

RE-GLOBALIZATION: FROM BRAIN DRAIN TO BRAIN GAIN

INTRODUCTION

The surge in immigration-related headlines is a consequence of the unraveling of pro-immigration policies, which, by their very nature, had shaped the liberal character of the globalized world. Be it an Indian, a Mexican, a Russian, an American, an Indonesian, a Briton, a Bolivian, an Egyptian or a Nigerian, every single person and entity in this highly globalized and interconnected world is realizing both the flaws of the core values upon which globalization was built, as well as of the rectifications being done to uproot such values entirely. After all, just as it is quite an ordeal itself for a sapling to sprout into a tree, and even more so when being cut down, the same can be said about immigration in the globalized world. We shall talk about the debate surrounding immigration in a highly-globalized world, and subsequently shifting our focus towards the issue of “Brain Drain” and the concept of “Re-globalization”.

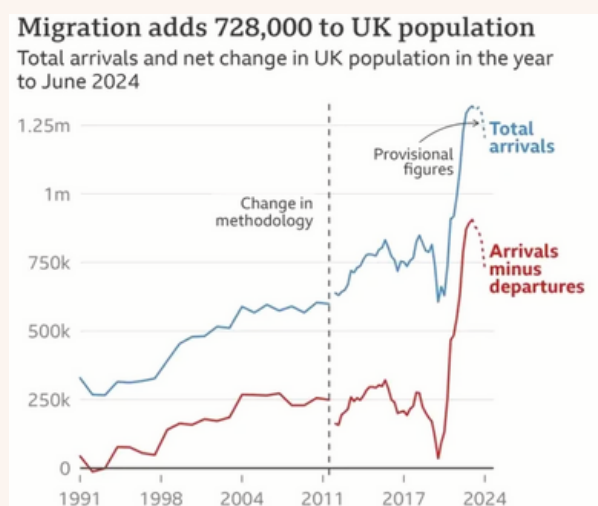
THE GENESIS

This Pandora's Box opened as a still-ongoing global debate unfolded, with governments striving to curb illegal immigration while simultaneously improving the ease of legal immigration. The issue being that the home country often loses most of its bright minds to brain drain in the pursuit of a better lifestyle, be it for higher education, for a better employment opportunity, or as a destination to retire for life.

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The host country is not without its own issues too. Illegal immigrants, often aided by local populations, can pose significant challenges, including concerns related to safety, criminal activities, and illegal cross-border operations, which can jeopardize the social fabric of the host country. Exhibit A of one such situation is the massive influx of illegal immigrants from Asia, especially from South Asian countries in general, who go via the “Donkey-route”, which is a way of bypassing direct immigration to the USA by travelling to Canada and using illegal pathways from the northern borders between the two North American countries. In some instances, such immigrants are, more often than not, responsible for establishing global terrorist networks or facilitating transportation of illicit materials across the oceans.



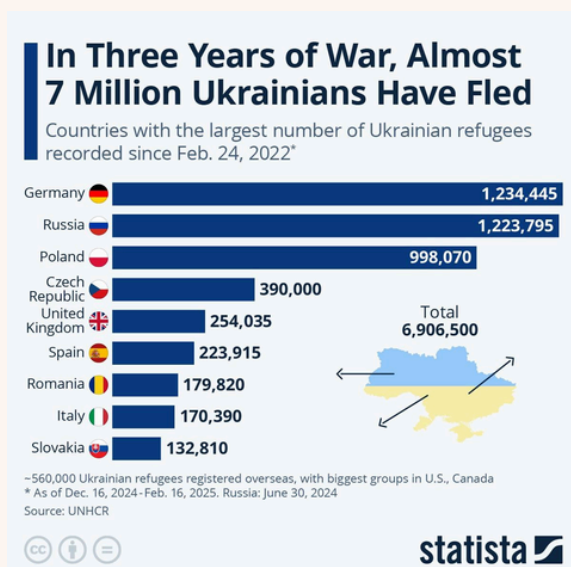
THE CONSEQUENCES

The global order's pro-immigration policies began to show their weaknesses, starting from 2015 with a significant influx of immigrants into Europe, primarily from the Middle East. Although initially a humanitarian crisis, it subsequently led to an influx of illegal immigrants who exploited the more lenient migration rules into European countries.

Despite government

assurances that the situation was under control, right-wing politics gained popular support, leading to the displacement of pro-immigration policies by pro-nationalist ones. Several key member states of the European Union have demanded a reinterpretation of immigration policies, arguing that current policies are insufficient to curb mass immigration. This, in turn, has

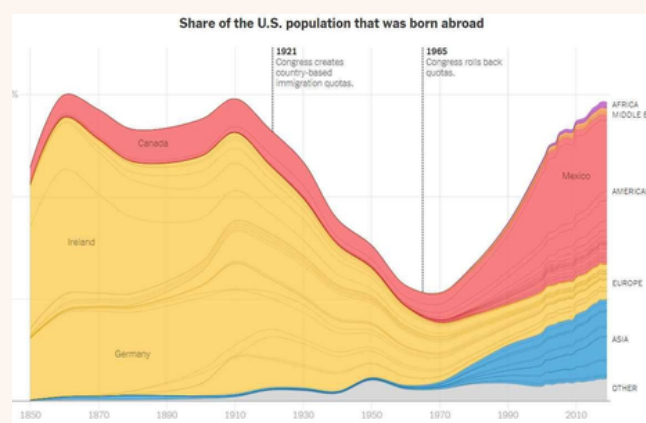
prompted other countries, including India, to review their immigration policies, particularly concerning illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, the tenth most densely populated country.



The ongoing conflicts between Ukraine and Russia, and the recently concluded Israel-Palestine conflict, have generated two polarizing perspectives: one opposing immigration, and another supporting it (particularly in the context of humanitarian crises). However, as expected, outliers on both sides exploit public sentiment and engage in anti-globalization efforts.

This is exemplified by the sharp increase in hostility towards immigrants, both legal and illegal (where perpetrators can also be immigrants), leading to public harassment, torture, and/or

coercion into unintended actions such as criminal activities or illicit support. It is imperative, therefore, that governments worldwide establish timely legal frameworks to address the negative aspects of both immigration policies and anti-immigration clauses, thereby maintaining a delicate balance.



"Above all we must realize that each of us makes a difference with our life. Each of us impacts the world around us every single day. We have a choice to use the gift of our life to make the world a better place - or not to bother."

-Jane Goodall

INDIA AND GLOBALISATION

India has long suffered from the phenomenon of 'Brain Drain,' where both educated and uneducated citizens seek better educational and employment opportunities abroad, thereby depriving their home country of their valuable contributions. This hinders India's overall growth, as the talent nurtured within the country is not reinvested domestically, further exacerbating the situation. This quickly spiralled away from India's favour, however, when Mr. Donald Trump

was elected the 47th President of the United States of America in his bid for a second term, implementing numerous radical changes to immigration policies. These included strict measures for detaining and repatriating illegal immigrants, tightening visa restrictions and increasing registration fees (such as for the H1-B visa), and introducing taxation systems on remittances sent by naturalized citizens, all aimed at promoting his 'America First' framework. He has also repeatedly urged European countries to tighten their immigration policies, which creates uncertainty and potential obstacles for those seeking to study or work abroad in the future, not only in the EU and USA but also in other nations. So what is it that both we, the people of India, that is Bharat, can do?

THE WINDOW OF HOPE AND PROSPERITY

This is where the answer to the above question lies, wherein the role of the government of India (and even of the people of India to a large extent!) come in.

Time and again, we write about what can be rectified and what cannot be, while providing reasonable solutions for the same, either through articles, or essays or other writings in public mass media. First and foremost, concrete policymaking and action are needed to generate more opportunities, ensure more people are employed with a dignified work-life balance, and implement educational/employment policies that provide the youth of the country with the opportunities they truly deserve. If this window of opportunity is missed, India as a whole might mirror Japan's current situation: a good and efficient, but aging, workforce that was *this* close to replacing the USA as the true hegemon of the 21st century. The same is already being done by another major power, China. One could argue that their wholly authoritative system, with no real power in the hands of the people, allows for their goals to be realized more efficiently. However, as a model for global leadership, India can learn significantly from China, rectifying mistakes and applying lessons within its democratic frameworks and national institutions. The main issues and shortcomings that India has to face at present are many, with each of them requiring a good amount of time and dedication. One of the issues is the massive brain drain that peaked in the 1990s, immediately following the LPG reforms in 1991, and is still an ongoing process. But how do we solve this?

For starters, we must strategically deploy investments at opportune times, coupled with principles of good governance and strict vigilance, while ensuring public services are accountable to both consumers and vendors. Businesses must be encouraged to establish their units within the country, while simultaneously considering the ecological conditions of the allotted area to balance environmental and tribal interests. The ‘ease of doing business,’ a buzzword frequently heard in commercial press conferences these days, must be further improved, not merely by reducing the number of middlemen but by leveraging technology to eliminate the middleman system entirely. These are largely industry-centric policy changes, but to lead the multipolar world of the future, India must not simply be a service provider, but be the leader in all three sectors of production.

REGLOBALISATION

I mentioned the term “Re-globalization” in the title of this article, which our Hon’ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar has aptly described as follows,

“...the world is heading for re-globalization with building of resilient and reliable supply chains and trusted and transparent digital transactions.” But what does Re-globalization really mean? It refers to the concept of supply chains. It is no surprise of the multipolar world back to a unipolar one.

But India, Japan, Brazil, Russia, Nigeria, Egypt, the UAE, the UK, France, Indonesia, Philippines and several other countries are already on their way to restructure the global landscape with a safety valve against such attempts. As Indians, we may also aspire to be the next USA, but the question remains: is it better to be a lone superpower or a partner in creating a truly cosmopolitan utopia, or at least a semblance of one? This is already evident with the conclusion of the long-awaited UK-India Free Trade Agreement and India's diverse partnerships with nations such as Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, Croatia, Cyprus, Ghana, Papua New Guinea, and even China, demonstrating the fluidity of such a multipolar model.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, for India, the true solution for this transition lies in collective, accountable, and accommodative action, representing the voice of all its people, in the pursuit of a truly developed India and a more vibrant multipolar world. Globally, it is preferable to resolve our differences definitively, rather than masking our true intentions for professional expediency. Only then can we begin our journey towards true unity and cosmopolitanism. As renowned primatologist and anthropologist Jane Goodall rightly said,