

November 21, 2024

Press Release

Two-Day International Conference at JMI on Migration and the Indian Diaspora Highlights India's Global Image

The two-day International Conference, The Changing Dynamics of Migration and the Indian Diaspora: Leveraging India's Global Image, held on November 18-19, 2024, at the Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), brought together a diverse group of experts, scholars, and policymakers to explore critical issues related to migration, the Indian diaspora, and India's growing influence on the world stage. The conference was convened by Prof. Anisur Rahman and was sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), JMI, and the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA).

The conference attracted over 180 participants from more than 50 institutions across India and abroad, including Canada, the USA, the UK, Bangladesh and the Netherlands. The event featured 23 technical sessions, three online sessions, and a plenary session that addressed key themes related to migration, cultural identity, and India's diplomatic and economic strategies.

Inaugural Session: A Platform for Thought Leadership

The conference opened with a warm Welcome Address by Prof. Hemayun Akhtar Nazmi, who highlighted the growing significance of migration in shaping India's identity globally. Prof. Anisur Rahman, the convener, elaborated how migration influenced India's socio-economic development and shapes its global image.

In his keynote address, Dr. Hemraj Ramdath spoke about the power of the Indian diaspora to enhance India's soft power and build transnational networks. He emphasized the shift from labor migration to a highly-skilled, entrepreneurial community contributing to India's global standing.

Chief Guest Prof. Mohan Kumar Gautam, from the Netherlands, underscored the rising influence of the Indian diaspora, especially in skilled migration, and called for empowering younger generations to take on leadership roles both in India and their host countries.

Prof. Muslim Khan, Dean of Social Sciences at JMI, delivered a thought-provoking address, tracing India's historical migration and its patterns from ancient trade routes to contemporary global trends. Dr. Satya Prakash, OSD to the Vice Chancellor, discussed the emotional and intellectual complexities of migration reflected in contemporary literature.

Prof. S.P. Singh, Former Chancellor, encouraged the youth to engage with emerging global issues, particularly the integration of the diaspora and its role in nation-building.

Key Sessions and Takeaways:

- 1) **Migration Patterns and Trends: A Global Perspective** Experts analyzed shifting migration patterns, particularly from the Global South to the Global North, noting the growing diversification of Indian migration and the challenges posed by regional instability.
- 2) **The Indian Diaspora and Its Global Influence** Discussions highlighted the increasing impact of the Indian diaspora in business, academia, and culture, particularly with a shift from labor migration to a highly educated, entrepreneurial community.
- 3) **Leveraging India's Global Image: Challenges and Opportunities** This session explored how India can harness the strengths of its diaspora to foster diplomatic, economic, and cultural growth. Experts discussed government initiatives like Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the Overseas Citizen of India scheme.
- 4) **4. Migration and Cultural Identity:** The preservation of cultural identity within the diaspora, particularly among younger generations navigating the tension between heritage and assimilation, was a key focus.
- 5) **5. Changing patterns of Migration and reverse migration:** The sessions on education gender and diaspora emphasized on changing patterns of migration and reverse migration and also the way government address such issues in contemporary times.

Roundtable on Remittances, Philanthropy, and Social Development

A key roundtable discussion examined the role of remittances and diaspora philanthropy in supporting social development in India. Prof. Rakshanda F. Fazli emphasized the shift toward impact-driven philanthropic investments, while Prof. Amba Pandey highlighted the significant role of remittances in poverty alleviation, education, and healthcare in rural India. Dr. Mahalingam M explored policy frameworks affecting remittances and the growing role of digital financial technologies.

Valedictory Session

The conference concluded with a Valedictory Session at the Conference Room (MMTTC), HRDC, JMI. Prof. Shahid Jamal Ansari, Director of the Centre, delivered the welcome address, followed by a presentation of saplings and mementos to the distinguished guests.

Prof. Sebastian, of CWAS, presented the conference report, prepared by Dr. Atikur Rahman, summarizing the outcomes and recommendations. Prof. AK Mohapatra of JNU delivered a comprehensive speech, urging the next generation of scholars to engage more deeply with academic discourse on emerging migration and diaspora issues. Prof.

Muhammad Gulrez, former Vice Chancellor of AMU, explored the significance of the Indian diaspora in shaping India's foreign policy.

The session concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks from Prof. Anisur Rahman, who expressed gratitude to the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of JMI, Prof. Mazhar Asif, and Hon'ble Registrar, Prof. Md Mahtab Alam Rizvi, for their support, as well as to the organizing committee, faculty members, scholars, and staff.

Key Recommendations

The conference concluded with several key recommendations to strengthen India's engagement with its diaspora:

- **Policy Development:** Advocate for inclusive policies to support migrant communities and facilitate stronger diaspora engagement.
- **Diaspora Engagement:** Foster diplomatic and business ties by leveraging the entrepreneurial and skilled nature of the diaspora.
- **Education and Skill Development:** Prioritize skill development programs to enhance the employability of migrants and help them adapt to global markets.
- **Focus on the Next Generation:** Create initiatives to connect younger diaspora members with India's cultural and developmental initiatives.

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