



# Migration in Bengal delta driven by livelihood issues, social factors

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## Most migrants are in the age group of 20-30 years

- Economic reasons are the precipitating factor for migration in the Indian Bengal Delta that comprises the Sunderbans reveals an international study titled **Deltas, Vulnerability and Climate Change: Migration and Adaptation (DECMA)**.
- The study also points out that there is huge gender disparity when it comes to those migrating from the region.
- The study which covers 51 blocks of districts of South and North 24 Parganas reveals that 64% people migrate because of economic reasons, unsustainable agriculture, lack of economic opportunities and debt; 28 % of the migration from the region is for social reasons and about 7% for environmental reasons like cyclones and flooding.
- The study, held between 2014 and 2018 focusing on three deltas Ganga Brahmaputra Meghna Delta (India and Bangladesh) Volta (Ghana) and Mahanadi (India) looks into the aspect of climate change, adaptation and migration in these deltas.
- Only in cases of extreme events like flooding and cyclones resulting in loss of livelihood, did the locals say their migration was due to environmental reasons.
- When it comes to migration in the Indian Bengal Delta, the study finds a huge gender disparity, with men outnumbering women by almost five times.
- It shows that of the people migrating 83% are men and only 17 % are women.
- While most of the men migrate due to economic reasons, women do so, driven by mostly social factors.
- It shows that 57% of migration is seasonal, where people move once or twice a year; 19% is circular where those migrating move thrice a year irrespective of reasons and 24% permanent where people intend to stay for at least six months in the place they are migrating to.

- According to experts behind the study, one of the reasons for migration is failed adaptation in the areas which are under stress due to climate change.

### **Vulnerable areas**

- In the study, experts also map the climate change hot spots and highest risk areas of Sunderbans based on an analysis of climate change hazards.
- The areas of Gosaba, Basanti, Kultali, Sagar, Kakdwip, Namkhana, Canning and Mathurapur (all in South 24 Parganas) have high levels of agriculture dependency and so are sensitive to climate hazards such as flood and salinity.

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