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S.NO	TOPIC
1.	THE STATE OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MINORITIES
2.	MIGRANT WORKERS FORCED TO FLEE BACK HOME, GURUGRAM HIGH-RISES FEEL THE PINCH
3.	INDIA'S ROHINGYA REFUGEE CHILDREN ARE NOT CRIMINALS

THE STATE OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MINORITIES

SOURCE: [the Hindu](#)

WHY IN NEWS

Over the recent years, the Centre has halted two important educational initiatives designed for religious minority groups, reduced the reach of another program, and progressively reduced the funding allocated to various projects under the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

WHY SCHOLARSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT FOR MINORITIES

- Financial constraints:** Many minority communities in India experience economic challenges that hinder access to quality education. Scholarships provide financial support that covers tuition fees, books, and other educational expenses.
Example: Pre-Matric Scholarship for Minority Students" offers financial assistance to minority students from lower income families, enabling them to continue their education.
- Skill Development:** Scholarships can be designed to encourage skill development and vocational training among minority youth.
Example: The "Seekho Aur Kamao" initiative focuses on providing skill training and employment opportunities to marginalized sections of society, including minorities.
- To promote diversity:** Scholarships can help to promote diversity in higher education by encouraging minority students to pursue their studies.
- Community Development:** Educated individuals contribute positively to their communities and society at large. Scholarships empower minority students to become role models, inspiring others to pursue education and contribute to the overall development of their communities.

WHAT ARE VARIOUS WELFARE SCHEMES FOR MINORITY

- "Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme:** Central sector programmes implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The scheme has now been discontinued for classes 1 to 8, only covering class 9 and 10 in its revised form."
- "Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Scheme:** Targeted professional and technical courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The scholarship scheme saw a major reduction

in funds in 2023-24. It was allotted ₹44 crore this year, while last year's allotment was ₹365 crore."

- **Padho Pardesh scheme:** was launched to provide better opportunities for higher education abroad, providing an interest subsidy on education loans for overseas studies to students belonging to economically weaker sections of minority communities. However, this scheme was discontinued from 2022-23.
- **"Naya Savera :** An initiative offering complimentary coaching to minority students for technical courses and competitive exams, received ₹30 crore in the 2023-24 Union Budget. However, the program has been terminated by the government, citing inconsistency with the New Education Policy 2020's stance against coaching programs."
- **"The Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship,** intended for accomplished girls aiming for higher secondary education, was administered by the Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF). However, this year, the scholarship has received no allocation."

VARIOUS CHALLENGES FACED BY MINORITIES IN INDIA

- **Violence:** Minorities are often the target of violence, both from individuals and from groups. Example, in 2022, a Muslim man was lynched by a mob in Uttar Pradesh after being accused of carrying beef.
- **Inequality:** Minorities are often more likely to live in poverty and to lack access to basic services, such as education and healthcare. Example, a 2018 study by the World Bank found that the poverty rate among Muslims is higher than the poverty rate among Hindus.
- **Lack of representation:** Minorities are often underrepresented in government, in the media, and in other positions of power. This can make it difficult for them to advocate for their rights and to address the issues they face.
- **Educational Disparities:** Minorities often experience lower enrollment rates, dropouts, and limited access to quality education. Example: The Sachar Committee Report highlighted the educational backwardness of Muslim minorities in India.
- **Hate Crimes:** Minorities can be targets of hate crimes and violence, affecting their safety and security. Example: Incidents of mob lynching based on religious or caste identities, such as the lynching of Pehlu Khan in 2017.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Minority communities might have limited access to healthcare facilities, leading to health disparities. Example: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minority communities, highlighting existing healthcare inequities.

SACHAR COMMITTEE

It was appointed in 2005 to study the social, economic, and educational condition of Muslims in India.

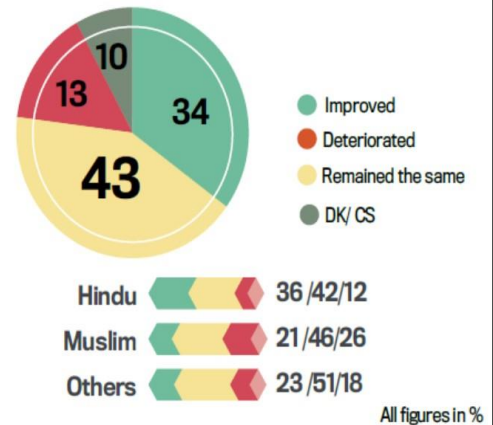
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS :

- The committee recommended increasing the enrollment of Muslim children in schools, especially girls.
 - Create a nomination procedure to increase participation of minorities in public bodies.
 - The committee recommended promoting sustainable livelihoods for Muslims, such as handicrafts and agriculture.
 - Establish a delimitation procedure that does not reserve constituencies with a high minority population for SCs.
- Recognise degrees from madrasas for eligibility in defence, civil and banking examinations.

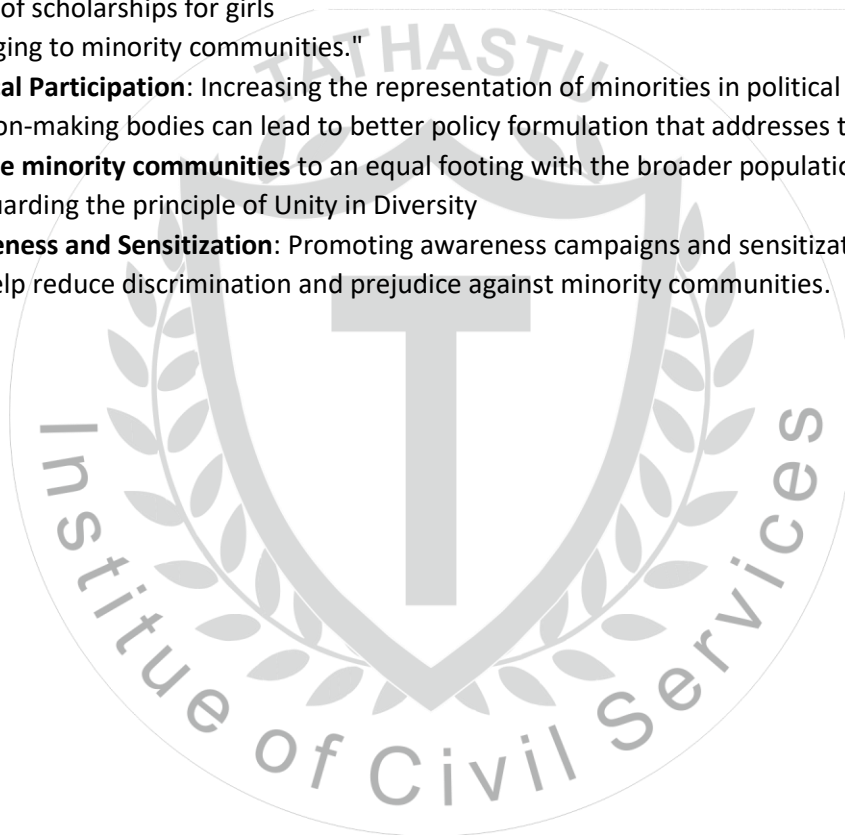
WAY FORWARD

- "Niti Aayog has proposed boosting pre-matric, post-matric, merit-cum means scholarships, along with MANF and national overseas scholarships, advocating for a yearly increment of 15% starting from 2019-20."
- Furthermore, it suggested an annual rise of 10% in the count of scholarships for girls belonging to minority communities."

How has the condition of religious minorities, such as Muslims and Christians, changed in the past five years?



- **Political Participation:** Increasing the representation of minorities in political offices and decision-making bodies can lead to better policy formulation that addresses their needs.
- **Elevate minority communities** to an equal footing with the broader population, safeguarding the principle of Unity in Diversity
- **Awareness and Sensitization:** Promoting awareness campaigns and sensitization programs can help reduce discrimination and prejudice against minority communities.



MIGRANT WORKERS FORCED TO FLEE BACK HOME, GURUGRAM HIGH-RISES FEEL THE PINCH

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

WHY IN NEWS

In the next two days of **Nuh Violence** nearly 700 families, predominantly from West Bengal, grabbed whatever little they could and went back to their native places. The mass departure has hit the city's rich and middle-class households where it hurts the most – managing daily chores.

FACTSHEET ON MIGRANTS IN INDIA

- According to the Census of India 2011, the total number of internal migrants in India was 36 crore or 37% of the country's population.
- The Economic Survey of 2017 pegs the size of the migrant workforce at roughly 20 per cent or over 10 crore in 2016.
- The states with the highest number of migrant workers are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal.
- The most common reasons for migration are to find work, to escape poverty, and to reunite with family members.
- Between 2001 and 2011, while the population grew by 18%, the number of migrants increased by 45%.

FORMS OF MIGRATION IN INDIA

- **Internal migration** refers to migration from one place to another within a country, while **external migration** or international migration refers to migration from one country to another.
- **Forced migration** is when people are made to move, and they don't choose it. This can happen because of things like war, being treated badly, or natural disasters. **Voluntary migration** is when people decide to move on their own.
- **Temporary migration** means moving for a short time, like for a season or temporary job. **Permanent migration** means moving for a long time with the intention of making the new place your permanent home.
- **Reverse migration** refers to the migration of individuals or families who have previously migrated, back to their country of origin or their original place of residence

FACTORS OF MIGRATION IN INDIA

- **Economic Opportunities:** Economic disparity between regions drives people to migrate in search of better job prospects and livelihoods.
Data: According to the 2011 Census of India, Maharashtra had the highest number of migrants from other states, followed by Delhi and Gujarat.

- Urbanization:** Rapid urbanization leads to increased migration from rural to urban areas in search of better living standards and access to services
Data: The Census data indicates that the urban population of India grew from 27.8% in 2001 to 31.2% in 2011.

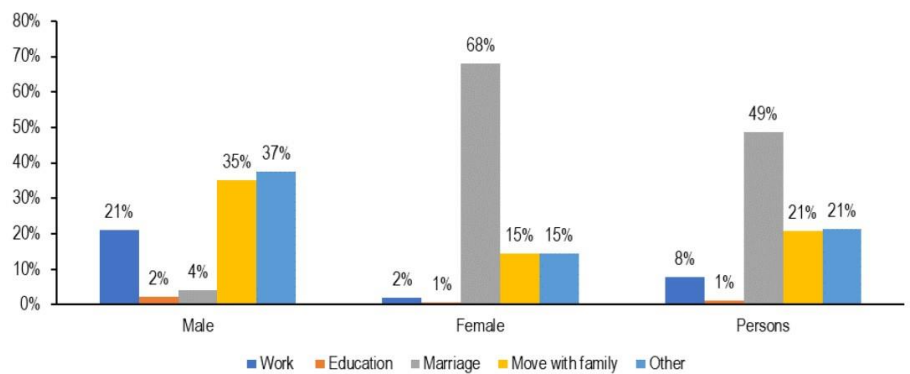


Figure 1 DESCRIBES REASONS FOR INTRA STATE MIGRATION

- Education and Skill Enhancement:** Individuals often migrate for education and skill development opportunities. Students move to cities with reputed educational institutions, leading to temporary or permanent migration.
- Social and Cultural Factors:** Marriage, family reunification, and social ties influence migration decisions. People often move to be closer to their families or join their spouse.
Data: According to Census 2011, migration due to marriage accounted for around 5.4% of the total migration in India.
- Conflict and Political Instability:** Internal conflicts, political instability, and issues related to security can also force people to migrate to safer regions within the country.
Example: The ethnic conflict in the northeastern states has led to migration of people to other parts of India.

CHALLENGES FACED BY MIGRANT POPULATION IN INDIA

- Lack of Social Services and Infrastructure:** Many migrants live in slums or informal settlements with limited access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare services.
- Unregulated Working Conditions:** Migrant laborers, especially in sectors like construction and agriculture, often work in hazardous environments without proper safety measures or legal protection
Data: The Economic Survey 2017-18 estimated that about 90% of India's workforce is in the informal sector.
- Lack of Legal Identity and Social Exclusion:** Migrants without proper identification often face difficulties in

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Code on Social Security: The code entails specific advantages for migrant workers moving between states, including provisions for insurance and provident fund coverage. The "One Nation-One Ration Card" initiative has granted households benefiting from the Public Distribution System (PDS) the ability to choose the Fair Price Shop (FPS) from which they receive their rations, thereby offering increased flexibility.

Remote Voting Proposal: The Election Commission aims to test a Multi-Constituency Remote Electronic Voting Machine (RVM) to enable domestic migrants to participate in the

accessing services like healthcare, education, and social welfare programs.

electoral process from their distant locations, allowing them to vote for their home constituencies

- **Education Disruptions for Children:** As per the "Educational Statistics at a Glance 2019" report, migrant children often drop out of school due to their families' frequent movements.
- **Lack of Social Security Nets:** The "Social Security in India" report highlights that a significant portion of the informal labor force, including migrants, lacks access to social security benefits.

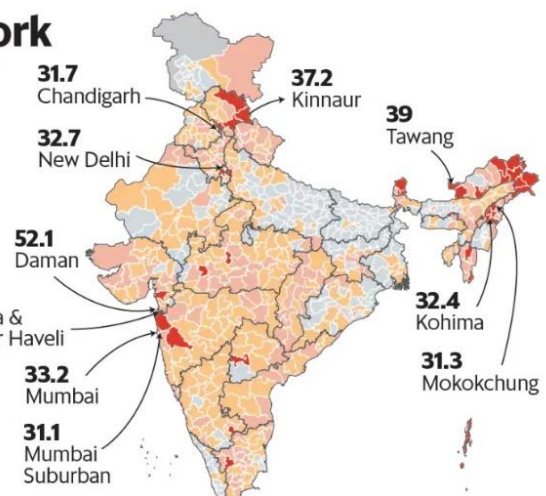
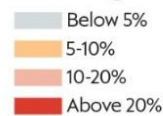
WAY FORWARD

- **Healthcare Access:** Ensure affordable and accessible healthcare facilities for migrants.
- **Education:** Establish mobile schools and support education initiatives for migrant children.
- **Legal Protection:** Enforce labor laws and create mechanisms to safeguard migrants' rights.
- **Housing Solutions:** Provide affordable housing options near workplaces for migrants.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Offer banking and financial services tailored to migrants' needs.
- **Information Dissemination:** Set up information centers to guide migrants about their rights and available services.

In search of work

Despite a large number of people moving places for work inside the country, there are only a few districts where the ratio of such migration is more than 20%. Here are the top ten districts.

Those migrating for work/business as % of total migrants



INDIA'S ROHINGYA REFUGEE CHILDREN ARE NOT CRIMINALS

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

WHY IN NEWS

A five-month-old infant born to a **Rohingya refugee** died in a detention or holding centre in Jammu in July. A viral video shows the police tear gassing a small congested area in the holding centre. Refugee women and children are also seen in the same space. As the explosion occurs, one can hear the shrieks of women and see children running in panic.

HOW INDIA DEALS WITH REFUGEE CRISIS

- **Non-refoulement Principle in Practice:** Although India hasn't ratified the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, it has consistently adhered to the non-refoulement principle whenever vulnerable asylum seekers have sought refuge within its borders.
- **Ad hoc refugee policy:** India's refugee policy can be termed as ad hoc refugee policy that allows New Delhi to differentiate between different groups in its treatment toward refugees and put other interests over humanitarian concerns.
- **Inclusive Border Approach:** India has a track record of embracing refugees, using this as a way to demonstrate its comparative stability and safety as a dominant economic force in South Asia. Historically, the nation has upheld relatively open borders.
- There are some laws that govern refugees, including the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939; Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Passport Act, 1967.
- While these rights are available to citizens, the Supreme Court ruled in *National Human Rights Commission v. State of Arunachal Pradesh (1996)* that "persons, including foreign nationals, are entitled to the right to equality and the right to life, among others."

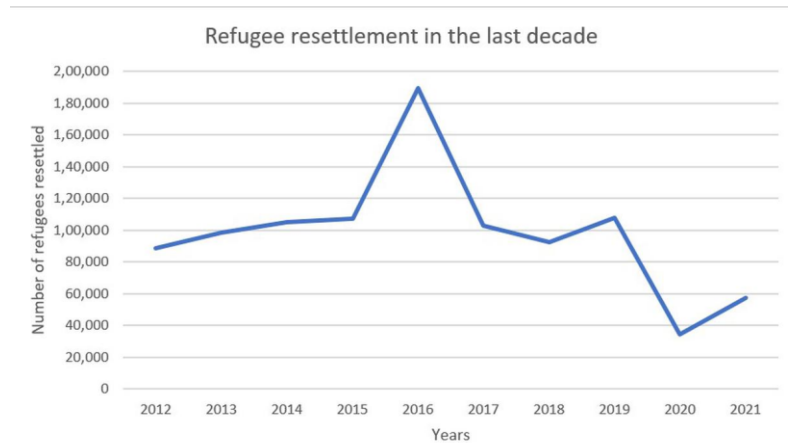
1951 UN CONVENTION ON REFUGEES

The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) is a multilateral treaty that defines who a refugee is and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum. The Convention was adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons in Geneva, Switzerland. It entered into force on 22 April 1954.

ISSUES FACED BY REFUGEES IN INDIA

- **Legal Uncertainty:** Refugees often lack legal recognition, leading to difficulties in accessing rights and services.
Example: Rohingya refugees from Myanmar residing in India face legal hurdles that hinder their access to basic services like education and healthcare.
- **Livelihood Constraints:** Limited work opportunities due to legal restrictions and language barriers make it challenging for refugees to sustain themselves.
Example: Afghan refugees in India.

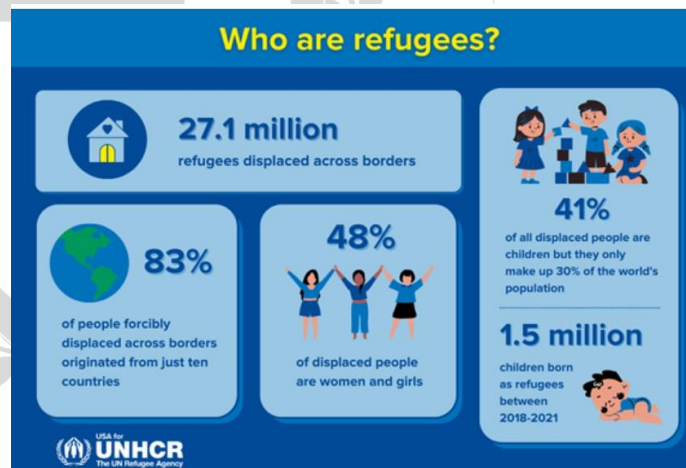
- **Housing and Shelter:** Many refugees live in overcrowded and inadequate conditions. Example: Tibetan refugees in certain settlements face challenges related to substandard housing and infrastructure.



- **Healthcare Access:** Limited access to affordable healthcare services can result in health vulnerabilities.
- **Detention and Deportation:** Refugees sometimes face detention and deportation. The case of some Sri Lankan Tamil refugees facing deportation highlights this issue.
- **Human Trafficking and Exploitation:** Vulnerable conditions can expose refugees, particularly women and children, to risks such as human trafficking and exploitation.

WHAT INDIA SHOULD DO

- **Resettlement:** Efforts should be made to resettle Rohingya refugees with cooperation from Myanmar, their home country. India provided 7,000 tonnes of aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and later initiated a \$25-million project to help Myanmar build the necessary infrastructure for Rohingya rehabilitation in Rakhine State.



- **Balancing Human Rights:** The Supreme Court has emphasized finding a balance between human rights and national security interests while not halting deportation plans. India should uphold human rights, offering healthcare, food, and temporary shelter to Rohingya without violating their rights.
- **Identity Cards:** Given the cultural ties between Myanmar and India, introducing identity cards for refugees could provide temporary relief and enhance security, as a proactive measure to address the situation.

WAY FORWARD

- The next step involves a group of experts working on rewriting guidelines for how people seeking asylum and refuge should be treated.
- A domestic refugee law should allow for temporary shelter and work permit for refugees.

- Make a distinction between temporary migrant workers, illegal immigrants and refugees and deal with each of them differently through proper legal and institutional mechanisms.
- Enhance access to education, healthcare, and basic services.
- Align with international refugee protection standards.
- Strengthen cooperation with UNHCR and international partners.

