



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# THE GROWING MENACE OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IN EASTERN STATES - FEAR OF ALTERING DEMOGRAPHY AND PRIVILEGES FOR LOCALS.

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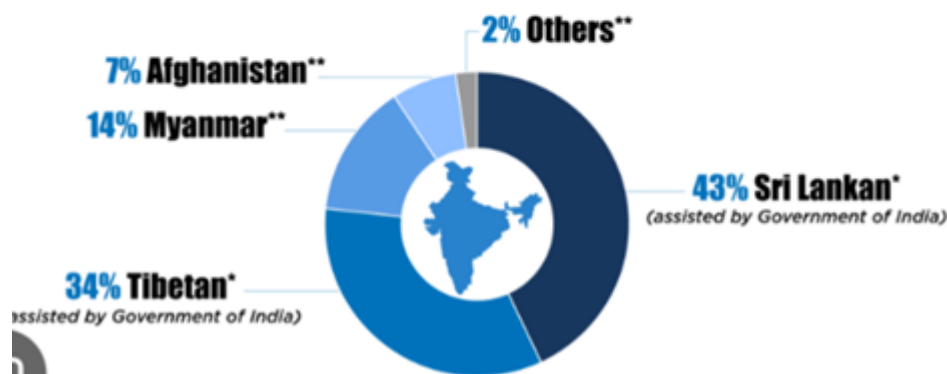
**CONTEXT:** Intensifying efforts to identify immigrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar illegally residing in Odisha, the Jharsuguda district administration recently rounded up 444 suspected foreign nationals, officials said.

## Illegal Migration

- *Illegal migration refers to trans-boundary migration of people from one country to another without valid documents, using illegal means.*
- *In Indian context, as per Citizenship Act, 1955, an illegal migrant is defined as, a foreigner who enters India, without a valid passport or other prescribed travel documents, or*
- *with a valid passport or other prescribed travel documents but remains in India beyond the permitted time period.*



**India hosts approx. 2.5 Lakh Refugees and Asylum-Seekers**



## Reasons for illegal migration

**Political and religious persecution:** This has led to refugees and illegal immigrants from Tibet, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Bangladesh finding shelter in India.

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**Overpopulation:** This may lead to crisis of living space. E.g. In countries like Bangladesh where high population density has led to illegal migration in North eastern States of India.

**Stagnant Economic Growth and Lack of Employment:** Industrialisation in India's neighbouring countries has not been able to keep pace with the growing labour force and as a result, the unemployment rate is declining. The working-age people who are unable to find jobs in the country look outside for employment opportunities.

**Better standard of living:** Real or Perceived promise of better opportunities in destination countries.

E.g., the promise of 'The American Dream' still attracts lot of migrants both legal and illegal towards U.S.A.

**Human Trafficking networks:** Smuggling of migrants is a highly profitable illicit activity with a relatively low risk of detection.

As of October 2023, 2925 illegal agents have been notified in India through the e-Migrate portal.

### **Consequences of Illegal Migration in India:**

- **Risk of Detention and deportation:** Illegal migrants face constant fear of being deported by the authorities and may also be mistreated during detention
- E.g., **Detention centres of US** for illegal migrants, are often alleged to have **poor living conditions** impacting physical, mental, social health of detainees including children.
- **Social Tensions:** Large scale illegal migration may **distort existing demography** and pose a threat to existing socio-cultural identity.
- E.g. **Threat to Assamese identity** due to illegal migration from Bangladesh has given rise to various socio-political tensions in Assam.
- **Facilitates Organized Crimes:** Often organized criminal groups are involved in smuggling migrants across borders (e.g. US-Mexico Border).
- **Political Instability:** Conflict over scarce resources, economic opportunities and cultural dominance ensues between the locals and migrants, along with the resultant political instability caused by the mobilization of popular perception against the migrants by the elites to grab political power.
- **Economic Exploitation:** Illegal and undocumented migrants lack legal safeguard and thus are prone to informal, temporary or unprotected jobs and even forced labour.
- **Violation of Human Rights:** Illegal Migrants are vulnerable to multiple inhumane conditions and criminal offences like assault, rape or extortion during their arduous journeys or at the destination region.

### **Initiatives Taken to counter illegal migration:**

- **Border management:** To restrict infiltration of illegal immigrants. Initiatives include,
- **Physical infrastructure in** the form of border fencing, floodlighting etc
- **Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS),** a technological solution to improve situational awareness along border areas.
- **Regular patrolling and anti-tunneling exercise** by Border Security Force, Assam Rifles etc. to stop illegal infiltration.

### **Global Initiatives**

- **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:** Global agreement under **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions

One of its objectives is to, 'Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration'.

- **Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air,** under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)

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