

Illegal Immigration

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Context:

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said on Sunday that 5,801 illegal immigrants from Myanmar had been detected in Kamjong district since a civil war broke out in the neighbouring country. This has brought back the topic of illegal migration again in news

Background:

The topic is very sensitive and humanitarian dimension also needs to be considered along with others.

Illegal Immigration is a threat to Internal Security:

1. It is alleged that among the illegal migrants there are also militants especially groups such as NSCN/KUFLA, who enter India to carry out terrorist activities.
2. In recent decades, trafficking of women and human smuggling has become quite rampant across borders.
3. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion found that tension usually exists with the presence of high levels of migration combine with other forms of social exclusion like poverty, poor housing, etc.
4. Immigration has increased pressure on the part of the government, as the government has to increase the expenditure on education and health facilities for the immigrants.
5. Most illegal immigrants have got their names enlisted in the voting list illegally, thereby claiming themselves as citizens of the state.
6. The influx of immigrants created a crisis of identity among the indigenous people of the region.
7. Large areas of forestland were encroached upon by the immigrants for settlement and cultivation. This creates conflict in resource utilization with the local communities.

Laws in India to tackle Illegal Migration:

1. Under the Foreigners Act of 1946, the central government can deport illegal foreign nationals.
2. Under the Passport (Entry into India) Act of 1920, the state governments have been entrusted to remove an illegal foreigner by force.
3. The Citizenship Act of 1955 provides for the acquisition and determination of Indian citizenship.

Way Forward:

1. A considerable portion of the problem of illegal immigration lies in the fact that we have no such effective refugee policy. The central government should frame a holistic refugee policy.

2. India has to make a diplomatic effort to get neighboring countries to cooperate as illegal migration cannot be solved unless the origin country cooperates.
3. Government should introduce identity cards for the borderland people who frequently used to cross borders for different reasons.
4. There is a vast area of the border that is not protected by fencing. The central government should complete the border fencing.
5. Regional forums like BIMSTEC can be used to discuss issues like illegal migration from neighboring countries and garner support and coordination from the members.
6. Border guards like BSF, and ITBP should be strengthened and a second line of defence can be created by the State government through the state police force.

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