Human Migration in India

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Why in News?

According to the **International Migrant Stock 2019** report (released by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), India with **17.5 million** international migrants has emerged as the top source of international migrants, constituting **6.4%** of world's total migrant population.

Human Migration

- Human migration is the movement of people from one place in the world to another. People can either choose to move **(voluntary migration)** or be forced to move **(involuntary migration).**
- **The International Organization for Migration** (The **United Nations** Migration Agency) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an **international border** or **within a state** away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of :
  - **Person's legal status**
  - Whether the movement is **voluntary or involuntary**
  - What the **causes** for the movement are
  - What the **length of the stay** is

Factors

Migration is a **global phenomenon** caused not only by economic factors but many other factors like **social, political, cultural, environmental, health, education** are included under the broader classification of **Push and Pull factors** of migration:

Push-factors Countries of origin	Migrants	Pull-factors Countries of destination
⇒ Population growth, young age structure ⇒ Inadequate educational institutions, medicare and social security	Demographic factors and social infrastructure	⇒ Stable population, population decline, demographic ageing ⇒ Welfare state benefits, educational institutions, medicare, social security
⇒ Unemployment, low wages ⇒ Poverty, low consumption and living standard	Economic factors	⇒ Labour demand, high wages ⇒ Welfare, high consumption and living standard
⇒ Dictatorships, shadow democracy, bad governance, political upheaval ⇒ Conflict, (civil) war, terrorism, human rights violation, oppression of minorities	Political factors	⇒ Democracy, rule of law, pluralism, political stability ⇒ Peace, security, protection of human and civil rights, protection of minorities
⇒ Ecologic disaster, desertification, lack of natural resources, water shortage, soil erosion, lack of environmental policy	Ecological factors	⇒ Better environment, environmental policy, protection of natural resources and environmental protection
⇒ Decisions of the family or the clan ⇒ Information flows, media,	Migrant flows and migrant stocks	⇒ Diaspora, ethnic community ⇒ Information flows, media, transferred picture of

- **Push Factor:** Push factors are those that **compel** a person, due to different reasons, to leave a place of **origin** (out-migration) and migrate to some other place.
- **Pull Factor:** Pull factors indicate the factors which **attract** migrant (in-migration) to an area (destination).
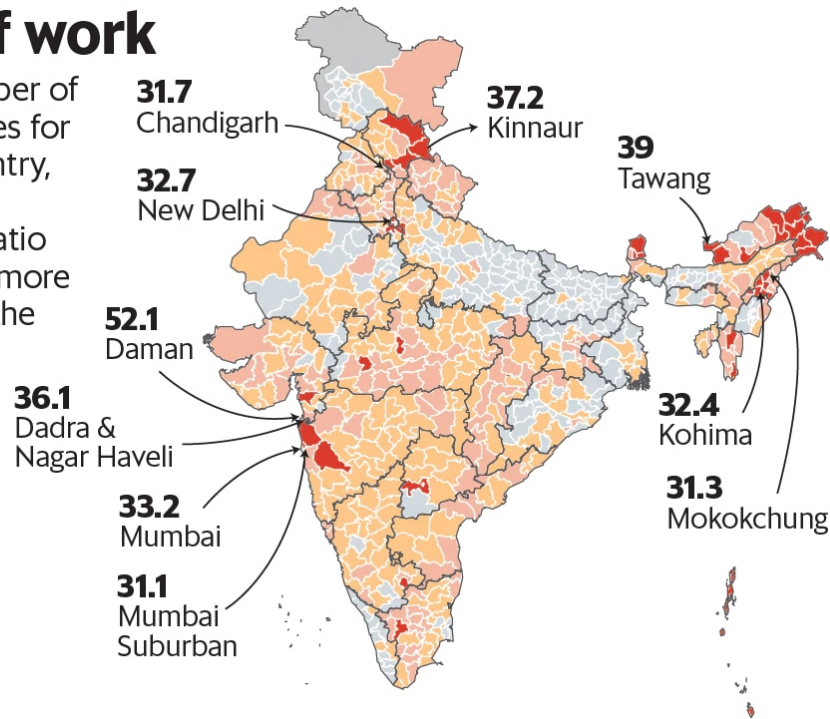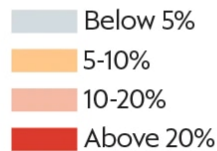
Types

People move for many reasons, based on which types of human migration include **internal migration** (moving within a state, country, or continent) and **external migration** (moving to a different state, country, or continent).

Internal Migration

In search of work

Despite a large number of people moving places for work inside the country, there are only a few districts where the ratio of such migration is more than 20%. Here are the top ten districts.

Those migrating for work/business as % of total migrants

- Below 5%
- 5-10%
- 10-20%
- Above 20%

31.7 Chandigarh

32.7 New Delhi

52.1 Daman

36.1 Dadra & Nagar Haveli

33.2 Mumbai

31.1 Mumbai Suburban

37.2 Kinnaur

39 Tawang

32.4 Kohima

31.3 Mokokchung

- **Types:** Internal migration in India is primarily of two types:
  - **Long term Migration,** resulting in the relocation of an individual or household.
  - **Short term Migration,** involving back and forth movement between a source and destination.
- **Key Source States:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh.
- **Key Destination States:** Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Karnataka.
- **Internal Migrants** in India constitute a large population of 309 million internal migrants or **30 percent** of the population (Census of India 2001).
  When a person is enumerated in the census at a different place than his / her place of birth, she/he is considered a migrant.
- **Female Migration:** Out of the total internal migrants, **70.7 percent** are **women** (Census of India 2001) and **marriage** is one of the major reasons for **female migration** in both the rural and urban areas.
- **Male Migration:** Migration for **employment-related** reasons is one of the prominent reasons for **male migration** in both rural and urban areas.
- **Employing Sectors:** Migrants are mostly employed in **subsectors** like construction, domestic work, textile, brick-kilns, transportation, mines, quarries, and agriculture.
- **Urbanization:** Rates of urbanization influence **rural-urban wage** differences and an increase in the demand for labor in urban areas can push up urban wages and **increase migration.**
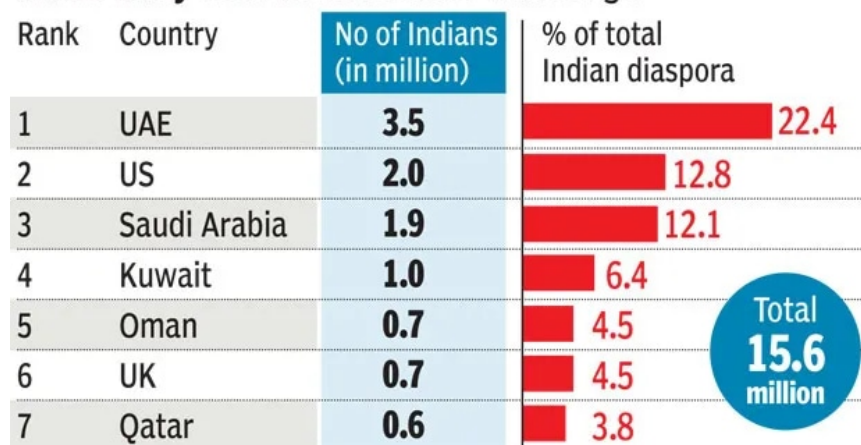
Facts and Figures

- The **Constitution of India (Article 19)** gives the right to all citizens "to move freely throughout the territory of India and to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India.
- As per **Census 2011,** 45 million Indians moved outside their district of birth for economic opportunities (be it employment or business).
- In India, **internal migration** (fueled by an increasing rate of urbanization and rural-urban wage difference) is far **greater than an external migration.**
    - India's urban population is expected to grow from 410 million in 2014 to **814 million by 2050.**
- Instead of long term migration, there is a huge flow of short term migrants in the country.

External Migration

External migration in India can broadly be classified as:
- **Emigration** from India to various parts of the world.
- **Immigration** of people from different countries to India.
- **Refugee Migration:** There had also been a significant trend of an involuntary or forced immigration to India in the form of refugees.

Home away from home: Where Indians go

Rank	Country	No of Indians (in million)	% of total Indian diaspora
1	UAE	3.5	22.4
2	US	2.0	12.8
3	Saudi Arabia	1.9	12.1
4	Kuwait	1.0	6.4
5	Oman	0.7	4.5
6	UK	0.7	4.5
7	Qatar	0.6	3.8

Total 15.6 million

International Migration and Global action

- In 2016 the United Nations General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and prepared the report **"Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants".**
- United Nations member states adopted the **New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,** which commits to protect the safety, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status.
- As a result of the New York Declaration, UN Member States agreed to cooperate in the elaboration of a **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,** adopted at an intergovernmental conference on international migration in December 2018 in Morocco.

- Every year, 8th December is celebrated as **International Migrants Day.**

Causes

- **Employment:** Basic reasons for intrastate, interstate (migration from rural to urban areas, urban to urban areas) and external migration can be attributed to the search for better employment in industries, trade, transport, and services.
  - **Seasonal Migration:** People seasonally migrate for employment in different areas and different industries.
    - For example, significant numbers of people from drought-prone regions migrate seasonally to work in brickmaking, construction, tile factories, and agricultural work.
  - **Circular Migration or Repeat Migration** is the temporary and usually repetitive movement of a migrant worker between home and host areas, typically for the purpose of employment.
- **Education:** Due to the lack of educational facilities at their place of residence, people migrate to urban areas in case of internal migration and other countries in the case of international migration for better academic opportunities. By 2020, India will become the world's largest pool of young people, in contrast, there is a lack of opportunities for employment in India, this leads to the emigration of qualified people.
- **Lack of security:** Political disturbances and inter-ethnic conflicts are also one of the reasons for internal and external migration.There can also be forced displacement due to reasons like wars, and internal political instability.
- **Marriage:** Marriage is one important social factor for internal migration and in case of intra-state migrants majority of the migration is from one rural area to another, due to marriage in the case of females.
- **Environmental and Disaster-Induced Factors:** There are migrants who are forced to move from rural to urban areas or from one country to another as a result of an environmental disaster in the form of drought, floods, heatwaves etc, that might have destroyed their homes and farms.

Impact

Positive Impact

- **Labour Demand and Supply:** Migration fills gaps in demand for and supply of labor, efficiently allocates skilled labor, unskilled labor, and cheap labor.
- **Economic Remittances:** Economic well being of migrants provides insurance against risks to households in the areas of origin, increases consumer expenditure and investment in health, education and assets formation.
- **Skill Development:** Migration enhances the knowledge and skills of migrants through exposure and interaction with the outside world.
- **Quality of Life:** Migration, enhances chances of employment and economic prosperity which in turn improves quality of life. The migrants also send extra income and remittance back home, thereby positively impacting their native place.
- **Social Remittances:** Migration helps to improve the social life of migrants, as they learn about new cultures, customs, and languages which helps to improve brotherhood among people and ensures greater equality and tolerance.
- **Food and Nutrition Security:** According to the 2018 State of Food and Agriculture report by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), outmigration often leads to improved food and nutrition security for migrants.
- **Demographic Advantage:** As a result of outmigration, the population density of the place of origin is reduced and the birth rate decreases.
- **Climate Change Adaptive Mechanism:** Migration has also emerged as a possible adaptive mechanism in the context of climate change and the occurrence of extreme weather events like floods, droughts, and cyclones.

Migrants and the SDGs

- The **2030 Agenda** (with core principle to **"leave no one behind,"** including migrants) for Sustainable Development recognizes for the first time the contribution of migration to **sustainable development.**
- 11 out of the 17 **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) contain targets and indicators that are relevant to migration or mobility.
- The SDGs' central reference to migration is made in **target 10.7,** to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Negative Impact

- **Demographic Profile:** Emigration in large numbers can alter demographic profiles of communities, as most of the young men move out, leaving only the women and elderly to work on the land.
- **Political Exclusion:** Migrant workers are deprived of many opportunities to exercise their political rights like the right to vote.
- **Population Explosion and the Influx** of workers in the place of destination increases competition for the job, houses, school facilities etc and a large population puts too much pressure on natural resources, amenities, and services.
- **Illiterate and Underskilled Migrants** are not only unfit for most jobs, because of a lack of basic knowledge and life skills but are also prone to the victimization of **exploitation, trafficking, psychological abuse,** and gender-based violence in the case of female migrants.
- **Increased Slum:** Mass Migration results into an increase in slum areas, compromising quality of infrastructure and life at the destination, which further translates into many other problems such as unhygienic conditions, crime, pollution, etc.
- **Brain Drain:** Source state suffers from the loss of human capital.

Challenges

- **Inclusion and Integration of Migrants:** Internal migration is not viewed positively in India and policies are often aimed at reducing internal migration, as a result, there is a **lack of integration of migration** with the process of development.
- **Psychological and Emotional Stress:** Any person migrating to a new country faces multiple challenges, from **cultural adaptation** and **language barriers** to **homesickness** and **loneliness.**
- **Employment challenges:** Foreign labor migrants often face unacceptable treatment from their employers. For instance, some labor migrants are paid below their contract wage and may be forced to work long hours and denied regular time off. Systems like reservation of jobs in many states and countries for the locals(visa barriers in US, Saudi Arabia's Nitaqat law) pose as the main hurdle.
- **Contract Wage System:** The problems faced by migrants in destination countries range from contract violation, non-payment of salary, long working hours, and poor working conditions.
- **Health Hazards:** The poor and harsh living conditions coupled with difficult and risky working conditions, lack of information, and lack of medical health support also leads to several health problems of the migrants.

- **Lack of Information:** In spite of the challenges and problems faced by the migrants in the destination countries, low tendency to seek assistance from the diplomatic missions in the destination countries were also observed due to lack of knowledge, information about the role of diplomatic missions, trust and effectiveness to enhance access to justice.

    For internal migrants also there is the **Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979),** enacted to prevent migrant workers from being exploited, but it is rarely invoked and the penalty is minimal.

- **Exclusion from social benefits:** The need to provide proof of address, ration cards, Voter IDs and Aadhaar cards, which is difficult due to the fluidity of their lives, deprive them from accessing welfare schemes and policies.

Way Forward

- **The Human Development Report** by United Nation Development Programme (2009) highlights that migration is integral to the process of human development and it plays a very important role in achieving sustainable development goals, thereby preventing migration could even be counterproductive.

- **The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** has highlighted that the policies and programs facilitating the integration of migrants at the destination remain weak at best or non-existent and suggested the inclusion and integration of migrants in development.

  > **Making Work Decent for Migrants**
  >
  > - Help workers make informed choices
  > - Protect human rights and workers' rights at source and destination
  > - Protect workers against exploitation to prevent them from getting into forced labour or human trafficking
  > - Reduce costs of labour migration
  > - Regulate placement agencies and agents
  > - Integrate migrants in the development agenda of states and/or cities
  > - Build positive public perception of migrants

- Hence India needs to formulate migration centric **policies, strategies, and institutional mechanisms** in order to ensure inclusive growth and development and reduce **distress induced migration,** thereby increasing India's prospects for poverty reduction and achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

- The government at Centre needs to provide amenities and social securities for the migrant population which is riddled with the issues of inadequate housing; low-paid, insecure or hazardous work; extreme vulnerability of women and children to trafficking and sex exploitation etc. For instance, schemes like **Kerala government's** Aawaz health insurance scheme, **Apna Ghar project** -accommodation for migrant workers, Portable Rights- ensures the basic rights to workers in their respective home state, even as they labour in other states.

For Mind Map