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The ethics of selective immigration

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By Pradip Rodrigues

Last week when noted left-leaning environmentalist David Suzuki made some controversial comments about **Canada**'s immigration strategy, it ignited a huge controversy and some lively debate online. It isn't often internationally renowned environmentalists make the link between immigration and degradation of the environment.

In an interview with the Paris-based publication L'Express, Suzuki described **Canada**'s immigration policy as 'disgusting' because the **country** wants to increase its population for economic reasons at the cost of depriving southern countries of future leaders. Suzuki believes that only refugees should be permitted into **Canada** on humanitarian grounds. Former Immigration and Citizenship Minister Jason Kenney quickly waded into the controversy using words like xenophobic and anti-immigration to describe Suzuki.

But the question over the morality of rich countries like **Canada** plundering human resources from poorer countries is something that might warrant a discussion.

Here is my humble take on the issue. In centuries gone by, immigration to the New World has functioned as an escape valve for Europe's surplus population. The words inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty said it all, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door." Poverty and wretched living conditions drove millions to abandon their homes and start life afresh in the New World. Those who abandoned the old **country** were often at the bottom rung of their societies or victims of pogroms, famines or crushing poverty. The days of mass immigration are over and today, and immigration to countries like **Canada** has been calibrated to fill gaps in the workforce, certainly not to alleviate the pressure on over-populated countries like China and Bangladesh. The process has metamorphosed into a head hunting exercise. The **country** is seeking the brightest and the best around the **world**.

The kind of immigrants being sought aren't the poor masses but rather those who have a good chance at being successful in **Canada** but would probably be just as successful in their own countries.

Countries like **Canada**, Australia and the US are skimming off the cream of the crop. Thousands of health care professionals from Africa are being lured into abandoning their countries where their skills are badly needed, instead they are brought to America and Europe to tend their sick and infirmed.

We are plundering human capital and for a rich **country** that is easy to do. Our selection strategy is getting narrower and more focused. It is not that we are targeting unemployed doctors, engineers and scientists from countries like **India** or surplus landless farmers from China. Neither are we plucking poverty stricken families and giving them a chance to live better lives. We are after the sons and daughters of hard working parents who do their utmost to give their children the best education and once that is done, we lure them to the West. In countries such as **India** it is hard to calculate the cost of losing thousands of the best educated people each year. This is almost like surrogacy with a twist. Indian parents raise their children, instill in them values, nurture them, educate them and then once they are ready, they get adopted by a rich **country**. This is about as ethical as a wealthy childless couple who goes into a slum, finds a **family** with five kids, adopts the one sibling most likely to succeed and help his **family** out. His grateful parents are happy he is going away to a better place where he will have limitless possibilities. That is the only thing that makes such a sacrifice worth it.

While millions of NRIs live all around the globe, it is often their parents who get left behind, many who end up dying of loneliness and neglect, not to speak of the heartache of knowing it is unlikely their children will be by their bedside in sickness or in death.

I have spoken to at least two professionals who abandoned their promising careers in **India** for a long shot at similar success in **Canada**. Why exactly did these two professionals pack up and leave? It was a western lifestyle they craved. Did they have any regrets? Yes, they left their parents, **family** and friends behind. That was both their regret and guilt.

Of course a selection process is essential in a global **economy**. In a skill driven workplace, having immigrants with the right skill set is imperative. A market driven **economy** depends on an endless stream of new immigrants who will drive the **economy** by their participation. But poaching the brightest and the best of talent from around the **world** does make it that much harder for developing countries to compete in the marketplace. This massive brain drain has many social and economic consequences. As long as the well-selected immigrant finds himself working in his own field and contributing to his optimum potential, all is good.

The scandal is that many of these 'screened' applicants could find themselves in jobs that scarcely require their abundant talent.

So depriving Pakistan or **India** of a bright young doctor who could potentially do a **world** of good back in his **country** is bad enough, putting him behind the wheel of a taxi in downtown Toronto or working at a gas station is a crime.

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By [Pradip Rodrigues](#)

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2:48 AM on July 23, 2013

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Suzuki's offensive statements are not surprising. Observers have suggested that David Suzuki simply hates people. According to reports, Suzuki does not hate all people, and seems to like pretty females who serve as his bodyguards. However, David Suzuki has provided reasons for believing that he hates people, at least certain types — Suzuki hates everyone in the lawn care industry, and has destroyed it by ruining businesses and putting people out of work. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-43B> Suzuki hates golfers and despises the game of golf. Suzuki hates his fans by staring at them woodenly with icy silence. Suzuki hates humans because he believes they are maggots. Suzuki hates Santa Claus and ruins Christmas for children. For more details concerning David Suzuki, please go to the following report and web-page ...

<http://wp.me/p1jq40-66Q> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-21m> WILLIAM H. GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G
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AUTHOR BIO



Pradip Rodrigues (36 Posts)

Pradip Rodrigues started out as a journalist at Society magazine, part of the Magna Group in Mumbai. He wrote extensively on a variety of subjects. He later moved to the Times of India where he was instrumental in starting the now defunct E-times, a television magazine. He conceptualized Bombay Times and became its first assistant editor where he handled features and page three. Since coming to Canada in 2000, he has freelanced for newspapers and magazines in India and written autobiographies for seniors.

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