
UNIT 13 IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

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13.1 INTRODUCTION

Australia has always faced dilemmas emanating from its geography, history and culture. Geographically, it is located in Asia, at best in Asia-Pacific. Historically, it was a British penal colony, a dominion and, since 1901, an independent Commonwealth of Australia. In cultural terms, Australians think of themselves as a Western society—all through their history, as a White settlers' society; and since the 1970s, as a multicultural albeit and still a predominantly Anglo-Celtic one.

These dilemmas mean some very profound things as far as immigration is concerned.

- i) Immigration defines who the Australians are. So long as immigrants were coming from Britain, Ireland and Scotland, Australia was an English-speaking Anglo-Celtic country. When immigrants arrived from other White European countries, it was still alright as White Europeans were 'invisible,' and within a generation or so adopted the Anglo-Celtic ways including the English language. There were internal cultural differences and differentiations among the White settlers, for instance on account of language and religion but gradually these differences turned only cosmetic. In other words, they were 'assimilated' in the Australian society.

After the Second World War and, more particularly from the 1970s, as immigrants began arriving increasingly from Asian countries—Japan, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Afghanistan, Iran and Lebanon etc.—the claim that Australia is a European English-speaking country began facing certain challenges. The Asian immigrants were 'visible', systemically more prejudiced against, occupied lower position in economic terms. Because of their colour, religion and rituals and customs, and no less on account of their low economic status, they were difficult to get 'assimilated.' The very definition of the word 'assimilation' began to be questioned. 'Assimilation' did not mean a monochromatically uniform society. Culturally diverse groups could still feel and contribute to 'Australian-ness,' whatever be its definition, while maintaining their own different customs, languages and religions. This is how the idea of Australia as a multicultural society was born in the 1980s.

- ii) Immigration also defines Australia's relations with Asian countries. Whether, Australia is located in a culturally friendly or hostile region? Until at least 1950s, Australia feared an industrially and militarily rising Japan and Japanese immigrants as 'yellow peril' who threatened the Anglo-Celtic ways of Australia. So were Chinese who were brought in droves in the second half of the nineteenth century to work on mines and railways, but described as 'Chinese plague.' Whereas immigration in other countries, like Canada,

is seen in terms of economic and demographic necessity, in Australia it is also seen in terms of national security. Immigration may pose not simply a cultural challenge but also a military-security threat.

- iii) In other words, if immigration is closely related to national identity and security, it becomes an important issue in the making of foreign policy and Australia's relations with the world, principally with the Asian countries.

13.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading the unit, you should be able to understand:

- the pattern and trends of immigration to Australia in the wake of globalisation and liberalization of its economy;
- the recent compulsions and reasons (political, economic and social) for the people to migrate to different countries consequent to globalisation, end of Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc;
- the new social and cultural issues which have emerged in the host countries as well as the immigrant population as a result of immigration;
- how the immigration has led to the evolution of the multicultural societies, particularly after 9/11 developments, in which certain ethnic groups are being perceived as a concern for state security; and
- 'economic rationalism' for Australian Policy of encouraging immigration in view of restructuring of its economy, shifting to market logic and making it more competitive.

13.3 GLOBALISATION AND IMMIGRATION: TRENDS AND ISSUES

Contemporary global developments have given a new respect and momentum to immigration. There are several noteworthy aspects of immigration related to the phenomenon of globalization.

- i) Immigration is seen as positive and indispensable in the age of globalization. In economic terms, it is argued that immigrants bring new skills, accept low-paid jobs, add to the national economic competitiveness and what economists call 'productivity diversity', repatriate valuable foreign exchange to their 'home' countries and raise acceptability of 'host' country exports in their 'home' countries. Immigration enables the 'host' society to imbibe new universal values and promote inter-cultural dialogue and thus removing cultural isolation and jingoism. Immigration pluralizes the political process and thereby strengthens democracy. No less, immigration strengthens foreign policy choices and tools and the external reach of a country. Immigrants lobby for improved relations with the 'host' country; as for instance, the American Indian community has done for closer relations between US and India.
- ii) Immigration has increased both in size and type. Since the closing two decades of the 20th Century, with processes of globalisation – open, export-based market economies under electoral democracies, and having urban cosmopolitan classes who subscribe to some common universal values principally those of conspicuous consumption – gathering momentum, migratory and immigration patterns have become denser.
- a) In the post-modern 'global village', sizeable strata of highly skilled and capitalised persons of multi-national origin are opting to become somewhat nomadic. Many developed countries are vying to attract highly skilled and educated professionals. As you know, a large number of highly skilled and talented professionals from India migrate to US to work as contractual professionals in the high-salaried Information Technology sector.
- b) Then there is a second category of immigrants nowadays. Vast number of people uprooted from their traditional economic productive patterns and social settings for a variety of reasons are migrating across national borders and geographical regions. In such cases, search for a livelihood

or escape from state violence and ethnic genocide are generally the motivations for their long and hazardous decisions to immigrate. Such immigration, even if for economic reasons, is not voluntary. These are internally displaced persons or refugees. According to the estimates of the UN High Commission for Refugees, the worldwide figure for refugees and the displaced was 21.3 million in 2001. If one adds those described as the undocumented labour (those who enter a country illegally in search of work), it is close to 100 million.

- iii) In terms of sheer volume, immigration has increased phenomenally. According to the International Organisation of Migration, at the beginning of 21st Century, some 2.5 per cent of world's total population was involved in the process of cross-border migration. It has been noted that with increased scale, immigration is becoming increasingly involuntary, 'feminised' (more number of women are immigrating) and the result of political and environmental factors. The world's migrant population grew from 84 million in 1970 to 120 million in 1990 and had reached approximately 150 million in the year 2000.

A negative aspect of the rising size and volume of immigration is the emergence of human trafficking as an organized international crime. Human trafficking has become a global business. Approximately four million people are smuggled across international borders of states; and the international crime syndicates, who smuggle human beings across borders, rake up some US \$ 15 billion every year.

- iv) Yet another notable development is the rise of new sources of immigration and altogether for some new reasons. In the period since the end of the Second World War, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean regions have seen large displaced populations. A majority of the displaced persons were those who were victims of civil wars, political repression, demographic-environmental disasters, external interventions, and those rendered destitute with the destruction of their traditional economic activities by the externally induced economic changes. At the end of the 1980s, almost one-third of the global migration was centred in these two regions. About 25 million went into Europe from the Mediterranean; by 1980s, some 16 million had crossed over into US from the Caribbean-Central American region and Mexico.

Since the end of the Cold War, two other areas of immigration have emerged. A new current of immigration from the Eastern to the Western Europe has surfaced. A survey undertaken by IPSOS-World Media in 1990 among the Hungarians and Russians from Moscow showed that 10 per cent of them intended to settle down in West Europe, the US or Australia. It is attributed largely to the propaganda about the material success and good life in the West, a propaganda that was mounted by the 'West' against the 'East' during the Cold War. Significantly, most of those intending to migrate Westward belong to the 25-35 age group, and they are drawn from urbanised middle strata of East European societies and have better educational and professional skills. Another source of immigration that has become noteworthy is the geographical semi-circle, running from Pakistan to Philippines, which, besides, covers India, Bangladesh, and Vietnam. The oil producing and exporting countries in the Persian Gulf and West Asia are attracting both labour and high-valued skilled personnel from this semi-circle. The contractual manpower supply from these countries is understood to be better in terms of the demand and supply. An estimated 12 million contractual workers and others at any one time are living in West Asia since the oil boom of the early 1970s. In Saudi Arabia, immigrants represent some 20 per cent of the total population, whereas in UAE and Qatar, they constitute the top seventy per cent of the population.

In this new pattern and sources of immigration, Australia stands at the other end of the pole. The immigration from and within Asia is on the rise and Australia is the principal destination of the immigration current. Favourable economic conditions, large open spaces and low population density have attracted immigrants and refugees mainly from Indo-China, South East Asia and South Asia. Notably, half of the legal immigration towards US also originates from the Pakistan-Philippine semi-circle; which, in times of economic slow-down or tighter immigration controls in the US, has the potential of moving towards an Australia destination. Internal wars and external interventions have also sent a new wave of immigrants and refugees from countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Lebanon towards Australia. Many of these immigrants and refugees are not necessarily poor or low skilled; many are simply escaping political instability and loss of livelihood.

- v) Contemporary immigratory movements are producing new social and cultural issues in the 'host' societies. Immigrants tend to 'cohere' and 'persist' as distinct social groups for reasons, among others, of their recruitment being based on certain common principles and circumstances. Some common institutionalised

rules and informal behavioural characteristics come to be associated to them. Host societies lump together and station ethnicities for their own political and cultural reasons. Certain legal and cultural rights and obligations regulate the internal order within the group and its relation with other groups and the government and thus pave the process of community formation. This leads to the process of identification: the group acquires a name and its members identify themselves with the group. A good example is the way immigrants of different nationalities are clubbed together and described as 'Asians.' Not necessarily, the identity so articulated would be homogenous. The US Census Bureau clubs immigrants from some twenty different Latin American countries as 'Hispanics'. But an identity would have its own internal divisions and hierarchies based on national origin, religion, language, caste and occupations/skills. Indian diasporic communities are good examples of intra-community diversities and divisions based on caste, language and religion. Temporal and spatial factors in the 'host' society that is, the 'context of arrival', also contribute towards internal hierarchies and stratification. Immigrants were welcome in Australia irrespective of their religious identification. Since 9/11, however, all Arabs are considered as Muslims and all Muslims as Arabs; and it is believed that they uniformly hold some 'illiberal' beliefs and practices.

- vi) Contact with the dominant cultural milieu shapes in inexorable ways the new arrivals and their progression or, lack of it, towards identification. Massive migrations that took place in the 19th Century were prone, and often were subjected, to the assimilative and integrative processes of the host societies. This was the era of colonial domination and formation of modern nation-states. Immigrants were required to and often imitated the social moors and cultural values, which were in harmony with the behaviour and values of the dominant society.

The migratory impulses and patterns of the last few decades are no doubt very different from those of the 19th Century: (a) In the first place, the meaning and processes of 'integration' and 'assimilation' have not only changed but have also been discarded. Since the 1950s, host societies had begun claiming to be multicultural, that is, the state was committed to non-discriminatory equal treatment of different ethnic groups. Since 9/11, such a definition of multiculturalism has been diluted, even gradually discarded, in many countries. Multiculturalism and immigration are seen as having implications for state security and certain ethnic groups, particularly Muslims, may as well be 'enemy within' in the West's war on terrorism. One also frequently hears that Muslims, because of their faith and practices, are not prone to 'assimilation'. (b) Secondly, whatever may be the 'context' of immigration and whatever may be the 'reception' in the host society, it is the economic dimension that has emerged very important. The immigrant is less an individual and more an economic actor, who is only responding to the restructuring of production patterns, distribution and consumption that are underway at the global scale. Countries such as Australia, which are critically dependent on immigration for their economic productive activities and for servicing their aging populations have, so to say, compete for immigrants as, at the same, they try to regulate immigration for domestic political and social reasons. (c) Thirdly, 'assimilative' patterns are discarded and discredited as certain types of immigrants nowadays travel with their heavy 'cultural baggage.' Highly educated and professionals earn incomes and maintain a life-style which puts them among the privileged in the 'host' society. Ostensibly, they feel at home with the life and work culture of 'host' societies while retaining their 'cultural baggage'. In fact, many of the high-skilled and investor-category immigrants are truly multi-national, earning the sobriquet of 'immigrants in orbit'. These, for instance, include investor category immigrants from Hong Kong who, in the wake of British hand-over of the island to China in 1998, have chosen to emigrate to Australia and Canada. With their business interests spreading over both Australia and Hong Kong and elsewhere, they continue to operate out of Hong Kong. (d) Fourthly, the changing norms of citizenship are also allowing the growth of the so-called global citizens. Many countries allow 'dual citizenship' to their ethnic migrants. An estimated 40 million Americans have citizenship of other countries, and many actually work and live in other countries. India too confers 'dual citizenship' on non-resident Indians of select developed countries. This is done mainly to attract investment, skills and to capitalise on the cultural bonding of the Non Resident Indians (NRIs) for certain foreign policy goals. (e) Fifthly, the immigration patterns in a globalising world economy have implications for global finances and national economies. There has emerged an 'international migrant economy'. It has been estimated that

in the year 1990, financial transactions that came under remittances had reached approximately US \$ 50 billion. The *Global Development Finance 2003* report of the World Bank indicated that as much as US\$ 72.3 billion flowed to the developing countries as remittances in 2001. These figures reflect the financial and

economic importance of the expatriates to the liberalising developing country economies. As expatriates and diaspora communities become a source of much-needed investment and know-how by liberalising economies, this has implications for foreign policies of countries.

13.4 PATTERN OF IMMIGRATION

Australia is a country of high immigration. According to the data provided by the International Organisation of Migration, immigrants currently represent some 20 per cent of the total population of Australia. Since 1945, over 6 million people arrived as new settlers in Australia. In the 50 years (1945-95) of planned post-War migration, about 5.9 million migrants arrived in Australia; besides about 600,000 were accepted under humanitarian programmes for the displaced and the refugees. In the same period, Australian population rose up from 7 to 19 million, and had reached 19.6 million by 2001 – with one in every four Australians being born overseas. Data indicates that about one million migrants arrived in each of the five decades following 1950: about 1.6 million between October 1945 and June 1960; 1.3 million in the 1960s; 960,000 in the 1970s; 1.1 million in the 1980s; and 900,000 in the decade of 1990s.

Following features of immigration to Australia are noteworthy:

- i) Number of settlers arriving in Australia between July 2001 and June 2002 totalled 88,900. In 2002-03, immigration had totalled some 94,000—some twenty-eight thousand made up the family reunion applicants, thirty-five thousand came under the skilled category, over sixteen thousand were New Zealanders and a little less than ten thousand came under humanitarian schemes as refugees, etc. It shows that the number has remained more or less steady since 2001; so has the proportion of those born overseas. Immigrants are drawn from more than 150 countries; with most of them born in New Zealand (17.6 per cent), UK (9.8 per cent), China (7.5 per cent), South Africa (6.4 per cent), India (5.7 per cent), and Indonesia (4.7 per cent). In simple words, the net is quite widespread with some regions being the constant source of immigration.
- ii) The data also indicates that immigration has remained limited and regulated over the past one decade notwithstanding claims of governments following 'liberal' or 'restrictive' immigration policies. Overall, Australia remains a high regulatory country, for the net permanent immigration is even more limited.
- iii) Also it is to be noted that immigration policies and quotas are based on 'national interest and need', and immigrants are chosen from two broad categories of 'skilled' and 'family.' The programme planning level set by the government ensures that shift towards skilled immigrants continues with at least 58 per cent of new immigrants selected from the 'skilled' stream.
- iv) Perusal of data indicates that immigration from within Asia is not so overwhelming as conveyed through foreign policy pronouncements and security-risk rhetoric. Nor for that matter, Muslims constitute a disproportionately high percentage of immigrants and asylum-seekers. At the estimates made in June 2000, of the 23.6 per cent resident population born overseas, only 5.6 per cent was born in Asia, 2.5 per cent in Oceania, and 1.2 per cent in West Asia and North Africa. Immigration from West Asia and North Africa has become more restrictive after 9/11.
- v) The Australian immigration authorities do admit that "business globalisation has resulted in a major flow of people who often do not intend to stay in Australia permanently."
- vi) The intake under the humanitarian programmes for the year 2002-03 that covered refugees, displaced persons etc. was fixed at 12,000—of which one thousand are reserved for people found to be refugees onshore and four thousand offshore.
- vii) The one to two per cent average annual increase in population over the previous decade indicates that the growth is more on account of the natural increase in the birth rate than net overseas immigration. Australian government rewards parents for more number of children.
- viii) The immigration policies and patterns compared with the grant of non-business visitors visas

indicate that in the year 2000-01, more than 3.2 million such visas were granted offshore. The data for 1997-98 shows that international visitors to Australia consumed A\$12.8 billion worth of goods and services which represented for that year 11.2 per cent of the total export earnings – the fourth largest contributor after mining, manufactures and agriculture.

13.5 IMMIGRATION AND ECONOMIC ‘RATIONALISM’

Australia’s reliance on resource exports for its economic growth and decent living standards for its population had come to an end in the 1970s with growth rates in industrialised economies becoming low and unpredictable and prices of commodities in the global market becoming even more vulnerable. In the last quarter of the 20th Century, Australia had to restructure its economy and adjust to the global economic changes – rapid growth of finance markets, increased mobility of capital, and the shift from labour-intensive factory production to high-technology information industries, etc. The adoption of economic ‘rationalism’ – the Australian term for ‘neo-liberalism’—produced its own economic and social consequences – new kinds of job and wage patterns, internal migration from rural to urban and from small to metropolitan areas. All these had some major implications for the way Australians had always thought of their lives, community and culture.

Once the logic of market was accepted as the sole reason that would and should shape human life, it destroyed the so-called Australian Settlement-conservative norms, egalitarian values, community life, state protection and Church guidance etc. An aspect of economic ‘rationalism’ was the bipartisan consensus on its need. It was the Liberal government of Malcolm Fraser that had begun the process of economic restructuring while still trying to maintain social security and state patronage. No sooner however harsher economic measures had to be introduced causing widespread social disaffection and dislocation in terms of loss of jobs, low wages, high taxes and government giving up social security-related responsibilities. Australia had to learn to live in a globally competitive economy. The rapid increases in foreign borrowings and a persistent trade deficit had placed the Australian dollar at the mercy of foreign speculators and investors in the 1980s. The rising foreign debt and poor export performance by late 1980s had created the spectre of Australia being described as a ‘banana republic’. The challenges of economic restructuring and its consequences went beyond the economic aspects of efficiency, productivity and value-added exports. It was a cultural shock for many Australians to know that Australia was not a ‘European’ economy; that it has been an inefficient economy importing most of its advanced technology to support a small population that has all along lived off the exploitation of natural resources. The central principle of ‘Australian Settlement,’ that a strong state would always protect the living standards of its population, gave way to market logic.

As market-oriented ideas and policies gained respectability and acceptance at the policy level, it left large segments of population without traditional economic benefits and social values of a community. While export-based interests benefited from liberalised economic regime, the manufacturers, farmers and those producing for domestic consumption lost. Labour, the traditional constituent of the Australian Labour Party was the worst sufferer; so were indigenous people, women and the immigrant groups. In such a scenario, immigration came under attack from both the government and the public. Free marketers attacked public welfare as perpetuating ‘dole dependence’ and immigrants for draining state’s financial resources. Those facing unemployment and low income also blamed the immigrants for their loss of jobs and low living standards, deterioration of urban amenities and rising crime rates.

In the general elections held in 1996, the conservative John Howard came to power by appealing to, what he called, ‘Middle Australia.’ It were those who had bore the brunt of economic adjustment without getting any benefit from it. As he embarked on further economic liberalisation, Howard turned against immigration and ethnic minority groups as a source of economic malaise, urban crime and degradation of urban civic amenities. He appealed in a conservative-populist manner. His nationalist rhetoric was directed at the Aboriginals, the multicultural discourse and immigration. In doing so, he was competing for the same ideological-political space with the anti-immigration right-wing forces symbolised by the rise of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation party.

13.6 IMMIGRATION AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

To the domestic milieu against immigration and ethnic minority groups, certain international developments in the 1990s had also contributed to the 'compassion fatigue' in Australia. The internal wars in the Balkans and African continent produced many more displaced and refugees in the 1990s. 'Humanitarian' interventions by the US and its allies had led to the acceptance of many more temporary migrants and refugees. Australia had to do it in the case of East Timorese. Added to it was the growing number of less welcome category of economic immigrants who were victims of economic dislocation and deprivation in their home countries. By 1990s, the 'compassion fatigue' had become very strong. Given the economic hardships faced by a large proportion of Australian population, anti-immigration feelings were competitively exploited by Pauline Hanson and the ruling Liberal-National coalition. This is since when annual immigration targets began to be regularly trimmed and greater preference came to be given for immigrants bringing in capital and professional skills.

The terrorist events of 9 September 2001 have brought a new round of denunciation of immigration and ethnic minority groups. Immigration and refugees have come to be seen increasingly from the perspective of national security. For the government, the hard-line nationalism fits in snugly with the borderless world of the globalisation. The 'others', mainly Muslims, are being demonised as posing a threat to the Australian territorial integrity and also its political and cultural security. Maintaining national sovereignty and protecting national borders were the reasons given for the government's hard-line policy towards the asylum seekers on board the Norwegian ship Tampa in 2001. It is not the number of asylum seekers – who represent less than 0.01 per cent of all arrivals in Australia – but the political virulence and popular fear psychosis, which is out of all proportion to the actual number of arrivals, which is noteworthy. Howard government has militarised the immigration and refugee question by enacting what is called the 'Pacific Solution,' which involves long period of detention and quarantine beyond and out of Australia on a couple of islands in the Pacific. Strip-searching, tough prison terms, intimidating and curbing the human rights of 'arrivals' – all in violation of international treaty commitments of Australia – are part of the 'securitisation' of immigration and refugee policies. Since majority of those arriving illegally in Australian waters since 1999 are from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, detainees have been often conflated with 'terrorists'. As a result, detention has acquired a new military and cultural rationale. The Bali bombing of October 2002 which led to the death of several hundred Australian tourists in the Indonesian tourist resort turned the public opinion against immigrants and refugees especially from the Muslim countries and in support of hard-line policies.

In the wake of Bali bombing and Australia's participation in the US-led 'coalition of the willing' attack on Iraq, much is being insisted upon the religious differences in the domestic discourse on immigration and refugees. Australia, like many Western countries, has somehow come to hold the view that Muslim minorities, because of their specific religious and cultural practices, are not 'integrating' with the 'national mainstream.' They are blamed for holding on to 'illiberal' practices; which invariably include the use of head-scarf by Muslim women, arranged and sometimes forced marriage, honour-killing etc. There is no attempt to find out whether these practices are sanctioned in religion; or the way all immigrants gradually modify and give up many of the things from their 'cultural baggage.' Moreover, there is no consensus on the meaning either of 'integration' or 'national mainstream'; or on what precisely integration policies seek to attain; and what an integrated Australia should look like? In other words, while multiculturalism is being looked at critically, even disdainfully, it is not clear whether there is an alternative to multiculturalism in a society that has become highly diverse.

In 1999, the federal government had adopted the term 'Australian multiculturalism', stressing upon the word 'Australian' and asserted the importance of social cohesion and allegiance and responsibility to Australia. Three aspects of 'Australian multiculturalism' are important:

- i) **Cultural Preservation:** It means that while Australian government ensures economic and cultural well being of immigrants, and they in turn would owe their primary allegiance to the Australian polity. A fall-out of the policy is the decline in government funds for cultural preservation. It is argued that cultural matters are issue of choice and not policy; and those who wish to preserve and promote their culture may do so by raising their own resources.

- ii) **Religion and Public Life:** In the 1990s, religion was not the central issue in the debate on multiculturalism. Religious diversities were part of ethnic differences. Since 9/11, however, religious differences are seen as important. The 400,000 Australian Muslims have experienced a growing wave of social hostility, much of which is focused on those from West Asia and those who wear distinctive Muslim dress. Incidents such as the Bali bombing have led to violent incidents against Muslims. Much worse, local problems of violence and organised crimes take on dimensions of religious conflict.
- iii) **Economic Transformation and Human Capital:** In its earlier meaning, multiculturalism had meant that governments will not allow discrimination and economic inequality to grow along ethnic and racial lines. In recent years, this kind of a commitment has waned. With market economic approaches dominating the policy making, many ethnic groups, who had entered Australia as poor and with low level of education and skills, are getting ghettoized as low-income, high-unemployment and violence-ridden under-classes.

In short, 'Australian multiculturalism' is conservative and market-oriented. It is no more considered a desired social policy to bring about social cohesion and national integration while respecting diversities. The market-oriented version stresses on assimilation in the spirit and meaning in which the word 'assimilation' was understood in the era before the Second World War. There is a stress on the 'core' Anglo-Celtic values which are vaguely understood as support for democracy, individual freedom and Christian ethos. It is assumed that Muslims, and may be others too, are not prone to imbibe and practice such liberal values. For ethnic groups, who have been at the margin of the economy, the changes in public policy and discourse of recent years have only incensed inter-group hostility, systemic disadvantages and discrimination, and a reduced level of incentive to interact across cultural boundaries for fear of rejection. 'Australian multiculturalism' is conservative and controlling of cultural differences. Such posturing and policy perspective create an Australian polity that is high-handed towards immigrants and socially disconnected with ethnic minority groups. In the general elections held in 2004, multiculturalism was not even mentioned in the election programmes by the Liberal and the National parties. As for the Australian Labour Party, it has ceased to have a policy on the subject since 2000. In the foreign policy realm, immigration has been subjected to cultural considerations, which in turn, is linked to 'West's' view of non-Western peoples and their cultures.

13.7 SUMMARY

In cultural terms, Australians think of themselves as a Western society—all through their history, as a White settlers' society; and since the 1970s, as a multicultural albeit and still a predominantly Anglo-Celtic one. After the Second World War and, more particularly from the 1970s, as immigrants began arriving increasingly from Asian countries – Japan, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Afghanistan, Iran and Lebanon etc.—the claim that Australia is a European English-speaking country began facing certain challenges. Favourable economic conditions, large open spaces and low population density have attracted immigrants and refugees mainly from Indo-China, South East Asia and South Asia. The Australian immigration authorities do admit that "business globalisation has resulted in a major flow of people who often do not intend to stay in Australia permanently." In short, 'Australian multiculturalism' is conservative and market-oriented. It is no more considered a desired social policy to bring about social cohesion and national integration while respecting diversities. Cultural preservation, religion and public life and economic transformation and human capital constitute the core ingredients of the Australian multiculturalism though of late, it has raised crucial security issues. It is, to say precisely, transforming according to the developments that are taking place in and around the world.

13.8 EXERCISES

- 1) Explain the features of contemporary immigration to Australia.
- 2) Write a brief note on Australian immigration policy and war on terrorism.
- 3) Explain briefly 'Australian multiculturalism'.
- 4) Identify the worldwide pattern and trends in immigration under globalisation.

13.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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