



Mains Practice Question

Q. Illegal migration has emerged as a critical challenge to India's internal security. Analyze the various dimensions of this issue, including its impact on demographic patterns, socio-economic fabric, and national security. **(250 words)**

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Approach

- Introduce the answer by highlighting the plight of illegal migration in India
- Delve into Dimensions of Illegal Migration in India
- Highlight its impact on demographic patterns, socio-economic fabric, and national security
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Illegal migration has become a pressing concern for India, affecting various aspects of the nation's internal dynamics.

- This issue, primarily stemming from neighboring countries like **Bangladesh, Nepal, and Myanmar**, has far-reaching consequences on India's **demographic composition, socio-economic structure, and national security**.

Body

Dimensions of Illegal Migration in India:

- **Scale:** Millions of illegal immigrants reside in India, particularly from **Bangladesh**.
- **Routes:** Porous borders, especially in the **Northeast and West Bengal**, facilitate illegal entry.
- **Push Factors:** **Poverty, political instability, and environmental disasters** in neighboring countries drive migration.
- **Pull Factors:** **Economic opportunities, cultural similarities**, and established migrant networks attract immigrants to India.

Impact on Demographic Patterns:

- **Population Growth:** Illegal migration contributes to rapid population growth in border states, straining local resources.
 - **Example:** **Assam's population growth rate** has consistently exceeded the national average, partly attributed to illegal migration.
- **Altered Ethnic Composition:** The influx of migrants changes the ethnic balance in certain regions.
 - **Example:** The **demographic shift in parts of West Bengal** has led to social and political tensions.
- **Urbanization:** Many migrants settle in urban slums, contributing to unplanned urban growth.

Impact on Socio-Economic Fabric:

- **Labor Market:** Illegal immigrants **often work in informal sectors**, potentially displacing local workers and suppressing wages.
- **Public Services:** Increased pressure on **healthcare, education, and housing infrastructure**.
 - In border districts of **West Bengal**, public hospitals report strain due to patients from across the border.
- **Social Cohesion:** Cultural differences can lead to tensions between immigrants and local populations.
 - Periodic conflicts in Assam between **Bodo tribes and Bengali-speaking immigrants**.
- **Political Landscape:** Demographic changes influence voting patterns and political representation.
 - Allegations of **vote bank politics in states like West Bengal** where parties are accused of appeasing illegal immigrants for electoral gains.

Impact on National Security:

- **Terrorism and Insurgency:** Some groups exploit illegal migration channels for anti-national activities.
 - **Example:** Investigations into terror attacks like the **2014 Burdwan blast revealed** involvement of illegal immigrants.
- **Crime and Trafficking:** Illegal migration networks often overlap with smuggling and human trafficking operations.
 - **Example:** The India-Bangladesh border is a known route for **cattle smuggling and human trafficking**.
- **Internal Security Apparatus:** Significant resources are diverted to detect and deport illegal immigrants.
 - **Example:** The complex and costly process of updating the **National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam**.

Conclusion

Addressing the issue of illegal migration requires a comprehensive approach involving **better border management, diplomatic engagement with neighboring countries, and balanced internal policies** that consider both security concerns and humanitarian aspects. The government must also focus on **economic development in border regions to reduce the appeal of illegal migration** while ensuring that genuine Indian citizens are not unfairly targeted in the process of identifying illegal immigrants.