

North america immigration



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Mexican immigration to USA The Mexican immigration to North America started long back in 1850. Over the period 1850 to 1880 around 50000 Mexicans came to North America as migrant workers to work in building railroads. Their destination was California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah; all were primarily Mexican territories that were surrendered to USA following the Treaty of Gaudalupe (1848). (Head) Texas and Illinois soon became popular destination for Mexican Immigrants. Such immigration was mostly illegal and carried out in search of job. However they were valued as a source of cheap labour and the issue of illegal immigration was over looked. The pace of migration rose from 1910 following the Mexican revolution. Around fifty thousand Mexicans migrated to USA each year from that period till 1929. The reason of migration was higher availability and opportunity of Job in USA than in Mexico. Jobs in USA also offered a higher wage rate than that in Mexico. To tame this inflow, in 1929 around 2 million Mexicans were forcefully deported back to Mexico. In 1942 during the Second World War considering the Mexicans as a cheap source of labour again looked profitable and a programme named Bracero was formed by USA and Mexican officials that paved the way for legal status for the Mexican immigrants as guest labourers.

Obviously the Mexican labourers working in USA under that programme were bereft of any labour protections that were extended to USA labourers. The same set up has been maintained till 1986, however not in papers rather through verbal and mostly under the table agreement. In 1986 USA government gave amnesty to 3 million uncited Mexican labourers and were given all possible rights that a USA labour enjoys. However, owing to the high demand of undocumented Mexican labourers from corporations for the

lesser burden on corporations regarding wage and rights, their number kept on growing. (Head)

Mexican immigrants in USA registered and unregistered

(Passel)

According to the 1990 census of United States of America the documented Mexican population was 4.3 million that rose to 9.8 in 2002. The undocumented population of Mexicans in USA grew at a faster rate; it was 2 million in 1990 and 5.3 million in 2002. The projected number of Mexican immigrant in USA would be 13 million by the end of 2010.

(migrationinformation.org) A striking change has taken place in terms of destination of the Mexican immigrants in USA. The traditional destination areas mentioned previously are gradually getting replaced by states like “Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee” (Passel) as the proffered location of Mexican immigrants. In these states the Mexican immigrants mainly take part in “poultry processing, light manufacturing, and construction.” (Passel) “Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Wisconsin” (Passel) are also becoming popular among Mexican immigrants. They get indulged in “pork, beef, and turkey” (Passel) processing. Delaware, Maryland and Colorado are other states that are experiencing astronomical growth of Mexican immigrants.

The Mexican immigration to USA is intra continental migration, led voluntarily by both push (lack of job opportunities in Mexico) and pull (higher employment opportunity, better wage) factors. Some explanations of Ravenstein forwarded explaining migration do hold for Mexican immigration in USA. Considering the close geographical proximity of Mexico to USA the Mexicans only move short distance and that towards the centre of absorption

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that is USA. Whether the Mexican migrants leave a gap at their homeland that gets full filled by migrants from remote districts of Mexico is beyond the scope of this research. Earlier, the Mexican immigrants used to get absorbed in California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Texas and Illinois so the dispersion was low. Later they got dispersed in other USA states since the level of migration increased manifold and could not be absorbed by the previous preferred destinations. Therefore dispersion and absorption are inversely related. The compensating counter current of migration as mentioned by Ravenstein is absent and considering the gap of growth and development between USA and Mexico it is quite justified.

Since Mexican migrants have spread in many states of USA irrespective of the proximity to border area, therefore it is true that they have made quite a distance in search of better prosperity. Most of the Mexican immigrants get absorbed in primary sector in USA or as unskilled labour so Ravenstein's law of migration that natives of town are less migratory than that of rural area might be true, since primary sector mainly flourishes in rural area. However this is not conclusive without a proper empirical prove. Ravenstein also mentioned that females migrate more than the males that is not true for Mexican immigrants as in 2004 they represented only 42% of the total registered immigration from Mexico. (Fry, 5) Ravenstein's laws of migration mostly do not hold for Mexican immigrants to USA, since Ravenstein formulated those laws based upon migration trend within United Kingdom and so his theory fell short of explaining the intra continental migration of this type. (Corbett)

References

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