

## Iran's Brain Drain Crisis

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Our perspective on the huge flow of migrants is mostly related to people's pursuit of better life in developed countries. The main source of income, prosperity and stability of the countries around the globe are their citizens, especially competent ones, and their loss provokes a fracture. Third World countries rank first in the number of migrants where the majority of people unwillingly leave their home because they are no longer able to endure due to political and economic crises. Among developing countries, Iran occupies the highest loss of talent, in other words, brain drain, where an enormous number of educated and skillful people leave the country. Every year more than 150,000 people migrate and this estimation has grown three times over the past three years. The main destinations for Iranian immigrants are the United States (32%), Canada (14%) Germany (11%), the United Kingdom (6%), and other developed countries. Majority of them are permanent migrants whose intention to return to their home country was estimated at only 10 percent. In this matter, the departure of educated and qualified people costs Iran 60 billion US dollars a year. At first glance, it may seem that a brain drain disaster in Iran is inevitable, though there are several ways of addressing this issue.

Studies indicate that due to political, economic instability and high levels of unemployment, many Iranians are likely to leave. Iran's brain drain has taken root after the revolution in 1979 where thousands of Iranians were coerced to move to Western countries because of the destructive revolution. Mass migration persisted and consequently has led to economic stagnation. The crisis worsened the situation when Iranian political leaders proposed new curricula for schools based on Islamic principles, thereby eliminating the Western style of education. On top of that it took almost three years to promote and develop the new education system and during this period schools

were closed. In this regard, Islamization has put a lot of pressure on people, peculiarly teachers and researchers, where it has become a big obstacle to their effectiveness. Government repression, numerous restrictions, and constant adverse intervention have greatly affected the loss of well-educated and professional personnel. Moreover, unscientific curricula and the absence of highly qualified teachers led to a bigger problem-inadequate education. This chain of issues caused a deficit of human capital and resources for the functioning of educational institutions. Consequently, except working personnel, thousands of students who were willing to strive for high quality education departed from Iran.

The state of conflict in Iran during eight years destroyed Irani infrastructure, damaged agricultural, oil and gas sectors, deteriorated many industries and caused high unemployment. Iran was in the process of rebuilding after the revolution and imposing policies to tackle problems, but there was a war with Iraq, which dealt it a double blow. Apparently, there was another migration flow, and this time it was more persistent. Apart from the brain drain crisis, exports of oil and gas which Iranian government relied on were eliminated. As it appears, the Iran-Iraq war has affected all the major sectors of Iran that drive the economy and generate the country's revenue. People have once again witnessed that the socio-political status of Iran is unstable and it is better for them to leave. In this matter, Iranian migrants are appealed by career prospects abroad, higher education, good salaries and better living standards.

In developing countries, low incomes and salaries do not allow people to meet their basic needs. Moreover, it becomes problematic when a country is not capable of creating job places. Iran's unemployment rate has been estimated to be 12.7 percent in recent years. Thereby, only 20 percent of Iranians have a possibility to get a job while others do not have access to the main source of revenue. Recent estimates examined that 40 percent of Iranians are involved in professional and managerial positions and the rest in administrative roles. It shows that Iranians are more likely to have better lives and professional job prospects abroad that causes persistence. Thus, unavailability of job opportunities is one of the push forces behind the brain drain crisis of Iran.

At first glance, it might seem that Iran's brain drain disaster is hard to attain,

however there are several potential policy recommendations that can overcome the crisis. Iranian government must propose new political and economic reforms to ensure stability in the country. To put it plainly, policies should be updated in accordance with Western principles rather than Islamic ones, since they are paramount driving factors of the brain drain crisis. To a possible extent, there has to be a democratization process in major institutions of the country where people will not experience oppression. This would mean that Islamic rules and norms should be excluded from governmental institutions. Apart from that, Iran must advance exports of oil and gas due to their immense impact on economic growth. It is eager to appeal to international oil companies and thus increase the number of foreign investments. Additionally, if companies and factories would be launched to increase exports to foreign states, this may boost employment opportunities. To sum up, I strongly believe that there is a high chance to fight the crisis if all the above highlighted actions are taken.

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