

***India Moving: A History of Migration, Tumbe, Chinmay.*
Penguin Random House, 2018, 304.**

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India Moving: A History of Migration is a book written by Chinmay Tumbe and provides a detailed account of successive waves of migration that led to millions of people moving within, to and from India over centuries. The book is divided into six chapters covering the migration history of India. Tumbe provides an in-depth analysis of how factors such as partition, imperialism, colonialism, militarisation, advancement in technology and globalization have impacted the internal and external migration trends in India over the years. Based on evidence, the book also tries to highlight the largest refugee crisis and displacements that India witnessed in the 20th century.

In the first chapter of this book, “Indian Diversity and Global Migration,” the author states that in ancient time, seasonal migration was observed among those moving between different altitudes, especially because settlement and survival were both found to be difficult at high altitudes. Areas at lower altitudes witnessed more agricultural immigration due to the presence of water and more rainfall. This also contributed to heavy emigration from such regions as the Kaveri delta of Tamil Nadu. He points out that even in the era of Christ, the people of India had developed a fear of immigrants and the resultant 'contamination' by them. As a result, restrictions were imposed on the inward movement of the foreign population. However, it would have been even more interesting had it been specified how these restrictions were actually imposed during those times.

Increased warfare across the Subcontinent eventually led to expansion of military force during the medieval times (precisely during the Mughal era) which in turn led to high ‘spatial mobility’ of individuals across the Subcontinent. Imperialism also played an important role in movement of Indian skilled labour (post carriers, stone-cutters, craftsmen, masons, goldsmiths, etc.) both across India and the rest of the globe. The author then

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sheds light on the plight of the forced migrants such as slaves by giving a detailed description of the practices of slavery in medieval India. Tumble tries to explain the antagonistic impact of colonisation on the mobilisation of those residing in India. He explains how railways and steamboats drastically increased migration flows. However, as India underwent colonisation it was observed that movement of people was adversely impacted through occupational displacement of tribes that were highly mobile. The author believes that demilitarisation during the colonial era also exacerbated the reduction in migration.

The second chapter of the book focuses on the “Great Indian Migration Wave.” The major causes that Tumble identifies behind this wave of migration were better living conditions, employment and marriage. In the third chapter, “Merchants and Capital,” the author discusses the migration stories of businessmen from diverse communities like Sindhi, Punjabis, Gujratis, Parsis, Chettiars, Baghdadi Jews, European Christians and Muslim merchants. Tumble states that merchant migration was mostly male dominated, semi-permanent and remittance based.

In chapter four, “Diasporas and Dreams,” the author gives a detailed account of the external migration from India to the rest of the World and the historical background of more than 25 million Indian diaspora community. He concludes that although there is religious diversity in the Indian diaspora but has become more of an elite diaspora with very little representation from the lowest castes in recent waves of outmigration. This claim is quite debatable as most of the domestic help workers, construction workers and care givers that migrate from India to the Middle Eastern and European countries are from lower castes. The author also fails to provide strong evidence in support of this argument.

Chapter five of the book is “Partition and Displacement” in which Tumble sheds some light on the mass migration that took place at the time of the partition in 1947. This chapter also talks about the refugee problem that occurred first in the 1930s once the Indians started to come back from Burma, then in 1947 when the partition took place and again in 1980s when Burmese refugees started coming to India. The author notes that in 1930 the racial riots broke out in Rangoon between Indian and Burmese labourers as the economy sank and jobs dried out. This led to a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment and restrictive immigration policies

by the nationalists. Something the world is witnessing once again. Communal riots of partition that forced people to migrate and the humanitarian crisis that occurred in the aftermath are also discussed in this chapter. Although the author briefly talks about the rehabilitation of refugees but a detailed analysis of repatriation policies is missing.

In the last chapter, “Migration and Development,” Tumble notes that the past two decades have seen a surge in internal and external mobility in India. By stating Kerala and Bihar as case studies Tumble notes that despite the fact that Bihar is one of the poorest states in India and Kerala is the richest; both the states have almost the same rate of out migration. Thus, he questions the simplistic assumptions that poverty is the main driver of migration. The author while tracing the history of brain drain states that since late 19th century, America and Britain had started to attract students from India. International and domestic remittance dependency and their role in reducing poverty are also explained in detail in this chapter.

India Moving: A History of Migration is a social history of migration, both voluntary and involuntary that was needed at a time when populist and anti-immigrant narrative is gaining popularity in India. It provides an in-depth analysis of the causes that led Indians to migrate within India and across the globe. The author points out that how over the years; India has moved away from its centuries old tradition of *atithidevo bhava* which means “a guest is equivalent to God” as it has now become less tolerant to immigrants. The personal anecdotes provided by the author make this book interesting to read. Tumble talks about the transformation in the skin color of the people residing in India and the rest of world. This seems quite unnecessary and untimed in the context of migration and mobilisation of individuals across the globe. While the author clearly explains the reason behind the difference of skin color between individuals as an outcome of living in different zones which may either be closer to the poles or farther from them, he fails to point out why, as per him, this argument is crucial to developing a clear understanding of migration in the Indian Subcontinent. The author tries his best to not undermine the migratory patterns that existed elsewhere in the world; however he still ends up glorifying the movement trajectories of the Indian Subcontinent. Nevertheless, the book is a good addition to the existing academic literature on migration.