

Amartya Sen: Migration Integral to Globalisation and Human Progress

August 23, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



Migration and Globalisation Latest News

- Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, during an interaction with students in Kolkata on August 22, 2025, highlighted that **migration is essential to globalisation** and has historically driven human progress.
- He further stressed that **diversity is the foundation of Indian society**, fostering genuine growth and development for the nation and its people.

Linkages Between Migration and Globalisation

- Migration is both a cause and consequence of globalisation. It represents the mobility of people across and within borders in search of opportunities shaped by global economic changes.
- While often portrayed as problematic, migration contributes significantly to sustainable development.
- In poorer regions, **remittances improve household security and support local economies**, while in ageing industrial societies, migrant workers fill labour shortages and sustain welfare systems.

Migration and Global Economic Changes

- **International Migration:** Driven by global restructuring of labour markets, especially demand for semi-skilled and unskilled workers in developed countries.
 - Migrants often find employment in informal sectors such as textiles, construction, and agriculture.
- **Internal Migration:** Linked to relocation of industries and tourism growth in the Global South, where rural workers, especially women, migrate for low-paying but vital jobs.
 - Migration is also a path for youth to gain independence and exposure.

Contributions of Migrants

- **Economic Support:** Remittances are critical for household survival, investment in agriculture, housing, and local enterprises.
- **Skill Transfer:** Returning migrants bring new skills and open non-farm opportunities if adequate infrastructure exists.
- **Social Impact:** Migration fosters cultural exchange and reshapes community expectations, especially for women and youth seeking autonomy.

Key Challenges

- **Restrictive Policies:** Immigration controls often strengthen illegal smuggling networks and exploitative employers, rather than addressing underlying labour market needs.
- **Exclusion from Urban Services:** Internal migrants face difficulties in accessing housing, healthcare, and education due to restrictive policies.
- **Informal Labour Exploitation:** Many undocumented migrants work under poor conditions with limited rights and protections.
- **Unequal Benefits:** Skilled migrants earn more and invest productively, while unskilled migrants face lower incomes and limited capacity to send remittances.
- **Gender Disparities:** Women migrants often face social pressures but can be strong agents of change where they have access to land and resources.

Policy Imperatives

- The report stresses that migration should be recognised as both a choice and a contributor to development, not merely a problem to be controlled.
- Policies must:
 - Protect migrants' rights and improve working conditions.
 - Support productive use of remittances through training and infrastructure.
 - Ensure equitable access to resources, especially for women.
 - Reduce structural constraints that force people into migration as the only survival strategy.

Amartya Sen on Migration and Diversity

- During an interaction with students in Kolkata, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen underscored that **migration is fundamental to globalisation and has historically driven human progress**.
- He explained that cultural, linguistic, scientific, and artistic advancements—such as the repeated **Arabic translations of Brahmagupta's mathematical works**—reflect migration's role in collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
- Stressing that “almost nothing would happen” without the movement of people, Sen noted that migration enriches societies through food, music, culture, and ideas.
- He also highlighted that **diversity forms the bedrock of Indian society**, enabling true growth of the nation and its people.
- His remarks come amid recent attacks on migrants from West Bengal in other states, which have caused livelihood losses.

Conclusion

- Migration is deeply linked with globalisation and has long been central to human survival and progress.
- Its contributions to **economic growth, cultural exchange, and sustainable development** are undeniable.
- However, without supportive policies, migrants remain vulnerable to exploitation, exclusion, and inequality.
- Recognising their role and safeguarding their rights is essential to harness migration as a force for inclusive global development.

Source: TH | IIED

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/amartya-sen-migration-integral-to-globalisation-and-human-progress/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.