



A Perspective on the Migrant Population in the Capital Township of Arunachal Pradesh: Impact and Issues

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Abstract: *The term migration denotes the movement of a population from one place to another. Every migration has an origin-destination and volume that shapes the population dynamics of both the place of origin and destination. While from time immemorial, natural inquisitiveness has always led human groups to migrate from one place to another either to explore or for basic survival necessities, the scenario has continued to be the same, though the cause, purpose and consequence have been changing per time and place. It is not surprising therefore to find that the issues of migration dominate the population dynamics of any given area even today and has a definite trajectory of impact in the economic and social circumstances. India with an expanding population rate, rapidly growing urbanization process and decadent regional disparities, witnesses a significant role in pushing migration to its emerging and existing cities and towns dominated by rural masses for livelihood reasons. Often these urban and rural-urban centres lack proportionate infrastructural facilities and the migrants are devoid of basic living conditions and resultantly remain vulnerable. The process of urbanization in the state of Arunachal Pradesh is a recent phenomenon. But interestingly it reflects the same characteristics of other urban centres and accordingly, the volume of inter and intra-state migration is mostly dominated by the rural masses forming the unskilled workforce in the economic set-up of the state which in turn affects the socio-economic condition of the state in general and that of the migrant groups in particular. The influx of vulnerable groups of migrants that constitute a major part of the city population are often the victims of push migration from the neighbouring states Assam, Manipur, and across the international border i.e., Bangladesh. However, the tribal and non-tribal dynamic plays another major role in deciding the vulnerability of the population. The present paper is an attempt to understand such groups who are part of the urban area of Itanagar and assess its impact on the given area. The study is limited to the urban capital township of Arunachal Pradesh which tries to focus on these issues.*

Key Words: Migration, Migrants, Urbanization, Impacts, Issues

Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh, nestled in the northeastern part of India, stands as a testament to the country's rich cultural diversity, stunning natural beauty, and vibrant tribal heritage. Often referred to as the "Land of the Dawn-Lit Mountains," Arunachal Pradesh shares its borders with Bhutan to the west, China to the north and northeast, and Myanmar to the east. With its rugged terrain, dense forests, and towering peaks of the Eastern Himalayas, Arunachal Pradesh remains one of India's most remote and least explored regions.

Arunachal Pradesh presents an interesting cultural mosaic of indigenous tribal communities, each with its own distinct culture, traditions, and languages. The state is home to 26 major tribes and more than 120 minor

tribes including the Nyishi, Adi, Apatani, Galo, and Monpa, among others. These communities have preserved their age-old customs, rituals, and craftsmanship, adding to the state's cultural tapestry.

Arunachal Pradesh was constitutionally a part of Assam before 1962. Post-independence, efforts were made to integrate the tribal territories of the Northeast which resulted in the administrative reorganization with the creation of the North Eastern Frontier Agency in 1954. The State was formerly a part of the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA). The region continued to remain relatively isolated and underdeveloped and was administratively governed by the Ministry of Home Affairs till 1972. On 20th January 1972, NEFA renamed as Arunachal Pradesh became a union territory with greater administrative autonomy that provided the exposure and recognition of the distinct identity of inhabiting indigenous tribal communities. With the passage of time and the growth of socio-political awareness among the people of Arunachal Pradesh, there were demands for full statehood and accordingly, on the 20th of February 1987, the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh was granted statehood thereby becoming the 24th state of the Indian Union.

Like its physical diversity, the state of Arunachal Pradesh possesses a diverse social fabric and cultural heritage having its base upon its egalitarian social structure. Home to indigenous tribal communities, each with its own distinct culture, traditions, and social structures, these societies often have egalitarian principles embedded in their customs and practices, where decisions are made collectively, and social hierarchies are relatively flat. Many tribal communities in Arunachal Pradesh follow traditional governance systems based on consensus-building and community participation. These systems promote equality among community members by ensuring everyone has a voice in decision-making processes. Egalitarian values are often reinforced through social cohesion and mutual support networks within tribal communities. However, while Arunachal Pradesh has a rich tradition of egalitarianism rooted in its tribal heritage, it is also important to recognize there are emerging challenges to equality and social justice that persist in various forms. Efforts to address issues such as poverty, discrimination, and access to resources remain an ongoing simultaneous process, reflecting the transition in nature of egalitarianism in the state especially with the advent of Urbanisation.

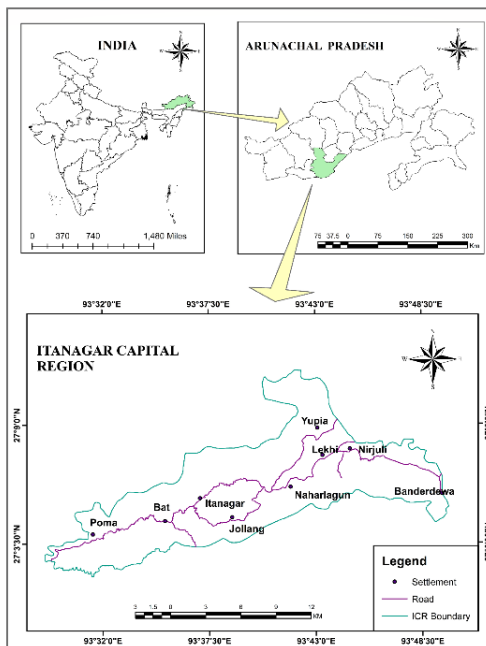
The process of urbanisation though recent, is quite rapid in Arunachal Pradesh which is reflected through the observation of several indicators such as population growth in urban areas, expansion of urban centres, infrastructure development, economic diversification, government initiatives, and consequent social and cultural changes that is becoming apparent in the form of changing living choices and approaches.

Of late, globalization has added further incentive to this process by accentuating the opening of new economic opportunities for the state, particularly in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and hydropower. Increased connectivity and integration with global markets have led to the expansion of trade and investment opportunities, contributing to economic growth and employment generation. This in turn has attracted migrants both from within and outside the state mostly dominated by the flow of rural migrants in the form of unskilled labour seeking employment and higher wages in urban centres.

Hence, at a glance, it becomes imperative that urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh has contributed to migration by creating economic, social, and cultural opportunities in urban centres catering to pull migration from rural areas seeking improved living standards, access to work in areas of administration, tourism, construction, trade, and services. These subsidiary activities aided by the influx of migrants have in turn led to the expansion of the CBD and consequent expansion of the pattern of urbanization in the state.

While these urban areas are rated as the heart of development and economic growth, they also serve as a breeding ground for poverty, inequality, environmental hazards, and communicable diseases. The Itanagar Capital Region (ICR) which includes the towns of Itanagar, Naharalgun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa acts as the hub for intra-state and inter-state migration. As Arunachal Pradesh has a high per capita income, it acts as a major pull factor for those who are being pushed from their place of origin, which constitutes both skilled and unskilled labours. Most of the migrants work in the informal sector of low-skilled, low-productivity jobs and constitute the urban labour force. Within this background, the present paper is an attempt to understand such groups who are part of the urban area of Itanagar and assess its impact on the given area and the issues associated with them.

Study Area



Source: Prepared from the map of India Admin using ArcGIS 10.3

Itanagar Capital Region is the administrative capital city of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. It is located in the district of Papum Pare. ICR is divided into three administrative circles- Itanagar, Naharlagun and Banderdewa. Among the three circles Itanagar has the highest population i.e., 65,301, followed by Naharlagun with 49,106 and Banderdewa with 8523.

Itanagar was mentioned as a town in the Census of India, 1971 along with Naharlagun. In 2018, Itanagar was declared as a smart city among the 100 cities in the country added to the Smart City Mission.

Ever since the declaration of area as city, there has been legal and illegal migration. However, as the city started expanding the consecutive census shows the migrant population coming into the area.

Database and Methodology

This paper is based on primary and secondary sources and is descriptive in nature. The primary data on reasons for migration among the migrant population of ICR was collected by undergoing household survey with the help of a structured questionnaire. 70 households were selected based on Quota Random Sampling in Naharlagun region where the population of migrant labour is in large number. A detailed analysis of impact and issues was made through observation of the migrant labourers and their area of occupation. The secondary data has been taken from the Census of India (1991-2011), the Statistical Handbook of Arunachal Pradesh, various journals, research papers, magazines, and websites.

The location map of the study area was prepared from the map of India Admin using ArcGIS 10.3. Data so collected was computed and converted into tables and appropriate diagrams were used for analysis.

Results and Discussion

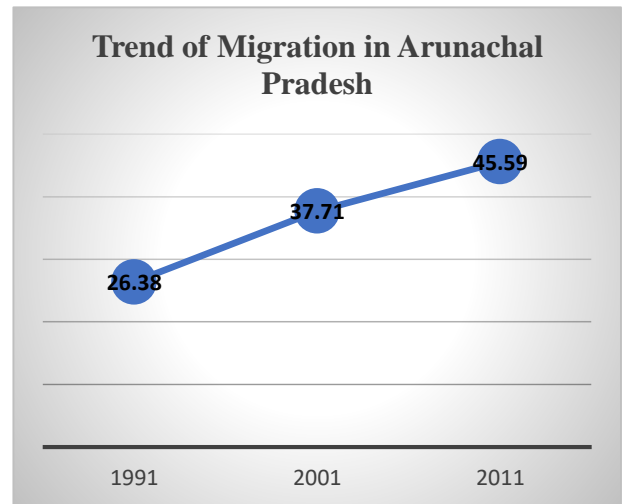
The process of urbanisation is of recent phenomenon in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The growth rate of urbanization in the state has been impressive with nil percent in 1961 to 22.94% of total urban population in the year 2011 per Census. The data provided shows the total number of migrants, the total population, and the trend of migration in a particular region over three census years: 1991, 2001, and 2011. Between 1991 and 2001, there was a substantial increase in both the total number of migrants and the rate of migration. This suggests a significant influx of migrants into the region during this decade. The period from 2001 to 2011 saw a further growth in both total migrants and the rate of migration. This indicates a continued trend of increasing migration into the region over time. The rising trend of migration can be attributed to various factors such as economic opportunities, urbanization, social factors, infrastructure development, or demographic changes in the region or neighbouring areas. Overall, the data highlights the dynamic nature of migration patterns in the region, with an increasing number of individuals choosing to migrate into the area over time. This trend may have implications for various aspects of regional development, including infrastructure planning, social services provision, and cultural diversity management.

Table 1: Migrant population of Arunachal Pradesh

	Total Migrants	Total Population	of Migration
1991	228035	864558	26.38
2001	4,11,440	1091117	37.71
2011	6,30,831	1383727	45.59

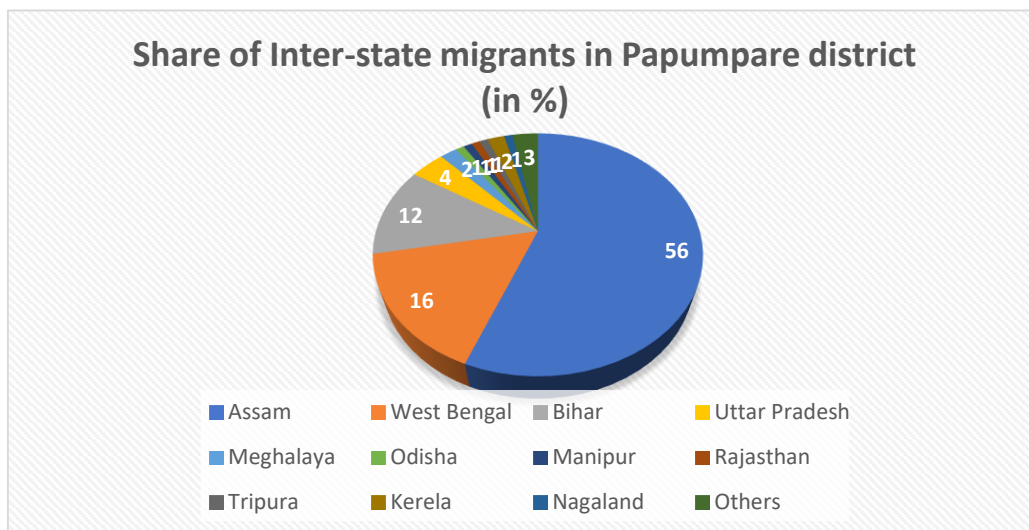
Source: Census of India

Fig. 1: Trend of Migration in Arunachal Pradesh



The capital city of Arunachal Pradesh- Itanagar, has seen significant urban development in recent years. Itanagar serves as the political, administrative, and cultural hub of the state and has experienced population growth and infrastructure development.

Fig. 2: Share of Migrants



The study area Itanagar Capital Region (ICR) lies in the Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh. The pie chart above depicts the percentage distribution of inter-state migrants in Papumpare district from various states in India. The data indicates that the majority of migrants in Papumpare come from Assam, constituting a significant portion i.e. 56% of the migrant population. Assam is the border state of

Source: Census of India, 2011

Arunachal Pradesh; therefore, every year thousands of people migrate to ICR in search of better opportunities. Migrants from West Bengal make up a substantial but smaller proportion compared to those from Assam. Bihar contributes a notable percentage of migrants to Papumpare, although it is less than West Bengal followed by Uttar Pradesh. The data indicates a diverse influx of immigrants into Papumpare. The rest of the states contribute smaller but still noticeable percentages to the immigrant population.

Table 2: Reasons for Migration, Papumpare district

Reasons for Migration	% of male	% of female	% of total migrants
Work/Employment	73.43	26.57	22.50
Business	74.81	25.19	4.21
Education	50.82	49.18	7.10
Marriage	2.42	97.58	9.60
Moved after birth	51.38	48.62	2.50
Moved with household	39.89	60.11	25.03
Others	49.96	50.04	29.07
Total	49.30	50.70	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2011

According to the census, employment is a significant reason for migration, representing 22.50% of the total migrants. Within this category, there is a notable gender disparity, with a higher percentage of males (73.43%) compared to females (26.57%), reflecting traditional gender roles and occupational preferences. Marriage constitutes 9.60% of the total migrants, with an overwhelming majority of female migrants (97.58%), indicating the influence of marital ties as a primary driver of female migration. Education accounts for 7.10% of total migrants, with a relatively balanced gender distribution, suggesting that both males and females migrate for educational opportunities. Business and moved after birth represent smaller percentages of total migrants (4.21% and 2.50% respectively), with a higher proportion of males in the business category and a slightly higher proportion of females in the Moved after birth category. Moved with household and Others are significant categories, representing 25.03% and 29.07% of total migrants respectively. Both categories show a higher percentage of female migrants compared to male migrants, suggesting the influence of family-related reasons and other unspecified factors on migration.

The provided data in Table No. 2 offers the percentage distribution of male and female migrants across different reasons for migration, as well as the percentage of total migrants represented by each category. The data categorizes various reasons or purposes of migration. For each migration category, the data provides the percentage of male migrants and female migrants. The data categorizes various reasons or purposes of migration. For each migration category, the data provides the percentage of male migrants and female migrants.

Table 3: Reasons for Migration among Inter-state Migrants in ICR

Reasons	Reasons for Migration	No. of HH	Percentage
Push factors	Unemployment	25	35.71
	Low wages	7	10.00
	Migration of Parents	5	7.14
	Too many family members	2	2.86
	Total (Out of 70)	39	55.71
Pull factors	Employment and better income	21	30.00
	Joining relatives	2	2.86
	Marriage	1	1.43
	Easy Access to the Informal sector	7	10.00
	Total (Out of 70)	31	44.29
	Total (Out of 70)	70	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Rural push factors are significant contributors to migration from rural areas to the Itanagar Capital Region (ICR), accounting for 55.71 per cent. The primary driver for migration is unemployment, cited by 35.71 per cent of migrant labourers, followed by low wages in their previous areas of employment (10 per cent) and migration of parents (7.14 per cent). Furthermore, the data reveals that 44.29 per cent of migrant labourers are influenced by urban push factors. Among these, 30 per cent migrate to the ICR in search of employment and better income opportunities, while 7 per cent are attracted by the perceived ease of accessing the informal sector due to rapid

urbanization in the area. Additionally, 2 per cent migrate to join family members already residing in the area, while 1 per cent relocate due to marriage.

Impacts and Issues

The migrant population in the capital township of Arunachal Pradesh presents a multifaceted and nuanced issue that warrants careful consideration from various perspectives. The state, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse indigenous communities, has been witnessing an influx of migrants primarily from neighbouring states and regions. Understanding the impact and addressing the associated issues requires a comprehensive analysis that considers socio-economic, cultural, and political dimensions. Migration has emerged as one of the defining global phenomena of the contemporary era, shaping societies, economies, and cultures around the world.

Impact of Migration			
Socio-economic Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Contribution • Competition for Resources • Employment Dynamics 	Cultural Dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Exchange • Social Cohesion 	Political Implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship and Identity • Governance and Service Delivery 	Environmental Consideration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological Impact

While migration offers opportunities for individuals seeking better livelihoods, it also presents a myriad of challenges and complexities, particularly for migrants themselves. From economic disparities to political upheavals and environmental crises, migrants confront a diverse array of issues that impact their well-being, rights, and integration into host communities. It lays the groundwork for examining the complex challenges encountered by migrants, diving into various aspects including economic, social, legal, and humanitarian factors that influence their journeys. By examining the impacts and issues, we gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding migration and the urgent need for comprehensive and humane responses to address them, especially in a developing city like the ICR.

The city of ICR is currently undergoing urbanization characterized by various developmental endeavours underway. Migrants often play a significant role in various sectors of the economy, including construction, agriculture, and services. Their labour fuels growth and development, contributing to the overall economic output of the region.

While the contribution of the migrants helps in economic growth and overall output, it may create a social imbalance in the form of resource distribution like space for housing, water, and other basic commodities. This is more applicable to non-indigenous migrants who over time can create an imbalance of employment and market resources and related factors in the context of the indigenous youths who over time are also becoming the part of service sector. This can further be explained by the fact that the indigenous tribal society is also going through changes in terms of living conditions and demands and is affected by consumerism and the market economy. The increasing influx of unskilled, low-income, and predominantly male migrant workers has intensified competition for jobs within the ICR. This heightened competition exacerbates existing challenges faced by migrant labourers.

The labour market in the ICR is characterized by rigidity and imperfections, which likely refers to factors such as limited job opportunities and barriers to entry for migrant workers. These constraints hinder the ability of migrant labourers to secure decent employment and fair wages. Moreover, migrant labourers in the ICR often lack adequate protection for their labour rights. This could include issues such as unsafe working conditions, low wages, and limited access to social security benefits. The absence of legal protections leaves migrant workers as one of the most vulnerable groups in the study area. The demand for labour in the ICR is predominantly for manual and menial jobs, which are often low-paying and offer little job security due to the absence of local labour. This reflects a structural imbalance in the labour market, where migrant labourers are primarily employed in sectors with limited prospects for upward mobility and decent working conditions.

Another prevalent issue among migrant labourers in the ICR is the lack of adequate accommodation. This implies that many migrant workers face challenges in finding suitable housing or living arrangements in the region. The observation highlights a widespread problem that impacts the living conditions and well-being of migrant labourers in the ICR. As these workers are being paid under informal arrangements, these workers are often excluded from receiving economic benefits such as pensions and insurance plans creating a significant issue of inadequate social security. Moreover, they are unable to access profits provided by the government for unemployment and social security benefits due to a lack of education and unawareness making them vulnerable

to exploitation, concerning better working conditions and minimum wage requirements. Additionally, the challenge of establishing a formal identity further impairs their inability to access entitlements and social services intended for economically disadvantaged populations. In essence, the absence of social security measures greatly compounds the vulnerability of migrant workers, leaving them without crucial financial protections and social safety nets.

Moreover, a core issue faced by migrant workers is proving their identity, particularly in destination areas. Arunachal Pradesh mandates the possession of an Inner Line Permit for entry into the state. This requirement suggests a controlled access policy implemented by the state government to regulate the movement of individuals from outside the state. The Inner Line Permit serves as a legal authorization for non-residents to enter and stay within the boundaries of Arunachal Pradesh, implying a need for official permission to visit or travel through the region. Without proper legal identification and formal work documents, migrant workers are deprived of the legal protections afforded to formal sector workers. This lack of recognition also leads to suspicion from residents and authorities, potentially resulting in discrimination and unfair treatment. Besides, the absence of official documentation makes migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, as they may be hesitant to report incidents due to fear of reprisal or further victimization. Furthermore, the financial constraints faced by migrant workers often force them to live in overcrowded and substandard housing conditions, further aggravating their vulnerability.

Migration brings about cultural exchange and diversity, enriching the social fabric of the region. Arunachal Pradesh is a culturally rich state. The ICR, serving as the capital, plays a crucial role in accommodating individuals from various districts of the state, each with its distinct cultural background. ICR serves as a melting pot of cultures, where people from different tribal districts come together, contributing to the region's vibrant cultural tapestry. These cultural differences are a significant source of challenge for migrants in the ICR. When individuals migrate to a new location characterized by distinct cultural norms and languages, they encounter various hidden and unspoken difficulties. Overbearing cultural mixing leads to the dilution or erosion of indigenous cultures which over time creates an identity crisis in terms of language, customs, and beliefs as migrants bring their own traditions and practices. These challenges may include difficulties in understanding local customs, communicating effectively with residents, and navigating social interactions.

These cultural differences create barriers to integration and adjustment, leading to feelings of isolation and alienation among migrants. Moreover, these challenges may not be immediately apparent but can significantly impact the migrant experience and overall well-being. The cultural influence of migrants over the local population in ICR is already visible in the context of language, festivals, dress, dietary habits etc. Efforts to promote understanding and integration are crucial to fostering social cohesion and harmony.

Therefore, addressing cultural differences and promoting cultural sensitivity are essential for facilitating the successful integration of migrants into the community. Additionally, the presence of migrants raises questions about citizenship and identity, particularly concerning indigenous rights and land ownership. Balancing the rights of indigenous peoples with the needs of migrants requires careful policy formulation and implementation. Local governance structures may face challenges in accommodating the needs of a diverse population, including access to healthcare, education, and other essential services. Effective governance mechanisms are essential to address these challenges and ensure equitable distribution of resources.

As already stated above rapid urbanization is driven by migration and can have adverse environmental consequences, including deforestation, pollution, and habitat loss. Sustainable development strategies are needed to mitigate these impacts and preserve the region's natural resources.

The surge in the inflow of migrant labourers into regions like the ICR has intensified competition for jobs while exacerbating existing challenges such as labour rights abuses, job insecurity, and discrimination. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive efforts to strengthen labour protections, promote decent work opportunities, and address the underlying structural factors driving migration and labour market inequality. The issue of identity verification significantly impacts the well-being and rights of migrant workers, highlighting the need for comprehensive measures to address this challenge and ensure their protection and inclusion in society. In the absence of local labour, migrant workers take on low-paying, unattractive jobs, leading to the establishment of enclaves within cities where these migrants tend to live among their own groups. Rapid urbanization and an increase in migration are creating a slum-like situation in ICR, with migrants coming from various states, including interstate migration. The significance of studying this phenomenon lies in two important factors: the

population dynamics and the impact of migrants on the economy and society, which could raise questions of identity and existence. Understanding the population dynamics of the state is crucial, as it may lead to economic, political, and social instability in the future. Therefore, the need of the hour is to tackle this issue through proper planning and policy implementation with active involvement from various stakeholders of the state.

Conclusion

The paper delves into the intricate dynamics of migration in the capital township of Arunachal Pradesh, shedding light on its impact and associated issues. Migration, a phenomenon as old as human civilization itself, continues to shape the demographic and socio-economic landscape of regions worldwide. Arunachal Pradesh, with its diverse indigenous communities and unique cultural heritage, stands witness to the influx of migrants primarily from neighbouring states and regions, driven by factors ranging from economic opportunities to social and political dynamics. The process of urbanization, although relatively recent in Arunachal Pradesh, has been rapid, fuelled by globalization and increased connectivity. This urbanization trend has led to a significant influx of migrants into urban centres like the Itanagar Capital Region (ICR), seeking employment, better living standards, and socio-economic advancement. However, this also brings forth a myriad of challenges and complexities, impacting both the migrant population and the indigenous communities.

From the socio-economic standpoint, migrant labour contributes significantly to various sectors of the economy, fuelling growth and development. However, the fact remains that over time it can and does place strain on local resources and may lead to friction between migrants and indigenous communities. Cultural dynamics come into play an important role as migration brings about cultural exchange and diversity but may also pose challenges to indigenous cultures and traditions. Political implications arise concerning citizenship, identity, and governance, necessitating careful policy formulation to address the needs of both migrants and indigenous populations. Additionally, environmental considerations are crucial in mitigating the adverse impacts of rapid urbanization driven by migration. The paper also highlights in conclusion, understanding the dynamics of migration in Arunachal Pradesh requires a holistic approach that considers socio-economic, cultural, political, and environmental dimensions. Addressing the challenges associated with migration demands collaborative efforts from policymakers, civil society, and local communities to ensure the well-being and rights of both migrants and indigenous populations, thereby fostering inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

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