



Illegal Indian Migration to the U.S.

For Prelims: Rise in Illegal Indian [Migration](#) to the U.S., [Global Migration](#), Minority Communities, [Discrimination](#).

For Mains: Rise in Illegal Indian Migration to the U.S., Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Over the past decade, the influx of **illegal Indian Migrants to the U.S.** has seen a remarkable increase, rising from a **modest 1,500 a decade ago to a staggering 96,917 in 2023**, as per the data from the **U.S. Customs and Border Protection**.

- The most significant surge in illegal border crossings by Indians has been witnessed since 2020, marking a departure from historically lower numbers under 10,000.
- Traditionally, the **majority of illegal crossings** occurred in the **U.S.-Mexico border**. However, Indian migrants are increasingly opting for the **northern border, with numbers rising from under 100 in 2014 to over 30,000 in 2023**.

Migrant

- **The International Organization for Migration** defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence.
 - Migration is the movement of people from one place to another, either permanently or temporarily.

What are the Reasons for Surge in Illegal Indian Migrants in the USA?

- **Push Factors:**
 - There are several push factors such as **the lack of sufficient job opportunities and economic prospects in India** prompt individuals to seek better employment prospects abroad.
 - Social conflicts or lack of confidence in the governance structure in India may drive some individuals to seek a more stable environment elsewhere.
- **Pull Factors:**
 - The US's reputation for offering better employment, higher wages, and career advancement **acts as a significant pull factor for migrants**.
 - The enticement of **quality education and prestigious academic institutions** in the

USA attracts students and families seeking educational opportunities.

- Desire to reunite with family members or relatives already settled in the USA drives **some migrants to seek illegal entry for proximity** to loved ones.

▪ **Global Migration Trends:**

- The overall rise in **Global Migration** after the pandemic has contributed to this surge, as individuals **seek better opportunities and security in different countries.**

▪ **Visa Backlogs and Alternative Routes:**

- Smugglers have **evolved their methods, offering sophisticated and in-demand services** to facilitate illegal entry into America.
- Extreme visa backlogs have **driven individuals to explore alternative**, albeit illegal, pathways to enter the USA due to the prolonged waiting times and limited options for legal entry.

▪ **Misinformation:**

- Misinformation spread through social media and deceptive travel agencies often misguide desperate migrants, **enticing them to undertake perilous journeys** guided by multiple facilitators across continents.
- Desperate migrants **might undertake complex, multi-leg journeys** passing through various continents and countries, facing numerous risks and challenges along the way.

What are the Socio-Political and Geo-Political Implications for India Over Surge in Illegal Migrants?

▪ **Bilateral Relations:**

- The issue could impact bilateral ties between India and the USA, potentially affecting trade negotiations, security cooperation, and strategic partnerships.

▪ **Economic Factors:**

- The potential brain drain resulting from skilled individuals seeking illegal entry might impact India's economy, particularly in sectors where skilled labour is in demand.

▪ **Brain Drain:**

- The loss of skilled and educated individuals to illegal migration can negatively impact India's economy, depleting the country of talent and expertise.

▪ **Labor Market Challenges:**

- The departure of skilled or semi-skilled workers might create labour shortages in certain sectors, impacting India's workforce and economic productivity.

▪ **Policy Repercussions:**

- India might need to implement stringent policies to address the factors driving illegal migration, potentially diverting resources and attention from other developmental priorities.

Way Forward

- Focusing on economic stability, **job creation, and social welfare programs** to alleviate distress and provide better opportunities within India.
- Engaging in **diplomatic dialogues to understand and address concerns** leading to migration, collaborating with other nations to ensure the protection of migrants' rights.