

## **INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATES AND DERIVING “THEORY OF NEED FULFILMENT”**

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### **Abstract**

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#### **Keywords:**

International Migration;  
Labour Economics;  
Networks;  
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Need Fulfilment.

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This paper states that international migration today is a global reality for nation-states as the number of migrants are rapidly increasing each year. Further, the paper talks about paradox of transnational migration where socio-economic and political cause of migration for one set of tribes in one region becomes a socio-economic and political consequence for another set of tribes in another region, changing the environment of that region. The paper has discussed contemporary debates on emigrants and immigrants through examples. An appraisal of theories of international migration has been spelled out which says that international migration theories earlier were focussing on labour economics like neo-classical (macro and micro theory), new economic theory of migration, dual labour market theory, dependency theory and world market theory. Considering the fact, that there are other reasons also for migration; emerged network, world systems and mixed migration theory. An attempt has been made in this paper for deriving of a new comprehensive theory of international migration termed as “*Theory of Need Fulfilment*”. This newly derived theory traces the need of international migration in not just economics but also in fulfilment of social and political needs, which if not fulfilled in country of origin forces a national to migrate in another destination, where they foresee possibility of fulfilling those needs in a better way.

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## **Introduction: International Migration as a Global Reality**

International Migration, as the word suggests means migration between two or more nations. With increasing globalization, international migration has become inevitable. As Stephen Castles and Miller <sup>1</sup>(Miller, 2009) have rightly stated that we all live in the '*Age of Migration*'. International Migration is also synonymously used these days with the term transnational migration. April Carter stated (Carter, 2001)<sup>2</sup>:

**“The right of individuals to find somewhere to live safely, if they can no longer feel at home in their country of birth, and the right to travel to other parts of the world and perhaps settle there, have been central to the evolving theory of international law and to cosmopolitan thought.” (Carter: 99).**

Today, International migration is a reality for nation-states because of several reasons like security and integration issues. Not that international migration never occurred earlier but its forms and magnitude have changed with times. Michael Fisher<sup>3</sup> (2014) have talked about how human species can be traced back to 200,000 years ago, in form of Homo Sapiens in Africa and their journey from Africa to Eurasia. Earlier, movement between nations was not restricted by stringent laws and regulations, but today, such international movements raise different forms of economic, social and political debates. These debates range from human rights of migrants and refugees, citizenship rights and voting rights of both emigrants and immigrants.

People who leave nation-states of their origin for residing in borders of other nations are called '*immigrants*' by receiving nations and '*emigrants*' by sending nations. International migration is a global reality can also be understood by the fact that international migrants are growing each year rapidly, the number gone to 244 million in 2015. Russell (King, 2012)<sup>4</sup> has highlighted on statistical constraints of international migration in the following manner:

1. The process of naturalization converts foreign borns into citizens and they escape from migration count.
2. People who are born to immigrants in host country are also counted as immigrants i.e. the second generation immigrants are also counted as immigrants.

3. There is no definite account of illegal and undocumented migrants, which escape the migration count again.

Out of the 244 million international migrants, 75 million were in Asia itself. Unfortunately, Asian experiences of international migration are underwritten by migration theorists as most of the international migration theorists are either Americans or Europeans and they have majorly focussed on their region-specific situations. But this does not mean that the Asian experiences have escaped completely from the eyes of the international migration theorists. Myron Weiner (2004), Michael Fisher (2014), Brenda Yeoh and Katie Willis (2004), Paul Brass (1991), Howard-Hassmann and Margaret Walton Roberts (2015), have focussed on Asian migration experiences. This under focus on Asian experiences may be unintentional. In 2015, India possessed the biggest “diaspora” in the world (16 million), followed by Mexico (12 million). Other countries with large Diasporas included the Russian Federation (11 million), China (10 million), Bangladesh (7 million), and Pakistan and Ukraine (6 million, each).<sup>5</sup>

Also, noticeable, according to 2015 figures is that women migrants are as much as 48% and migrants in Asia are comparatively men more than women. Though, this percentage had declined in 2015 as to 48% from 49% in 2000. The causes of transnational migration are many- job, education, business, marriage, retirement, escape from dictatorship regimes, fleeing from religious persecutions and it can be forced or voluntary in nature. In contemporary scenario, international migration is at a watch and can call upon criticisms for the nations whose citizens migrate not in positive light. For example, because of vibrant social media, Yeonmi Park, a migrant from North Korea is being internationally heard off and when I say that, it means, she has been able to justify the cause of her international migration from North Korea to China and then ultimately settling in South Korea. The migration, she was forced to undertake was because of dictator regime of Kim Jong that did not even allow usage of internet and facebook in North Korea as it is considered as a Western influence in the country. Her mother was raped because she wanted to save Yeonmi from border traffickers. They travelled through Gobi desert, had difficult times and the father died without cremation. Finally, they reached South Korea and Yeonmi has been constantly raising her voice against the North Korean government amidst international community.

## **The Paradox of Transnational Migration**

Very often, it has been seen, transnational Migration between two nations is a paradox. I (Jain, 2017) had stated in one of my works earlier:

**“Transnational migration is a paradox because socio-economic and political cause of migration for one set of tribes in one region becomes a socio-economic and political consequence for another set of tribes in another region, changing the environment of that region”<sup>6</sup> (Jain: 37).**

There was transnational migration of Chakmas from Bangladesh (earlier East Pakistan) to India resulting from social and political unacceptance of Chakmas<sup>7</sup> and when they migrated to northeast part of India, the other tribes developed xenophobia against them. The native tribes became economically insecure and all job, business and educational opportunities were taken away from Chakmas over a period of time. The native tribes wanted to deprive Chakmas of the political opportunities as well. Thus, all these changes had a profound impact on socio-economic and political fabric of the northeast region, especially Arunachal Pradesh. The natives started thinking that Chakmas had encroached on their land and labour opportunities and both the migrants and the natives began to organize themselves socially and politically in their own ways.

In another situation of Bengali Muslim migrants from East Pakistan, the natives have been feeling cheated as their migration has led to vote bank politics where certain political parties provide favours to migrants in lieu of vote benefits. It has now become very difficult to differentiate as to which Muslims came before independence and which ones came recently. The migration of Bengali Muslims in Northeast has brought a change in demography of the region. The question for research is should migrants like Chakmas or Bengali Muslims after years of stay in India be termed still as migrants? This called for a debate that whether such migrants should be given due citizenship rights. Indian government in the year 2015 granted citizenship rights to Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh through a verdict of Supreme Court but this grant of citizenship holds no value, till it is effectively executed. As far as Bengali Muslims are concerned, they are accessing voter identity cards in an unauthorised manner as because of language and cultural similarities; it is difficult to distinguish them from Bengalees of India.

Sujata Ramchandran has explained how Indian government is managing the identities of transnational Bangladeshi migrants. She has examined two national level identification systems that addressed the issues of such a capricious citizenship. These are Unique Identification Project and Aadhaar.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Debates on Rights of Immigrants and Emigrants**

Some countries look at immigrants with suspicion and some consider them of economic value. This raises a political debate whether voting rights should be given to non-nationals. April Carter has elaborated on the rights of migrants in form of dual citizenship, rights of denizens and post national or transnational membership.<sup>9</sup> He has called dual citizenship as a systematic response to migration. But many immigrants are alleged to be indulging in anti-social activities. Hammer has been mentioned as coining the term “denizens” to refer to the rights and duties of migrants in their country of residence but are not granted full rights. Post – national citizenship traces rights of citizens to not just in their political and administrative regimes but to the supranational bodies like UNO, European Union, etc. Thus, human rights of citizens are recognised in respect of their individuality and not nationality according to post-nationalism. Hassmann in his work has talked about fundamental contradiction between human and citizenship rights.<sup>10</sup> This contradiction specifies that as a human, it is not necessary that one is guaranteed the citizenship rights.

Emigrants also are looked at with suspicion because of their divided loyalties as pointed out by Anthony Smith<sup>11</sup> (Smith, 1983) and at the same time considered as valuable because of remittances they provide to home country and the technical know how they bring from destination countries. Boccagni, Lafleur and Levitt<sup>12</sup> (2015) have given an overview of transnational politics which is significant from the point of view of studies on transnational migrants and their identity concerns. They have elaborated on 3 types of states mentioned below:

1. *Transnational nation-states* who treat emigrants as long-term members and grant dual citizenship. They are dependent on emigrants for remittances.
2. *Strategic and Selective States* encourage some forms of long-distance economic and political nationalism, but want to selectively and strategically manage what immigrants can and cannot do. They walk a fine line between providing enough incentives to reinforce long-distance membership while not ‘over-serving migrants’ and making non-migrants resentful. India, the

Philippines, Haiti, and Turkey have all tried to obtain support from populations abroad without granting full participation in their internal political activities.

3. *Disinterested and Denouncing State.* States adopting this stance treat migrants, as if they no longer belong to their homeland. Any overtures they make toward their ancestral home are viewed as suspect, because migrants are seen as traitors who abandoned the cause.

Today, accepting the global reality of transnational migration, emigrants are provided with voting rights in their home countries, even if their residency is in some other nation or even the citizenship. These can be called voting rights of the diasporas. According to Jean Pierre Kings, a former Election Commissioner of Canada, right to vote is a fundamental right of any citizen, irrespective of his residence. But the question is does this prove to be practical enough as physical presence is not possible always for the reason for voting? For example, in India, physical presence is essential for voting by NRIs. Bangladeshis still do not get rights of voting despite the fact that their remittances to home country are huge and they constitute 9 million and represent 5% of the total population of the country. According to the World Bank statistics, in the last five years, the average yearly remittance sent by Diasporas of the country was over USD 14.5 billion, equivalent to almost 10 percent of the country's GDP. The Migration and Remittances fact-book 2016, published by the World Bank, shows that in the last few years, Bangladesh has been consistently among the top ten remittance receiving countries in the world.<sup>13</sup> (Khasru, 2017)

Jean- Michael Lafleur have written about the origin of external voting debate in Mexico. He says:<sup>14</sup> (Lafleur, 2013)

**“The roots of the external voting debate in Mexico are firmly tied to the evolution of the Mexican and Mexican origin presence in the United States and its significance for both states...Mexico’s emigration policy has historically been influenced by the 19<sup>th</sup> century foreign policy principle of non intervention in other countries’ domestic affairs (also known as the Estrada doctrine<sup>15</sup>).”(Jean- Michael Lafleur: 50).**

It is to be noted that countries like Mexico, invite external voting for Presidential elections only and countries like United Kingdom, India, Bangladesh, etc invite external voting for Legislative elections only.

### **International Migration theories and focus on labour economics**

The studies on international migration reveal that migration across borders occurs due to push and pull factors. This has been an understanding for long in transnational processes. The destination countries attract migrants for potential economic opportunities. Most of the migration theories are centred on labour economics and only recent theories like network theory, systems theory and mixed migration theory talk about factors other than economics for migration. The role of women migrants was vividly absent until the network theory acknowledged their role in perpetuating personal networks. Russell King (2012), Massey et al (1993) and Haas (2008) have given an overview and evaluation on theories of international migration. This overview has been in the form of table below:

**Table-1: Theories of International Migration: The Causes and Focus**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Theory of International Migration</b>	<b>Causes of Migration</b>	<b>Theorists/Propone nts</b>	<b>Focus of Theory</b>
1	Neo-Classical Macro Economics	Labour movement because of difference in wages of sending and recieving country	Lewis (1954) Ranis and Fei, (1961) Harris and Todaro, (1970) Todaro (1976)	Labour Economics
2	Neo-Classical Micro Economics	Migration to more productive regions as an individual choice, after calculating the migration	Sjaastad, (1962) Todaro (1969, 1976, 1989), Borjas, (1990)	Labour Economics

		costs.		
3	New economics of migration	Migration decisions are not individual but family decisions.	Stark and Bloom(1985)	Labour Economics
4	Dual Labour Market Theory <b>(Historical-Structural Model)</b>	Migration is the result of pull factors and not push factors. This for 2 reasons: local labourers shun certain jobs and demand for certain skilled labour in foreign market.	Piore (1979)	Labour Economics
5	World Systems Theory <b>(Historical-Structural Model)</b>	Migration to underdeveloped nations for search of cheap labour, raw-materials, etc.	Wallerstein (1974)	Capitalist migration instead of labour migration
6	Dependency Theory <b>(Historical-Structural Model)</b>	The dependency school views migration as one of the causes of underdevelopment.	Gunnar Myrdal (1957) and Andre Gunder Frank	Labour Economics
7	Mobility Transition Theory	Migration linked to phases of transition in	Zelinski (1971)	Labour Economics

		modernization process of society.		
8	Network Theory	Migration increase perpetually due to Kinship networks, family networks and labour networks.	Boyd and Nowak (2013)	Labour economics, women migration and migration for other reasons
9	Systems Theory	Feedback mechanisms and information flows in migration systems	Mabogunje (1971)	All kinds of migrants including labour migrants.
10	Mixed Migration Theory	Migration is the result of multiples factors like marriage, study, etc	(Hear, 2014) <sup>16</sup>	Personal factors other than labour economics.

### International Migration Theories and the need to shift from labour economics

In the words of Massey et al<sup>17</sup>:

**“Probably the oldest and best-known theory of international migration was developed originally to explain labor migration in the process of economic development.” (Massey et al: 432)**

But if economics were the only reason for international migration, there would have been no need for a new theoretical paradigm in international migration. The fact of the matter is that there has arisen a need. *In neo-classical macro-economic theory*, differential in wages between two

nations is the reason for migration but when supply of labour increases in the high wage country, the wages decrease in near future making migration a less attractive option for further migrants or creating a same situation as was existing in home country or country of origin. In such a case, it is always better to take low wages in one's own country rather than a country of migration as migration costs also need to be calculated apart from the wages received. Only if wages received are recovering the migration costs, such an international migration will be fruitful. When I say migration costs, it means opportunity costs of living in a foreign country. Above all, the emotional costs associated with migration are huge as migrants have to leave behind their family and live in other countries as outsiders or foreigners. There is no parameter to calculate emotional costs in neo-classical macro-economic theory. In *neo-classical micro economic theory*, migration is an individual choice but under the given set of same situations, not all people migrate. Russell King has mentioned how Arango (2004)<sup>18</sup> had talked the Achilles Heel of neo-classical theory as it fails to explain the following-

1. Why few people migrate despite the incentives associated with migration?
2. Why some countries have high rates of migration while others do not?

As per *new economics of migration*, migration is not an individual decision but a family decision where certain labour can be spared in the family to explore the overseas opportunities. But what about the compromises that family makes in the absence of that labour. Are all families eager to take such risks and make such compromises? Or for the sake of family, such risks taken and compromises made? The reason for why some countries have high migration whilst others do not may be because their families compromise the labour of their family members and others do not. Also, due consideration needs to be given to the fact that situation in back country are so unfavourable that families decide that certain members should migrate for others to follow behind. For example, a Bangladeshi migrant when comes to India for driving auto or a rickshaw, it is a family decision that his labour should be contributed to neighbouring country, considering the fact that this migrant labour would bring remittances back home for sustaining his family.

Coming to *Dual labour market theory*, the fact that migrations takes place because of pull factors and not push factors is not agreeable. It is true that there is demand for certain type of labour in

foreign market but mere pull does not force the labour to migrate. The less favourable economic conditions at home country definitely acts as a push factor when foreign market is pulling the labour. It is only when pull factor is more lucrative that push happens. The pull factors for demand of certain kind of labour in a foreign market looks like an exploitative option as sometimes, it is not the demand for certain kind of labour that pulls the migrants but because the migrants would take up certain kind of labour in a lesser cost as they do not have adequate bargaining power.

According to *World Systems theory*, migration is to search for cheap labour, raw-materials, etc in underdeveloped countries by developed countries. Here the Labour does not migrate because of need for high wages or certain skilled labour. Here the capitalists migrate in search of cheap labour and low costs of production. The push factors seem to be more active in this case because of the shortage of cheap labour and raw-materials in country of origin. The purpose of migration as per World Systems theory is capitalist i.e. reaping maximum profits. Therefore, international migration as per such situation can also be called “Economics of Capitalism” where the theory is to migrate in foreign country which can provide maximum profits at the minimum price or costs involved in migration. For understanding this, we can take the example of BPO or call centre industry in India where call centres are set up in India by brands because of the less expensive employees available here instead of the home country where counterparts for same work are paid much more packages for the same work.

At this juncture, we need to look at the case of Chinese ventures in India as well. The key positions of a business venture are filled by native workers of so that decision –making remains in the hands of home country. In such a case, migration is lucrative, less costly and supported by the sending country government as well. In such a case, migration is of blue coloured workers. For example, many Chinese companies which are taking over business ventures in India position Chinese at the decision-making positions and Indians are retained at the lower and middle level. This dual labour market is favourable for the sending countries. Recently, there was a huge stir in India, when Oppo<sup>19</sup>, a Chinese mobile company in NOIDA, India raised protests against the Chinese production Manager who is alleged to have thrown the Indian flag in dustbin. International migrations need to be careful about the socio-cultural dynamics of the destination

country to make their migration productive and sustaining. Russell King has clubbed the 3 theories of international migration under Historical Structural Model: Dual and segmented labour market theory, Dependency theory and World systems theory. But there are other reasons also apart from labour economics which cause international migration. These gave birth to migrant network theory. Massey et al stated<sup>20</sup>:

**“Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. They increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration.”(Massey et al: 448)**

Bangladeshi transmigrants in India are a classic example of network theory of international migration. They had kinship ties with India as they are neighbouring nations since, several centuries whose populations intermingled with each other even before independence. People on both the sides speak same language, wear same dresses and celebrate same festivals. But due to non-favourable economic and political conditions for them being in Bangladesh (an underdeveloped country), they with the help of their kinship networks migrated to India for the purpose of better wages and considering the fact that they possess the special skills like handicrafts making, road construction work which the natives do not want to undertake. Once, settled, these migrants paved way for more Bangladeshis to come to India. This made the cost of migration also lesser and frequency of migration perpetual. However, Haas has rightly, criticised network theory on the basis of following points<sup>21</sup>:

1. Network theory does not talk about the processes that counteract the formation of networks.
2. It is difficult for government to control networks which can be detrimental to the security of any nation.
3. Migrant networks can be gatekeepers as well instead of facilitators, controlling the migration of future migrants.

The females sometimes, accompany as associated migrants. The role of females in network theory can also be understood by the fact that many of them come in the destination country as

migrants and get married and settle forever. Their children, in turn become the natural citizens of the destination country, because their fathers are legal citizens of the country. In Northeast, many Bangladeshi migrant women have been getting married to Indian men and adopting Indian citizenship. This also serves as a safe option for them as socio-political conditions back at Bangladesh could have been worse for them. Female networks play a big role in such cross-border marriages. Female networks also play a negative role in trafficking of women across borders for the purpose of commercial sex and household maids. Such networks have led to increasing crimes against women. In 2012, a group of 48 women and children were rescued, who were trafficked from Bangladesh border and kept at brothels in Pune and Mumbai forest trade, reported BBC<sup>22</sup>. (Ethirajan, 2012).

### **Deriving a new theory of International Migration- The “Theory of Need Fulfilment”**

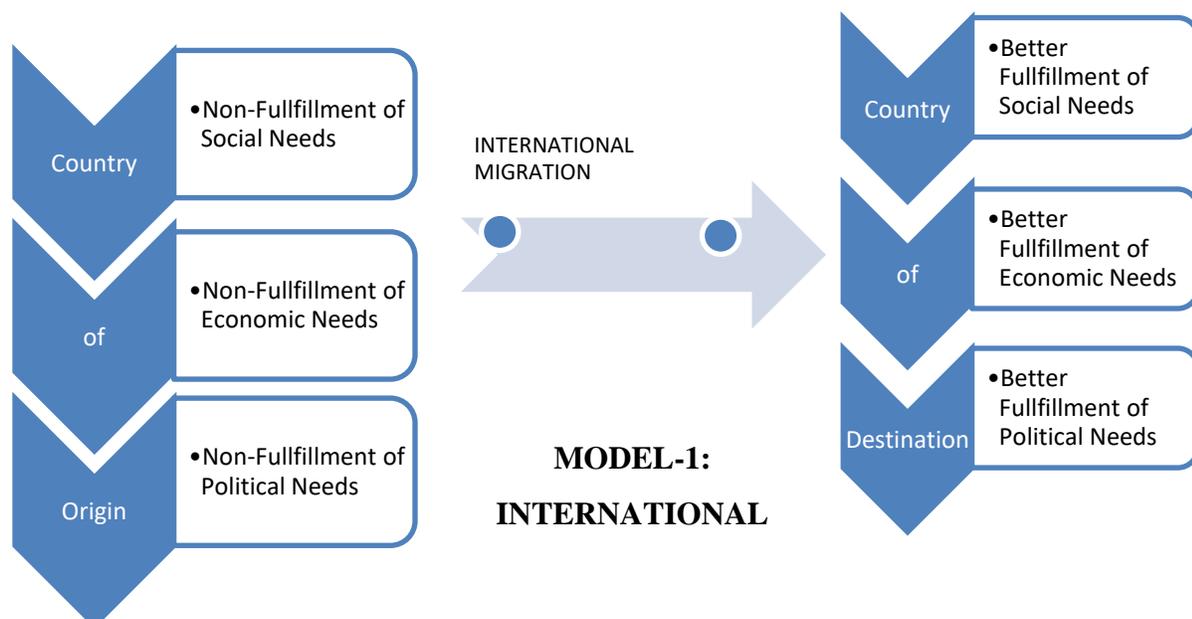
Earlier theories considered international migration as a result of labour economics where the labourers migrated from country of origin to country of destination in search of better wages. This was sometimes an individual decision, sometimes family decision and at other times demand from the foreign market. But recent theories like network and mixed migration point out that the reasons of international migration can be social too for example, personal networks, study, marriage, etc. But what about the international migrations which happen because people become unhappy with the functioning of governments or law-making in the country of origin. For example, strict laws for women in Taliban after they took over Kandahar. One of the women (Hala)<sup>23</sup> who escaped to USA (when she was caught teaching children by Taliban police) stated:

**“Each day brought new restrictions: no make-up even under the burka, no white socks, high-heels, shoes that made a noise or nail polish. If a window faced the street, it had to be painted black, then covered with a thick curtain so that male passers-by could not glimpse the women inside.”(The guardian.com)**

A review of theories of international migration point out towards the fact that mostly, all of them talk more about the causes of migration and less the consequences. Therefore, there is a need of more comprehensive theory that covers and justifies all types of international migration and is based not just on labour economics because the causes of migration can be more except for labour or wages or networks i.e. the causes can be political as well. In case of Hala, it is not the fact that she received warm welcome on reaching America. She was in American jail where

inmates received animal like treatment. But she could not go back to Taliban now and finds America relatively more secured place to stay. Her non-fulfilment of security needs because of oppressive Taliban forced her to migrate internationally. It is a human tendency that a person is always looking for green pastures i.e. a place that fulfils his needs at best and better than the earlier inhabitation. Migration across the borders thus, is for need fulfilment which otherwise does not get fulfilled at the place of origin. International Migration theory of Need Fulfilment, in economic terms is for better job and business opportunities; in social terms it is for non-discriminative and just society; and in political terms, it is for stable government and adequate political participation and democratic rights. The given below examples discussed in this paper justify the “*Theory of International Migration for Need fulfilment*”:

1. Migration of Sikhs in India to USA (for economic need of better compensation).
2. Migration of Bengali Muslims to India (for economic need of better employment).
3. Migration of British and Portuguese to India (for economic need of cheap labour and raw –materials).
4. Migration of North Koreans to South Korea (for need of democratic government as North Korean government does not allow usage of internet, social media, etc.).
5. Migration of Hala, a women escaping from Taliban to America (for need of non-oppressive government towards women)
6. Migration of Chakmas from Bangladesh to Northeast India (for socio-economic need for earning livelihood and escaping religious persecution).
7. Migration of Mexicans to USA (for socio-economic need of better jobs and education).



## MIGRATION THEORY OF NEED FULFILMENT

Finally, it is true that at the same time not all people migrate internationally and few countries migrate more than the others. The answer to this is in “*Theory of Need Fulfilment*” because economics is not the only need for migration, as already mentioned earlier; there are social and political needs too. A same person cannot give same kind of importance to all the needs. For some, fulfilment of economic need may be the top priority and for some social needs and for others political need. Also, it is also not necessary that the needs are completely fulfilled at the country of destination after migration. More justifications for why not all people migrate and why some people migrate more than the others are given below:

1. Not all humans have the same risk taking capacity.
2. Not all humans have complete knowledge of how, where and when to migrate.
3. Not all humans have enough resources to migrate internationally
4. Not all humans have their family support for international migration.
5. Not all humans have access to migrant networks.
6. Not all humans possess the necessary skills required in world market.
7. Not all humans possess the dual citizenships or post-national citizenships.

If the economic, social and political needs of migrants are not met in country of destination as well, this results in their return migration to the country of origin. After returning, their needs may be fulfilled because of the newly acquired knowledge and skills in a foreign country or may not be fulfilled at all.

### Conclusion

One thing is sure in international migration, until and unless there is some need that needs to be fulfilled, migration will not happen. It is true like an idiom which says, “*Necessity is the mother of all inventions*”. According to “*theory of need fulfilment*”, the idiom should be “*Necessity/Need is the mother of all Migrations*”.

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<sup>7</sup> Chakmas are Tribes who preach Buddhism since, Buddhism has originated. They are believed to be descendants of Sakya clan, the clan in which Gautam Buddha was born. Their presence can be majorly found in present day Bangladesh, India and Burma.

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<sup>15</sup> Estrada doctrine is a foreign policy doctrine of Mexico which states that Mexico would not judge the governments or change of governments in other countries and follow a policy of “non-intervention” and “self-determination of nations”. The name is derived from Genaro Estrada, Secretary of Foreign Affairs during 1930s in Mexico.

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