

## An Assessment of Involuntary Migration in India: Understanding Issues and Challenges

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**Abstract :** India is among the nations born out of partition that led to one of the greatest forced migrations that marked the past century. The Indian subcontinent got partitioned into two nation-states, namely India and Pakistan. This led to an unexampled mass displacement of people accounting for about 20 million in the subcontinent as a whole. This exemplifies the socio-political version of displacement, but there are other identified reasons leading to human displacement viz., natural calamities, development projects and people-trafficking and smuggling. Although forced migrations are rare in incidence, they are mostly region-specific and a very less percentage of population appears to be affected by it. However, when this percentage is transcribed in terms of volume, the real impact created by such migration can be realized. Forced migration is thus an issue related to the lives of many people and requires to be addressed with proper intervention. Forced or involuntary migration decimates peoples' assets while taking from them their most basic resources and makes them migrate without planning and intention. This in most cases proves to be a burden on the destination resources. Thus, the question related to their security concerns arise profoundly with regard to the protection and safeguards to these migrants who need help at the place of destination. This brings the human security dimension of forced migration into picture. The present study is an analysis of a sample of 1501 persons by NSSO in India (National Sample Survey Organisation), which identifies three reasons for forced migration- natural disaster, social/political problem and displacement by development projects. It was observed that, of the total forced migrants, about 4/5th comprised of the internally displaced persons. However, there was a huge inflow of such migrants to the country from across the borders also, the major contributing countries being Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Gulf countries and Nepal. Among the three reasons for involuntary migration, social and political problem is the most prominent in displacing huge masses of population; it is also the reason where the share of international migrants to that of internally displaced is higher compared to the other two factors /reasons. Second to political and social problems, natural calamities displaced a high portion of the involuntary migrants. The present paper examines the factors which increase people's vulnerability to forced migration. On perusing the background characteristics of the migrants it was seen that those who were economically weak and socially fragile are more susceptible to migration. Therefore, getting an insight about this fragile group of society is required so that government policies can benefit these in the most efficient and targeted manner.

**Keywords :** involuntary migration, displacement, natural disaster, social and political problem

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