



Perspective: Human Migration: Reasons & Impact

For Prelims: Human Migration, International Organization for Migration

For Mains: Significance of Migration, Role of Indian Diaspora in India's Economy, Challenges to Migration, Need for a migration-centric policy.

Why in News

[Human migration](#) and mobility is an age-old phenomena touching almost every society around the world. However things have changed over time in various ways.

Key Points

- **About 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.
 - Examining the shifts in scale, direction, demography and frequency can help understand how migration is evolving. It can further lead to effective policies, programmes and operational responses on the ground.
- **Factors Determining Migration:** A broad range of factors determine the movement of people. It can be **either voluntary or forced movements** as a consequence of the increased magnitude or frequency of disasters, economic challenges and extreme poverty or conflict situations.
 - In more recent years, the [Covid-19 pandemic is also one of the major causes of Migration](#).
- **Push and Pull Factors of Migration:** Push factors are those that compel a person to leave a place of origin (out-migration) and migrate to some other place such as - **economic reasons, social reasons, lack of development of a particular place**.
 - Pull factors indicate the factors which attract migrants (in-migration) to an area (destination) such as **job opportunities, better living conditions, availability of basic or high level facilities etc.**
- **Gradual Increase in Migration:** From an economic perspective, migration over the last several years is seen due to **change in the paradigm of production processes**, services rendered and due to **increase in demand and opportunities** in different economic jurisdictions.
 - Migration has **evidently increased since the 1980s** because of the new paradigm of production processes and the evolution of skill sets has facilitated this process.

Migration and India

- **Migration at Global Level and Related Initiatives:** As of 2020, approximately **281 million people were international migrants**, representing **3.6%** of the total global population.
 - The **International Migrants Day** is celebrated annually by the UN on **18th December** to raise awareness about the challenges and difficulties of international migration.
 - The theme for the **International Migrants Day 2021** was '**Harnessing the**

potential of Human Mobility'.

- The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** recognizes for the first time the contribution of migration to sustainable development.
 - 11 out of the 17 SDGs contain targets and indicators relevant to migration or mobility.
- **India and Inter-Country Migration:** India is the **largest migrating country** and has been supplying a highly skilled labourforce in many countries. By 2018, people from India **migrated to about 193 countries**.
 - The Indian diaspora outside India is supposed to be the most vibrant. It contributes to the local communities' economies in many ways and also **repatriates the funds**.
 - Indian migrants to other countries, in this way, **create a win-win situation** for both India and the country where they migrate.
 - Although slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic, repatriated funds from inter-country migration has made a **remarkable contribution to India's GDP**.
- **Contributions of Indian Diaspora:** Indians have played a major role in **providing assistance in countries like Kenya or Uganda** where there have been disturbances/ conflicts.
 - Indian businessmen, though in a small number, are **generating local jobs contributing to the local economy** as well as serving them beyond providing jobs.
 - Organizations led by the Indian diaspora in various countries, during the Covid-19 pandemic, also **served by distributing oxygen concentrators or providing free services like food kits**.

Significance of Migration

- **Labour Demand and Supply:** Migration **fills gaps in demand for and supply of labor**, efficiently allocates skilled labor, unskilled labor, and cheap labor.
- **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**.
- **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.
- **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.

Challenges Related to Migration

- **Issues faced by Marginalised Sections:** The people who are economically rich and sociologically accepted widely (such as upper caste in India or white in the Western countries) find it quite easier to move and get easily accepted into other societies.
 - Whereas the people who are poor or belong to a **marginalised section do not find it as easy to get into many of these countries** and even if they get, they might not be able to mix up.
- **Socio- and Psycho-logical Aspects:** Many times, the host countries **do not easily accept the migrants** and they always **remain as a second class citizen**. So, the confidence level of interaction is also affected.
 - Any person migrating to a new country faces **multiple challenges, from cultural adaptation and language barriers** to homesickness and loneliness.
- **Exclusion from Political Rights and Social Benefits:** Migrant workers are deprived of many opportunities to exercise their political rights like the **right to vote**.
 - Moreover, 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

- **Migration-Centric Policies:** Migration is integral to the process of human development and plays a very important role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals, thereby **preventing migration could even be counterproductive.**
 - 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.
- **Role of State Government:** The **India Center for Migration,** a research think-tank to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) can play a major role in finding out the ways to train and orient the people who are willing to migrate inter-country.
 - Also it shall be the responsibility of the state governments (as Employment is a subject under the State List of Indian Constitution) to monitor that the **international migrants are smoothly working in other countries.**
 - The Central Government shall also assist the former to play a rather proactive role in training and orienting the people from employment perspective.
- **Bringing Behavioural Changes:** There is a need to have more fluidity in the immigration and immigration policies that allow for easier transfer of human capital.
 - Moreover, it is time to move away from the old paradigms in which migration and immigration is primarily thought of as some sort of refuge and realise that migration is vital to human development.

Conclusion

- There are various factors responsible for migration and most prominent amongst them are socio-political, economical and environmental.
- It is important to understand how this process of migration is beneficial to both the origin country as well as the destination country and that's where comes the need for having a **more inclusive policy vis-a-vis migration.**