doi:10.20896/ddhd0k55

SPECIAL ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

Navigating the Security Nexus: Climate Change, Migration, and Conflict in Assam

Tayenjam Priyokumar Singh[†*] and Ningthoujam Koiremba Singh[¥]

Abstract

Climate change poses a significant challenge to human civilisation, and human activities continue in accelerate it. Yet, the traditionalist view of security is not ready to reformulate its military and state-centric approaches, which are confined mainly to the sovereignty, integrity, and cohesion of the nation. However, climate change can lead to multi-dimensional security threats ranging from mass migration, poverty, sectarian conflicts, xenophobia and collateral damage across nations and boundaries. This issue can affect a nation's welfare and ecology, and even its existence. It is high time for researchers and policymakers to examine a deeper, more comprehensive theory that can comprehend contemporary security challenges beyond the traditional security outlook in International Relations. So, the study seeks to apply the Non-Traditional Security framework to critically analyse the extent to which Bangladeshi migrants and their impacts on climate change and security concerns in India, particularly in the state of Assam.

Keywords: Climate Change; Conflicts; Resources; Illegal Migrants; Non-Traditional Security; Assam; India

[†] Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Shivaji College, University of Delhi, India
[*]Corresponding Author Email: priyokumartayenjam@gmail.com
[¥] Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, India

Introduction

Within the multifaceted discipline of International Relations, the subfield of security studies occupies a crucial position, dedicated to understanding and addressing the pervasive challenges to the safety and well-being of states and individuals. Traditionally, the study of security has been bifurcated into two primary categories, each distinguished by its distinct ontological and epistemological assumptions, methodological approaches, and normative orientations. One of these categories encompasses traditional security, which predominantly emphasises the state's security as the primary referent object (Buzan, 1984; Chatterjee, 2003). This perspective emphasises the role of military power, geopolitical competition, and balance of power in maintaining global stability and preventing conflict (Caballero-Anthony, 2016; Fulvio, 2016; Hama, 2017). The other category encompasses non-traditional security threats that emerge as a challenge to the state-centric focus of traditional security studies and broadens the scope of analysis to include non-state actors, human security, and a wider range of threats, such as environmental degradation, economic inequality, and social injustice (Burgess, 2010; Caballero-Anthony, 2016; Kolodziej, 2005; Newman, 2001). With the end of the Cold War, it emerged as a response to the perceived limitations of traditional security studies, which were criticised for their narrow focus on military threats and state-centric perspectives. Some of the common features of non-traditional security threats are discussed in below.

- Non-conventional security threats like scarcity of resources and irregular mass migration cause political and societal instability in the receiving place. To address these issues, regional or multilateral cooperation is essential (Caballero-Anthony, 2016).
- They are mainly expressed in political and socio-economic terms, but not in the form of a balance of power or competition between states. So, their nature is transnational with respect to ideas, origin and impacts (Caballero-Anthony, 2016).
- Other security threats like climate change, mainly induced by anthropogenic activities, lead to a fragile balance of nature with hostile impacts to states and societies that are very difficult to repair or reverse to the normal order. They look at individuals and society through the lens of dignity and well-being rather than just sovereignty or territorial integrity (Caballero-Anthony, 2016).

Climate change is one of the greatest present-day non-traditional security threats to human civilisation. Tragic incidents clearly show how climate change is making living beings increasingly vulnerable. It has a variety of impacts, including agriculture (jeopardising food security), sea-level rise, rapid erosion of coastal plains, species extinction, and the development of vector-borne diseases. Climate change can be defined as a region's long-term changes in temperature and weather patterns (Bhattacharya, 2019). It is the result of anthropological activities and natural phenomena. Due to its profound impact on non-traditional dimensions of security, environmental challenges have increasingly entered the field of International Relations, reshaping its core concepts and theoretical foundations. Moving beyond the traditional military-centric understanding of security, scholars—particularly those associated with the Copenhagen School—have advanced new frameworks that broaden and deepen the security agenda. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, through their seminal work *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, argue for the inclusion of environmental, societal, and economic sectors within security studies (Buzan et al., 1998). Their contributions have significantly expanded the theoretical boundaries of International Relations, demonstrating that environmental degradation and climate-related risks can constitute existential threats to states and societies alike.

However, human security did not displace or become identical with national security; instead, it was simply expanded to include additional elements such as personal security, economic growth, and human rights (UNDP, 1994). It was intended for this process to become a universal, broad and flexible approach and the interdependencies between seven components: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security and was codified conceptually and institutionally in Human Development Report, 1994 (UNDP, 1994). However, genuine security requires not only the absence of a military threat or protection against it, but also the management of a multitude of risks related to the economic and socio-political well-being of states and their peoples (Aftendorn, Keohane, & Wallender, 1999). According to Koca, "Social security refers to the security of the community and its identity, especially the ethnonational identity and acts in the context of antagonistic friend/enemy relations" (Ticu, 2021: 392). Barry Buzan argued strongly that security was tied to all human collectivities and could not be reduced to an "inherently inadequate" concentration on military power (Williams, 2008).

In this context, this study avoids deterministic claims that climate change directly leads to conflict. Instead, it views ecological stressors as "threat multipliers," intensifying existing socio-economic and political tensions (Barnett & Adger, 2007). Climate change threatens human lives, food, and soil, and thus poses a serious threat to the internal security of any nation. Due to factors like overcrowding, poverty, various religious groups, diverse cultures, and mass migration, India has a history of sectarian violence and xenophobia. India is also dealing with problems brought by the undocumented Bangladeshi migrants. If this problem is not resolved effectively and in a timely manner, it will endanger the internal security of India. On the other hand, Bangladesh is one of South Asia's most climate-change-susceptible nations and struggles with severe flooding, with coastal regions submerged by rising sea levels, tsunamis, and saltwater intrusion. Without a suitable avenue for resolving these problems, it would probably force tens of thousands of people from Bangladesh to India (Antos, 2017). As a result, India might experience higher levels of shortages in food, water, land, and social and economic security.

Most South Asian nations have more or less weak governance systems. As a result, the region's resources could be feeling increasingly strained. Along with these circumstances, climate change will create social, political, and economic problems, including mass migration and unemployment. The lack of resources in these countries and their weak governance will make them more vulnerable and lead to local versus migrant conflicts in future. While most of the Northeastern states of India are similarly structurally vulnerable, Assam is the worst-affected state by demographic change due to the illegal migration from Bangladesh (Khakhlary, 2017). A disproportionately high level of ethno-religious conflict, environmental degradation, and political instability associated with migration has affected the state (Burrows & Kinney, 2016; Swain, 1996).

The historical experience of Assam, from the Assam Movement (1979-1985) to the recent updating of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), provides a critical perspective through which the intersection of environmental stress, migration, and identity insecurity can be analysed at the sub-national level (Baruah, 2007; Barbora, 2022). Unlike typical migration scenarios, where economic competition is the primary factor, the Assam experience reveals how environmental fragility and demographic change are securitised along ethnic and territorial lines. Using Lee's (1966) push-pull theory of migration, mobility into and within Assam can be conceptualised within a framework of interlocking structural forces: periodic flooding, riverbank erosion, land fragmentation, and agrarian crisis serve as environmental "push" factors in both Bangladesh and ecologically fragile districts of Assam, while relatively fertile char lands, agricultural possibilities, and informal labour markets have historically acted as "pull" factors

(Manuvie, 2018; McDuie-Ra, 2012). However, in the Assamese scenario, the migration process does not merely stay within the bounds of economic rationality; instead, it gets entangled with deeply embedded concerns about indigeneity, linguistic identity, and political representation, turning demographic change into a threat to cultural and political survival (Shamshad, 2017; Kumar & Bhagat, 2021). The NRC process formalises this securitisation by turning disputed histories of migration into regimes of documentation. Thus, climate change displacement, migratory pressure, and identity politics create a self-reinforcing cycle in which environmental stress fuels migration, migration fuels ethnic polarisation, and identity politics shapes conflict outcomes. Analysing Assam, therefore, facilitates a theoretically informed and context-specific investigation of how environmental change and migration systems intersect with sub-national identity politics to generate layered insecurities and conflict episodes (Ganguly & Mistry, 2022; Saul, 2012).

This study introduces Assam as a classic example of what has been termed the Climate-Migration-Conflict (CMC) nexus, that is, a process whereby environmental degradation, illegal border crossing, and identity issues converge in politically volatile borderlands. In Assam, environmental displacement such as flooding and deforestation converges with demographic change and militarised state intervention to render the border a contested territory marked by both ecological fragility and politicised identity narratives (Burrows & Kinney, 2016; Bhattacharyya & Werz, 2012). In response to this convergence, the study proposes the Climate–Migration–Conflict (CMC) Framework, a synoptic analytical model that synthesises insights from critical securitisation theory, political ecology, and non-traditional security studies. This framework enables us to gain a deeper understanding of how identity narratives and government responses frame environmental stresses at sub-national borders (Abrahams & Carr, 2017; Burrows & Kinney, 2016). It provides a valuable tool for analysing the confluence of climate-related stressors, migration-related concerns, and ethno-political mobilisations in frontier ecologies like Assam, while also offering applicability for security dynamics in the South Asian borderlands (Burrows & Kinney, 2016; Baruah, 2023).

This study indeed makes a significant contribution by reconceptualising the climate–migration–conflict nexus within an interdisciplinary framework. Although substantial work has been done on isolated aspects of environmental insecurity, illegal migration, and conflict in Assam, this research integrates them into a unified, theory-driven model. In doing so, it enriches environmental security discourse in social science, particular in International Relations field by foregrounding the intertwined nature of climate risk factors, migratory flows, and identity politics in fragile frontier zones.

Research Design and Methodology

This study follows a qualitative process-tracing research design to investigate the contingent relationships between climate stress, migration processes, and securitisation in Assam. Instead of testing a linear causal hypothesis, this research aims to trace and interpret the underlying mechanisms by which environmental stress could be translated into securitised political outcomes.

The research work relies on a systematic triangulation of primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources include books, peer-reviewed academic literature, newspaper articles, environmental impact statements, and reports from international organisations. For the primary sources, decennial census data, parliamentary debates, and state and central government policy documents are used. By cross-validating these sources, this research aims to identify recurring patterns in narrative framing, institutional responses, land governance processes, and demographic interpretations.

Bangladesh: Climate Change and Migration

The unique combination of its geo-political and socio-economic characteristics, such as flood-prone, large coastal areas, high population density, and heavy reliance on agricultural

activities, makes Bangladesh very vulnerable to the climate change impacts in South Asia. Bangladesh is also an overpopulated country, with 164.6 million people living in a 147,570-square-kilometre area (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Due to cyclones and rising sea levels, coastal plains of Bangladesh are being submerged day by day. The entry of salty water into soil also makes farming in the country a challenging one. The obstacles in addressing the nation's changing climatic conditions include frequent natural disasters, inadequate infrastructure, and vast economic and social inequalities.

Environmental change-induced scarcity of natural resources, rapid population growth, and uneven access to resources are the primary causes of the ecological and economic marginalisation of Bangladesh's common people. They could become worse off as a result of frequent natural catastrophes, including floods, riverbank erosion, and cyclones. These individuals have to migrate for their survival. They have no choice but to migrate to India because there is less hope for them to survive in their own country or other neighbouring countries like Myanmar (Alam, 2003).

Bangladesh is also vulnerable due to the diversion of the river Ganga by the Farakka barrage, which negatively impacts its environment and economy, given that 33 per cent of its population and 37 per cent of its total area depend on the Ganges basin (Kawser & Samad, 2016). At least two million Bangladeshis crossed into India in search of better livelihoods after being forced out of their villages due to the Farakka Barrage (Islam & Islam, 2011; Swain, 2017). In 2019, more than 4 million additional climate-induced migrants were also brought on by natural catastrophes, notably the devastation caused by storms— Fani and Bulbul (Hossain et al., 2022). The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) calculated that floods during the monsoon season uproot around 1 million people from their livelihoods each year in Bangladesh, whereas cyclones uproot 110,000 people on average each year (Alam & Siddiqui, 2022). The IDMC recorded 15.5 million people displaced by natural disasters between 2008 and 2021 (Alam & Siddiqui, 2022). Environmental degradation, including that caused by construction projects such as the Farakka barrage, results in the loss of livelihoods, culminating in widespread population migration. These displaced populations often move to other regions of India, where their arrival may create tensions and conflicts with local communities in the host areas.

This phenomenon results from a complex chain of events, so it is very hard to 'prove' it without a much more thorough investigation. The extensive scholarship offers, on the other hand, a great weight that there is a plausible relationship between environmental degradation in Bangladesh due to the Farakka barrage and rising ethnic violence in India (Swain, 1996; Islam & Amstel, 2021). According to the 2011 Census, India has 2.3 million Bangladeshi migrants in India. Because of unauthorised immigration, it is believed that the hard number of Bangladeshi illegal migrants to India is more significant. There are approximately 15 to 20 million illegal migrants in India from Bangladesh (Ostaszewski, 2018; Sood, 2025). Certain local regions will lose their viability as residential or economic centres if disasters occur more frequently and on a larger scale (Sood, 2025). Under such circumstances, migration and displacement can become ongoing and place new strains on areas being relocated. These movements have the potential to create scarcity in receiving communities, mobilising political players and exacerbating existing incompatibilities. These organised players' perceived conflictual behaviours against one another may finally escalate into acute conflict.

However, climate change will likely slow progress toward eradicating poverty in Bangladesh in the coming years. Due to its substantial reliance on agricultural operations and climate-sensitive natural resources for their income and subsistence, these people would be the most vulnerable and impoverished segments of the population in the country. Climate change-related shocks and disasters are likely to

have long-lasting and generational effects on these individuals, necessitating expensive coping mechanisms for their future living standards (Bryan et al., 2014). The aforementioned unfavourable circumstances and the country's sensitivity to climate change will impede its economic and environmental growth and put it in danger for the foreseeable future.

Bangladesh has developed a number of strategic planning and action plans. On the front of mitigation, it adopts the Nationally Determined Contributions in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and on the front of adaptation, the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan, and the National Adaptation Plan. By utilising activities on climate change, these proposed programmes would improve resilience and economic growth and generate and increase job opportunities. This country needs strong political will from top to bottom to accomplish these goals, address multi-sectoral issues, and vigorous public participation and engagement from all facets of society. The Government of Bangladesh has been actively participating in multilateral and international climate negotiations. In 2001, it approved the Kyoto Protocol. Moreover, it also participated in the 2015 Paris Accord and signed the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement, which India founded in 2015 (Mathur, 2022).

As a "living document" for the nation, the Bangladesh Government published Bangladesh Climate Change in 2008. Its major goals are to provide methods for mitigating climate change and its impacts on the nation, as well as an action plan for significant interventions with a deadline for on-the-ground execution (Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2008). The plan outlines the country's physical, climatic, socio-economic, and logical measures for combating climate change. It also extensively described on how to create a climate-resilient economy and society along with a low-carbon sustainable development path in Bangladesh (Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2008). The disastrous effects of climate change will cost huge amount of money if Bangladesh do not appropriately handle. As a result, the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan Decade 2030 was also visualised in 2021. This strategic plan aims to minimise and prevent loss for the nation. To build resilience and stability in its population and ecosystems, it incorporates a number of new, ambitious and improved adaptation techniques. It strives to protect vulnerable individuals and sectors of the economy from harm and losses brought on by climate change (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 2022). It also strives to ensure Bangladesh's prosperity within ten years by bringing economic reform initiatives to fruition (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 2022). These crucial documents, however, do not provide a thorough analysis of the migration driven by climate change. Climate change is going to impact millions of Bangladeshis in the coming years. The World Bank estimates that 216 million people could be displaced across the globe by 2025 (Huang, 2023). For future generations, at the very least, this crucial component must be reflected in these two crucial plans.

Most of the time, natural disasters cause thousands of Bangladeshis to become homeless and face waterborne diseases. So, the threat to Bangladesh's human security is in crucial stake. India is where Bangladesh's longest and most porous land border is located. Most of the border states of India share a socio-cultural and historical bond with Bangladesh. India is the ideal choice for these immigrants seeking a brighter future. However, Dhaka has neither recognised nor made significant efforts to restrict the influx of its people into India. Over the years, India's efforts to halt these people by building a barbed-wire barrier around the border and improving border monitoring have not yielded the expected results (Tripathi, 2016). It will impact India since there might be significant illegal immigration from Bangladesh that will endanger India's national security system, be it traditional or non-traditional security.

Challenging issues of illegal migrants in India

Since time immemorial, humans have been migrating, and they will do so in future. It might modify the recipient society's social, political,

economic, and cultural fabric. There will essentially be two ways in which illegal migration from Bangladesh impacts India's security. The first aspect would be the struggle for scarce resources, economic challenges, and socio-cultural dominance, as well as the ensuing political unrest brought on by the mobilisation of public opinion against these immigrants by the power-hungry individuals seeking to seize political control. For instance, in the north-eastern Indian states like Assam, resistance to Bangladeshi migrants has socio-cultural and economic components that have been politically motivating and repeatedly brought the big picture of ethnic identity and illegal migration to the forefront during elections and other social movements. The second type would be that these immigrants engage in unlawful and anti-national activities, such as illegal entry, fraudulent identity card acquisition (ration card,[1] aadhaar card,[2] etc.), exercising Indian voting rights through impersonation, and resorting to transnational smuggling and heinous crimes (Das, 2016). As a result, the securitisation of illegal migration issues has been pushed into the national security discourse.

In this context, it is crucial to comprehend the various categories of immigrants. It is tough to define, but without distinguishing these people as much as possible, the Indian state would only encounter obstacles and hurdles in trying to securitise these concerns. India has the largest number of immigrants from Bangladesh, as the Indo-Bangladesh migration corridor is the world's fourth largest (Chowdhury, 2021; IOM, 2020). According to Kiren Rijiju, the then Indian Union Minister of State for Home, who briefed Parliament on 16th November 2016, "there are around 20 million Bangladesh migrants staying in India" (Deccan Chronicle, 2016; Ministry of Home Affairs, 2016).

The presence of illegal immigrants poses severe issues to India's internal security, which should be addressed in a timely manner. To date, there is no exact official record; however, it is estimated that Assam has around six million illegal Bangladeshi migrants out of its 26 million people (Goswami, 2010; Mayilvaganan, 2019). This insidious population invasion of Assam might result in the loss of Lower Assam's geostrategic key districts. Therefore, it is time to address the issue of illegal migration to keep Assamese people in their own country and protect the nation from the menace of invaders (Manoharan, 2012).

Political Ecology and the Territorialisation of Security

To theorise the climate-migration-conflict complex in Assam, it is important to contextualise environmental change within historically mediated regimes of territorial governance and power. Political ecology provides a critical framework for this by conceptualising environmental degradation not as an objective ecological process but as a result of political-economic structures and relations of authority (Bryant & Bailey, 1997; Robbins, 2012). Instead of focusing on land scarcity, deforestation, or erosion as biophysical processes, political ecology draws attention to the institutional and socio-political structures of access and control over natural resources.

In frontier zones like Assam, land is not only an economic resource but also a constitutive aspect of political subjectivity and collective identity. The historical legacy of colonial land settlement, postcolonial border-making, and ethnic territorial protection has created a complex and fractured governance terrain. Tribal belts and blocks, reserved forests, revenue lands, and char lands are governed by multiple, and sometimes contradictory, regulatory regimes. This institutional complexity generates ambiguity

[1] Ration Card is a government-issued document in India which enables eligible households to obtain essential household commodities at subsidised rates under the Public Distribution System (PDS). It also functions as a proof of identity and residence.

[2] Aadhaar Card is a 12-digit unique identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), based on an individual's biometric and demographic data. It is used for identity verification and access to various government services and welfare schemes in India.

regarding legality, entitlement, and enforceability, thereby, creating fertile ground for conflict (Baruah, 2020).

Political ecology underscores that environmental governance is always a matter of power: who gets to define the terms of proper land use, who gets to enforce the rules, and whose claims become visible or invisible (Bryant & Bailey, 1997; Li, 2014). In Assam, forest encroachment issues are often framed in ecological discourses of deforestation, biodiversity loss, and erosion control, but they are also caught up in citizenship verification regimes and demographic politics. The governance of land, therefore, cannot be separated from the governance of belonging.

This intersection is especially important in situations where the verification of citizenship and land rights is a self-reinforcing process. The processes of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and other verification processes do not occur in a manner that is separate from territorial governance. Persons whose citizenship is in question may be at greater risk of vulnerability in land rights disputes, eviction drives, or forest clearance operations. Political ecology reminds us that these processes should not be reduced to issues of environmental mismanagement but should instead be understood in the context of state-making and boundary-making (Vandergeest & Peluso, 1995).

On a more theoretical level, the land rights situation in Assam can be understood as a process of territorialisation—the creation of space that is governable through legal definition, mapping, and enforcement (Scott, 1998). Climate change, particularly the flooding and erosion of the Brahmaputra river basin, disrupts territorial boundaries and land rights, making them difficult to govern. These ecological instabilities interact with identity-based territorial claims, increasing the uncertainty of land ownership and rights.

Notably, securitisation theory provides another level of analysis. When environmental degradation is posited to be the result of demographic change, environmental discourse is politicised (Floyd, 2010). The construction of land encroachment as an existential threat to Indigenous identity is a process that secures environmental governance as a security practice. In this way, eviction drives, border patrols, and land-clearance operations can be justified as necessary measures to restore the balance of nature, even if the underlying structural causes of environmental degradation, such as infrastructure development, resource extraction, or embankment mismanagement, remain unexplored.

Therefore, environmental degradation in Assam cannot be abstractly separated from political economy. Climate change may increase the competition for cultivable land and forest resources, but whether this competition leads to conflict is contingent on the institutional consistency, equity of distribution, and the securitisation of environmental discourse. Political ecology restates the climate change-migration-conflict complex by emphasising the importance of governance design and discursive power over environmental determinism.

The inclusion of political ecology within the Climate-Migration-Conflict (CMC) framework strengthens the article's core argument: climate change is not a direct cause of conflict but a structural stressor whose impact is mediated by territorial governance, citizenship regimes, and elite discursive strategies. Land governance, therefore, is the institutional pivot between ecological risk and political contestation in the Assam frontier.

Migration and Environment

The interlinkage between migration and environmental concerns is not a recent phenomenon. It can be traced back to human civilisation, where its repercussions led to catastrophes in many forms. According to International Organisation for Migration, environmental migrants are defined as “persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad” (IOM,

2007:33). Deforestation could be one of the numerous environmental issues confronting immigration in developing nations. Water depletion and pollution would be among them, as would overpopulation, soil erosion, and poor sanitation. In some situations, other environmental issues existed before the immigrants' arrival; in some cases, they aggravated the difficulties. Diminishing resources might also result in increased conflict with local communities and significant hardship for them.

For the past few decades, the irresponsible exploitation of forest resources and encroachment of forestland for shelter have accelerated deforestation in Assam. For example, according to the Assam Remote Sensing Application Centre's study report, Goalpara district had just 9.9 per cent forest cover (Assam Science Technology and Environment Council, 1990; Medhi & Kar, 2016). However, a recent satellite study conducted by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSA) reveals that various protected forest areas around the state, including Goalpara district, are in deteriorating condition (Medhi & Kar, 2016). The likely cause of deforestation is the district's growing population, primarily due to the settlement of large numbers of Bangladeshi migrants (Medhi & Kar, 2016). A significant section of the forests has been destroyed as a result of human occupation and the increasing strain of unlawful encroachment, including forced encroachment and other harmful activities. This practice will be repeated as the state's population grows. As a result, the percentage of land area covered by forest in the state has decreased from 39 per cent in 1951-52 to around 30 per cent in 2015-16 (Mayilvaganan, 2019).

Illegal settlers might add more of a human footprint to the virgin forests, grasslands, and Brahmaputra valley areas. Their heavy usage of land and deforestation contribute to the vulnerability of the river Brahmaputra's ecosystem. They also develop houses along the riverbank. Their unwelcome actions contribute to the deterioration of the valley regions. They could, and still can, expand on those territories with minimal resistance. In recent decades, migrants have encroached not just on public lands and forests but also on areas in restricted belts and blocks for Assamese tribals. These encroachments have resulted in environmental devastation and ethnic strife (Nath & Nath, 2010). The conflicts over forest land in the Orang National Park, sparked by the settlement of immigrants and local people's movement into forestland in Golaghat district, have provided a clear picture of the intensity and gravity of this illegal migrant issue (Sharma et al., 2012). If not limited, these competitions might have significant ecological consequences, as shown in previous events in this region. An extraordinary loss of about 23,000 acres of forest land in Assam's Sonitpur district from 1994 to 2001 highlights the potential implications of such conflicts (Sharma et al., 2012).

Along with these issues, Assam has been facing many human-induced calamities, such as severe floods every year. The floods in Assam serve as a warning that climate change is real and wreaking havoc on people's lives (Tiwari, 2022). The surging Brahmaputra and Barak rivers have inundated new places, affecting more than 54.5 lakh people across 32 districts (as of 2026, there are 35 districts) of Assam (PTI, 2022). At least 101 people died due to the floods and landslides in 2022 in the state. In its 12th report, the Standing Committee on Water Resources stated that "deforestation, erosion and destruction of wetlands have added to the persisting havoc" (Outlook, 2022). Environmental scientist Partha Jyoti Das said, "[g]rowing population and construction in flood-prone areas are some of the reasons behind the burgeoning damage in the state. In several places, breach of embankments has caused widespread destruction." He further said, "[d]rainage congestion in low-lying areas, which is a result of rapidly changing land use practices, the fast pace of urbanisation and expansion of human habitat all around, at the cost of natural waterways, have also intensified the flood situation." Echoing him, Dr Abhik Gupta said "hill-cutting and deforestation, along with climate change,

compound flood problems" (Outlook, 2022). This was reinforced by Nayan Sharma, who said:

> [t]he huge loss of forestry and massive soil erosion from watersheds cause continued riverbed rise. This has triggered bank erosion, widening channels and generally reduced flood-carrying capacity (Karmakar, 2022).

Seemingly, Parthankar Choudhury, in the context of Barak Valley, asserted that:

> The water holding capacity of most rivers has reduced, far lower than it was 30-40 years ago; the open natural sink areas have shrunk — anthropic needs/greeds, peripheral expansion of Silchar city being the causes (Karmakar, 2022).

The Assam State Action Plan for Climate Change (ASAPCC) highlighted that the state's climate projections indicate that extreme rainfall will have increased by 38 per cent (GPlus, 2022). Many environmentalists, therefore, argue that devastating floods in the state are repercussions of climate change.

Several studies found concrete evidence of conflict between the influx of illegal immigrants and local people over access to the limited natural resources, such as forest products and environmental degradation around the migrant habited areas (Berry, 2008). Illegal immigration from Bangladesh exacerbates the increasing population pressures and, sooner or later, will lead to further resource-related conflicts. Therefore, large-scale migrations have the potential to worsen existing environmental problems and lead to environmental deterioration.

Migration and Conflict

Migration and conflict are two of the delicate areas of present International Relations, which cannot be underestimated in many cases; they lead to ethnic cleansing and xenophobia, especially in the Afro-Asiatic region. (Crush & Ramachandran, 2010). The influx of illegal immigrants and their illegal settlement might change the social and cultural fabric of the host nation and escalate tensions, probably in countries with multi-ethnic religions and so on. In many cases, resistance from the local community was driven by a desire to preserve their own identity. On the other hand, migrants are emotionally and cognitively 'excluded' and characterised as competitors for limited resources like food, and land. This native-versus-migrant conflict might be infused into the power equation among the host society's elites. Local people, for example, might deliberately develop a strong group identity within their own community to protect their interests and agitate for action. The prevalence of this sort of conflict represents the insecurity of both natives and migrants, prompting them to defend their interests (Swain, 1996). In this process, it may lead to conflict among the diverse ethnic or religious communities of the host nations. While estimates of Bangladeshi migration to India vary widely—ranging from official census data to academic projections—these figures must be interpreted with caution. Scholars warn that these figures often blur distinctions between legal, undocumented, and seasonal migrants (Tripathi, 2016; Ostaszewski, 2018). Additionally, attributing conflict solely to migration overlooks crucial factors such as local governance, integration policies, historical coexistence, and political mobilisation. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that migration alone does not inherently lead to conflict; intervening variables significantly shape outcomes.

India is not an exception; it is experiencing many incidents which escalate to conflicts due to illegal immigration. Minority fear or xenophobia of Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam is a serious problem because Muslims are the state's largest minority community (34.22 per cent) as compared to other communities (Kashyap, 2024; PTI, 2024). The problem of migration is significant, where Bodos feel that Muslim settlers help illegal migrants to enter the area. There have also been instances of Muslim encroachers encroaching on state-owned forest property (Firstpost, 2014). The Kokrajhar violence of 2012 (also known as the Bodo-Muslim riot) between the immigrant Muslim population and the native Bodo people provides a striking image of the strife caused by illegal

immigration. Apparently, the conflict started after the death of two Bengali-speaking Muslim people in Gossaigaon on 6th July 2012 and the shooting and injuring of two members of the ABMSU (All BTC Minority Students' Union) on 19th July 2012, which resulted the retaliatory killings of four former Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) on 20th July 2012, by miscreants in Joypur (a Muslim-majority village in Kokrajhar district) (Brahma, 2022; Ghosh, 2024). However, deeper investigation reveals that it is more than that and is tied to politics for space in the reserved forest and adjacent wasteland regions (Deka, 2012).

The Bodos have been alarmed by the incredible growth of the Bengali-speaking Muslim population and thought that if the trend continues, they would be outnumbered and politically subject to them. They are also apprehensive that their land and identities might be lost to invading migrant Muslims soon (Deka, 2012). Though the demarcation of illegal immigration by using 26th March 1971[3] as the cut-off date is not the primary cause of the BTAD (Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts) riots, Kokrajhar district faces the burden of immigration more than other districts of Assam. According to the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) (2012), "[d]uring 1951-1961, Kokrajhar had a decadal growth rate of 46.44 per cent compared to 34.98 per cent in Assam, while it increased to 54.28 per cent (in Kokrajhar) compared to 34.95 per cent (in whole Assam) during 1961-1971. The decadal growth rate of the population of Kokrajhar district climbed to 76.75 per cent from 1971 to 1991, compared to 53.25 per cent of the whole of Assam." Kokrajhar illustrates the big picture about the BTAD's unnatural decadal population growth pattern. This ethnic conflict in Kokrajhar and the other three Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) of Assam has cost the lives of around 113 people. Over 400,000 people have been displaced and are being housed in 273 relief camps. This internal displacement has been variably considered the most significant since the partition of India in 1947 (Brahma, 2022; Singh & Lakshmi, 2019). It was one of the deadliest incidents in recent memory, perpetuating a pattern of back-and-forth violence between the Bodos and Bengali-speaking Muslims.

In the meantime, this conflict triggers a bizarre series of knock-on events that have impacted large parts of the country. The radical Muslim networks in India and other like-minded organisations escalated the event, which exhibited this conflict into a sectarian tone. They, too, make it an ethnic cleansing issue. This incident quickly spread across the country. Northeast residents in major cities, including Mumbai, Bangalore, and Chennai, are fearful owing to the reports of violence and targeting. Thousands of people from the northeast fled, particularly from Bangalore (Madhok, 2012). It might be the first instance from the northeast to have an influence outside the region. It occurred on 11th August 2012, when a gathering in Mumbai to support Muslim victims of alleged atrocities turned violent. At least two people died, while more than 50 others were critically injured (The Hindu, 2012). Some demonstrators claimed to have seen photographs of Muslim casualties in the Northeast on the internet, which enraged the common masses. Days later, a mass exodus began: thousands of individuals from northeastern backgrounds who had gone to large cities like Bangalore and Pune for employment began to stream into railway terminals, yearning to leave (Pathak, 2014). They claimed to have received warning and threatening text messages to leave or risk violent retaliation for what had happened to Muslims in Assam. People from northeastern states also fled because they were all scared (Pathak, 2014).

The comparison of the 1971 and 1991 census data to the all-India level (see Table 1) reveals an exponential rise in Assam's population growth. It might be validating the fears of continued illegal immigration in the state. Most Bangladeshi migrants have had their names unlawfully added

[3] The demarcation of illegal immigration in Assam from Bangladesh is set at 26 March 1971. This cut-off date dates back to the Bangladesh Liberation War and was subsequently formalised under the Assam Accord (1985) as the legal basis for identifying unauthorised immigrants in the state.

to the electoral rolls, allowing them to claim citizenship in the state. With these startling revelations, influential civil society-led anti-foreigner movements in Assam between 1979 and 1985 have raised the stakes once more, reiterating the fears that illegal migrants will eventually overwhelm the local population. They also put forward their demands for concrete action against this relentless demographic push, such as updating the National Register of Citizens with 1971 as the cut-off year (Bhaumik et al., 2020; Das, 2016). At the pick of their agitations, All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad, All Assam Students' Union and other civil society organisations spearheading the anti-foreigner campaign in the state, which later on estimated the illegal migrants in the state is to be around 4.5 to 5 million, or 31 to 34 per cent of the entire state's population in 1971 (Goswami, 2007). Later, the Asom Gana Parishad, an Assam-based political organisation, continued the agitation. The "sons of the soil" movements in Assam reached their pinnacle in the 1980s (Price, 1997). The change in demographic structure, brought about by these migrations, has had a profound impact on the social, cultural, economic, and political scenario in the state. These changes have at times been linked to political instability, civil strife, and even ethnic conflicts in the region (Borkakoti, 2013).

Table 1: A Comparison of Population Trends Between Overall India and Assam

Year	Total Population of Assam	Total population of India
1951	8,028,856	3,61,088,090
1961	10,837,329	4,39,234,771
1971	14,625,152	5,48,159,652
1981	18,041,248	6,83,329,097
1991	22,414,322	8,46,302,688
2001	26,655,528	10,28,737,690
2011	31,205,576	1,210,193,422

Sources: Census Reports of India and others

Policy Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and theoretical insights, the following policy recommendations are proposed to address the climate–migration–conflict nexus in Assam and the broader Northeast region:

- Establish a Bilateral Climate Adaptation and Migration Task Force between India and Bangladesh to coordinate early warning systems, displacement management, and climate resilience in vulnerable border regions.
- Implement Participatory Resource Governance involving local and immigrant communities in forest and land management to reduce competition over scarce resources and mitigate social tensions.
- Develop Conflict-Sensitive Resettlement Guidelines to ensure sustainable and socially inclusive rehabilitation of climate-displaced populations, safeguarding indigenous land rights and promoting community cohesion.
- Integrate Climate-Induced Migration into Assam's State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) to align climate adaptation efforts with livelihood diversification and food security, addressing root causes of conflict.

Collectively, these policy measures emphasise a shift from reactive, militarised responses to anticipatory, governance-centred approaches that integrate environmental security, migration management, and conflict prevention in Assam and the broader region.

Conclusion

Migration and climate change have many facets that generate concerns in non-traditional security, which involves conflicts in many forms.

They are inter- and intra-national domains in nature. Over time, many states worldwide have faced multidimensional security threats due to this nexus. Many small states are even having existential threats due to the repercussions of this twin problem and have a high potential to culminate in conflict between the host and the migrants. Reinhard Lohrmann also says, "environmental degradation leads to mass migrations which further accelerate environment overloads elsewhere and can lead to further, subsequent migration" (Lohrmann, 1996: 838).

After having critically analysed, it is quite evident that there are a lot of conflicts and xenophobic issues related to illegal migrants from Bangladesh in India, especially in the context of Assam. After all, India and Bangladesh do not have any formal agreements or conventions regarding illegal immigrants. We need more effective border management procedures, along with measures to control illegal migration from Bangladesh. The nature of threats is non-traditional and transnational in nature; however, policymakers often try to resolve this problem through traditional mechanisms. India must work with Bangladesh to develop a plan for collaboration and coordination to help diagnose the problems of illegal migration. India must also take proactive steps to establish itself in a sustainable way and to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Mass migration might alter the demographic makeup of the host population and create competition for scarce resources like water, food, and land. It is also going to widespread societal anxiety and xenophobia. So, it is crucial that India look ahead to addressing the challenges of migration by cooperating with Bangladesh rather than knee-jerk reactions (Mahmood, 2014). As a result, state actors in bordering countries will frequently face a higher risk of destruction from these people. It suggests a form of "security interdependence between states" that renders governments extremely susceptible to policies implemented by neighbouring states on illegal migration. Given the urgency of the situation and the fact that we are observing the impacts of illegal migration on the political ecosystem of India's Assam state, it is right time to review the securitisation of the environment and migration. It is necessary for academics and policymakers to shift their focus from traditional security to non-traditional security outlook in International Relations.

References

Abrahams, D., & Carr, E. R. (2017). Understanding the connections between climate change and conflict: Contributions from geography and political ecology. *Current Climate Change Reports*, 3(4), 233–242. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40641-017-0080-z

Aftendorn, H., Keohane, R., & Wallender, C.A. (1999). *Imperfect unions.* Oxford University Press.

Alam, M. R. & Siddiqui, T. (2022). Climate-induced migration in Bangladesh. *South Asia.* https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/regionalprofile/english-version-country-profiles/516048/climate-induced-migration-in-bangladesh/

Alam, S. (2003). Environmentally induced migration from Bangladesh to India. *Strategic Analysis*, *27*(3), 422–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160308450098

Antos, D. (2017). India, Climate Changes and Security in South Asia. *BRIEFER No. 36, The Centre for Climate Change and Security.* https://climateandsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/india_climate-change-and-security-in-south-asia_briefer-36.pdf

Asian Centre for Human Rights. (2012). *Assam Riots: Preventable but not prevented.* Asian Centre for Human Rights. https://reliefweb.int/report/india/assam-riots-preventable-not-prevented

Assam Science Technology and Environment Council. (1990). *District Report on Land Use/Land Cover, Goalpara District, Assam.* Assam Remote Sensing Application Centre, Assam.

Bailey, S., & Bryant, R. (1997). *Third World Political Ecology: An Introduction* (1st ed.).

Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203974360

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2019). *Bangladesh Statistics.* Government of Bangladesh.

Barbora, S. (2022). *Homeland insecurities: Autonomy, Conflict, and Migration in Assam*. Oxford University Press.

Barnett, J., & Adger, W. N. (2007). Climate change, human security and violent conflict. *Political Geography*, 26(6), 639–655. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2007.03.003

Baruah, M. (2023). The political ecology of an environmental crisis in the Brahmaputra Valley. *Environmental Sociology Journal*. https://ecoinsee.org/journal/ojs/index.php/ees/article/view/1054

Baruah, S. (2007). *Postfrontier blues: Toward a new policy framework for Northeast India*. East-West Center Washington.

Baruah, S. (2020). *In the name of the nation: India and its Northeast*. Stanford University Press.

Berry, L. (2008). The impacts of environmental degradation on refugee-host relationships. *African Security Review,* 17(3), 125-131. https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2008.9627489

Bhattacharya, A. (2019). *Changing Climate and Resource Use Efficiency in Plants.* Academic Press.

Bhattacharyya, A. and Werz, M. (2012). *Climate Change, Migration, and Conflict in South Asia.* Centre for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/climate-change-migration-and-conflict-in-south-asia/

Bhaumik, S., Purkayastha, S., & Chaudhury, S. (2020). NRC FACTSHEET Media Factsheet on Issues of Citizenship in the Northeast. *Calcutta Research Group.* http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2020/NRC_Factsheet_2020.pdf

Borkakoti, J. (2013). Demographic Invasion, Assamese Identity and Geopolitics. *Space and Culture India,* 1(1), 28-42. DOI:10.20896/saci.v1i1.12

Brahma, A. (2022). A Study on Communal Conflict of 2012 In Kokrajhar District Of Btad, Assam. *Quest Journals,* 1(4), 1-9. http://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/archive.html

Bryan, G., Chowdhury, S. and Mobarak Mushfiq, A. (2014). Underinvestment in a profitable technology: The case of seasonal migration in Bangladesh. *Econometrica*, 82(5), 1671-1748. https://doi.org/10.3982/ECTA10489

Bryant, R. L., & Bailey, S. (1997). *Third World Political Ecology*. Routledge.

Burgess, J.P. (Ed.). (2010). *The Routledge Handbook of New Security Studies* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203859483

Burrows, K., & Kinney, P. L. (2016). Exploring the climate change, migration and conflict nexus. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 13*(4), 443. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph13040443

Buzan, B. (1984). Peace, Power, and Security: Contending Concepts in the Study of International Relations. *Journal of Peace Research,* 21(2), 109-125. https://doi.org/10.1177/002234338402100203

Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Caballero-Anthony, M. (2016). *An Introduction to Non-Traditional Security Studies.* SAGE Publications.

Chatterjee, S. (2003). Neo-realism, Neo-liberalism and Security. *International Studies*, 40(2), 125-144. https://doi.org/10.1177/002088170304000202

Chowdhury, I. R. (2021). *Geography in the 21st Century Emerging Issues and the Way Forward.* Namya Press.

Crush, J. & Ramachandran, S. (2010). Xenophobia, International Migration and Development. *Journal of Human Development*

and Capabilities, 11(2):209-228. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452821003677327

Das, P. (2016). Illegal Migration from Bangladesh Deportation, Border Fences and Work Permits. *IDSA Monograph Series, No. 56*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. https://idsa.in/publisher/monograph/illegal-migration-from-bangladesh-deportation-border-fences-and-work-permits

Deccan Chronicle. (2016). *India has 2-crore illegal Bangladeshi migrants, says Kiren Rijiju.* https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/171116/india-has-2-crore-illegal-bangladeshis.html

Deka, K (2012). Assam Communal Violence Toll Rises to 19, Army Called In. *India Today*. https://www.indiatoday.in/india/east/story/assam-communal-violence-toll-rises-army-called-in-110798-2012-07-22

Firstpost. (2014). *Assam violence: 5 key facts about the Bodo-Muslim conflict.* https://www.firstpost.com/india/assam-violence-5-key-facts-about-the-bodo-muslim-conflict-1507865.html

Floyd, R. (2010). *Security and the environment: Securitisation theory and US environmental security policy*. Cambridge University Press.

Fulvio, A. (2016). *Traditional security issues.* In Janwei, Wang and Weiqing, Song, (eds.). *China, The European Union, and the International Politics of Global Governance*. Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 175-194.

Ganguly, S. & Mistry, D. (2022). *Enduring and Emerging Issues in South Asian Security.* Rowman & Littlefield. https://doi.org/10.5771/9780815738855

Ghosh, P. (2024). A Study of the Violence between Bodo's and Bengali-speaking Muslim's In Western Assam (2012-2014). *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies,* X (V), 190-204.

Goswami, N. (2010). Bangladeshi Illegal Migration into Assam: Issues and Concerns from the Field. *IDSA Issue Brief,* Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. *https://idsa.in/publisher/issuebrief/bangladeshi-illegal-migration-into-assam-issues-and-concerns-from-the-field*

Goswami, U. (2007). Internal Displacement, Migration, and Policy in Northeastern India. *Working Paper No. 5,* East-West Center Washington.

GPlus. (2022). *Assam Ranks Fifth Most Vulnerable State To Climate Change In India.* https://guwahatiplus.com/assam/assam-ranks-fifth-most-vulnerable-state-to-climate-change-in-india

Hama, H. H. (2017). State Security, Societal Security, and Human Security. *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, 21(1), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0973598417706591

Hossain, B., Shi., G., Ajiang, C., Sarker, MNI., Sohel, M.S., Sun, Z., and Yang, Q. (2022). Climate change induced human displacement in Bangladesh: Implications on the livelihood of displaced riverine island dwellers and their adaptation strategies. *Frontiers in Psychology,* 13:964648. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.964648

Huang, L. (2023). *Climate Migration 101: An Explainer. Migration Policy Institute*. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/climate-migration-101-explainer

International Organisation for Migration (IOM). (2007). Migration and the Environment. *MC/INF/288,* International Organization for Migration, Geneva.https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1411/files/MC_INF_288.pdf

International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2020). *World migration report 2020*. https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2020

Islam, Md., R., & Islam, Md., T. (2011). Environmental Degradation, Migration and Conflict: A case between India and Bangladesh. *Asian Affairs,* 4 (1& 2), 28-45.

Islam, N. & Amstel, A. (2021). *Bangladesh II: Climate Change Impacts, Mitigation and Adaptation in Developing Countries*. Springer

Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-26357-1

Karmakar, S. (2022). Communities hit hard as climate change aggravates floods in Assam. *Deccan Herald.* https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/communities-hit-hard-as-climate-change-aggravates-floods-in-assam-1126728.html

Kashyap, S. (2024). Himanta Sarma claims Assam will be Muslim-majority state soon, Congress counters. *India Today.* https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/assam-himanta-biswa-sarma-muslim-majority-population-increase-control-2569408-2024-07-20

Kawser, M.A., & Samad, M.A. (2016). Political history of Farakka Barrage and its effects on environment in Bangladesh. *Bandung: Journal of Global South,* 3(16). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40728-015-0027-5

Khakhlary, N. (2017). Illegal Bangladeshi Migration into Assam: Security Concerns and Development Challenges. *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences,* 5(10A):1329-1333. https://saspublishers.com/media/articles/SJAHSS_510A1329-1333.pdf

Kolodziej, E. A. (2005). *Security and International Relations.* Cambridge University Press, New York.

Kumar, A., & Bhagat, R.B. (Eds.). (2021). *Migrants, Mobility and Citizenship in India* (1st ed.). Routledge India.

Lee, E. S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography, 3*, 47–57. https://doi.org/10.2307/2060063

Li, T. M. (2014). *Land's end: Capitalist relations on an Indigenous Frontier*. Duke University Press.

Lohrmann, R. (1996). *Conference Report: Environmentally-induced population displacements and environmental impacts from mass migrations.* International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Madhok, D. (2012, August 17). Indian PM moves to cool panic as thousands flee cities. *Reuters.* https://www.reuters.com/article/world/uk/indian-pm-moves-to-cool-panic-as-thousands-flee-cities-idUSBRE87G09A/

Mahmood, S. A. I. (2014). Impact of climate change in Bangladesh: Role of two governments. *Journal of Ecology and the Natural Environment,* 6(3), 119-125. https://doi.org/10.5897/JENE2013.0406

Manoharan, N. (2012). Illegal Migration as a Threat to India's Internal Security. *Vivekananda International Foundation. https://www.vifindia.org/article/2012/august/06/illegal-migration-as-a-threat-to-india-s-internal-security*

Manuvie, R. (2018). *Governance of climate change related migrations in Assam (India)*. University of Edinburgh.

Mathur, A. (2022). International Solar Alliance's journey towards 1000. *Solar Compass,* 1:100015. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.solcom.2022.100015

Mayilvaganan, M. (2019). Illegal Migration and Strategic Challenges: A Case Study of Undocumented Migration from Bangladesh to India. *Artha-Journal of Social Sciences,*18 (4), 25-42. https://doi.org/10.12724/ajss.51.2

McDuie-Ra, D. (2012). Tribals, migrants and insurgents: Security and insecurity along the India–Bangladesh border. *Global Change, Peace & Security, 24*(1), 165–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/14781158.2012.641286

Medhi, D., & Kar, B. K. (2016). Depletion of forest cover and encroachment in Gonbina Reserved Forest in Goalpara district of Assam. *Space and Culture, India*, *4*(1), 40-50. https://doi.org/10.20896/saci.v4i1.187

Ministry of Environment and Forests. (2008). *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.* Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. (2022). *Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan*

2022-2041. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. https://bangladeshbiosafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Mujib-Climate-Prosperity-Plan-2022-2041.pdf

Ministry of Home Affairs. (2016). *Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 55.* Government of India. https://xn--i1b5bzbybhfo5c8b4bxh.xn--11b7cb3a6a.xn--h2brj9c/MHA1/Par2017/pdfs/par2016-pdfs/rs-161116/55.pdf

Nath, H. K. and Nath, S. K. (2010). Illegal Migration into Assam: Magnitude, Causes, and Economic Consequences. *SHSU Economics & Intl. Business,* Working Paper No. 10. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1750383

Newman, E. (2001). Human Security and Constructivism, *International Studies Perspectives*, 2(3), 239–251. https://doi.org/10.1111/1528-3577.00055

Ostaszewski, V. (2018). *Climate change redefining migration: The example of Bangladesh.* Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. https://www.asiapacific.ca/publication/climate-change-redefining-migration-example-bangladesh

Outlook. (2022). *Assam Floods Getting Increasingly Devastating Because Of Climate Change, Poor Planning: Experts*. https://www.outlookindia.com/national/assam-floods-getting-increasingly-devastating-because-of-climate-change-poor-planning-experts-news-206454

Pathak, J. P. (2014). Role of social media in reference to North-East ethnic violence (2012). *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science,* 19(4), 59-66. DOI:10.9790/0837-19455966

Price, G. (1997): *The Assam Movement and the construction of Assamese identity.* University of Bristol.

PTI. (2022). Assam flood situation grim, 54.5 lakh hit, 12 fresh deaths. *Moneycontrol.* https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/assam-flood-situation-grim-54-5-lakh-hit-12-fresh-deaths-8727851.html

PTI. (2024). Assam to become Muslim-majority state by 2041: CM Himanta Biswa Sarma. *The Indian Express.* https://indianexpress.com/article/india/assam-himanta-biswa-sarma-muslim-majority-state-9463866/

Robbins, P. (2012). *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction* (2nd ed). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Saul, B. (2012). The Security Risks of Climate Change Displacement in Bangladesh. *Sydney Law School Legal Studies Research Paper No. 12/58,* The University of Sydney.

Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press.

Shamshad, R. (2017). *Bangladeshi migrants in India: Foreigners, refugees, or infiltrators?* Oxford University Press.

Sharma, N., Madhusudan, M. D., & Sinha, A. (2012). Socio-economic Drivers of Forest Cover Change in Assam: A Historical Perspective. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *47*(5), 64–72. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41419850

Singh, N. K., & Lakshmi, S. (2019). Climate Change Regime in Bangladesh Security Challenge for India. *GNLU Journal of Law, Development and Politics,* 9(1), 47-64.

Sood, S.K. (2025). Rethinking India's Border Strategy to Curb Illegal Migration. *Observer Research Foundation.* https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/rethinking-india-s-border-strategy-to-curb-illegal-migration

Swain, A. (1996). Displacing the Conflict: Environmental Destruction in Bangladesh and Ethnic Conflict in India. *Journal of Peace Research*, *33*(2), 189–204. http://www.jstor.org/stable/425436

Swain, A. (2017). The Farakka effect: If honeybees migrate, why not people? *Dialogue Earth*. https://dialogue.earth/en/climate/the-farakka-effect-if-honeybees-migrate-why-not-people/

The Hindu. (2012). *Two killed as protest in Mumbai against Assam riots turns violent*. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/two-killed-as-protest-in-mumbai-against-assam-riots-turns-violent/article3754170.ece

Ticu, I. (2021). Migration as a (Non)Traditional Security Issue of the Risk Society. *Postmodern Openings,* 12(2), 387-409. https://doi.org/10.18662/po/12.2/314

Tiwari, S. (2022). The Worst Floods in 122 Years and How Climate Change Is Making Them Worse. *The Quint.* https://www.thequint.com/climate-change/assam-the-worst-floods-in-122-years-and-how-climate-change-is-making-them-worse

Tripathi, S. (2016). Illegal immigration from Bangladesh to India: Toward a comprehensive solution. *Carnegie India.* https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2016/06/illegal-immigration-from-bangladesh-to-india-toward-a-comprehensive-solution

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (1994). *Human Development Report, 1994.* Oxford University Press.

Vandergeest, P., & Peluso, N. L. (1995). Territorialization and state power in Thailand. *Theory and Society, 24*(3), 385–426. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00993352

Williams, P.D. (Ed.). (2008). *Security Studies: An Introduction* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203926604

Ethical Approval

This manuscript was prepared in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the Declaration of Helsinki or similar ethical statements.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest, whether financial or non-financial, related to this manuscript. We confirm that no portion of this manuscript was prepared using AI-generated text. In addition, no figures in this manuscript were generated using AI-assisted tools. The authors certify that the submission is original work and represents the opinions of the authors based on the research work.

Author Contribution Statement

Both authors have made substantial contributions to the manuscript.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. The consent process complied with institutional and national ethical standards. If participants were minors or unable to consent, permission was obtained from their legal guardians.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Data Availability Statement

In compliance with the journal's guidelines, the revised manuscript is accompanied by a complete Data Availability Statement. All relevant data supporting the findings of this study have been clearly indicated and are included within the manuscript.