

21– 07 – 2024

News: Colombo Process

- Recently, **India has become chair of the regional grouping Colombo Process for the first time since its inception in 2003.**
- **India would lead the grouping for the period 2024-26.**

Colombo Process

- **The Colombo Process comprises 12 Asian member states and serves as a regional consultative forum. It aims to promote the sharing of best practices related to overseas employment for countries in South and Southeast Asia that send migrant workers abroad.**
- **The 12 member states include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.**
- **The founding states include Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.**
- **In the past, it has been chaired by Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.**

- The decisions under **Colombo Process** are made by consensus and are non-binding.

Objectives

- Share experiences, lessons learned and best practices.
- Consult on issues faced by overseas workers, and offer practical solutions.
- Optimise development benefits from organised overseas employment.
- Review and monitor the implementation of the ministerial recommendations.
- **Secretariat:** The **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)** provides technical and administrative support to the Colombo Process.
- The **Colombo Process Technical Support Unit (CPTSU)**, based in Sri Lanka, provides technical support to the Colombo Process in its thematic areas of focus.

Five Thematic Priority Areas

- **Skills and Qualification Recognition Processes.**
- Fostering Ethical Recruitment Practices.
- Pre-departure Orientation and Empowerment.
- Promote Cheaper, Faster and Safer Transfer of Remittances.
- Labor Market Analysis.

Achievements

- A regional workshop for employment agencies in Asia on placing workers in Europe and ethical recruitment was held in Manila (2006).
- A feasibility study to establish an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in one of the contractual labour destination countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has been completed.
- Organised the first "Asia-EU Consultation on Labour Migration" held in Brussels in 2008 attended by Colombo Process countries and 16 EU member states.

International organization for Migration (IOM)

- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organization that provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers.
- As of March 2019, International Organization for Migration has 173 member states (including India) and eight observer states.
- Formed in 1951 the headquarters of IOM is in Geneva, Switzerland.

Importance of IOM for India

- International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) latest report, 'Global Migration Report 2023', says that India continues to be the largest country of origin of international migrants with a 17.5 million-strong diaspora across the world.
- In 2022, India was the largest recipient of remittances, receiving over \$111 billion, which helped narrow the country's current account deficit.
- The top destination country remained the United States (50.7 million international migrants) followed by Germany with 16 million international migrants.
- More than half of all international migrants (141 million) live in Europe and North America.
- The top three countries of origin of international migrants – India (17.5 million) > Mexico (11.8 million) > China (10.7 million).
- The top three remittance recipients were India (\$83.2 billion) > China (\$59.5 billion) > Mexico (\$42.9 billion).
- The United States remained the top remittance-sending country (\$68 billion) followed by the United Arab Emirates (\$44.4 billion) and Saudi Arabia (\$34.6 billion).

Reasons for migration

- Economic
- Ongoing conflicts and violence
- Syria has the highest internally population of displaced people, at 6.1 million
- Impact of climate and weather disasters

Migration

- As per the International Organization for Migration's definition, **a migrant is an individual who is relocating or has relocated across an international boundary or within a state, departing from their usual place of residence.**

Forms and Patterns of Migration

- **Internal migration:** Internal migration **occurs within a country, and can be categorised based on origin and destination, encompassing rural-urban migration, intra-state, and inter-state migration.**
- **External Migration:** External migration is **also known as international migration, involves individuals or families moving from one country to another and can be driven by various factors, including economic opportunities (Indian IT professionals in the US or construction workers in GCC nations), education,**

family reunification, or seeking asylum from persecution or conflict (Rohingya in Bangladesh)

- **Emigration from India to various parts** of the world.
- **Immigration of people from different countries to India.**
- **Forced migration:** Forced migration occurs **when individuals or families are compelled to move** due to factors like war, persecution, or natural disasters.
- **Voluntary migration:** Voluntary migration involves **individuals or families choosing to relocate, often driven by better economic prospects or a desire for an improved quality of life.**
- **Temporary migration:** Temporary migration is **intended to be of short duration, such as seasonal or temporary work, whereas permanent migration involves settling permanently in a new location.**
- **Reverse migration:** Reverse migration refers to **individuals or families returning to their country of origin or original place of residence after previously migrating elsewhere.**

Reasons for Migration

Economic Factors

- **Push Factors:** Economic difficulties like **poverty, low productivity, and joblessness** serve as push factors and make people want to leave where they are

currently living, for example, farmers in Maharashtra facing low yields due to recurring droughts might migrate to cities like Pune or Mumbai for construction or service sector jobs.

- **Pull Factors:** On the other hand, **prospects for better jobs, higher pay, and a better quality of life act as pull factors and attract people to move to a different place**, for example, A young graduate from a village in Uttar Pradesh might migrate to Noida/Gurugram for a software development job due to the higher salary and the opportunity for a better life in the city.

Socio-cultural Factors:

- **Migration can be influenced by social factors such as marriage, family reunification, or the desire to be closer to one's community or social network.**
- **Examples include migration due to marriage or to escape caste-based discrimination and violence.**
- **Out of the total migrants in 2011, rural to rural migration stream accounts for about 53.8% of total migrants, where 31.3% of male, and 63.3% of female migrants and a similar pattern was observed in the 2001 census.**

Cultural factors Preservation

- People may migrate to areas where their cultural practices, traditions, and beliefs are respected and preserved.
- For example, a community might move to a region where there is a strong presence of their ethnic or religious group, allowing them to maintain their cultural identity.

Political Factors:

- Political instability, conflicts, and persecution can force individuals to migrate in search of safety and security.
- Factors such as government policies, administrative actions, and separatist movements can also influence migration patterns.

Environmental Factors

- Natural disasters, climate change impacts, deforestation, water scarcity, etc. can lead to migration by causing loss of homes, livelihoods, and resources.
- As a result, affected populations may be compelled to migrate in search of safety, sustainability, and improved living conditions.

- Some estimates suggest that India could experience significant migration of around 45 million people by 2050 due to the impacts of climate change.
- **Developmental Projects:** Projects like the Narmada Dam Project and the Ken Betwa River Linking Project lead to migration.
- For Example, Sardar Sarovar Project, a large multipurpose river project on river Narmada has displaced more than 40,000 families, primarily tribals from the 245 villages spread over three states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Impacts Associated With Migration?

Positive Impacts

Economic Growth

- Migration can contribute to economic growth by filling labour gaps, boosting productivity, and increasing consumer spending.
- Migration results in remittances from migrants, which serve as a significant source of foreign exchange for the source region.
- In 2022, India was the largest recipient of remittances, receiving over \$111 billion, which helped narrow the country's current account deficit.

Social Impact

- Migrants act as agents of social change, facilitating the spread of new ideas and technologies, such as family planning and education, from urban to rural areas.

Cultural diversity

- Migration also fosters cultural diversity and contributes to the evolution of composite cultures, broadening people's perspectives.
- Migration enriches societies by bringing multiple languages, and traditions, fostering creativity and tolerance.

Improving Quality of Life

- Migration increases employment opportunities and economic well-being, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for migrants.

Innovation

- Migrants often bring new ideas, skills, and technologies, driving innovation and entrepreneurship in host countries.

Labor Market Flexibility

- Migration can help balance labor supply and demand, particularly in sectors facing shortages of skilled workers.

Negative Impacts

Demographic Impact

- Migration causes population redistribution within a country, particularly contributing to urban population growth, however, selective out-migration from rural areas can negatively affect and leads to feminization of agriculture, particularly in terms of age and skill distribution.

Environmental Impact

- Rural-urban migration leads to overcrowding in urban areas, straining existing infrastructure and resulting in unplanned urban growth and the emergence of slums. For example, Mumbai's massive slum population, estimated at over half the city's residents, is a direct result of rural-urban migration.
- Increased traffic congestion and dependence on informal waste disposal due to unplanned settlements contribute significantly to air and soil pollution in Indian cities.

Social Tensions

- Migration may exacerbate social tensions, including competition for jobs, housing, and social services, as well as cultural clashes and discrimination.
- Migration can lead to family separation, emotional distress, and disruption of social networks, particularly when family members are left behind in sending countries.

Government Initiatives regarding Migration

One Nation - One Ration Card Scheme

- One Nation One Ration Card' scheme seeks to provide portability of food security benefits all across the nation.
- The new system, based on a technological solution, will identify a beneficiary through biometric authentication on electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices installed at the Fair Price Shops (FPS), and enable that person to purchase the quantity of foodgrains to which she is entitled under the NFSA.
- The poor migrant workers will be able to buy subsidized rice and wheat from any ration shop in the country but for that their ration cards must be linked to Aadhaar.

- Migrants would **only be eligible for the subsidies supported by the Centre**, which include rice sold at Rs. 3/kg and wheat at Rs. 2/kg, It would not include subsidies given by their respective state government in some other state.
- This scheme will ensure that no poor person is deprived of subsidized grains.
- The **Annavitran portal enables a migrant worker or his family to avail the benefits of PDS outside their district but within their state.**
- Ministry recently launched **Mera Ration app** for the implementation of One Nation One Ration Scheme.
- While a **person can buy her share of foodgrains as per her entitlement under the NFSA, wherever she is based, the rest of her family members can purchase subsidised foodgrains from their ration dealer back home.**
- To ensure that one member of a family after shifting to another place does not buy the entire family quota in one go, **a maximum limit of buying will be fixed.**
- In such cases, the **beneficiary will be allowed to buy maximum 50 per cent of the family quota.**