In this chapter, we propose to take up two very similarly placed marginalised and excluded groups, i.e., refugees and Internally Displaced Persons/People (henceforth, IDPs) in India in the larger context of human security. Only in recent times has there been a proliferation of studies on refugees and IDPs throughout South Asia. These studies have been mainly concerned with the question of rights, protection and rehabilitation of the refugees and the IDPs. The international community, too, has been concerned not only with the problems of refugees but also with the problems of IDPs. Since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Union, the number of refugees has come down drastically. At the same time, the number of IDPs has increased substantially, particularly in Asian and African countries. These two problems have also affected all South Asian countries, with the exception perhaps of Maldives. India, too, experienced a massive inflow of refugees in the wake of the partition of India in 1947 and again very severely in the wake of the liberation movement of Bangladesh in 1971. On the other hand, because of certain complex multiple reasons, India has also experienced the emergence of IDPs in various parts of the country. The IDPs, of late, have become a very visible marginalised and excluded group in India.

The Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees are obviously highly marginalised social groups. Both these groups face exclusion from the larger society. They deserve special attention. The first part of this chapter deals with the problem of refugees, and the second with the problems of IDPs. Like other chapters, here too, while we emphasise the Indian situation, we have also kept the overall South Asian situation in mind.
6.1 REFUGEES: THE UNENDING INSECURITY

Generally, a refugee is a person who has fled his/her country because of fear of persecution. The term is popularly understood in a far broader sense, encompassing persons fleeing war, civil strife, famine, and environmental disasters etc. The United Nations Convention relating to the status of refugee held on 28 July 1951, defined a refugee as any person who “as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (UNHCR, nd) However, the drafters of the 1951 Convention limited the modern definition of refugees not only to persons fearing a relatively narrow range of human rights abuses, but also restricted its scope to migrants in Europe who fled as a result of events occurring before 1951. In 1967, a Protocol dropped the Convention’s geographic and temporal limitations. Although the Protocol universalised the applicability of the Convention, it did not expand the definition of the term (UNHCR, nd).

At present, there are 11.9 million refugees throughout the globe. It should be noted here that most of the world’s refugee flows are in third world countries. Africa is the worst affected region, followed closely by Asia. Table 6.1 shows the region-wise refugee distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>6,187,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>4,285,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>4,268,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America &amp; the Caribbean</td>
<td>1,316,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>962,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>74,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,003,400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 REFUGEES IN SOUTH ASIA

From a broad South Asian perspective, we can look into the problems of Burmese, Rohingya, Chakma, Lhotsampa, Tibetan, Sri Lankan Tamil, Bangladesh and Afghan refugees. These refugees are mainly concentrated in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. Countries in South Asia are both refugee-generating and refugee-receiving. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal are countries that are hosting refugees while Bhutan and Sri Lanka have been generating refugees in large numbers. Table 6.2 shows the pattern of refugee flow in South Asia.

Table 6.2: Profile of South Asian Refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refugees</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Host country/ countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Rohingyas</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Bangladesh, India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmese Chin</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakma</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lankan Tamils</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetans</td>
<td>Tibet</td>
<td>India, Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutanese</td>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Nepal, India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashmiri</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghans</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Pakistan, India</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Burmese Refugees

During the past two decades more than 5 hundred thousands Burmese have fled their country due to violation of political and human rights by the military government. These people entered neighbouring countries like India and Bangladesh. Some 2,50,000 Burmese Rohingya refugees entered Bangladesh in late 1991 and early 1992 (USCR, 1998). Although Bangladesh initially welcomed them, within months it began trying to repatriate them. Almost 2,30,000 Rohingyas were repatriated, 21,500 still remain in two camps in Bangladesh. During 1996 and 1997, thousands of Rohingyas again fled to Bangladesh. Many of them took shelter in the town of Cox's Bazar where gradually the local people developed a hostile attitude towards the Rohingyas. There is extreme unemployment amidst them, and most of them survive by daily labour and some of them by begging. However, Bangladeshi authorities label
them as "economic migrants" and treat them as such. Bangladesh has put restrictions on UNHCR for assisting Rohingyas. Nor does it allow any international NGOs to assist them even with medical care.

An estimated 42,000 Burmese Chin fled to the Northeastern part of India (USCR, Country Report: India). The Chin, largely Christians, fled discrimination under successive Burmese governments and persecution by the present regime. Chin refugees, a majority of them living in Mizoram, have been demanding refugee status and protection from UNHCR but India considers them as illegal immigrants and does not permit UNHCR access to them. That has largely resulted in an ethnic conflict among local tribal groups and outsiders. Besides, some Burmese refugees, who have been staying in refugee camps in Delhi were recognised as refugees by UNHCR and were given assistance. The group includes both former students who fled Burma after Burmese authorities crushed the pro-democracy movement in 1988 and ethnic Chins who made the long journey from Mizoram to Delhi to seek UNHCR protection.

Chakma Refugees
Chakmas are mostly Buddhists and are considered as an ethnic and religious minority group in Bangladesh. Chakma refugees fled to India in two sections. The first group of Chakma people migrated to India in 1964 from erstwhile East-Pakistan (present day Bangladesh). They were basically victims of the Kaptai Dam project. These people lost their villages and farmland because of the Kaptai Dam that was built in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) by the Pakistan government. The Indian government gave shelter to these Chakma migrants and settled them on lands near the Indo-Chinese border of India's Northeast, which is now in Arunachal Pradesh. But even after decades of their settlement, and when Arunachal Pradesh was given statehood, these refugees have remained stateless and Indian government has not granted them citizenship of India. According to one estimate, about 65,000 Chakma people lived in Northeast India up to 2000 (UNHCR: Country Report). Meanwhile, this community has become the target of locals, including political parties and student organisations, who have been threatening to drive them out of Arunachal Pradesh. This has resulted in the displacement of more than 3000 Chakmas.
The second group of Chakma refugees entered India during 1980s due to harassment by Muslim settlers. Chakmas complained that the new Muslim settlers were driving them from their land. Thousands of people reportedly either died in this conflict or fled to India from CHT area. These refugees were settled in six camps in India’s Northeastern state of Tripura. However, India did not allow UNHCR or any other international agency to help these refugees. Since 1993, India has been pressurising the Chakma refugee leadership and the government of Bangladesh to arrange for the return of these refugees. Some 1850 persons were repatriated, and up to 1996 over 5028 families comprising 25,000 Chakmas have returned home. But they complain that they have been unable to reclaim their land and have not received the assistance the Bangladesh government had promised them. At the end of 1996, some 53,000 Chakma refugees remained in India (USCR: Country Report). However, on December 2, 1997 the government of Bangladesh and the rebel group, known as Shanti Bahini (meaning peace force) rebel group signed a peace agreement, ending 25 years of conflict. Progress in the situation encouraged hundreds of Chakma refugee to repatriate. And up to the end of 1997, while some 13,000 Chakma were repatriated, several thousands of them remained in India.

**Bhutanese Refugees**

Bhutanese Hindus of Nepal origin, living mostly in the southern parts of Bhutan, fled to Nepal and India between late 1990 and 1992 due to the “ethnic cleansing” campaigned by Bhutanese authorities. These refugees complained of being denied citizenship and political rights. They were also prevented from studying Nepalese language and forced to wear Drupka dresses (traditional Bhutanese cloths). Bhutanese government considered them as illegal migrants. An estimated 1.26 lakh persons from Bhutan lived in neighbouring countries in 2002, including 1, 10780 in Nepal and 15,000 in India.

In Nepal, these Bhutanese refugees were initially put in camps. The UNHCR and various humanitarian and human rights groups assisted them. Gradually, the refugees formed their own organisation and started demanding their homeland i.e., Bhutan. Since 1993, there have been talks between Bhutan and Nepal over the refugee issue, but no concrete results have been reached so far. On the one hand, the
Bhutanese government is not accepting them as citizens of Bhutan, and on the other, Nepal is worried about the future of its own citizen due to heavy pressure of refugees.

More than 1,00000 ethnic Nepalese of Bhutan fled to India at the beginning of 1991. They took refuge in West Bengal and Assam. These refugees settled down in the border area of Bhutan and India. India is keeping quiet in this matter as under the terms of Indo-Bhutanese Friendship Treaty of 1949, India allows Bhutanese citizens to live and work freely in India. Therefore, the Indian government neither assisted the Bhutanese refugees nor put them in the state-sponsored refugee camps. However, a number of peace marches attempted to establish refugee camps for the Bhutanese in India. In most cases, Indian authorities blocked the marches and arrested them, forcing these refugees back to Bhutan.

In 1997, several hundred ethnic Sarchops from eastern Bhutan fled into Arunachal Pradesh due to political persecution. The aim was to stifle political opposition among Sarchops for Druk National Congress, a political party seeking more democratic reform and human rights protection for Sarchops in Bhutan. Since the number of these Sarchop refugees in small, very little is known about these refugees in India. Over the years, it seems that Bhutan has become a refugee-generating country. It is also taking too long a time to amicably resolve this long-pending refugee issue.

**Tibetan Refugees**

China’s continuous repression in Tibet led thousands of Tibetans to flee to India and Nepal. Most of the estimated 20,000 Tibetan refugees in Nepal arrived in 1959 and 1989. Since 1989, Nepal has stopped registering Tibetan refugees and it no longer allows newly arriving Tibetans to remain there. These refugees were initially kept in Jawalakhel (Lalitpur); later, the Nepal government set up camps in various parts of the country. The refugees who arrived after 1989 were not recognised as refugees, and in 1995 Nepalese government forcibly repatriated more than 300 Tibetans who fled to Nepal to pursue traditional religious studies, which the Chinese government allegedly did not allow. During these years, Tibetans fleeing human rights abuse by the Chinese authorities in Tibet continued to transit from Nepal to India. By the end of 2001, UNHCR had assisted 1,381 Tibetans in their
journey from Nepal to India. However, for many years, Nepal remained home to a large Tibetan exiled community and their leader, the Dalai Lama, and also allowed UNHCR's access to them.

According to an estimate made in 2002, some 1,10,000 Tibetan refugees are living in India. Tibetan refugees first fled to India in 1959, led by their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, when they refused to accept Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Subsequently, more refugees arrived. Initially, the government of India allowed UNHCR to assist Tibetan refugees in India but after the Sino-Indian war and China's entry into the United Nations, UNHCR unilaterally withdrew its support to Tibetan refugees. India has permitted Tibetans to establish their administration in the north Indian city of Dharmashala in the state of Himachal Pradesh, which in effect functions as the Tibetan government in exile.

The number of Tibetan refugees varies greatly, as the number fluctuates because of arrival of more than 1000 refugees from Tibet each year and the return of unknown numbers to Tibet. Among them, many Tibetans flee to India because of religious or political persecution and intend to remain here while others still pilgrimage to meet the Dalai Lama or study Tibetan language and culture. The Indian government has been adopting a flexible approach to the Tibetans compared to other refugees in India. Indian authorities continue to permit Tibetan refugees to enter. Many Tibetans in India are self-sufficient and have access to many facilities as refugees.

**Sri Lankan Refugees**

The eighteen years conflict between Sri Lanka's Sinhalese, Buddhist majority and the Tamil Hindu minority has led more than 144,000 Sri Lankan Tamils fleeing to India. From 1983 to 1990, hundreds and thousands of Tamil refugees fled to India. Initially, the Indian authorities, and the Tamil Nadu state government assisted the refugees. There were 122 refugee camps in the southern state of Tamil Nadu for whose maintenance the government incurred an annual expenditure of Rs.150 million. Some 64,000 of the refugees live in state-run camps. The State government assisted them with cash and food rations, as well as space to build homes. All refugees may receive social services available to Indians and are permitted to work and attend schools. However, UNHCR and other international groups were not allowed regular
access to camps. The sympathetic attitude towards Sri Lankan refugees changed substantially following the involvement of LTTE in the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Between 1991 and September 1993, 36,000 refugees were sent back, after the bilateral agreement on repatriation between the governments of India and Sri Lanka. However, the repatriation scheme has not operated smoothly or uninterruptedly. Gradually, the militancy problem in Sri Lanka started posing a threat to India. The Indian authorities placed some of them in “special camps” because they suspected them to be associated with the LTTE. However, the difficulty is that the militants easily blend with refugees and survive with the aid provided by the government of India. Activities of these refugees militant group now pose a real threat to law and order in Tamil Nadu. Militants took undue advantage of Tamil Nadu’s hospitality and there are a number of instances where they took the law into their own hands, in view of lack of direct control over their activities by the state authorities. However, the Tamil Nadu government has also taken some steps to tackle the problem of Tamil refugees. The movement of the refugees was restricted and all refugees living outside the camps were ordered to register with the local police station. Several were subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention and coercion. Local humanitarian organisations, that were running schools for small children in the camps and providing health services, were banned from entering them. UNHCR was also denied access, as it was feared that it would encourage refugee flow. Thus, India's refugee policy towards the Sri Lankan refugees was at first welcoming until the time of Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination when it proved to be otherwise.

Afghan Refugees

The civil war in Afghanistan in 1978 led to Afghans fleeing to Pakistan, Iran and India. More than three million Afghans fled their country and arrived in Pakistan following the Soviet Union’s occupation in December 1979. This grew to more than 4 million in 1980s. As Pakistan was unable to protect the huge number of refugees, Pakistan government sought the assistance of the UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO and other international organisations. The presence of these refugees not only posed a serious threat to Pakistan’s economy but also caused many political problems in Pakistan. The repatriation process of these
Refugees started only from 1993 onwards after Afghan insurgents ousted the Soviet-installed Najibullah regime. But in mid 1990s, the radical Islamic Taliban faction seized control over southern Afghanistan and Kabul. These caused hundreds of thousands of new refugees to stream into Pakistan and Iran. Over the years, it has not been possible to determine the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Not all Afghan refugees got registered; many came informally and the deaths and births caused problems in actual estimation of the number of Afghan refugees. During the late 1990s, UNHCR estimated the number to be 1.2 million. It also detected 2 million Afghans in Pakistan without documentation. In 2000, the government of Pakistan officially estimated the total number of Afghan refugees to be 2 million. However, the Pakistan government considers Afghans who entered Pakistan prior to 1998 to be refugees, although few have documentation of their status. And those who had arrived Pakistan after 1998 were regarded as illegal migrants.

As Pakistan's economy deteriorated, many international organisations working for Afghan refugees shifted their emphasis to facilitate repatriation and help returnees in Afghanistan. In 1995, UNHCR and the World Food Programme ended food aid to most refugee villages. On January 23, 2001 the Governor of Northwest Frontier Province authorised the police to detain and deport any Afghans not holding a valid Afghan passport and Pakistani visa, including both new arrivals and long-term refugees. However, there is still large influx of Afghans to Pakistan. UNHCR for that purpose has started a screening process to distinguish those who could return to Afghanistan and those who need protection or cannot return to Afghanistan. Things took a new shape after September 11, 2001 when President Bush linked the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington to the Afghan based Al-Qaeda. This has led to the influx of large number of Afghans into Pakistan, especially when the US military began bombing sites in and around Kabul and other Afghan cities.

Afghan refugees are also now staying in India, mostly in Delhi. Most of them are Hindus, Sikhs and Punjabi speaking people of Indian origin who had settled in Afghanistan long back. While the Hindus and Sikh refugees from Afghanistan have benefited from the support of the local people, ethnic Afghans in India face many problems. They are recognised by UNHCR as refugees. They are debarred from seeking employment or conducting any business. They are solely dependent on
the subsistence allowance provided by the UNHCR. As the UNHCR is denying further assistance, it has become difficult for these refugees to survive.

Kashmiri Refugees
The conflict in Kashmir dates back to the partition of India in 1947 and the Indo-Pak war during 1965 and has displaced nearly 500,000 people from India's Kashmir border district of Rajouri and Poonch to Pakistan. Due to the hostile attitude of the Indian army, Kashmiri refugees started living in camps in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir known as Azad Kashmir, where the local authorities assisted them. Since late 1980s, Indian armed forces in Kashmir have fought Kashmiri Muslim insurgents, who are allegedly supported by Pakistan, and who seek either union with Pakistan or an independent Kashmir. As tension increased, more and more Kashmiris sought refuge in Pakistan. These refugees were staying there without the assistance either from the government of Pakistan or UNHCR. Tension further increased in late 2001 when a suicide bomb killed about 40 people in the building, housing the Legislature of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Another incident of attack on the Indian Parliament made the situation worse. Following these events, Pakistan and India stationed more than 800,000 troops along the border. According to Agence France Presse, 26,000 people fled these areas due to skirmishes and shelling near the border. Very less is known about these people.

The refugee situation is very much a problem both in India and in South Asia. Political conflicts and resultant violence have generated massive refugee flows repeatedly in South Asia. Conflict within the territory of country obviously has its spillover in neighbouring countries. India being the largest country in South Asia had to bear the major burden of refugees since independence. Of course, that does not mean that other countries are free from this problem. Bangladesh and Pakistan, too, had to bear the brunt of refugees from neighbouring countries. However, none of the South Asian countries has signed the International Refugee Protocol. Refugees continue to suffer from homelessness, insecurity and fear. None of the South Asian countries has any clear-cut legal-constitutional framework to deal with the refugee situation. Hence, whenever, there is a massive refugee flows and a humanitarian crisis, it deepens further in the absence of a legal-
Refugees and the Internally Displaced Persons

The response to humanitarian crisis solely depends on the whims of the state. Many a time, the states have behaved irresponsibly, and one can well imagine the consequences of the situation. This enhances the insecurity and uncertainty of refugees. They remain in constant fear and suffer marginalisation whether they live in their own country or in a neighbouring country. Such refugees need dignity, protection, and security.

Michael Traber made some pertinent observations about the conditions and predicaments of refugees in general; however, these observations are more or less applicable to the Indian as well as South Asian situation. He notes (Traber, 2004:6):

- Refugees have no rights. Their legal protection is spurious; if they have any such protection at all. They are like wild animals that can be hunted without a license. The law, in practice has failed them.
- Refugees have very few friends, because they are an embarrassment to most citizens of the host state or a competing group in the situation of limited resources “Get off out back” seems to be the host society’s response.
- Refugees are supposed to suffer in silence. They do, of course, have voices like other people, but they are silenced. Their voices are not supposed to be heard.
- The political and bureaucratic conditions involving refugees are such that even if, the media wishes to report, they too, are silenced by intimidation or by reference to the common national good.
- Refugees are not only silenced but also hidden away in camps or settlements. They are not to be seen, and therefore, not to be remembered. They are not supposed to be part of the public sphere.
- They are thus ‘non-people,’ invisible and silent, particularly with regard to the mass media. Dalits and women in India are also ‘non-people,’ but they are at least voters, and therefore, of some interest to politicians. Refugees can’t vote; thus they are real ‘non-people.’

These observations are also largely applicable to the IDPs too. Their situation is again very much similar to that of refugees, but they are part of a nation-state’s important component “citizen!”
6.3 INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS: INCLUDING THE EXCLUDED

Defining IDPs

Conceptually, both the term “Refugee” and “Internally Displaced Person” are very similar as in both the cases people are involuntarily displaced from their natural habitat. People who flee their country and cross internationally recognised borders become refugee. However, there are people displaced within their country itself and do not cross an international border. Therefore, they fall within the domestic jurisdiction and under the sovereignty of the state concerned. They are considered as IDPs.

There is no international instrument to define IDPs. The most widely used definition of IDPs is as follows “...persons who have been forced to flee their home suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who are within the territory of their own country” (UNO, 1992).

Despite the fact that IDPs are often forced to leave their homes and find themselves in refugee-like situations, refugee law is not directly applicable to the situation of internally displaced persons as international law defines refugees as persons who have fled across international borders. The definition tries to encompass all aspects of internal displacement. It includes people forced to flee from their homes because of war (civil or international), disaster (natural or man-made) and development (construction of dams and other development projects or urban clearances). However, the actual number is much more than the recorded data as in most cases they go unnoticed unlike refugees. Of late, the increasing number of IDPs worldwide has drawn the interest of the international community to define and understand the term more precisely. The number of IDPs induced by conflict has risen up to 25 million worldwide. If all the above three conditions are taken into consideration then the global figure will probably exceed 100 million.

There are far more IDPs than refugees in South Asia. Apart from conflict-induced IDPs, the region is also by far the most affected by natural disasters which leaves hundreds of thousands homeless, displaced and destroyed every year. In 2004, several million people were severely affected by devastating floods both in India and
Refugees and the Internally Displaced Persons

Bangladesh. Large-scale infrastructure projects also cause displacement, forcing many to leave their homes, often without appropriate measures to mitigate their plight and assistance to restart their lives.

The Tamil, Chakma, Kashmiri and Lothsampa people were displaced by ethnic unrest. But for a long time new conflicts have erupted, which is making the number swell. However, the majority of IDPs in this region are victims of natural or man-made disasters. Both natural and man-made disasters are widespread in South Asia. In all South Asian countries, where the population structure is multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multilingual, the religious and ethnic minorities experienced discrimination and persecution almost repeatedly even in the secular political system wherein the constitution guarantees equality before law.

It should be noted here that in spite of the presence of victims caused by all three major inducers of displacement, there are no regional or national legal mechanism for protecting the internally displaced displaced people in this region. In most cases, the level of government assistance is minimal, and access for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) or the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) is either restricted or denied.

Displacement Caused by Conflict

Across the region, conflict-induced internal displacement reflects some common patterns such as ethnic or religious clashes and transmigration policies. Many conflicts in South Asia are rooted in poverty and the exclusion of certain regions or social groups from the economic development process, has led to clashes between secessionist or rebel movements and the ruling state. The main cause of conflict-induced displacement in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal has been an intensification of fighting between government, security forces and rebel groups often labelled as ‘terrorists.’ Other causes of displacement in South Asia include the low intensity war waged by India and Pakistan for disputed Kashmir region; and the assimilation policies and disputed land issues in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Table 6.3 shows the number of IDPs in some major countries of South Asia.

IDPs throughout this region are exposed to a number of human right violations, including indiscriminate bombing of civilians, forced labour, forced recruitment, landmines and limited freedom of movement.
Table 6.3: Country-wise Number of IDPs in South Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Number of IDPs</th>
<th>Estimate date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>150,000-520,000</td>
<td>Oct. 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>May 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar (Burma)</td>
<td>600,000-1,000,000</td>
<td>June 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>100,000-200,000</td>
<td>Oct. 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>June 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>386,000</td>
<td>Dec. 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.idpproject.org.

The displaced people interned for years in state-run welfare centres face destitution. As the conflict drags on, welfare centres designed as a temporary solution become semi-permanent with some IDPs spending decades living in squalid, overcrowded conditions. In addition to frequent food shortages caused by the inability of the state to mobilise resources to assist these vulnerable groups, displaced people also face serious psychosocial problems stemming from long-term stays in welfare centres/relief camps. These include high rates of suicide, dependency attitude, low self-esteem, alcoholism and depression. Politically they remain alienated and at the margins of the systems. Again, the question of return of IDPs remains unsolved following a significant deterioration in the security situation in the country due to conflicts. Apart from insecurity, the main problem faced by returnees and displaced people are issues related to land and property. For example, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, the majority of people who had to flee during a two decade long armed-conflict between local insurgent groups and the government security forces remain displaced because of unresolved land disputes with Bengali settlers. Landmines and episodes of shelling and insurgency have also obstructed safe return for IDPs, for e.g., Kashmir. Landmines are also a major cause of concern in Sri Lanka where more than 300,000 people have returned home since a ceasefire ended 20 years of hostilities in 2002. Despite the ceasefire, however, many remain displaced, and many of those who have been able to return have not done so in safety and dignity. Apart from landmines, returning IDPs face safety threats, property dispossession, landlessness and a lack of basic infrastructure and basic services.
However, the response provided by national authorities to the crisis of internal displacement in South Asia varies greatly from one country to another. Though some governments are trying to address the root cause of the conflicts leading to such displacement, yet overall attitude ranges from indifference to support for uprooting these hapless people from their makeshift habitat. On the other hand, the countries of this region consider any external intervention from the international community as a violation of their sovereignty and interference in their domestic affairs. In some cases, countries refuse to acknowledge any displacement problem in their territory as it shows the inability of the country concerned to resolve the conflict inside the country; consequently, they very often deny access to the affected group.

It should also be noted that in some countries, the international community largely ignores the problem of internal displacement. International organisations and donor countries have, for example, done little to address or even monitor the situation of conflict-induced displacement in India and Bangladesh. Moreover, South Asia has no dedicated regional mechanisms to deal with problems of internal displacement. Most regional efforts to coordinate and improve the response to internal displacement come from non-governmental organisations, national human rights commissions and academic researchers.

**Conflict-Induced IDPs in India**

Internal displacement resulting from political and communal violence, exist in two main regions of India: North East and Kashmir. The recent communal riot in Gujarat added one more name in the list. Over the years, the number of people displaced from Kashmir is continuing. Almost the entire minority community of Kashmir valley was forced to flee the region during 1989-90. The displacement occurred in the backdrop of heightened militancy and select killings of community leaders amid widespread anarchy. By the end of 1996, nearly 2.5 lakh people fled to Jammu and subsequently to Delhi and various other parts of the country. Again in 1997, seven Pandits were killed by militants, resulting in yet another exodus of Pandits who still lived in the valley. However, besides the Hindu and Sikh communities, other ethnic and religious minority groups also became vulnerable in Kashmir valley. When conflict again broke out between India and
Pakistan over Kashmir, more than 1 lakh people had been forced to flee from the Line of Control (LOC) following the Kargil war and terrorists attacks on the Indian Parliament.

The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) estimates that over 400,000 Kashmiri Pandits are internally displaced (NRC, 2002). Official records indicate that some 2,16,820 of them live as migrants in makeshift camps at Jammu; another 143,000 in Delhi and thousands in other parts of the country. Many families, however, are not registered. The Delhi administration has fixed Rs. 1800 as maximum relief payable to each displaced family. However, only about one-third of the registered families are paid the relief amount. Many live in miserable conditions in camps scattered throughout Delhi and Jammu region. Most of the displaced live in tents without proper education and medical care. However, it is reported by United States Committee for Refugees (USCR) that the Pandits want to return, even if the Kashmir valley remains restive. Hence, the Pandits have not returned to the Kashmir valley.

In case of Gujarat in Western India, we can say that India's deteriorating relation with Pakistan and VHP's ongoing temple construction campaign in Ayodha were directly responsible for the violence against the Muslim community in Gujarat. Communal violence is not new to Gujarat. Successive episodes of Hindu-Muslim violence in 1969, 1985, 1989 and 1992 have resulted in increasing ghettoisation of the state's Muslim community. However, the intensity of the violence increased sharply in 2002. Between February 28 and March 2, 2002, a three-day retaliatory killing spree by Hindus left hundreds dead and tens of thousands homeless and dispossessed, making it the country's worst religious bloodletting in a decade. By April 2002, the total number of displaced in Gujarat was 113,697 persons (NRC, 2002). Besides Muslims, Hindus were also displaced for fear of retaliation following the episode of the torching of the Sabarmati Express at Godhra on February 27, 2002.

The displaced took shelter in 103 relief camps scattered all over Gujarat. Though the state government closed down many relief camps after 31 May 2002, camps are still scattered throughout the state. There is shortage of food, water and medicine in these camps. The minimum government subsidy of Rs.15 worth of food grains and Rs. 5 for miscellaneous expenses per person has been withdrawn. Most government functionaries, particularly Ministers, do not bother to visit most camps, as the only inmates are Muslims. They are housed in
makeshift accommodation and live in extremely unsanitary conditions. Moreover, every inmate suffers from mental trauma and is not allowed to go out or move about freely, even for basic commodities. The Election Commission of India and the Supreme Court of India had to intervene several times because of the complicity of the state government of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the communal carnage. Besides, since the arrival of the single party BJP government in the state of Gujarat and the multi-party coalition led by the BJP at the centre, the number of attacks not only on Muslims but also Christians increased in the state.

Conflict-induced Displacement in North East India

Almost all the seven states of geographically and politically isolated areas of North East India are facing conflict-induced population displacement from the mid-fifties of the last century till now with only periodic lulls. Unlike the rest of India, where tension between Hindus and Muslims is one of the prevailing conditions of socio-political dynamics, religion is not a major factor of conflicts in the North East. Emergence and continuity of exclusivist ethnic movements causes tension within the region as out of India’s 430 recognised tribes, 200 live in these seven states. The intensity of the problem varies from state to state but the cause remains the same. In some form or the other, the process of forming homogenising state and for control over political and economic power often causes ethnic strife among different groups. The North East has witnessed six major cases of strife-induced displacement in last fifty years. The Naga rebellion erupted in the mid-fifties, followed in the mid-sixties by the Mizo uprising. Around the same time, an armed movement started in Manipur, Tripura and Assam. While the separatist movements in Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur were initially directed entirely against the Indian security forces and government officials, the movement in Tripura and Assam were primarily directed against Bengali settlers. Towards the late 1970, almost all the separatist or autonomous movements went ethnic and began to target communities perceived as “they.” These attacks led to large-scale internal displacement within the North East Indian states. However, incidents in the Karbi Anglong and Kokrajhar district of Assam have further raised the number.

It is difficult to ascertain the number of uprooted people. The figures provided by local authorities as well as by the administration are based
on the number of affected people living in camps. However, a good number of the displaced may not find refuge or may not avail the help provided by the administration. Much of the difficulties arising in making estimates in this region are due to inaccessibility of international organisations.

The end of 2001 reported a total of 157,000 internally displaced in North East, which is much less than the actual number. In Assam, an estimated 200,000 ethnic Santhals, Bodos, Muslims, Bengalis and Nepalese have been displaced by the violent conflict between Bodos and non-Bodos in the western part of the state. In Manipur, the conflict between Nagas and Kukis displaced as many as 130,000 Kukis, Paities and Nagas since 1992. In Arunachal Pradesh, the ethnic clashes between the local tribal and the Chakma-Hajongs displaced thousands from the latter groups, many of whom then migrated either to Tripura or to adjoining Assam. In Mizoram, the Mizo-Reang conflict led to the displacement of some 39,000 Reangs into neighbouring Tripura and Assam. In Tripura also, as a result of the ethnic conflict between the tribal and the non-tribal Bengalis, 1500 non-tribal families were rendered homeless by tribal insurgent groups in 2000 (NRC, 2002).

Throughout the North East, conditions of the displaced have remained pathetic. Violence and displacement are endemic in some areas, and no inter-governmental or international organisations are present. The displaced live in public buildings and makeshift shelters. Most receive little medical care and children have neither access to formal education nor to health services. Though some receive food aid, it often arrives sporadically and is insufficient. Despite the fact that there are a number of situations involving internal displacement in the North East, the international community remains oblivious of the situation. However, the displaced Pandits from Kashmir valley have been able to draw international as well as national attention to their plight. Various Indian and international groups monitor and report on the situation of IDPs in Kashmir, but the displacement in North East has gone virtually unnoticed. The international community, and many within India know almost nothing of the scale and nature of the displacement in this region; its causes, the conditions of the displaced or the response of national or local authorities.

Government response to IDPs from Kashmir has been much more generous than response to the displaced in the North East. Most IDPs from Kashmir live in Jammu or Delhi and receive substantially greater
government aid than that given to their North East counterpart. Displaced Kashmiri Pandits receive a monthly allowance, food aid, semi-permanent housing, medical and educational facilities, and many former government workers are still paid their full salaries. The government has spent US$ 62.9 million on food and financial aid for IDPs in Jammu and Kashmir since 1990. An amount of Rs. 7 crores has been spent to improve the infrastructural facilities in Kashmiri Migrants' Camps, such as water supply, electric facilities, drainage system and sanitation (NRC, 2002). Besides, seats are reserved for Kashmiri IDPs in many educational institutions including elite institutions like the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. On the other hand, IDPs in North East often get no recognition from the administration. In contrast, several local and international organisations are working with the IDPs from Kashmir. Besides setting up the employment-oriented vocational training centres, the Hindu Education Society Kashmir (HESK) provided free facilities of science practicals to the migrant children through mobile laboratories in their respective camps. Catholic Social Service Society (CSSS) of J&K has been actively and constantly involved in bringing relief to the people in camps of Jammu. International Red Cross Society (ICRC) is continuing to monitor the needs of the displaced from Kashmir. Moreover, Kashmiri displaced Pandits are much more organised and the Pandit leaders are demanding recognition as official IDPs in India and demanding protection and assistance of a kind which is often provided only to internationally recognised refugees.

**IDPs in Assam**

Since the early 1960s, Assam has lost much territory to new states emerging from within its borders. This desire to create majority populations in areas in order to back demands for separate homelands is said to be the fundamental cause of internal displacement in Assam. Recently, Bodos, one of the major plain tribes in Western Assam, are striving to establish a separate Bodo state within Assam. For this purpose from 1993 onwards Bodo militants have systematically targeted non-Bodo communities, especially in two districts, Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon, where Bodos are in a majority. A series of attacks on non-Bodos in 1993, 1996 and 1998 has displaced more than 3 lakh people belonging to Santhal, Bodo, Muslim, Bengali and Nepali communities. In May 1996 alone, more than 250,000 persons were
displaced as a result of Bodo attacks on ethnic Santhals. They took shelter in relief camps in and around Kokrajhar district. After staying in state-sponsored relief camps for a year, many displaced persons returned home by the middle of 1997. The Indian Government gave the returnees grants intended to help them rebuild their homes and renew their economic activities. The villagers, who are mostly farmers, used their grants to buy cows and farming implements and to rebuild their homes.

However, the villagers' return was short-lived. Some months later, Bodo militants again threatened them and they had to flee once again with only those possessions which they could carry. Once they reached camp, the men returned to the villages to collect their animals and other belongings. But they found that all of their belongings had already been looted by members of other ethnic groups, who live in nearby villages. More than a decade has past since 1993 when the first incident of displacement occurred in Kokrajhar, and yet 1.26 lakh people are still living in 38 relief camps spread all over the Kokrajhar district. One can well imagine the plights of IDPs living in makeshift camps for more than a decade without proper food, nutrition, shelter, clothes, medicines and privacy. Table 6.4 shows the present inmates position in Kokrajhar district.

Table 6.4: Distribution of IDPs in Kokrajhar District, Assam 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Relief Camps</th>
<th>No. of Families</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokrajhar sub-division</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7269</td>
<td>27499</td>
<td>14500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gossaigaon sub-division</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16687</td>
<td>55216</td>
<td>29048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23983</td>
<td>82715</td>
<td>43548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Deputy Commissioner’s Office, Kokrajhar.

In so-called relief camps, inmates live in a pathetic state; in thatched or polythene roofed huts. These relief camps lack very basic amenities and inmates get little ration, education and health care facilities. In the name of relief, district administration provides them rice only for ten days of a month, 600 grams for each adult and 400 grams for each child a day. But the inmates complain that the ration supply comes only in trickles in many camps, while it has stopped altogether in many others.
There is no semblance of sanitation and hygiene in and around the camps and inmates are compelled to use dirty river or stream water for drinking purpose. Though the government has provided tube wells in some camps a few years back, most of these are presently not in working condition. Lack of bathroom or toilet facilities makes the surroundings dirty. Inmates are subjected to health risks, especially vulnerable are children and elderly people. Diseases such as malaria, jaundice, dysentery, diarrhoea and influenza pose serious threats. Curable simple diseases and epidemics become fatal for many due to lack of proper sanitation and medical facilities. Though in Government Reports, it is shown that regular check-up camps are held every month, inmates say that the doctors sometimes show up only for nominal appearances. They even do not enter the camps and go back immediately after taking the signatures of the head of the camps to keep them as records.

There is very little scope for education for camp children, as authorities have not bothered to set up any school in the camps. In some camps, inmates have established a few schools with the help of the Lutheran World Service (LWS), an NGO, offering a small stipend of Rs. 400/per month to a teacher working in a temporary school shed. But the lack of other facilities like availability of books, inability of the parents to pay examination fees etc. keeps the students away from school. Even teachers are irregular in duty as they receive very minimum remuneration.

Most camps are situated in remote and abandoned areas but inmates have no scope for self-employment. The lack of job opportunities has forced many inmates to go as far as Guwahati, Meghalaya and even Bhutan to seek alternative modes of livelihood. Their woes do not end here. Wherever they go they are treated as outsiders, and whatever source of livelihood they manage to get as rickshaw-pullers or cart-pullers are snatched away by locals. Negligence of the state and direct attacks on their livelihood and denial of right to movement have marginalised them severely. They are very depressed by the uncertainty they face and more so by the fate of their future, specially their children. They suffer a profound sense of uncertainty and alienation from society as a whole.
Development and Displacement

Many development projects that aim to reduce poverty by building new infrastructure, constructing industries, or even establishing parks and road network also cause forced displacement of population because of their need for land. These displacements often dismantle the economic bases and livelihoods of the populations that are displaced. In this process, people are forced to relocate if their lands, homes or other immovable property is acquired for development projects. This displacement, involving risks of various kinds, often leads to impoverishment. In fact, the gains from development, in some cases, are being increasingly overshadowed by a steady rise in the number of people who have to be involuntarily resettled. According to an estimate, the lives and livelihoods of nearly 10 million people across the globe are affected by forced displacement due to infrastructure projects such as irrigation schemes, mines, industries, power plants and roads every year. Studies show that the majority of displaced people belong to poor and marginalised communities and within them women and children experience special vulnerability.

In recent years, anthropologists and sociologists have been putting more importance on impoverishment issues. According to Cernea (2000), projects that are not managed well reveal eight recurrent characteristics that contribute to the process of impoverishment. Cernea describes these eight as landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation. Impoverishment risks that entail resettlement is not a big deal, but what comes as a surprise is that, impoverishing effects continue to be either underplayed or even overlooked completely in people-displacing projects.

Displacement of communities from their ancestral lands has been a regular feature for developing region like South Asia. The pattern of socio-economic development, with their heavy emphasis on large-scale projects for infrastructure development in the region, is the biggest cause of displacement of millions in the region. However, among various other development projects, dams are the most responsible factors in massive displacement of population. The total number of registered large dams in East and South-East Asia is 4157; if one includes the unregistered dams in China and Vietnam that number may rise to 26,257.
Table 6.5 shows some of the major dams of South Asia and the number of people displaced by these dams.

Table 6.5: Dams in South Asia and Their Impact on Displacement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dams</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of People affected</th>
<th>Status of the dam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Srisailan</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
<td>Already built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>31,500</td>
<td>Already built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangla</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>Already built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danangkou</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>3,83,000</td>
<td>Already built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehri</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,05,000</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narmada</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>2,50,000</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almatti</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,60,000</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Gorges</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>11,00,000</td>
<td>Under design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xialangdi</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,81,000</td>
<td>Under design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakabagh</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>Under design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandhi</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
<td>Under design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Source: ICOLD Register of Dams, 1998

Figure 6.1: Dams in South and South East Asia
Development-induced Displacement in India

Development projects are one of the many causes of people's displacement. It is not well known that India has one of the highest rates of development-induced displacement. During last 50 years, some 3,300 big dams have been constructed in India (NRC, 2002). Most of them have led to large-scale forced eviction of vulnerable groups. The situation of the tribal people is of special concern, as they constitute 40 to 50 per cent of the displaced population. However, there is no reliable official statistics on the number of people displaced by development projects. Official figures state that as many as 21 to 33 million persons are likely to have been displaced (Fernandes, 2000). But the database studies show the number to be as high as 50 millions. Case studies indicate that most official figures are underestimates, for example, by official count 110,000 persons were displaced by Hirakud dam in Orissa, though researchers put their number at 180,000 (Pattanaik, Das and Mishra, 1987). The Farakka Super Thermal Plant in West Bengal has officially affected none, but the World Bank (1994) speaks of 63,325 IDPs after this project. Many more such cases can be cited.

As already mentioned, tribal or Adivasis constitute more than half of the development-induced displaced. According to the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, they constitute about 60 per cent of total project-induced displaced. A reason for the high proportion of tribal among IDPs is that the number of projects in their areas has been growing since the 1970s. For example, of the 117 dams above 50 meter completed or under construction in 1990, 40 are located in tribal areas.

Table 6.6 shows the number of displacement due to some major dams constructed in India, with reference to tribal displacement. Besides, mines, industries, sanctuaries and the urbanisation process have further increased the number of IDPs. Table 6.7 shows an estimate of persons displaced by various categories of projects (1951-1990).

The country lacks an official database on the number of IDPs and the state of their rehabilitation. India does not yet have a National Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) policy and law. As a result the right of the displaced to a life with dignity is not a concern of the law or the project authority. It is seen that people are resettled only when they agitate against displacement or when the World Bank orders the authority to do so. The few sectoral policies that exist, speak of R&R in
Table 6.6: Displacement by Dams in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Project</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population facing displacement</th>
<th>Tribal people as percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karjan</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardar Sarovar</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maheshwar</td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>73.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodhghat</td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>73.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icha</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>30,800</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandil</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>37,600</td>
<td>87.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koel Karo</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahi Bajaj Sagar</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>38,400</td>
<td>76.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polavaram</td>
<td>A.P</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>52.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maithon &amp; Panchet</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>93,874</td>
<td>56.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Indravati</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>89.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pong</td>
<td>HP</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>56.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inchampalli</td>
<td>AP, Maharashtra</td>
<td>33,100</td>
<td>76.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tultuli</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>51.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daman Ganga</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>48.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhakra</td>
<td>HP</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>34.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masan Reservoir</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>31.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukai</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>18.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Profile on Internal Displacement: India, NRC, 2002

Table 6.7: Number of Various Project Displaced Persons 1951-1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mines</td>
<td>25,50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dams</td>
<td>1,64,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industries</td>
<td>12,50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctuaries</td>
<td>6,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,13,00,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


terms of physical relocation without other support like jobs or income-generation schemes.

It is clear that the displacement without rehabilitation is tantamount to the deprival of livelihood of the marginalised and powerless. It is not only a question of losing land but also the emotional attachment with one’s own land and home. At the same time, local social networks and
traditional support systems have also been destroyed. Despite the enormity of the problem, awareness about displacement is very low in the country. The main reason for this is lop-sided developmental planning which has excluded people's participation from below and concentrated all decision making in the hands of politicians, bureaucrats and professional experts. The focus has been on GNP growth and economic development without social commitment.

It is the movement against the Narmada, Tehri and Koel Karo projects that has underscored the social and ecological costs of large dams. Besides the question of land-alienation and ecological losses, these movements have raised the question of economic feasibility and the long-term sustainability of such projects. In Assam also, visible movements are being launched against the construction of large dams such as Pagladiya and Tipaimukh (Hussain, 2005).

**Development-induced Displacement in North East India**

At present, the issue of development-induced displacement has become very relevant to the North East more than the past, because the focus of development has recently shifted to this region. However, an important consideration in the discourse on development-induced displacement in North East is the absence of any conclusive database since 1947. While defence-related acquisition, especially after the Sino-Indian war of 1962, in the region is a major source of displacement, it is by no means the only one. Some projects in power sector, oil refinery, paper industry and cement plant have caused displacement of large number of people in this region of India. In addition, growth of urbanisation, particularly in the process of expansion of cities, has displaced tribal and marginalised people to the periphery of the state (Hussain, 2005).

Of late, the people-displacing process has taken different shapes. The focus is on the development of the power sector. According to reports, 149 major dams are being planned in the North East, around 40 of them in Sikkim and the rest in the seven states of North East. It should be noted here that most schemes are in areas inhabited by tribal groups. However, proponents of large dams in the region have painted a bright picture, presenting them as fruitful plans to produce cheap and plentiful power for the nation. Not only this, it would also help in the region's economic growth and flood control. Dams are made to be the panacea for all the problems of North East. However, past lessons from
large dams constructed in this region are enough to make us critically examine the future of this issue. Dumber hydel project in Tripura deprived an estimated 40,000 persons of their livelihood. The Kaptai Dam in Bangladesh displaced several thousands families, particularly tribal, and forced them to migrate to India.

While there are well-publicised movements against large dams such as Pagladiya and Tipaimukh, there is no such resistance movement in Arunachal Pradesh in spite of the fact that more than half of those are planned in that state. It is because they have the projects planned in areas where population density is low, relatively less IDPs and thus people only raise feeble voices against them. Thus, it has become a major concern for the North East, where land is the only resource of the region’s indigenous tribal communities. It is not only the concern of land-alienation but also the lands that have immense symbolic value for indigenous people. There is no systematic manner by which project planners have addressed the issue of tribal. The absence of national policy for resettlement and rehabilitation, or the ‘land for land’ policy is also a recurring concern of the indigenous people. For example, poorly planned projects in the North East such as Loktak and Gumti have had long-term negative impact. Bhaumik (1996) makes a strong case for the decommissioning of the Gumti dam and the returning of prime agricultural land to the tribal, which he feels is a crucial step towards the resolution of tribal and non-tribal conflicts in Tripura.

However, it is also felt that one cannot deny the need for power generation. They will produce some income for the region. In this context, what is needed is not opposition to the projects but search for alternatives. The alternatives cannot be only economic or technical but have to be based on a combination of the technical, social and human parameters that must be within the parameters of sustainable development.

**IDPs Due to Environmental Reasons**

Displacement should also be seen in a geographical context. Emergency situations due to environmental havoc influence population movement and lead to environmental refugees. Although they have been somewhat sidelined in recent years, nonetheless, they represent important topic of interest to many policy-makers at the international level. Environmental refugees, according to Eassam El-Hinnawi who coined the word in a
report prepared for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1985, are “those people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitats, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption, natural and/or triggered by people that jeopardise the existence and/or seriously affect the quality of their life” (UNEP, 1985). There can be two types of displacement due to such environmental reasons: temporary and permanent. There are people who are displaced temporarily because of environmental hazards, such as an earthquake or a cyclone and who return to their habitat once conditions normalise. There are also people who permanently migrate to other places because their original habitat is no longer there, for example, due to riverbank erosion.

In South Asia, both temporary and permanent environment-induced displacements are found, especially in countries like Bangladesh and India, where natural disasters like cyclone, riverbank erosion and flood are regular features. Bangladesh has one of the largest deltas in the world, with a catchments area of 660,000 square miles and a rural population density of 2000 per square mile. It is estimated that riverbank erosion alone displaces nearly one million people a year. Basically, the eastern and northeastern part of India is subject to severe displacement of population due to environmental reasons. Every year floods cause severe havoc and damages to crops, roads, houses and properties in the states of Assam, Orissa and West Bengal. Millions of people are subjected to nomadic life every year.

Assam, a state of India, is affected mostly by floods of the rivers Brahmaputra and Barak every year. In 2004, more than 1 crore or roughly 40 per cent of the total population of the state suffered immensely in the flood. Every year, they cause displacement of lakhs of people but no recorded data is available on their displacement pattern or types of relief or rehabilitation measures taken for them. These flood-induced IDPs, who are basically farmers, abandon their homes and lose crops every year, but they still go unheard and unprotected. With 40 per cent of its land surface susceptible to flood damage, the Brahmaputra valley in Assam accounts for 95 per cent of the total flood-prone areas of 33,000 sq:km. In North Eastern region alone it is 9.5 per cent of the country's total flood-prone areas. In 1998, floods affected 4.698 million people in Assam. But so far no long-term flood control measures have been taken either by local or national authorities (Prabhat Ch. Sabhapandit, ed., 2003). Though not on the scale of the

It is not that flood alone have pushed the people of Assam to an uncertain future, it is also the case with the river bank erosion which has been affecting lakhs of people year after year. According to official reports, the total area eroded by the Brahmaputra river is 4,29,657 hectares. These people, who lose their villages to Brahmaputra, are in desperate need of land to reconstruct their lives.

6.4 IDPs AND REFUGEES AND THE QUESTION OF HUMAN SECURITY

Human security today has been receiving serious attention from different quarters. The concept of security is firmly embedded in beliefs, linking it to freedom from fear and anxiety. In fact, the thesaurus identifies it as synonymous to ‘unanxiety’, ‘certainty’ and ‘protection’ (Chari and Gupta, 2003:2). It is associated with terms such as human rights, humanitarian law and socio-economic development based on equality. At its most elemental level, the right to life constitutes the basic values underlying human security. Thus, preservation of human life and well-being of citizens; physical, socio-economic or psychological needs are among the first and the foremost duties of a democratic regime. Whenever the two pillars of human security, i.e., freedom from fear and freedom from want are not established by the state, citizens are deprived from enjoying basic human rights.

Among various other victims of threat to human security, forced migrants-refugees and IDPs are the most vulnerable groups who need to draw the attention of national and international communities. More than anything else, displacement results in the loss of access to the basic amenities of life. The insecurity of home, livelihood and social life are noticeable hardships that the displaced endure. Lack of home creates the sense of physical as well as mental insecurity. In addition, due to frequent food shortage, displaced people also face serious psycho-social problems stemming from long-term stays in relief camps. These include the sense of dependency, loss of self-esteem, alcoholism and depression. Thus, displacement creates a high risk of chronic impoverishment that occurs along with several dimensions: homelessness, joblessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, morbidity, social disarticulation etc. In such a situation, women and children are bound to suffer immensely.
During displacement, the worst affected segments of society are women and children, who are especially vulnerable. They are targets of human rights violation to a great extent. Most of the time, the gender-specific needs in encamped situation are overlooked. In camps, women are victims of rape and other form of sexual abuse, forced marriages, forced labour and trafficking. Besides, the family burden on women increases in camp life. There is also very little data available on the gender dimensions of the problem. Consequently, compensation packages ignore women and women’s needs regarding water, fuel and fodder. Women also suffer because of her lower status in the family. While there already exist inequalities about women and female children in the levels of education, health and nutrition etc., these disparities get aggravated at times of crisis. Women’s interests are systematically ignored in the resettlement process because transactions are invariably undertaken with male members. Gender biases are also reflected in amenities provided at resettlement sites. Most resettlement sites have been found lacking in sanitation, privacy and access to facilities that have direct bearing on the well-being of women. Even the compensation and resettlement and rehabilitation strategies are determined on the basis of male head of the family as he is the owner of land and property. Thus women are victims of double marginalisation during displacement due to male biases in society, on the one hand, and the lack of special policy for displaced women, on the other.

In addition, children have their own concerns. According to the Conventions on the Rights of the Child, every child must have the right to survival, development, protection and participation, which becomes a vital concern in displaced situations. In a situation of complete breakdown of all social security systems and internal mechanisms like the protection of home, children are often physically and psychologically exploited. Deprived of education, food and play, the mental and physical health of children are retarded.

Though there are well-founded provisions for the protection of IDPs in the form of ‘Guiding Principles”, there exists a large gap between the provisions and IDPs in India and other South Asian countries. Principle 3 of the Guiding Principles stipulates, “National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction.” However, neither in India nor in other South Asian countries, such national policy exists to protect IDPs, even if the number is growing at
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a faster rate. The Principles relating to Protection from Displacement contained in Principle 5 and 9 are completely violated in case of IDPs in North East. In terms of Principle 5 and 9, the state and the central government were required to take measures which could have prevented displacement. Effective measures have not been taken, either by the state or central government, towards violence against a particular community. However, the issues of protection of socio-economic rights of the most vulnerable sections are being overlooked in India, both by the government and the civil society. In the process, the IDPs remain at the margins of society, polity and economy.

6.5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The international community has been concerned, since its inception, about the situation confronting refugees, displaced and stateless persons and has adopted a number of measures to protect human rights and to find appropriate solutions for their problems. It can be mentioned here that in recent years, the international community has been particularly concerned about mass exoduses of refugees and displaced persons from areas of armed conflict, particularly in Asia and Africa.

The 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 protocol, are the main international instruments that regulate the conduct of states on the treatment of refugees. The 1951 Convention is a legally binding treaty that attempts to establish an international code of rights for refugees on a general basis. The 1951 Convention also has created numerous rights for refugees in the country of asylum. There are 46 articles in the Convention that has not only created specific rights for the refugees but has also given a legal definition to the term “Refugee.” The Convention also grants wide-ranging authority to contracting states to deny refugee status to criminals and persons perceived to endanger national security. The convention encourages assimilation and naturalisation of refugees in the country of asylum. Besides, several other international instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Convention for Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Child Rights Convention (CRC) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT) obligate contracting states to create legal provisions for the protection of refugees during their stay in host countries.
India is not a signatory either to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol and only joined UNHCR's Executive Committee in 1995. Though UNHCR is present in India, the government permits the agency access only to refugees living in urban centres and does not formally recognise UNHCR's granting of "refugee" status. Indian authorities argue that the Convention imposes one-sided obligations by requiring host countries to permit refugees to enter and to assist them, but not requiring countries of origin or the international community to work towards solutions. But India has, in any case, followed the spirit of the Convention by permitting refugees to enter the country. India considers Tibetans and Sri Lankans in camps to be *prima facie* refugees but regards most other groups as economic migrants. India also has not passed any domestic legislation on the subject of refugees. The fate of individual refugee is essentially determined by the protections available under the Constitution of India. In the past, Indian courts were rarely approached to determine the obligations of the State with respect to refugees or to pronounce on their rights and duties. More recently, however, courts have considered these matters. Generally speaking, the courts have been helpful when dealing with the problem of individual refugees or refugee groups.

Unlike refugees, IDPs do not have legally bound documents for their protection. Only in recent years has the international community taken a promising initiative in this regard by adopting a body of Principles entitled *Guiding Principles* which were presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights at its Fifty-Fourth Session in 1998 by Francis M. Deng. The Principles, "developed by a team of international legal experts, in collaboration with international agencies and non-governmental organisations, set forth the rights of the IDPs and the obligations of governments, non-state actors and the international organisations towards these populations" (Deng, 2002). The Guiding Principles address all three phases of displacement: the norms applicable before internal displacement occurs, i.e., protection against arbitrary displacement, those that apply at the time of displacement situation, and those that apply to return and reintegration. Besides, organisations like International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United States Committee for Refugees (USCR) etc. have been taking special interest in ensuring the basic human rights of IDPs. The Guiding Principles are not a binding document unlike declarations, resolutions or recommendations by
international organisations; they have not been negotiated by states. However, a close look at the Guiding Principles might reveal that this very soft instrument might actually turn out to be much harder than any well-known soft law instruments. The reason for this is that the Guiding Principles are very well grounded in various international laws like UDHR, ICCPR, CEDAW etc. It is possible to cite a multitude of existing legal provisions for almost every Principle, which provided the drafters with strong normative guidance.

Though there are well founded provisions for the protection of IDPs in the form of “Guiding Principles,” there exists a large gap between the provisions and the IDPs in India and other South Asian countries. Principle 3 of the Guiding Principles stipulates, “National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to IDPs within their jurisdiction.” However, neither in India nor in other South Asian countries, do such national policy exist for the protection the IDPs, even if their number is growing at a faster rate. The Principles relating to Protection from Displacement contained in Principle 5 and 9 are completely violated in case of IDPs in North East. In terms of the Principle 5 and 9, the state and the central government were required to take all such measures, which could have prevented the displacement. Effective measures could be taken up either by the state or central government towards violence against a particular community. However, the issues of protection of socio-economic rights of the most vulnerable sections are being overlooked in India both by the government and the civil society. In the process, IDPs remain at the margins of society, polity and economy.

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