

BEYOND BORDERS: UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIETAL AND POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION IN INDIA

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Abstract: India has been a significant source of human resources for many countries. However, it has also emerged as a destination for migrants from the African continent and neighboring Asian countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar, seeking education and work opportunities. However, this influx of migrants and immigrants has led to various social problems and political challenges that require urgent policy attention. Within the host country, immigrants often face unfavorable conditions, uncertainty, and instability. The social problems resulting from migration and immigration in India encompass poverty, acculturation, education, housing, employment, social adjustment, and family difficulties. These challenges demand a comprehensive understanding and effective policy measures. In addition to the social issues, immigration and migration have significant political consequences. Questions arise regarding political inclusion, political liberties, effects on political stability, and potential implications for conflicts and wars. It is essential to address these political aspects to ensure a harmonious and sustainable social and political environment. This paper delves into a thorough analysis of the social problems and political challenges arising from immigration and migration within India. It takes into account both international immigration and internal migration, providing a holistic perspective on the issue. To tackle the identified social problems and political challenges, this paper proposes policy statements that prioritize the interests of all stakeholders involved, including the host country, the country of origin, local communities, and the immigrants and migrants themselves. The aim is to foster an inclusive and cooperative approach towards addressing these issues effectively.

Keywords: immigration, migration, political challenges, social problems, India.

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INTRODUCTION

The antiquity of immigration and migration has been associated with human civilizations since ancient times. In current scenarios, the extent, duration and consequences of migration across national borders seem challenging and complex (Brooks, Waters 2011: 18). During the 21st century, the reasons for migration and the surge of refugees, immigrants, asylum-seekers and forcibly displaced peoples range from civil wars; to political and economic crises and the search for educational leadership for social justice (Brooks, Normore, Wilkinson 2017: 682). In the process of immigration and migration, several social, political, economic and cultural challenges emerge for immigrants and host countries. According to the data of OHCHR¹ (2021), an estimated 281 million people, approximately 3.6 per cent of the world's population, currently live outside their country of origin, many of whose migration is characterized by varying degrees of compulsion.

For several centuries India has had a long history of migration and has not always been the origin of migration but host also. Throughout various historical periods, i.e. The Aryans, The Mughals and The Europeans, people from distant parts of the world came to India with varying intentions. In a study (Khadria, Kumar 2015: 65-71), expedites India has been receiving large numbers of immigrants, mainly from the neighbouring countries of South Asia and some from other parts of the world. Hence, she needs to be seen as a major immigration country. She has attracted most migrants from the African continent and neighbouring Asian countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar for education and work. The other reasons a country receives a considerable number of immigrants include human rights violations, persecution, poverty, and conflict. The researchers (Khan, Arokiaraj 2021: 49) argue that the significant drivers of migration from or within India are prevailing unemployment conditions, a competitive labour market and enhanced livelihood prospects.

In 2019, just under 80 per cent of the 14 million international migrants in Southern Asia originated from other coun-



tries in the sub-region (UN DESA 2019). Major migration corridors include Bangladesh-India, Afghanistan-Pakistan, India-Pakistan and Nepal-India; however, it is essential to note that these corridors are all quite distinct, reflecting a range of historical and contemporary economic, security and cultural factors. Millions of Bangladeshi and Nepalese labour migrants are currently working in India (Srivastava, Pandey 2017). India is the primary recipient of the population flow in the region, both refugees and migrants. In the process of immigration and migration to and within India emerge various social problems and political challenges. In a study Isaias (1989: 225-231) elucidates that the difficulties caused by immigration require humanitarian aid, intervention, and supervision at national and international levels. Migration inevitably gives rise to various social, political, economic, and cultural challenges in host countries. India, too, has encountered such circumstances due to migration from neighboring nations. A study (Roy, Pramanick 2021: 351-383) explores the significant change in education, societal status, political participation, and cultural assimilation is prominent before and after immigration among Bangladeshi migrants to India. Roy and Pramanick further explore the problems experienced during living by the immigrants in both places (Bangladesh to India) are different, i.e., religious discrimination at the site of origin and socio-economic and political issues at the destination.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This theoretical research paper introduces, evaluates and explores a set of frames for understanding social problems and political consequences of migration and immigration. Weiner (1993: 1737-47) elucidates that the population flows across the boundaries in South Asia are driven by political and economic circumstances, which often diminish the ethnic heterogeneity of the origin country and make the countries of destination more heterogeneous. In a research, Das and Ansary (2018: 159-178) argues the significant theories of migration mainly address



the flows from an economic perspective. In contrast, some socio-political processes are also tangled with the phenomenon, which is often neglected. Ravenstein's migration theories highlighted women's significance in migration streams as early as 1885; most migration research, analysis, and theory remained fixed around the figure of a migrant man for almost a century afterwards (Kofman, Raghuram 2022: 281-294). Consequently, this paper provides an empirical and up-to-date analysis of the social problems and political consequences associated with migration and immigration.

This study takes into account both international immigration and internal migration within India. By adopting a holistic perspective, this study recognizes that migration can take various forms and occur at different scales, influencing different aspects of society and politics. This approach helps in understanding the interconnectedness of various issues and their implications. Nevertheless, the paper explores the various social problems that arise due to migration and immigration in India. It encompasses issues such as poverty, acculturation, education, housing, employment, social adjustment, and family difficulties faced by immigrants and migrants within the host country. This component delves into the challenges faced by individuals and communities and their impact on societal cohesion. Furthermore, the next aspect of the framework addresses the political consequences of migration and immigration in India. It examines questions related to political inclusion, political liberties, effects on political stability, and potential implications for conflicts and wars. This section emphasizes the need to consider the impact of migration and immigration on the political landscape and governance.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this article is qualitative in nature, which allows for the collection of data and an in-depth understanding of natural actions and trends. Extensive research was conducted by analyzing related articles, journals, government



reports, and books to examine the social challenges and political consequences associated with immigration in India. The collected qualitative data was thoroughly analyzed to identify recurring themes. The primary research method used was content analysis, which is analytical and exploratory in nature. The identification of themes followed a six-step process: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up.

The study's structure is based on three main themes. The first theme explores the social problems related to migration and immigration in India. The second theme delves into the political consequences arising from immigration and migration. The third main theme provides valuable suggestions and proposes a way forward. By adopting a qualitative research approach with content analysis, this study can gain a deeper understanding of the complex issues related to immigration and migration in India, paving the way for informed policy recommendations and actions to address the social and political implications of migration.

REASSESSING THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

The social challenges of international migration are traditionally at the center of discussions about the immigration discourse. The native residents in the host countries are largely unfavourable to newcomers because they associate them with increased stress in the labour market, larger loads on the social infrastructure, a rise in crime and ethnocultural conflicts, and an overall deterioration in living and working conditions of the native population (Tsapenko 2015: 563-585). In a study, Van Mol and de Valk (2016: 31-55) explores globally countries increasingly controlled entries of foreigners, and migration became an important topic in national political and public debates. Social problems with increasing unemployment arise due to the economic recession, including hostility, racism, and xenophobia towards certain "visible" groups of resident migrants. The social problems that stem from immigration and migration



are numerous in calculations. Studying social issues and their response in the USA, Dail (1988: 441-452) argues social problems resulting from migration to and within the United States, including poverty, acculturation, education, housing, employment, social adjustment, and family difficulties.

Migration in Southern Asia has been determined by large-scale international and internal movements caused by political, economic and sub-regional social developments, which still shape migration patterns (MDP 2021). India has a predominant share of internal migration and is also the top origin of international migrants (De 2019; UNDESA 2020; Khan, Arokkiaraj 2021: 49). Most migrants to India are from South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, and Burma). In India, migration from neighbouring countries poses various threats and creates challenges at societal and political levels. While discussing the drawbacks of immigration Shah (2008) claims immigration can become a social/political issue, where racism can be used to exploit feelings or as an excuse for the current woes of the local population.

Educational challenges

Within the global world, migration and immigration are becoming hot political topics. In this regard, education is key to providing citizens with a critical understanding of the issues involved. It can support information processing and promote cohesive societies, which are especially important in a globalized world (UNESCO 2018). Besides, a lack of native language proficiency is an educational disadvantage to migrants. Proficiency facilitates socialization, relationship-building and a sense of belonging. Lack of proficiency increases the risk of discrimination, bullying and low self-esteem (OECD 2018).

Primarily, immigration to northeastern and southern parts of India has created significant implications, particularly in demography, socio-political environment, and economy (Mayilvaganan 2019: 25-42). Factors that influence or hinder immigrant educational opportunities and make it a complex subject include issues of diversity and identity, language and culture,



and dislike by the host community. A study (Raj 2018: 23) argues that immigrants from Sri Lanka, particularly youth and adolescents, are the primary victims of unemployment, health hazards, lack of educational support, different forms of abuse, and inadequate power over their lives. This research further explores migrants from Sri Lanka who have insufficient educational facilities in India. Education to international migrants is vital for getting a job of their choice in the host country. Budría and Martínez-de-Ibarretab (2021: 102-145) expand host language proficiency can ensure immigrants against the risk of ending up in unsuitable jobs. There are complications for migrants crossing borders by illegal means. The migrants who enter India from Bangladesh severely threaten national security and challenge the respective societies' social harmony and economic well-being (Mayilvaganan 2019: 35).

International migration is a powerful symbol of global inequality in terms of wages, labour market opportunities, education or lifestyles. In a study, (Mehrotra 2020: 32-39) argues several social mega-challenges posed by potential migrants in India, including employment, urbanization and education. On the other side, internal migration has critical implications for policymakers on all fronts, including social, economic, political, and linguistic factors. Providing access to a high standard of education poses a significant obstacle for children whose parents are internal seasonal migrants. Within India, migrant children face considerable educational disadvantages, as they fall into a marginalized category. The right to education for these children is compromised due to the disruptions caused by their parents' seasonal and temporary migration, preventing them from attending school regularly. Moreover, with a rising trend of children and adolescents embarking on independent migration to pursue work and educational prospects, the challenges concerning their education are expected to persist.



Immigration and employment crises

The social issue for both international migrants and internal migrants' unemployment is a serious concern. The link between education and employability became closer when education was identified with development. Education creates employability, one of the most potent instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability (Cheong et al. 2015: 2253-2270). At different levels of governance (global, national, local), migration for employment is closely watched.

In a study, Lee (1966: 47-57) argues as per the theory of migration, push and pull factors play an essential role in the movement of people from a lacking region to a prosperous region. For Bangladeshi immigrants, India exerts pull factors such as better employment opportunities. While poverty, subsistence living, and ravages caused by natural calamities in Bangladesh act as push factors (Hugo 1996: 18; Dakua et al. 2021: 21-38). What makes immigrant's concerns high is job stress. Adli et al. (2021: 1-7) discuss that immigrants are usually considered more vulnerable to focus in the host country. Immigrant abuse in the working environment is not uncommon in the form of excessive workloads, low pay, overqualification, and poor working conditions. In the workplace, immigrant employees encounter employer discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and immigration status. There is a considerable lack of research on unemployment among immigrants in India. A research (Takenoshita 2016: 563-585), elucidates that little is known concerning what shaped the unemployment of immigrants in institutional settings outside of North American and European countries.

Numerous studies argue that Sri Lankan Tamils and Rohingyas show to be progressively integrated in local society (Tamil Nadu, India) and have been capable of fulfilling some important basic livelihood needs, especially regarding employment and education (Radhakrishnan et al. 2022: 778-792).



Housing problems and social adjustment

The debates are always there in research discourses about the challenges faced by immigrants and migrants in various senses. Immigrants and migrants in host communities are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, racism and xenophobia, which can further interfere with their ability to secure sustainable and adequate living conditions. Without proper housing and a lack of social adjustment, the migrants and immigrants in India are inclined to fall prey to the adverse mental health impacts of various traumas created by multiple factors. In a study, Jesline et al. (2021: 231) highlight various factors such as “abject poverty, malnutrition, cultural bereavement, loss of religious practices and social protection systems, malalignment with a new culture, coping with language difficulties, changes in identity, substance abuse, poor access to health-care, in addition to the poor living conditions and financial constraints”, as a result of migrating to a new state (Choudhari 2020).

In the internal migration, seasonal migrants are forced to reside in informal settlements such as slums, shanties etc., at times compelled to inhabit footpaths, open spaces, parks etc. They are reeling under the threat of forceful evictions and harassment by the police. They lack access to basic amenities such as water, electricity, sanitation and sewage management, adversely affecting their well-being and productivity.

In one of the studies on housing patterns of internal migrants in India, Mahadevia et al. (2012: 143-163) argue India does not have a formal policy for controlling migration to cities as any Indian citizen. A rural or an urban resident is free to migrate to any part of the country as often as s/he wants to and access subsidised urban services. Urbanisation immediately brings the housing issue for the recent low-income migrants to the Indian cities. Social adjustment implies adjusting people in the new society from their traditional society and how they adapt to the new environment along with their associated social activities (Das, Das 2014: 5-13). Migrants and refugees to India face hurdles in social adjustment. Their income pattern is not enough to meet the standard of urban living, and migrant children are highly susceptible to school because of their moving transactions.



Gendered migration

There are diverse reasons women migrate from their home country to host stations. May it leave behind poverty, conflicts and wars, climatic catastrophe, gender-based violence (deeply rooted) and gender inequalities. Many studies have given other reasons for gendered migration, like educational opportunities, better living standards, and new employment opportunities. In a study, Morokvašić (2014: 355-378) argues that women and men not only engage in migrations and mobility differently, inducing differential impact on those who remain non-migrants, but their movements are better understood in the light of hegemonic/contesting femininities and masculinities. Over the past 25 years, international migration theories have failed to address gender causes and gender-specific migration experiences (Jolly, Reeves 2005). The researchers of feminist ideology in the 1970s and 1980s questioned the invisibility of women as migrants, their presumed passivity in the migration process and their assumed place in the home (Boyd, Grieco 2003).

In earlier research, the gender dimension of migration in India was neglected because migration was highly seen as a male movement and women as residuals or dependent followers in the process (Bhatt 2009: 90). In the sub-continent of India, forced and trafficked migration of women is a contentious matter. Sahu (2022: 185-204) argues sexual exploitation is the most commonly identified form of human trafficking, about 80 per cent of all trafficking cases (UNODC database). West Bengal shares international boundaries with three neighbouring countries, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, through which continuous population migration has occurred. It has served as a source and receiving state for women trafficking within these countries.

The social, political and economic life of women in India has been strictly restricted to the social setup. They are not given a chance to nourish and explore all their faculties. The construction of gender roles by patriarchy places men and women at different levels in social and economic life. A study (Donato et al. 2006: 3-26) argues as it is critical to understand the role of gender in every aspect of economic life, migration is not an exception because there exists a differential inclination



to migrate for men and women. However, much research explores the dynamics of gender and international migration in developing and developed nations. However, such kind of studies is limited in the Indian context. Rao and Finnoff (2015: 485-505) elucidate that most studies in India focused on the pattern of marriage migration. Women primarily in India migrate due to marriage or tend to settle down with the earning member of the household, unlike in South-East and East Asia, where female migration tends to occur due to pulling factors generated by labour-intensive industrialisation. Despite its significance, systematic research on gender and inter-state out-migration in India has been severely limited due to the lack of nationally representative data (Ali et al. 2016: 22).

UNRAVELING THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

In terms of political upheaval, the most significant single bilateral flow in South Asia occurred in 1947, when the partition of the Indian subcontinent took place, and in 1971 when Bangladesh became independent (Raj 2020: 23). The political consequences of international migration encompass several key dimensions, primarily revolving around three aspects: political economy consequences, impact on conflict, and institutional effects. Within these dimensions, there is a specific focus on political institutions, as well as nationalism and citizenship. Apart from social issues, political challenges encompass a wide range of aspects, including political inclusion, questions surrounding political liberties, impacts on political stability, considerations of citizenship and security, as well as the potential for war and conflict. However, there are various possible effects of international and internal migration on sending countries. In a study Kapur (2014: 479-502) discusses multiple variables affecting and producing consequences of international migration, tabulated below.

The reality, perception, and inquiry into the political inclusion of migrant workers have garnered substantial attention, particularly concerning international migration. The primary question often employed to gauge migrants' political inclusion is whether they are counted as voters. A significant contribution



Tab. 1: *Different Variables in International Migration.*

Dependent variables in the study of international migration	
Levels of analysis	Household, subnational, national, international
Economic effects	Human capital, poverty, inequality, entrepreneurship, macroeconomic stability, financial flows
Political effects	Institutional effects, regime effects, clientelism, public services, voting behaviour, conflict (intra and interstate)
Social effects	Family, gender relations, fertility

Source: Kapur 2014.

made by Sharma et al. (2018: 1-17) elucidates a large number of migrants are unable to participate in the electoral process, both at the source and at the destination. Further, another study showed higher rates of political exclusion of seasonal migrant workers in India (Sainath 2005). This was the first research to bring the political exclusion of seasonal migrant workers in India to public notice.

In India, migrants face political underrepresentation and exclusion, inducing political marginalisation. The reasons for migrants' political exclusion have many roots. One primary reason is the inattentiveness of urban political elites (Gaikwad, Nellis 2021: 1129-1146). Gaikwad and Nellis (2021: 1131) argue onerous registration requirements impede the political incorporation, and thus the well-being, of migrant communities in fast-urbanising settings. Regulations and administrative procedures exclude migrants from socio-political rights and access to legal requests (Sharma, Jose 2020: 6). International migration can improve political institutions through multiple direct and indirect channels. Lodigiani (2016: 307) argues international migration can improve institutions in several ways, including the transfer of political norms; voting from abroad; financial remittances; return migration; and lobbying activities from abroad.



Amidst a multitude of concerns, the cross-border immigration of populations in South Asia is deemed an impulsive challenge. This affects internal security, political stability, and international relations, and not only the structure and composition of the labour market, which has seized the attention of heads of governments in the region and has often been the basis for bilateral negotiations (Raj 2020: 23). Politically, transnational migration can be regarded as a threat to a country's security and stability. Scholars have expedited migration across borders in various studies, causing danger to both human safety and national security (Thompson 2013: 11). The question of how international migration creates threats to states and citizens is well discussed by Myron Weiner (1993: 1737-47). Through a transnational perspective, he shows how the sending and receiving forms are linked by security challenges (Ullah et al. 2020: 136-153).

India, in South Asia, has been at the receiving end of the problem of illegal immigration from Bangladesh (Kumar 2011: 109) and other neighbouring countries. Unchecked migration, as a result of lax immigration control, along with high fertility rates, rampant and uncontrolled migration flows, volatile ethnic (including religious) rivalries, and haphazard urbanization, can contribute to extremism. This can occur especially in rising economic expectations, weak infrastructure, and resource shortages (Nichiporuk 2008: 23). The menace of illegal migration in India can be contained by seeking cooperation from neighbouring countries in identifying the flows of unchecked migration. Besides, citizenship becomes an issue while receiving transnational illegal migrants. Historically migration is the process that shapes citizenship and social structure. The Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016, in India aimed to amend the Citizenship Act 1955, acknowledging specific categories of illegal immigrants, categorized by religion and country of origin. On December 11, 2019, it was enacted as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA). According to the CAA, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Parsis, and Sikhs who had migrated from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, or Pakistan to India before 2014 are no longer considered illegal immigrants and can more easily attain citizenship. However, the CAA excludes Jews and Muslims from the six religions granted special privileges, effectively



endorsing a discriminatory policy against some section in India (Hausman 2020). Consequently, resulted into violent clashes. In a study (Parthasarathy 2020) expedites the objections to the clauses in the CAA and the movements of resistance have sparked discussions on broader matters of justice, equality, and secularism. Critics argue that the CAA could undermine the secular essence of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees non-discrimination and equal treatment for all religious communities.

Host states argue that the higher immigrant presence brings negative externalities such as increased insecurity. Internal conflict is considered an essential non-economic push factor of migration in low-economic countries, leading to insecurity. Numerous researchers argue that immigration has moved beyond humanitarian, economic development, labour market and societal integration concerns, raising complex interactive security implications for governments of migrant-sending, receiving and transit countries and multilateral bodies (Lohrmann 2000: 8). In a nexus between intentional migration and security, Ullah et al. (2020: 140) argue though migration and security are not entirely separable, not all migration results in security instability. In India northeast is considered one of the most vulnerable regions. So far, migration from nearby neighbouring countries has been considered. Internal displacement of persons (IDPs) is an emerging issue in the northeast region. In a study, Nath (2005: 57-72) argues keeping in view the strategic location of Northeast India in South Asia, sharing borders with Bangladesh, Myanmar, China and Nepal, the question of IDPs will not always remain internal to the nation-states. There is always a chance that due to lack of attention, there might be a spillover across the borders, affecting peace in South Asia. In one of the interviews, former Foreign Secretary of India Muchkund Dubey narrated “India faces threats to its security from almost all its neighbours. The spillover of domestic ethnic conflicts, large-scale illegal migration or the base they provide for terrorism directed against India”.

The security dilemma facing host nations becomes particularly strong when there is doubt about the long-term consequences of immigrant activities, and “offensive” posturing could be attributed to the intention of immigrants. According



to Alexeev and Hofstetter (2006: 1-32), immigrants' actions will be considered as "offensive" if they fail to return to their home country (and remain illegally) or bring over their families (and friends) to increase their stake in local resources and obtain greater political freedom. This is further compounded by doubt about the intention of the immigrant-sending country, which may also encourage immigration to undermine the sovereignty of the receiving country deliberately. Therefore, the conflict and security dilemma resulting from immigration could upset the social order and lead to political instability.

INDIAN IMMIGRATION GLOBALLY

Indian immigration refers to the movement of people from India to other countries for various reasons, including employment, education, family reunification, and seeking better living conditions. Indian immigrants have a significant presence globally and have made substantial contributions to the countries they have settled in. India has a longstanding history of international migration, with Indians residing in 199 countries, as per data from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in 2018. Notably, India holds a prominent position globally, being the top recipient of foreign remittances, as estimated by the World Bank (Ranjan 2020: 5).

Bortolazzi and Khan (2023) in a study elucidates India has emerged as the primary source of the largest annual outflows of migrant workers to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The significance of GCC countries as a destination for migrants is evident from the substantial increase in total migrant stock in these nations, which rose from 8.9 million in 1990 to 22.3 million in 2013. This shift has significantly bolstered economic relations between India and the GCC, reaching a level of importance that cannot be overstated and continuing to gain momentum over the years. Moreover, the presence of the Indian immigrant population has played a crucial role in influencing the economic transformation, reform, and sociopolitical atmosphere across the Gulf region.



India has a significant proportion of internal migration, and it is also the primary source country for international migrants. There are numerous difficulties and obstacles that Indian immigrants are encountering when moving to and settling in a host country. These challenges can vary based on factors such as the destination country's immigration policies, cultural differences, economic opportunities, political regimes and the individual circumstances of the immigrants. However, the challenges intensified as the pandemic (Covid-19) unfolded in 2019, governments worldwide implemented lockdowns and travel bans as essential measures to combat its spread and contain its impact. The immigrants were worst hit by this pandemic with an unparalleled crisis characterised by widespread uncertainty, countless deaths, a severe economic downturn, soaring unemployment rates, mandated quarantines, inevitable lockdowns, and widespread travel bans (Jesline et al 2021: 231).

India's extensive diaspora is dispersed among several prominent countries of destination, where the United Arab Emirates (UAE) accommodates the highest number of Indian migrants, totaling 3.5 million. Following closely, the United States (US) hosts 2.7 million migrants, while Saudi Arabia shelters 2.5 million migrants from India. In addition to the UAE, the US, and Saudi Arabia, other countries also play a significant role in hosting a substantial number of migrants from India. These countries include Australia, Canada, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, and the United Kingdom (UK). Each of these nations provides a diverse range of opportunities and draws Indian migrants seeking various prospects, such as education, employment, and better living standards (UNDESA 2020).

THE WAY FORWARD

The process of immigration and migration may adversely affect the host country's social, political and economic structures. It is essential to deal with all the challenges of governing policies and stability measures. Governments, from time to time, must do everything possible to facilitate the integration of migrants into the host communities and societies. In many



pieces of research, it is highlighted that the effects of immigration are highly contingent on where, when, how, and who. Therefore, for countries like India, regulating mobility is vital.

The instant migrants and immigrants are forced to reside in informal settlements like slums, shanties etc. and most of the time compelled to inhabit footpaths, open spaces, parks etc. They are reeling under the threat of forceful evictions and harassment by the police. Therefore, they lack access to basic amenities (water, electricity, sanitation and sewage management), adversely affecting their well-being and productivity. The government should develop policy options for not only instant migrants but all immigrants equally, with low pay rents and the appropriate housing model for seasonal migrants and immigrants from sending country.

In many refugee-receiving countries, essential issues have been raised by policies and programmes to promote humanitarian migrants' incorporation into the labour market (Benerdal 2021: 175) and the creation of employability. It is worth mentioning here that receiving states should make vigilant efforts to enhance immigrant incorporation into the labour market, address deficits and harness resources. A critical challenge in immigration to India includes gendered migration, particularly in the women trafficking sense. Some states in India have served as a source and receiving states for women trafficking. It is high time for policy formulators to commit to eliminating all direct and indirect forms of discrimination against women (at all stages of migration) by any person or organisation. Immediately they should develop a gender-responsive, human rights-based migration policy.

Political exclusion of migrants and long-term immigrants has remained one of the leading outcomes of migration. Most of the research poses a critical question in political inclusion: do migrants vote? In India, every voter is issued a voter ID, which has a unique number and certifies their right to vote. Without a voter ID or name on the voter list, a person is not eligible to vote. In this direction Election Commission of India is planning for remote voting. Remote voting refers to a mechanism that allows electors to vote from locations other than polling stations assigned to their registered constituencies – either within



the country or even abroad – as the Election Commission focuses on the importance of “inclusiveness” in polls. It has stated that a committee will be set up to examine the issues of migrant voters. Similarly, the host country should take all possible steps to include migrants in politics at different levels.

Illegal immigration has remained a threat to India’s internal security. However, attempts have been made to prevent illegal migration, but they are relatively weak. India has numerous options to stop this menace; diplomatic effort, financial incentives, coercive diplomacy, better border management, etc.

CONCLUSION

Migration and immigration in the Indian subcontinent have a long history. India is receiving many migrants from neighbouring countries and immigrants from the African continent. No doubt, migrant workers and their families contribute to the economic growth of the destination state/country. However, with the mobility of people comes externalities and challenges. In the migration discourse, social and economic difficulties have been at the center of migration flows from the original state to the host country. Political marginalisation and exclusion have always remained contentious consequences of migration. Immigrants in India who suffered systematic discrimination, disenfranchisement, and targeted persecution at destination states have profound security implications for the host country. Furthermore, the political inclusion of interstate migrants demands political will and efficient policymaking.

India has millions of immigrants on its soil; they battle chaotic challenges and issues, including poverty, unemployment, access to health services, gender-based violence etc. However, some refugees are supported by the government (refugees from Tibet, Sri Lanka, etc.), and some are aided by the UNHCR (refugees from Myanmar, Afghanistan, etc.). This disparity leads to a difference in identity documents, wherein the ones procured by the latter are usually not accepted by the host nation, leading to further segregation in the humanitarian response to the migration.



NOTES

¹ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, commonly known as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) or the United Nations Human Rights Office, is a department of the Secretariat of the United Nations that works to promote and protect human rights that are guaranteed under international law and stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

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