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Q8(b)

Discuss the consequences of illegal cross-border migration in India's north-eastern region

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · 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

- Discuss the consequences of illegal cross-border migration in India's north-eastern region
- Write at 15-mark length

Revision summary

Porous borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar structure the problem.

Assam's Accord and **NRC** politics show demographic fear becoming law.

Insurgency and trafficking are the security consequences.

Informal labour is the economic pull that fencing does not erase.

Diplomacy with Dhaka and a lawful citizenship process are part of any remedy.

Introduction

The north-east sits on open historical frontiers with Bangladesh and Myanmar. Illegal cross-border migration is a charged political fact. Its consequences are demographic, security, economic, and legal.

Body

Demographic and political consequences

- Local majorities in Assam and some other States fear a shift in language, land, and electoral rolls. The Assam Accord of 1985 and later **NRC** exercises grew from that fear.
- Citizenship, detection, and deportation became permanent campaign issues. Polarisation is itself a consequence.

Security consequences

- Insurgent groups have used poorly policed borders for sanctuary, arms, and funds.
- Trafficking in people, cattle, and narcotics rides the same paths as labour migration.
- Communal and ethnic clashes have followed rumours and census politics, which weakens the democratic process that Paper II Section A treats as participation.

Economic and ecological consequences

- Cheap labour fills construction, farm, and urban informal work. That is a pull factor as well as a grievance.
- Forest and char land come under pressure. Floodplain ecology in Assam is not infinitely elastic.

Legal and diplomatic consequences

- Pushback, fencing, and identity documents strain India-Bangladesh ties even when governments cooperate on security.
- Statelessness risk for those who fall out of rolls is a human-rights and administrative consequence, not only a partisan talking point.
- **Inner Line Permit** States face a different mix: fewer electoral-roll fights, more anxiety about cultural dilution.

Policy implication

- Consequences cannot be managed by fencing alone. Labour demand, border policing, and a lawful citizenship process have to travel together.

Flow diagram

Illegal cross-border migration -> Demography electoral rolls
Illegal cross-border migration -> Insurgency trafficking
Illegal cross-border migration -> Assam Accord NRC law
Demography electoral rolls -> Consequences in NER
Insurgency trafficking -> Consequences in NER
Assam Accord NRC law -> Consequences in NER

Conclusion

Illegal migration in the north-east has demographic, insurgency, labour, and citizenship-law consequences. It feeds both a security problem and a politics of belonging. The region's Act East bridge role is harder while this file stays inflamed.

Facts & figures

Assam Accord 1985

Political settlement after the Assam movement, with a cut-off date for detecting foreigners.

NRC

National Register of Citizens exercise in Assam that made migration a justiciable identity crisis.

Inner Line Permit

Colonial-origin regulation in some north-eastern States that still shapes who may settle.

Border fencing

India-Bangladesh fencing and patrols as the hardware reply, incomplete on riverine stretches.