



Migration in Bengal Delta

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Recently an international study titled **Deltas, Vulnerability and Climate Change: Migration and Adaptation (DECMA)** was published.

- The study found that the economic reasons are the precipitating factor for migration in the Indian Bengal Delta and most migrants are in the age group of 20-30 years.
- The study, held between 2014 and 2018 focusing on three deltas Ganga Brahmaputra Meghna Delta (India and Bangladesh) Volta (Ghana) and Mahanadi (India) looks into the aspect of climate change, adaptation, and migration in these deltas.

Findings of The Report

- **Reasons for Migration in Delta**

- The study which covers the district of South and North 24 Parganas reveals that 64% of people migrate because of economic reasons, unsustainable agriculture, lack of economic opportunities and debt.
- 28 % of the migration from the region is for social reasons and about 7% for environmental reasons like cyclones and flooding.

- **Gender Disparity in Migration**

- The study finds a huge gender disparity in the migration out of Indian Bengal Delta, with men outnumbering women by almost five times.
- It shows that of the people migrating 83% are men and only 17 % are women.
- While most of the men migrate due to economic reasons, women do so, driven by mostly social factors.

- **Destination of Migration**

In terms of the destination of migrations, the study finds that 51% of migration from the Indian Bengal Delta is to other areas of the State particularly to the city of Kolkata, 10% to Maharashtra, 9% to Tamil Nadu, 7% Kerala and 6% to Gujarat.

- **Type of Migration in Delta**

- 57% of migration is seasonal, where people move once or twice a year.
- 19% is circular where those migrating move thrice a year irrespective of reasons.

- 24% of migration is permanent where people intend to stay for at least six months in the place they are migrating to.

What is Migration?

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. It can be over a short or long distance, be short-term or permanent, voluntary or forced, intranational or international.

Pull Factors

A pull factor is a feature or event that attracts a person to move to another area.

Push Factors

Push factors are those that drive people away from their place of origins.

Causes of Migration

- **Economic factors**

- **Push factors**

- Unemployment or lack of employment opportunities
- Rural poverty
- Unsustainable livelihood

- **Pull factors**

- Job opportunities
- Better income and prospects for wealth creation
- Industrial innovation and technical know-how for a new industry
- The pursuit of specialized education

- **Sociopolitical factors**

- **Push factors**

- Political instability
- Safety and security concerns (ethnic, religious, racial or cultural persecution)
- Conflicts or threat of a conflict
- Inadequate or limited urban services and infrastructure (including healthcare, education, utilities, transport and water)

- **Pull factors**

- Family reunification
- Independence and freedom
- Integration and social cohesion
- Food security
- Affordable and accessible urban services (including healthcare, education,

utilities, and transport)

- **Ecological factors**
 - **Push factors**
 - Climate change (including extreme weather events)
 - Crop failure and scarcity of food
 - **Pull factors**
 - The abundance of natural resources and minerals (e.g. water, oil)
 - Favorable climate

Types of migration

Migration can be classified in several ways. It is usually categorized:

- **By political boundaries**
 - **Internal migration** – Migration occurring within a country from crossing political boundaries, either within a state or between states, whether urban to rural, urban to urban, rural to rural, or rural to urban.
 - **International migration** – Migration occurring across country boundaries. Such migrants are known as immigrants (coming into a foreign country) and emigrants (leaving their own country)
- **By movement pattern**
 - **Step migration:** Migration initiating from a small settlement and moving to a larger one in the urban hierarchy over the years. Such as movement from a farm to a village, then to a town and subsequently to a suburb (if applicable) and finally into a city.
 - **Circular migration:** Cyclical migration experiences between an origin and a destination with at least one migration and return.
 - **Seasonal migration** is a very common form of circular migration, driven by seasonal peaks in labor demand, mostly in agriculture.
 - **Return migration** refers to a one-time emigration and returns after an extended stay outside the host territory.
 - **Chain migration:** Migration of families at different stages of the life cycle from one location to the next, who subsequently bring people from their home location to this new place.
- **By decision-making approach**
 - **Voluntary migration:** Based on a person's free will, initiative and desire to live in a better place and to improve their financial status, among other factors.
 - **Involuntary migration:** Based on a person's being forced out of their home due to certain unfavorable environmental and political situations.

Benefits of Migration

- The areas of destinations benefit due to the reduction in the cost of production, availability of the human resource, rising productivity, size of consumer and capital market.
- At the same time, areas of origin also benefit through the flow of remittances, information, and innovations influencing the households and people left behind.

Issues Related to Migration

- **Low-quality jobs:** Migrants mostly dominate the low-paying, hazardous and informal market jobs in key sectors in urban destinations, such as construction, hotel, textile, manufacturing, transportation, services, domestic work etc.
- **Access to employment:** Certain states have introduced domicile requirements with regard to employment. This puts migrants at a disadvantage.
- **Housing and sanitation:** One of the key issues with regard to housing is poor supply, for both ownership and rental. Short-term migrants do not have access to short-duration accommodation. So migrants live in overcrowded colonies in unhygienic conditions.
- **Exploitation and intimidation:** Usually migrants are exploited at the behest of the majoritarian native population, they are the target of social profiling, stereotyping, abuse and are made to work under exploitative conditions with no social security cover. e.g. Gujarat migrant crisis.