remittances and migrants' savings, the focus has been increasingly placed on studying the effects achieved through the transfer of the knowledge, technical skills, and further social capital accumulated by migrants during their time overseas. The human capital can be transferred to the home country without people having to physically return there. Diaspora contributions and return migration became more relevant as attempts were made to understand the impact of Indian skilled migration, and the Indian government has started to acknowledge these benefits and as a response has implemented a number of policies intended to harness the resources of skilled migrants. Erstwhile Planning Commission (Montek Singh) and now NITI Ayog (Panigariya) are examples which are served by migrant Indians.

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