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Q6(c)

Write a brief analysis of the ethnic conflicts and cross-border migrations along India-Myanmar and India-Bangladesh borders

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · PSIR GS 2 · 15 marks · Comparative Politics

Comparative Politics: Nature and major approaches; political economy and political sociology perspectives; limitations of the comparative method.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on ethnic conflicts and cross-border migrations between India and Myanmar and between India and Bangladesh
- Write at 15-mark length

Revision summary

Colonial borders split Naga, Chin, Mizo, and Bengali-speaking worlds.

Myanmar's wars drive Chin and other hill refugees into India's north-east.

Rohingya flight from Rakhine is mainly into Bangladesh, with a smaller Indian presence.

1971 and later labour migration structure the India-Bangladesh people file.

State governments on the frontier are part of the foreign-policy machine.

Introduction

India's east and north-east sit on ethnic maps that colonial borders cut. Conflict on one side becomes movement on the other. Myanmar and Bangladesh are the two main files: Chin and related hill peoples, and Rohingya and older Bengali-speaking flows.

Body

India-Myanmar

- Naga, Chin, Mizo, and related communities straddle the boundary. Kinship does not match the 1937-48 political lines.
- Myanmar's wars, including post-2021 junta violence, pushed Chin and other refugees into Mizoram and neighbouring Indian States.
- Armed groups have used the other country's hills as rear area. Joint operations and the 2015 cross-border raid sit in that security reading.
- **Free Movement Regime** along the border was a people-to-people device that security agencies also treat as a smuggling and insurgent risk.

India-Bangladesh

- 1971 created a massive refugee wave into India and then a new State. That memory still shapes Delhi and Dhaka.
- Chakma and other hill people moved earlier from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

- Rohingya, a Muslim minority from Myanmar's Rakhine, transited or stayed in Bangladesh in very large numbers after 2017, with smaller numbers reaching India. India treats many arrivals as illegal migrants and a security-demographic issue; humanitarian and citizenship debates continue in courts and politics.
- Cattle, labour, and undocumented economic migration along a dense, riverine border mix with communal politics in Assam and West Bengal.

What links the two dyads

- Ethnic conflict is the push. Porous hills and rivers are the path. Domestic identity politics is the pull and the bar.
- Neither file is only "foreign." Constituent States - Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, West Bengal, Tripura - shape the federal response.

Flow diagram

Myanmar conflict -> Chin related inflows
Myanmar conflict -> Rohingya to Bangladesh
Rohingya to Bangladesh -> Some onward to India
Bangladesh labour 1971 memory -> Some onward to India
Chin related inflows -> Some onward to India

Conclusion

India-Myanmar migration follows hill ethnic wars, especially Chin and kindred groups. India-Bangladesh migration layers 1971 memory, labour movement, and Rohingya displacement that began in Myanmar. Ethnic conflict and the border are one political field, not two separate humanitarian footnotes.

Facts & figures

Chin migration

Inflows into Mizoram and nearby areas when Myanmar's conflict intensifies, on the basis of ethnic kinship.

Rohingya 2017

Mass displacement from Rakhine into Bangladesh after military operations; a regional humanitarian and security issue.

1971

Refugee crisis in India during Bangladesh's independence war, the historical baseline of the eastern migration debate.

Free Movement Regime

India-Myanmar border practice allowing limited local crossing, later tightened amid security concerns.

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