

BRAIN DRAIN

Essay No. 01

According to a UN definition, the flight of talent that is required for a country's development to another country is called brain drain. We have been experiencing this problem ever since we won our freedom. It was with great effort and high hopes that we set up our institutes of higher education. It is unfortunate that thousands of our doctors and engineers are leaving the country every year. More recently, the malady has affected the field of oil exploration, nuclear energy and agriculture also.

A very high proportion of the migrating engineers is of those trained in the five Indian Institutes of Technology. Apparently, nearly 35 per cent of the engineering graduates from the IITs go abroad as soon as they get their degrees. The percentage is even higher in the key areas such as computer science, physics, aeronautics and operational research.

The main reason for this brain drain is that our man power planning has not kept pace with employment opportunities. We have a large pool of scientific and technical manpower that is waiting for respectable assignments. Several thousand engineering graduates are waiting for employment. Some feel that they are under-employed, so they migrate to countries wherever they find better opportunities. It is also the grievance of some of them that they do not have adequate facilities and a congenial environment for work or research in this country. In fact, the situation is no different in many other countries too. They are the victims of academic colonialism which is an aspect of today's neo-colonialism.

The government has every reason to feel concerned about this problem because the number of scientific and technical personnel leaving India has increased in recent years. Measures taken to persuade our scientific and technical man power to return have not yielded results. The fact is that even now it is difficult to find suitable jobs for those who would like to return. Whenever some of them return and are given higher placements in an organisation on account of their qualifications and experience, the locals in the organization resent it and make the working environment for them uncongenial and hostile. They also complain of lack of job satisfaction due to the near absence of innovative research. We do hear of the government toying with the ideas of science cities, pool scientists and technological parks to attract talent, but a lot of all this remains on paper or in files only.

Indian workers, scientists, doctors and engineers have already made their mark in several countries. In America alone, more than 25 per cent of the doctors, engineers and technical personnel are from India. Big part of the economy of this richest country in the world depends upon those who have migrated to this country from India only. Indians working in fields, factories, hospitals and commercial units are known for their sense of duty and dedication. They form the back bone of the whole economic system in that country.

The human resources department of the government has laid stress on the evolution of suitable mechanism to bring back and woo talent from other countries. It has proposed that lecture assignments, consultancy in industry and assistance in setting up of pilot projects in India should be considered. The administrative procedures should be made more flexible. The areas of bio-technology, micro-electronics etc. offer significant potential for our technical personnel.

In fact what we require is a proper planning of our requirements. Students should pursue only those fields that are called for. They should not run after highly specialized courses which have no relevance in the country's economic development. An awareness should be brought amongst those intending to go abroad that it is their moral duty and sacred obligation towards their country to serve their motherland first and foremost.

The government must think in terms of instituting a compulsory national service for a limited period of time for those science, engineering and medicine graduates who are desirous of going abroad.

The basic facilities congenial for research and education should be provided in the institutions so that our technical graduates do not feel ill-at-ease in their own set-up. Let every graduate realize that he has a duty towards the country that educated him and that his leaving the country in a lurch is nothing short of a treacherous betrayal.

(720 Words)

Essay No. 02

Brain Drain

Brain Drain is an oft-heard expression used in India. This refers to the export, or going out of India of the Indian brains to different foreign countries. We term it as a drain of the brains because, it is believed that, with the going out of these best brains we, as a country are at a loss as. With our best brains working for other countries we are left only with mediocre and the lesser brains to work and develop with.

At the outset, let us analyse why there is so much of this exodus of brain from India and, without making much of a hullabaloo about the brains try to check the drain. It is however, a matter of pride for all of us Indians to realise that the world has, as of today recognised the Indian brain among the best brains of the world. This is why foreign countries encourage importing the Indian brain. On the other hand, our brains are also happy to go out because they get a congenial working atmosphere out there. There, in foreign lands there is appreciation of good work, and the environment of work is friendly unlike the prevailing conditions in India. Besides this, the handsome pay packets there are no match to the slim counterpart of a pay return here in India. With this situation in which both the Indian brains and the foreign countries find the business lucrative and very satisfying how and why should it be stopped.

Regarding the why of the question I feel that, it should be curtailed if not stopped because, if the best go out, what are the prospects of development in our own country? For this again we, ourselves are to blame. If we make the atmosphere healthier for good work, I feel at least some of the brains may stay back in India. With all their expertise going out, we have to accept that India is at a loss but, we

cannot really blame the people going out as, who does not want to improve standard of life? The fact of their going out does on the face of it appear to be unfair to India for, when we have the know-how, the expertise, why should we not reap the benefit of it all However, in order to take this advantage of the brains, we have to do something to lure them to stay within for which I daresay, India has to do a lot of work.

Regarding the problem of how this brain drain can be stopped, the solution is not simple but yet it is not impossible. The Government must see that the working environment provided, and appreciation be given to good work. As for the pay packets, they can also be enhanced in order to attract at least a few of the brains

who may be less ambitious and more patriotic. For, I believe that, several brains may prefer to stay back in India if the requisite changes are made for them in the entire system of working pattern. Thus, to prevent a brain drain from India it is not sufficient to just shout about it and make an issue of it. We must work towards the goal of providing them with at least the near amenities to them of what they would get in any of the foreign lands they may chose to go to. If we try this, we may succeed in holding back at least a few of them, for helping us to develop India.

The brain drain may be causing concern to us as, the best of our Indian brains go out of the country, however, there is not only a black cloud of missing out on our best, there is also a silver lining to the drain. The brains that go out of India are by now such a substantial number that they form a huge community in themselves, called the Non-Resident Indians. These NRIs are a constant source of income for India in terms of foreign exchange. With their remittances home, they contribute substantially to building up the country's foreign exchange.

Thus, this brain drain is and will continue unless we put a stopper by providing them with more working facilities at home and give them more than the other ordinary brains in terms of pecuniary benefits. As long as we can't do this for them or don't do this for them the brain drain cannot be stopped and the best of Indians will continue to find homes abroad. While they continue to go out we, the Indians will have to continue being happy with the fact that they have at least become a force to reckon with, and they get a lot of name and fame.

(800 Words)

Essay No. 03

Brain Drain

The problem of brain drain has some of its roots in the unwise development plans we have been adopting since Independence. Much reform and initiative was necessary to support India's development; but since they were not available adequately or coordinated efficiently, their output has not been as useful as desired. Our policy makers increased the opportunities for higher learning several fold in the early decades of nationhood, but failed to give sufficient thrust for social development necessary to provide gainful employment to the output from universities. Hence, owing to the poor state of development in the different social arenas, the trained and skilled manpower which came out of our higher education system could not be optimally utilized. The consequent mismatch between supply of educated and trained people and the demand for them in developmental activity was responsible for the decision of many to leave the country in search of education or employment.

However, it would not be entirely correct to suggest that developmental activity was inadequate and fragile, so that educated people could not offer their services to society. In a way, the opposite was true. Every sector of human activity was yearning for development, and, therefore, was looking for advice and expertise. In fact, many sectors, particularly those of human welfare and infrastructure, had to be built up virtually from scratch to make them contribute to the overall development process. Therefore, more than the lack of opportunities for service, it was the lack of motivation of educated individuals to serve society that was actually responsible for the phenomenon of 'brain drain'.

Certain characteristics of Indian society are responsible for this lack of enthusiasm and motivation to serve society. Nepotism, favoritism, jealousy, deception and a general reluctance to encourage and recognize merit, are some of the features prevalent in our society in volumes much more than those in societies elsewhere. These vices are often severe enough to drive our brilliant youth out of the country. Unless we attribute a substantial portion of the blame for brain drain on these vices, and try to minimize their influence on the morale of young people, if not eliminate the vices altogether from society, we shall not be able to find a durable solution to the problem of brain drain. Since a war against attitudes, aimed at their subjugation and eventual elimination cannot be won easily, it is likely that brain drain will continue for some time to come.

Rather than examine the direct results of brain drain, it will be worthwhile to analyze it in terms of the loss society suffers owing to wasted expenses and misused opportunities. The effect of brain drain is more severe in the fields of specialized

education, like technology and management, in which the cost and effort of training are substantial. India, which strains its fragile economy considerably to spare money for such education would be badly crippled if it were not to receive any return in terms of specialized service and counsel from those who are nourished by such education. India's despair may already be working to the advantage of other countries. A stage might come when advanced countries would stop expenditure on higher education, and instead grab readymade talent from India to meet their needs for trained manpower.

An important aspect of India's higher education scene, particularly in the field of specialized disciplines is, that the funding of facilities is almost entirely by the government, or, in other words, by tax payers' money. Instead, if the government solicits public wealth, and harnesses it to support the specialized education scene, the burden which brain drain causes on the government and the tax payer will not be severe. Harnessing of private wealth, particularly that concentrated in indigenous business and industry may be in the form of award of scholarship, and sponsorship of students. Moreover, a period plan of manpower requirements should help the government utilize the wealth made available, optimally. Such planning, to a considerable extent, can ensure that supply of trained talent is consistent with the demand for it. After the fund requirements have been taken care of as mentioned, the government shall concentrate on the quality of training, and, if necessary, the management of institutions. If this arrangement is successful, and if private money flows substantially into the education sector, the government will have its burden considerably eased.

Private investment in education may also help curtail the trend of brain drain. Since all private investments invariably seek returns, private sponsors of students can insist that the students whom they support should serve social interests for a specified minimum period after education. Sponsors should also be allowed to assess the performance of their beneficiaries from time to time to ensure that the invested money is serving its purpose well. If scholarship or sponsorship becomes necessary for every student to pursue higher studies, a sense of responsibility and obligation will naturally develop among the students, which will curtail their urge to leave the country.

The second aspect of brain drain — misuse of opportunities, is caused by both the society and the students. In other words, they share the responsibility for such misuse. It is as much the responsibility of society to provide useful and attractive opportunities for livelihood to the educated youth as of the youth, in turn, to make use of those opportunities. It is a fact, that despite the prevalence of brain drain for a long time, a good part of trained talent continues to stay on within the country. That talent, by its own efforts, overcomes the various challenges and set-backs it encounters and manages to thrive. The evidence of such talent is in the

remarkable progress we have made in different fields of activity since Independence. It may be, that some, who do not have it in them to overcome challenges, choose the easy way out by quitting the country. Such people, owing to their inability to persevere, would not be successful if they were forced to stay on.

With a large population, which naturally implies great variety in the attitudes of people, we should not think of brain drain with more seriousness and hopelessness than necessary. For us, brain drain does mean a loss or wastage of the money required training those who leave the country; but that is not an irretrievable loss. Since we are close to a billion, the loss due to every quitting person, can, in theory, be made up substantially by those who remain. Our situation is, therefore, unlike that of certain countries with smaller populations, which cannot afford to let their citizens emigrate, lest such emigration should endanger their survival as viable nations. Besides, brain drain need not be thought of as an irrecoverable or permanent loss for another reason also. As one of our former prime ministers suggested, brain drain should be considered as leading to a collection or pooling of talent from which we may draw expertise and counsel when we wish; like accessing the funds in one's bank account.

(1150 Words)

Essay No. 04

The Problem of Brain Drain

Brain drain may be defined as emigration, especially from developing and underdeveloped countries to developed ones, by intellectuals, experts, highly qualified professionals like scientists, engineers, doctors, economists and other technically trained persons. It means depletion of intellectual, professional and technical resources of one country and enrichment of another. Almost all the developing and underdeveloped nations have been suffering from this problem since long. India is no exception. The problem is really very serious and must be addressed immediately. Thousands of Indian scientists; doctors, engineers and other highly qualified and trained persons have been immigrating to the advanced and developed countries of Europe and America. This exodus of our young, promising and bright professionals and scientists, to developed countries of the West, in search of greener pastures and better career opportunities, is a matter of great concern. The departure of these highly talented and trained people, forming the intellectual backbone of the nation, has a detrimental effect on the economic, technical, scientific and mental health of the country.

This huge outflow of our scientific, technical and managerial manpower is common and widespread in all the fields and professions, like medicine, engineering, education, technology, computer science, business management and human resource development. A big percentage of our national income is being spent on the education and training of these young men and women. And when they are in a position to serve the country, as highly skilled professionals and scientists, they migrate to rich and developed lands. This results in a great national waste in terms of money and manpower. It is nothing – short of a national tragedy that these personnel, trained and educated at the expense of the Indian tax-payers, should leave the country at the very first opportunity. Moreover, the students who go abroad for higher education and raise of origin in the arch seldom come back. They leave their motherland and country of origin in the lurch and settle down in the West, enjoying a luxurious life. India has spent a great amount of her income and wealth in creating scientific, technological and educational infrastructure. But there are no commensurate returns because of this brain drain and outflow of talent. It also reflects their backs on moral degradation and utter selfishness. It has a touch that many of our young men and women turn their backs beloved motherland because of the lure of money, comfort opportunities. But they cannot be held solely responsible for this sorry state of affairs. No doubt, India has been spending millions of rupees every year on their training and education. But the matter does not end there.” They must also be given opportunities for the best possible utilisation of their talents, skills, manpower and mental abilities.

The reasons for this massive exodus of our national talent are quite obvious. This one-way traffic is the result of a deep-rooted malaise, comprising of lack of proper employment opportunities, research facilities, job-satisfaction and recognition of merit and excellence. Many of our great scientists, like Hargovind Khorana, etc., emigrated to the West just because we failed to recognise their genius and did not provide them with proper research facilities.

The prevailing unemployment and under-employment are the other reasons for this brain drain. There are many young and talented scientists, doctors, engineers and technologists in our country who suffer from the lack of proper employment opportunities. Their patriotism is beyond any shadow of doubt but it will grow weak and wither away soon for want of nourishment and proper employment opportunities. No talent, however patriotic, can exist and prosper in frustration and unemployment. Many of our best boys and girls go abroad for higher studies and research. After the completion of their research and studies, they prefer to settle down there because

they know that their capacities and capabilities would remain under-utilised here, and that they will not be provided jobs befitting their talents and training. If a few of them return, inspired by patriotism, national feeling and a high sense of duty towards India, they ultimately face frustration and unemployment resulting in great disillusionment and dissatisfaction. After enjoying the comforts, proper research facilities and affluence abroad, these young men and women are bound to suffer from frustration because of meagre salaries, inadequate research facilities, and poor working conditions in India. To attract our talented men and women back to India, it is essential that we create proper job opportunities, decent working conditions and top positions. It is almost impossible to stop this brain drain unless we considerably improve our living standards, salaries and other such facilities. In the United States, Canada, Britain or Germany, students, can earn their living easily while learning. Besides, they are given sufficient support to continue their studies smoothly. But in India all these are lacking.

The problem of brain drain is regally very serious and multidimensional. It cannot be solved with half-hearted measures and efforts. It has to be checked on two fronts. We should stop the outflow of our scientists, technicians, doctors, etc. by creating attractive, satisfying and meaningful job opportunities in the country. We should also create such conditions as may facilitate the return of those who have settled abroad. It is high time that we take concrete and immediate steps to check this brain drain because India is one of the worst hit countries by this intellectual exodus. India is bound to become a major world and industrial power sooner rather than later. The opening up of its economy and liberalisation of industrial and technological sectors will make it one of the most industrialised and scientifically advanced nations of the world. The multinational companies, foreign institutional

investors and others are parking their huge funds in India. Consequently, the number of positions in industry, finance, science, technology, computer software, medicine, etc. are increasing considerably. And so, now each and every scientist, doctor, engineer, scientist, technologist and technician can take part in this noble task of taking the country forward. India is already a power to be reckoned with and soon there will be sufficient opportunities for our gifted and talented professionals and young men and women.

India should not only check the flight of talent but also lure back the thousands of our talented scientists, etc. from developed countries. In recent years the outflow of our talented personnel to oil-rich countries of the Middle-East has been a matter of concern. No doubt they earn and send back huge valuable foreign exchange, but the real loss to the country is in long term dividends and benefits as these people go there and settle for good. They seldom return to India.

It is in our best interest that this brain drain is checked and the outflow of talent is discouraged. It is really tragic that we fail to recognise our own talents and applaud them only when the developed and advanced countries of the West put their stamp of recognition and appreciation. It is high time that our leaders. Government, educationists, planners, industrialists and others put their heads together to create suitable job and research opportunities so as to absorb our highly skilled, talented and gifted graduates and post-graduates coming out of universities, IITs, medical and engineering institutions. The need of the hour is that merit and excellence is given its due place of pride. Nepotism, bureaucratic interference, poor and appalling working conditions, etc. should be -eliminated. Unless we create a proper work culture, working conditions, job opportunities and handsome salaries, it is almost impossible to check and stop this brain drain. The problem is really very serious and has also attracted the attention of the U.N. It has suggested that developing nations should be properly and adequately compensated for the loss caused by brain drain. The developed countries should pay the affected countries because it is a great boon to them. But the suggestion is neither practicable nor acceptable as it involves many complexities and controversies.

(1320 Words)

Essay No. 05

Brain Drain- A Reverse Phenomenon

In 2005, approximately 191 million people lived outside their home countries, with one in five living in the US. Over the years, the United States has been the most successful in drawing, soaking-up, and exploiting talent from all across the world. The US with its world renowned universities, its dynamic companies, its high standard of living and its ever so liberal social and economic sensibilities, has succeeded in “luring” talented skilled individuals from less developed countries who are trained under highly subsidized public education systems in their home countries. The US has been triumphant in marshalling the energies and skill of foreign talent from all over the globe to its national use. This drain on the already scarce resources of less developed countries has served to the advantage of the developed countries. The US, even today, attracts the largest number of international migrants; especially skilled migrants.

However, the last decade has seen a change in scenario. The ability of the US to absorb and assimilate human capital flight from other parts of the globe seems to be on the decline. The US now seems to be witnessing a reverse flow of talented, skilled immigrants back to their countries of origin especially those from India and China. Students from India and China who have travelled abroad to study for advanced degrees or work in their professions are now showing an increasing interest in returning to their home countries permanently. These countries are showing a marked shift from labour intensive to knowledge and technology intensive industries. Recruitment of highly educated and experienced personnel has become the need of the hour. A lot of factors have contributed to the “reverse brain drain” phenomena, the main being delay in green card allotments which stretch from four to six years for Indian and Chinese nationals. Apart from this, a large portion of credit for the reverse drain effect needs to be given to the governments and the private sectors of these developing countries. It is the systematic efforts of both of these that have been able to harness this specialized talent pool.

Numerous private industries in developing countries are now taking part in a big way in the global economy and competing with industries of developed countries. Cutting-edge science and technology alone can keep them in the race. New laboratories and research centres are mushrooming in these countries and what they need above all else is researchers from developed countries with advanced training and work experience. Enter the expatriate.

Whatever the reason for the flight back home, the truth is these people are willing to move back to be able to leverage the tremendous opportunities that are

presenting themselves back home. For the expatriates, moving back home to a developing country like India means taking a shot at being a part of a growing and dynamic economy; an economy where the resources being offered, will be greatly appreciated. So it is finally happening! For decades Asian IITians and JIM graduates were lured to foreign shores with the dazzle of handsome remuneration. After years of losing the best of our brains and talent to the so called “land of opportunities”, it is time now to reap the benefits of “reverse brain drain.”

(540 Words)