# Conceptualizing Displacement: Abstracting From Diverse Regions In India

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| | Displacement is the act of forcefully moving someone from their local area or environment. The migration of people is caused by various circumstances, including both push and pull influences. The push factors that contribute to internal relocation include natural disasters, man-made disasters, ideological or ethnicity persecution, growth and development, and conflict. Population displacement can be categorised into two types: direct displacement, which involves physically moving people away from their homes, and indirect displacement, which results in the loss of subsistence and forces individuals to leave the locale to which they are connected. This research aims to comprehensively assess the various types of internal displacement that have been occurring in India, leveraging secondary sources of evidence. To enhance the formulation of policies, it is advisable to establish a distinct legislative framework focused on addressing the issues faced by displaced individuals. It is necessary to establish distinct legal systems for different categories of displaced individuals, as a single set of laws cannot be generally applicable to all forms of displacement.<br><br>**Keywords:** Conflict, Development, Ethnicity, Internal displacement, Natural disaster. |

## Introduction

Over the past three decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of displaced people in India. Their situation differs significantly from that of refugees and other displaced individuals, as they do not flee from the location of violence. According to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced persons (IDPs) "are people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their home or places of habitual residence, in particular, as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made-disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border" http://www.un-documents.net/gpid.htm.

The movement of individuals is contingent upon various circumstances. The primary cause of internal displacement is the "push factor," which may be categorised into numerous factors including development, natural and man-made disasters, ethnic persecution, and conflict. Under conditions of displacement, individuals face limited options and are exposed to greater risks compared to the opportunities available in their original homes. Internal displacement deprives populations of essential elements for survival, such as livelihoods, houses, material possessions, and familiar environments (IDMC, 2018).

In India, the most significant causes of internal displacement include development initiatives, violence between communities, ethnicity, conflict-induced displacement, and catastrophes both natural and man-made. Community violence is another prominent influence.

## Methodology

The objective of this study is to examine the occurrence of displacement in India by utilising secondary sources. The study will primarily investigate the underlying factors, consequences, and reactions to displacement in

several scenarios, including development initiatives, natural calamities, and socio-political disputes. The methodology is created to ensure an exhaustive and systematic review of the current body of information available, empirical information, and pertinent case studies pertaining to the subject matter.

People were forced to relocate as a consequence of the actions of both man and nature. From conflict to progress, it encompasses a broad spectrum of elements that contribute to the phenomenon. There are several variables that contribute to displacement, including "armed conflicts," internal circumstances or political or separatist movements, violence caused by ethnic or caste groups, and displacement caused by natural and development factors. Following is a detailed discussion of these factors, which are as follows:

## Development Induced Displacement

This can be categorised as either 'direct' or 'indirect'. The first refers to circumstances in which the erection and commissioning of large development projects result in displacement, whereas the latter occurs when the setting up and operation of projects continuously increase the utilisation of both physical and environmental resources, thereby removing people of their means of livelihood.

Each year, an estimated 15 million individuals are compelled to vacate their usual place of residence due to large-scale development initiatives like mining, industrial projects, airports, highways, and dams. In India, these development schemes have exacerbated social and environmental vulnerability, compelling people to abandon their homes (Terminski, 2012). The Dibang mega dam project, situated on the Dibang river in the lower Dibang valley area of Arunachal Pradesh, is one of India's largest hydroelectric power projects. It is being carried out by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC) and has a power output capacity of 3000MW. This project had a significant influence on the residents of five villages in the Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh. The total affected area was 868 hectares, 283 total population and total 72 number of households. The entire region affected was 868 hectares, with a total population of 283 individuals and 72 households impacted in these communities (Sarma, 2017). The Sardar Sarovar project is widely regarded as one of the most contentious and extensively discussed projects in India and globally. The primary point of contention revolves around the fundamental problem of the total number of individuals that are displaced as a result of the dam. The Sardar Sarovar dam project resulted in the displacement of around 40,245 households (Sahoo and Prakash, 2014). The construction of the dam resulted in the relocation of individuals in three states, namely Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh. The majority of individuals impacted by the dam were indigenous people, specifically adivasis.

According to assessments funded by the World Bank, it has been projected that over 10 million individuals have been forcibly relocated each year due to infrastructure development projects since 1990. Over the past five decades, over 25 million individuals in India have been forcibly relocated due to various development initiatives. During the same time frame in China, over 40 million individuals were forced to relocate due to development initiatives, with 13.6 million being displaced in the 1990s. These estimates, while significant in size, may be incomplete and imprecise.

## Conflict Induced Displacement

A large number of individuals have relocated from their dwellings in order to distance themselves from the repercussions of armed conflict and insurgency along the international boundaries. The phenomenon of people being displaced from their usual location of living is steadily growing (Mmahi, 2016). UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that in 2018, a total of 70.8 million individuals were forcibly displaced globally as a result of conflict and violence. According to the UNHCR Report of 2018, about one person is forcibly relocated every two seconds worldwide as a result of violence. The IDMC (Internal Displaced Monitoring Centre) reported that in India, there were 169,000 displacements resulting from conflict and violence between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2018 (IDMC Report, 2019).

The state of Jammu and Kashmir in northwestern India is accountable for significant displacement caused by conflicts. The status of Kashmir has remained contentious since the establishment of India and Pakistan in 1947. The upheaval in 1947 is accountable for the migration of a significant number of refugees from POK. The migration counts in 1947 amounted to 12,000,000 individuals. Around 2 million refugees, representing a significant portion of the total population, were accommodated in 34 camps located in the Jammu division (Shah, 2021). In 1947, 1965, and 1971, individuals were compelled to evacuate their native land in Muzaffarabad, Poonch, and Mirpur due to the conflicts between India and Pakistan (Kumar, 2012).

In the conflict in the Kashmir Valley between state forces and rebels, the extremist separatist groups such as Hizbul Mujahedeen have killed Kashmiri Pandits. Political turmoil and the disregard for fundamental human rights by both the state and terrorist organisations have resulted in significant displacement, particularly of Kashmiri Pandits. It is estimated that around 250,000 Kashmiri Pandits have been forced to leave their homes and relocate to Jammu and cities like Delhi (Shekhawat, 2009). Two significant military battles have occurred in North-east India, the Naga movement, principally headed by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, and the Assam movement, led by the All-Assam Students Union and currently dominated by the hardline United Liberation Front of Assam. The ongoing violence and subsequent retaliatory actions by the government and other opposing forces against the secessionists persistently result in a consistent influx of displaced individuals. The concurrent acts of violence, like the fights between the Kukis in Manipur and the Bodos and

Santhals in Assam, have resulted in a significant displacement of people, beyond the magnitude of any other prominent movement in these states (Banerjee, 2006).

In nations such as Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Georgia, Liberia, Kenya, the Philippines, Pakistan and Somalia, individuals known as internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been forcibly expelled from their residences and deprived of essential provisions such as security, shelter, sustenance, water, means of livelihood, and community assistance. The adversity they experience is frequently so severe that it undermines their very existence (Lischer, 2007).

Displacement in armed conflict often occurs as a result of breaches of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) or basic human rights. Undoubtedly, if the current rules were followed, the majority of individuals who have been forced to leave their homes due to violence would have the opportunity to stay in their own residences. However, due to the failure of the military, armed groups, and authorities to fulfil their commitments, many individuals are compelled to leave multiple times. Many actions that are forbidden by International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are actually quite common. These include targeting civilians and their property, intentionally starving civilians as a tactic of war, carrying out reprisals, using civilians as human shields, destroying objects that are vital for their survival, and obstructing the delivery of relief supplies and assistance that is required for the ongoing survival of those who are civilians. However, even though International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is legally obligatory for both State and non-State actors, a significant number of its regulations are ignored. While many States have acknowledged the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which are founded on humanitarian and human rights principles, a firm dedication is required to tackle the difficulties arising from the escalating issue of displacement. The ongoing displacement, which persists for long durations, presents significant humanitarian difficulties, particularly in terms of achieving a unified, well-organized, and all-encompassing response from the global community.

## Natural Disaster Induced Displacement

Every year, a significant number of individuals in India are forced to relocate as a result of natural calamities. The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) recognises that climate change has compelled individuals to abandon their homes in pursuit of new lives elsewhere. The UNHCR intends to focus on human rights concerns associated with population displacement caused by climate change and will modify its environmental planning and efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change (Jayawardhan, 2017). The cyclone named Fani struck the eastern regions of India from May 2 to May 4, 2019. This resulted in over 3.4 million people being forced to leave their homes and caused the deaths of 89 individuals in the states of Odisha, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh (IDMC, 2019). The regions in India that were significantly impacted by the flood: firstly, the Uttarakhand flood in June 2013 occurred in the upper Ganga Valley; the Jhelum River saw a devastating flood in September 2014, while Chennai was hit by a flood in December 2015 (Ray, Pandey, Dimri and Kishor, 2017). On June 13, the state of Uttarakhand saw a significant catastrophe that resulted in extensive damage and destruction. In addition to a high number of casualties, a total of 4,200 villages were impacted, 11,091 cattle perished, and 2,513 dwellings were completely destroyed. Over 70,000 visitors and 100,000 local residents became trapped in the challenging mountainous region of the upper Himalayas, while a significant number of individuals were forced to leave their homes. (India Disaster Report, 2013).

Natural occurrences pose distinctive hurdles to fulfilling national responsibilities in terms of displacement prevention. Earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, tsunamis, and other catastrophic events are beyond any state's ability to avert. However, states are obligated to avoid damage caused by such natural occurrences (Hidalgo & Baez, 2019). This is obvious from the 'Hyogo Declaration', which was endorsed during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005 (Shaamhula & Siyambango, 2012). States bear the main responsibility for protecting those who live on their land from hazards and prioritising reducing disaster risks in national policy, according to their abilities and capabilities.

Every year, natural disasters cause lakhs of people to be relocated. Common phenomena include landslides, earthquakes, and flooding. Most disaster categories recognise two major types: both manufactured and natural. Natural disasters can be divided into three distinct groups: unexpected impact, gradual onset, and epidemics, whereas man-made catastrophes have two separate classifications: industrial calamities as well as complex emergencies.

✓ Unexpected Effects of Disasters: This covers aridity, deforestation, plagues, hurricanes, tornadoes, and starvation as well as degradation of the environment. In general, bad land usage mixed with unfavourable climate conditions causes these tragedies.

✓ Slow start Disaster: Disasters that occur slowly are typically caused by slower-moving natural processes that interact with human activity. In rural settings, one element that directly impacts economic adequacy is soil deterioration caused by human activity. A supply of water constitutes another element that could influence living sustainably. The connection is far more nebulous; in most situations, there is also one or more of the following: economic downturn, uneven sharing of resources, lack of governmental assistance, political repression, and rapid population expansion.

✓ Outbreak of Epidemic: When there is a severe outbreak, epidemic diseases like diarrhea, cholera measles, respiratory infections dysentery, malaria, and increasingly HIV typically do not cause substantial displacement, though evacuated population especially those gathered in overflowing and unhygienic conditions may experience displacement.

✓ Technological catastrophes: Disadvantages arise as a consequence of the technological advances and industrial operations of a given society, which give rise to the release of perilous substances, weapons and mass destruction. They may result from inadequate facility development and technology, as well as from disregard for safety procedures.

Individuals affected by natural catastrophes are safeguarded under many different kinds of civil rights treaties and accords. The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response safeguard individuals affected by natural disasters and provide guidance for relief operations to guarantee that displaced individuals have access to sufficient and necessary assistance, such as food, shelter, and medical care. The Guiding Principles affirm that internally displaced persons possess the entitlement to seek and get protection and aid from national authorities, who bear the primary obligation to safeguard and support populations under their authority.
Despite the fact that victims of disasters, particularly natural disasters, are typically the center of sympathetic attention and efforts from international assistance organisations.

### Ethnicity Induced Displacement

It occurs when an ethnic group asserts complete and sole possession of an area, which it considers to be its 'home'. This assertion, which is both exclusive and discriminatory, undoubtedly contributes to ethnic strife, bloodshed, and ultimately the forced removal of marginalised populations (Phukan, 2013). (Lischer, 2007).
The IDMC report from 2011 identifies multiple causes for conflict and violence in the Northeast region. Rebel factions are engaged in armed conflict to secure self-governance and attain a certain degree of self-rule for their ethnic community. The scarcity of land for indigenous people has resulted in acts of violence against individuals whom they perceive as "outsiders". Instances of violence and disagreement have arisen among different indigenous communities, resulting in the relocation of individuals within their own communities (Baruah, 2003).
The Indian constitution's sixth schedule grants certain safeguards to some tribes in northeastern states by acknowledging "Tribal areas" governed by autonomous councils. The requirement for a demographic majority is necessary to attain that status, which has resulted in discontent among minority groups residing in regions governed by autonomous councils (Baruah, 2020). The 2011 report from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre indicates that the sixth schedule fails to provide effective and consistent security for various groups in the Northeast, instead contributing to a possibly violent battle for land and political power.
The study provides more details regarding the number of individuals who have been internally displaced in the region. According to the report, between December 2010 and January 2011, there was a conflict between the Garo and Rabha communities in Assam's Goalpara district and Meghalaya's East Garo hill area, resulting in the displacement of around 50,000 individuals (Borah & Ram, 2016). Over 46,000 Adivasis, Bodos, and Muslims in western Assam continue to experience prolonged displacement as a result of ethnic violence in the 1990s, which led to the forced migration of several hundred thousand individuals (Mochahari, 2013). The research highlights that, according to the information at hand, over 76,000 individuals were residing in internal displacement in the Northeast region at the end of 2011. These people had been compelled to flee as a result of violence.

### Conclusion

The issue of displacement is currently being researched in India. Furthermore, there are instances of performance being underrated in actuality. There are numerous recently established centers that focus on studying and implementing inclusive policy making. However, these centers are often not given the recognition they deserve in terms of practical application. Each instance of displacement is causing a noticeable impact on numerous social factors. Policies are created based on significant implementing influences.
Generations have been affected by relocation in a variety of ways, including the loss of conventional employment opportunities, environmental shifts, disruptions to community life and connections, marginalisation and severe psychological trauma. As per the Census of 2001, the proportion of ST people living in Chhattisgarh (31.8%) is higher than in the Jharkhand (26.3%) and the state of Orissa (22.1%). These states' tribal populations have been subjected to state-enforced resources displacement, exploitation, and eviction.

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