

# Migration, Climate Change and Sustainable Development

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**Abstract**—*The history of the world is of migration. All of us and our ancestors or forefathers had come from somewhere and now placed somewhere else. Migration is one of the most recurring phenomena in this ever-changing world. Most factors led to migration of people from one place to another are due to climate change, social, political, religious, economic and ethnic conflict issues. India is vulnerable to climate change because of the global warming and therefore experience climate change migration or people migrating because of climate induced phenomena such as natural disasters. Therefore, climate change creates migration, accelerate climate change will rise the scale of flows, both internal and cross border. Such migration can have positive and negative effects on both the local coping capacity and the environment from where these migrants originates as well as in their temporary and permanent destination. There is a very close interrelation between migration, climate changes and the environment. Just as environment causes can lead to migration, the immigration of people can have considerable impact on the destination country. This leads to the issues of development, especially of the sustainable kind, human security, survival strategies, identity and cultural preservation etc.*

*So, the main purpose of this paper is to show the possibilities of migration on sustainable development and different ways to achieve sustainable development. And various issues of climate change associated with migration where an attempt is made to show the present scenario of climate change and migration.*

**Keywords:** *Migration, Climate change, Environment, Sustainable Development.*

## Introduction

**Migration** since time immemorial has been an integral part of the human civilization. Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihood is a key feature of human history. Migration, climate change issue is popular and often debated because of its increasing importance and relevance to the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development as well as for its influence on all regions of the world. India is no exception and therefore vulnerable to climate change because of global warming. This has led governments, social activists, human rights agencies and the citizens of nations to breakthrough over this phenomenon to bring about a positive outcome for the originating and destination nations and resolve the matter in a sustainable manner.

People migrate from one place to another because of climate induced events such as natural disasters, droughts, rising sea level, lack of sufficient rainfall for agriculture, and the like. Migration due to climate change or climate migration is an issue for concern in present time. Because the arrival of environmental migrants can burden the economic and resource base of the receiving area, promoting native-migrants contest over resources. When environmental migrants and residents belong to different groups, then migration can promote tension. Such migration can have positive and negative effects on both the local coping capacity and the environment from where these migrants originates as well as in their temporary and permanent destination.

Migration is the movement of people that has a purpose of taking up permanent or temporary residence. In modern time migration is shaped by different factors related to economic, political, social, religious, life risks, and various ethnic and socio-cultural issues. There is a very close relationship between migration, climate changes, and the environment. Just as environment causes can lead to migration, the migration of people can have considerable impact on the destination country. This leads us to the issues of development, especially of the sustainable kind, human security, survival strategies, cultural preservatives, better future etc. Migration in other side can bring a range of benefits to society. Migrants fill gap in the labor market and help counteract the damaging effects of an ageing population. They stimulate creativity and dynamism in economic and cultural life, and make a major contribution to global economic development through remittances to their home countries.

## Objectives of the Study

This paper seeks to examine various issues of climate change and environmental degradation that have the potential to displace large group of people both within and across countries. Also, this paper analyzes the possibilities of migration on sustainable development and different ways to achieve sustainable development.

## Methodology

The methodology of the paper is based on secondary data such as books, journals, newspapers, and internet.

### Causes and Types of Migration

There are many perspectives of migration like why do people migrate, how people migrate, what social, legal, economic impact migration has on the receiving and sending countries etc. the age-old debates on the issue migration have broadly classified into two categories. These causes are I) push factors include shortage of foods, high population pressure on the land, war, natural calamities, like tsunami, cyclones, earthquakes, lack of basic infrastructural facilities like health care, education and conveyance. II) Pull factors are climate, better food supply, freedom, job opportunities, education, availability of regular work and relatively higher wages, better living conditions, effective equitable administration and sources of entertainment etc. These two categories are based on the theory of migration, happening by choice or under compulsion.

In general, the field of migration study is divided into two parts i) Internal migration and ii) International migration. A migrant who crosses a migration defining boundary in the process of changing the residence and enters a given community of some other part of the same nation is an internal migrant and is termed as 'in-migrant' while the term 'immigrant' refers to an international migrant who comes from a sovereign country. The area from which a migrant departs is termed as 'area of origin' and the area at which he arrives is termed as 'area of destination'. When a large number of migrants depart from a common area of origin and arrive at a common area of destination during a particular period of time, it is known as 'migration stream'.

### Climate Change and Migration

Climate change is a significant and lasting change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. It may be a change in average weather conditions, or in the distribution of weather around the average conditions. The human induced alterations of the natural world are currently causing global warming, and 'climate change' which is often used to describe human specific impacts.

Climate change is expected to affect the movement of people in at least four ways:

- i) The intensification of natural disasters both sudden and slow onset leading to increased displacement and migration.
- ii) The adverse consequences of increased warming, climate variability and of other effects of climate change for livelihoods, public health, food security, and water availability.
- iii) Rising sea levels that makes coastal areas uninhabitable and
- iv) Competition over scarce natural resources potentially leading to growing tensions and even conflict and in turn displacement.

All these above four ways of climate change will trigger widespread population movements with unprecedented impacts on lives and livelihoods.

### Migration and Sustainable Development

The notion of sustainable development is holistic as it indicates development of both present as well as the future generation. Sustainable development refers to a mode of human development in which resources use aims to meet human needs while ensuring the sustainability of natural systems and the environment, so that this can be met not only in the present but also in the future generations to come.

Migration, both internal as well as international, can lead to sustainable development, if the issue is dealt with policies and proper strategies. It can help mitigate problems such as skill and labor force shortages as well as surpluses. Like Opening up of new avenues of supply of capital and investment, transmission of knowledge and so on. This however has to be done appropriate manner, as poor management could lead to several road blocks like imbalances in the labor market, financial lapses and uneven income distribution. This could corrode very notion of sustainable development which would be detrimental to the economy, both of the destination country as well as the nation of the origin.

### Present Condition and its Impacts

At present internal and international migration is recorded at its highest levels. People moving from one place to another place because of shoreline erosion, coastal flooding, and agricultural disruption etc. Rising sea levels, changes in rainfall, glacial melting, and extreme weather are some of the climate changes that threats various zones of the world and causes migration. Like people from rural areas started moving towards urban areas for better standard living and job opportunities. Illegal migrants are coming for the better opportunities and better standard of living due to natural calamities and climate change induced events. It is also observed that the Northeastern region has much higher growth rate of population than the rest of the country. This all are outcome of climate change and migration. Assam has long been troubled by the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh, so much so that the general feeling on that issue is that such migration could overwhelm the culture and demography of the state if proper checks are not put in place in an expedient manner.

### Positive Impacts

Migration has the potential to deliver many positive benefits for development. As migration can contribute significantly in respect of sustainable development, it can also contribute to wider developments goals such as access to education and health, the empowerment of women, poverty reduction etc.

In recent years International and Internal migration has increasingly been recognized as a positive force for development as migrants transfer knowledge and skills to both receiving and origin locations, Channel investments and

remittances, and foster economic linkages, and business opportunities between countries and regions. It is sure that carefully managed migration can promote economic growth and innovation in destination locations and poverty reductions in original locations. Moreover, if the policies implemented by the economy encourage their social and economic integration both in less developed countries and in most developed countries migration will contribute towards development of the communities. Both international and internal migration can contribute significantly to sustainable development if it is managed with forward looking policies and strategies. It can build social and political networks, help address skills shortages and provide sources of capital, investment and transfer of knowledge.

### Negative Impacts

Migration can also introduce vulnerabilities and costs for migrants, their families and sending communities. Migration poses number of challenges to migrants and their families. These can include risk to the healthy mental and physical development of children or increases in the workload of women and children left behind in countries of origin. The problem of illegal migration is also serious and it is sure that if the rapid rate of illegal migration is going on than it will create devastating effect for economy.

Again, if the implemented policies are poorly managed: through lack of legal means for movement, inadequate capture of transferred skills, and barriers to remittance flow-migration can potentially contribute to chronic labor market imbalances, chronic fiscal imbalances and severe income disparity - all of which are risks to the global economy. It will also create pressure on the labor market. So, it is necessary to maintain carefully so that migration can promote sustainable development.

### Steps for Achieving Sustainable Development

The link between migration and sustainable development has been addressed as a fundamental issue. Migration has the potential to deliver many positive benefits for development and poverty reduction for both receiving and sending countries of the world. Few steps are mentioned here to achieve sustainable development. These are i) to encourage co-operation and dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination in order to maximize the benefits of migration to those concerned and increase the likelihood that migration has positive consequences for the development of both sending and receiving countries; ii) to address the root causes of migration especially related to poverty; iii) take appropriate measures for better utilization of knowledge, skills and earnings of the returning migrants; iv) protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families, to offer adequate protection and assistance to persons displaced within their country, to find solutions to the root causes of their displacement in view of preventing it and when appropriate to facilitate return or resettlement.

Therefore, it is very clear from the above study that migration as a result of climate change creates both positive and negative effects on sustainable development. It is important to manage migration through a proper development strategy so that its benefits can be maximized.

### Conclusion

It can be concluded that migration as a result of climate change can promote sustainable development if appropriate measures, proper costs-policies, programs are taken otherwise migration will deteriorate sustainable development. It has both positive and negative impact so it needs to be facilitated through proper development strategy and a coherent policy so that its benefits can be maximized. Climate migration may become an increasing concern in the coming decades. Natural disasters are already displacing people in the twenty-first century. If no set of effective mechanisms is put in place, scientists expect these displacements to increase. In order to create such mechanisms, however, government and society must support it.

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