

International Migration of Doctors: A Case of Indian Doctors in the UK

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Abstract

International migration of doctors has been a subject of concern and debate since the 1960s. However, recently this has acquired enhanced attention and importance, especially due to steep rise in the rates of 'brain drain' of healthcare workers in the Sub-Saharan region and resulting fatal impact on their healthcare systems. South Asia is another region which has significantly lost its healthcare workers and dominant in the overseas stocks and flows of healthcare workers in the OECD countries. With sharp and continuous increase in the percentage of ageing population and corresponding decline in the indigenous health workforce in advanced countries on the one hand and increased access to international education and labour markets in the developing countries on the other, are expected to further intensify international migration of health workers from developing to developed countries. However, in sharp contrast to these anticipations, developed countries lately are resorting to downsizing and restricting the inflow of foreign workers through tighter immigration and visa regulations. As a result, since 2005, there has been significant decline in the annual entry of Indian Medical graduates to the UK. This raised apprehensions that, if the 'London Dreams' of Indian doctors had come to an end? The paper seeks to answer, if these apprehensions are well founded or the declining trend of their immigration is only cyclic in nature?

Key words: International migration, Doctors, India, South Asia and United Kingdom.

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