



**TATHASTU**  
Institute Of Civil Services

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## Topics Covered

1. LS clears nuclear Bill allowing privatisation
2. Change for the worse: The move to alter MGNREGS beyond recognition must be dropped
3. The changing patterns of India's student migration
4. The story of 'We, the moving people'

### LS clears nuclear Bill allowing privatisation

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the **Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025**,— replacing the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 with a modern legal framework.

**Despite demands by several Opposition** parliamentarians **for referring the legislation to a parliamentary panel.**

The Bill, which aims to incentivise private sector participation, both Indian and foreign, into nuclear power production, now moves to the Rajya Sabha for discussion.

# LS passes nuclear energy Bill allowing privatisation

Congress protests SHANTI Bill which removes clause holding equipment supplier responsible for failure, questions its timing and interest shown by a 'conglomerate house'; Centre defends the Bill

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025, despite demands by several Opposition parliamentarians for referring the legislation to a parliamentary panel.

The Bill, which aims at incentivising private sector participation, both Indian and foreign, into nuclear power production, now moves to the Rajya Sabha for discussion.

Congress MP Manish Tewari, who opened discussions on the Bill following introductory remarks by Science Minister Jitendra Singh, sought to know if it was a "coincidence" that a

## Core changes

The SHANTI Bill repeals existing legislation on nuclear activity and opens up private participation in civil nuclear sector

- The Bill enables private companies to run nuclear power plants and bring foreign investment into the sector
- It places the responsibility of managing nuclear plants on the 'operator' of the facility
- It limits operator liability to the capacity of the plants
- Govt. to stay in control of nuclear waste management



legislation enabling private sector participation in the nuclear sector coincided with interest expressed by the "conglomerate house... Adani" in November to enter the nuclear sector.

Mr. Singh, amidst uproar in the House following this, retorted that the Bill had nothing to do with

any specific company and such an aspersion "brought disrepute to the House."

Mr. Tewari also burrowed into what is perhaps the most significant element of the Bill: the removal of a clause in the existing Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010,

## RS passes Bill for 100% FDI in insurance sector

**NEW DELHI**

The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, which allows 100% Foreign Direct Investment in the insurance sector, amid demands for it to be sent to a select committee. » **PAGE 11**

that allows the operator of a nuclear power plant to claim recourse from suppliers if their equipment was found being responsible in case of an accident.

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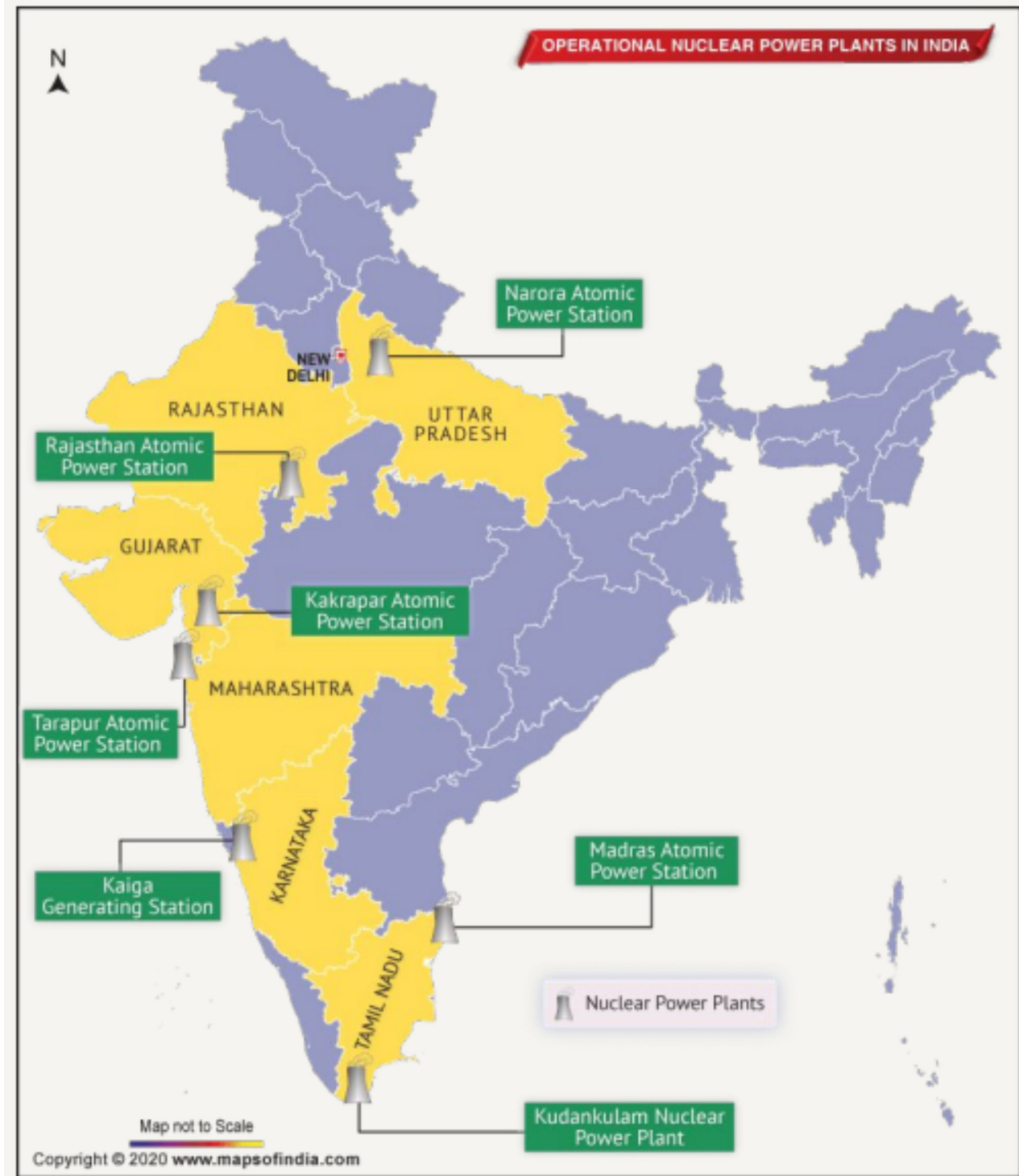
**DEBATE ON VB-G RAM G BILL**

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## Background

India's nuclear sector was **historically monopolised by government entities** (like NPCIL and DAE) with very limited room for private participation.

Existing liability norms under the 2010 Act were seen as **deterrents for private & foreign investment**.



## Key Provisions

### Opening Nuclear Sector to Private Players

- For the **first time in independent India**, private firms and joint ventures can participate in civil nuclear power projects — including **reactor design, construction, operation, and fuel cycle services**.

### Civil Liability Framework

- Introduces **tiered liability caps** depending on reactor size (e.g., ₹100 crore to ₹3,000 crore) instead of a flat cap
- Operator remains primarily liable; **supplier liability is limited or conditional**, easing investor concerns.

### Foreign Investment & Global Integration

- The Bill permits **foreign investment (up to specified limits)** and aims to align India with global nuclear norms, potentially bolstering technology collaborations.

**Privatising the nuclear power sector — that currently makes up 1.5% of India's installed power capacity and 3% of the electricity produced —**

has been on the government's agenda in recent years **to boost clean energy production,**

**improve grid stability and move towards its 2070 net-zero (zero net-carbon emissions) targets.**

This includes **scaling up installed nuclear power to 100 GW up from the current 8.8 GW by 2047** and a **₹20,000-crore mission announced in the Budget this year to develop 'small modular reactors' and a slew of customised 220 MW Pressurised Heavy Water reactors (Bharat Small Modular Reactors).**

## Change for the worse

The **Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin), or VB-G RAM G Bill**, tabled in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday **to replace** the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), **deserves to be rejected for more than one reason.**

What is **sought to be changed** is not only the nomenclature but **also the fundamental character of the existing Scheme (MGNREGS).**

The **use of Gandhi's name in the 20-year-old scheme signifies the link to his Gram Swaraj** concept that gives importance to democratic decentralisation.

But the **new Bill, by making the Union government virtually the sole decision maker in the proposed law**, will not make any positive contribution in this direction.

Supporters of the government point out that **the increase in the days of work to 125 in a year is a major benefit for people in rural India.**

But, the data, on employment given to households under the MGNREGS, reveal that **it was only during 2020-21, the COVID-19 pandemic year, that 9.5% (nearly 7.2 million) of households actually worked for 100 days.** *Over the last two years, only around 7% of families could get the full quota.*

By calling the VB-G RAM G **"a centrally sponsored scheme"**, the *Union government has done away with the special status that the MGNREGS had enjoyed*, wherein it had been absorbing the entire cost of wages payment for unskilled manual labour. In the proposed scheme, the fund-sharing pattern between the Centre and States generally would be **60:40.**



**A benefit of the existing scheme was that rural wages have gone up sharply. The finances of States are not in a robust condition.**

Besides, when direct cash transfer schemes are increasingly being viewed as a political game changer, it is an open secret that not many States will be keen on participating in the fresh scheme. More importantly, the soul of the current law — **a bottom up demand-based scheme** — **has been taken away.**

What has been proposed is a **supply-driven framework** wherein allocations will be capped, as decided by the Union government.

**Also, States will have to bear any excess expenditure, which is a new feature.**

A feature of the Bill, which is meant to ensure that work does not clash with farm work during sowing/harvesting, may be included explicitly in the MGNREGS, after consultations with States

## The changing patterns of India's student migration

**Student migration from India has shifted from elite, funded programmes to self-financed mass migration,** driven by middle-class aspirations for global degrees, mobility and permanent settlement.

**Scale is large and rising: over 13.2 lakh Indian students abroad (2023), projected 13.8 lakh by 2025,** making India one of the world's top student-sending countries.

**Destinations are concentrated: US & Canada (~40%),** followed by UK, Australia and Germany; students are now a **core diaspora category** (Parliamentary Committee, 2022).

### Issues:

- Many students enter **low-tier universities and vocational colleges** via poorly regulated agents, leading to **deskilling, weak job prospects and underemployment.**
- **Economic outcome is often negative:** heavy reliance on loans and family assets results in **debt, forced return and “reverse remittances”,** where Indian households subsidise foreign economies.
- **Host countries benefit disproportionately:** international students significantly boost GDP, jobs and universities in Canada, the US and UK, while Indian students bear high financial and mental stress.

### Why?

- **Domestic push factors matter:** limited quality institutions, job insecurity and the lure of OECD residency—not just education—drive migration.

### Net effect?

A form of **“brain waste”**, creating cheap labour for developed economies and exposing a gap between aspiration and outcome.

### Way forward?

**A stronger regulation of education agents, robust pre-departure counselling, and bilateral accountability frameworks** to protect students and ensure quality outcomes.

## The changing patterns of India's student migration

India's latest wave of student migration marks a decisive shift that is no longer confined to elite universities or programmes that are fully funded. Today's migration is characterised by self-financed education where middle-class households invest heavily in the promise of a global degree and upward social mobility. In the Ministry of External Affairs data, more than 13.2 lakh Indian students were enrolled in over 70 countries by 2023, which rose to 13.25 lakh in 2024, and projected to reach 13.8 lakh in 2025. India is one of the top senders of international students, with the United States and Canada as the top destinations (40%), followed by the United Kingdom, Australia and Germany. This significant development is reflected in the report of the Parliamentary Committee on the Welfare of Indian Diaspora (2022) which engages with students as one of India's major diaspora categories.

**The true picture**  
While all this is seen by some as a democratisation of foreign education, with doors opening to students from different socio-economic classes, the reality is more complex. Many of these students are channelled into lower-tier institutions and vocational colleges, into courses often unrelated to their expertise and without much job prospects, due to recruitment agencies that operate in a grey legal zone. The partnership between recruitment networks and less credible private colleges abroad is driven primarily by commissions and profit, reflecting the largely unregulated expansion of the foreign education industry. The outcome is widespread deskilling and underemployment, with many graduates unable to transition into skilled work. In the UK, what were once polytechnics have become universities post 1992 that cater primarily to international students, sometimes waiving entry requirements and triggering controversy due to declining academic standards. Reports suggest that



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approximately only one in four Indian postgraduates in the UK, secures a sponsored skilled visa. Student migration from India represents a middle-class aspiration with significant risks. Kerala, historically defined by Gulf labour migration, illustrates this transformation as the Kerala Migration Survey (KMS) 2022 reports that student migration doubled in five years, from 1.29 lakh in 2018 to 2.5 lakh in 2023, which is 11.2% of total emigrants. Outward student remittances from Kerala are estimated at ₹43,378 crore, equivalent to about 20% of total inward remittances from labour migrants.

**Reverse remittance**  
Most students migrate through self-financing or education loans, often mortgaging family property, with the hope of better employment and higher wages that would repay debts and enable higher living standards. However, for many, this journey ends in debt, underemployment or forced return, a phenomenon that economists describe as reverse remittances, where Indian households subsidise foreign economies.

Foreign students contribute significantly to host economies. In Canada, international students contributed about \$30.9 billion to GDP in 2022, supporting over 3.6 lakh jobs. In 2023, Canada hosted over 4.27 lakh Indian students, which is roughly 45% of international enrolments. In the US, roughly 1,00,000 Indian students, in 2024, spent an estimated \$7 billion-\$8 billion annually on tuition, housing and living costs, sustaining universities and local economies. Across destinations, students shoulder substantial financial burdens, sometimes to the tune of ₹40 lakh-₹50 lakh, to finance studies abroad. Rising rents, restricted working hours, and visa caps exacerbate financial and mental strains. Unable to find skilled work, many take up

low-wage unskilled jobs, often juggling multiple part-time jobs, sometimes undocumented, to work longer hours, and facing exploitation. Restrictive visa rules, limited post-study employment options and a lack of placement support from low-ranked colleges exacerbate this downward mobility. For instance, until 2024, the UK allowed students to convert student visas into care visas, offering a survival route in a tight job market, but this pathway has since become impossible due to new restrictions.

**The local context**  
This outflow of students needs to be understood within the domestic context that is driving it. It is the perceived lack of quality in domestic institutions or an inability to find well-paid domestic employment? With foreign universities establishing offshore campuses in Dubai, Singapore, and other destinations offering western degrees at lower costs, it is telling that Indian students rarely choose them. The reason is more structural. For many, studying in OECD countries is not only about education but about permanent residency, social mobility and an escape from a third world identity.

Ironically, this wave of student migration has also created a new form of cheap labour for OECD countries, akin to Gulf labour migration except that it is now accompanied by reverse remittances often financed through savings and debt. This rapid expansion of Indian student migration exposes deep systemic contradictions between aspiration and outcome, and between opportunity and exploitation, resulting in a phenomenon that can be described as brain waste. It calls for stronger regulation of education agents, pre-departure counselling, and bilateral frameworks to ensure institutional accountability abroad.



## The story of 'We, the moving people'

Citizenship is tied to a person's residency in a delimited territory. A citizen is ordinarily expected to be residing in a particular location. The migration of people across borders – international or within a country – dislocates this presumed overlap between citizenship and territory, causing a conceptual drift. Neither governments nor political parties are fully equipped to deal with this, and what we see around the world is public angst that is being harnessed for mobilisation against recent immigrants, mass deportations and efforts to clean up voter lists.

In India, the Election Commission of India (ECI) is undertaking a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls. Pushing back against challenges to the move, the ECI told the Supreme Court of India: "Rapid urbanisation and frequent migration of population from one place to another on account of education, livelihood and other reasons have become a regular trend. Some electors obtain registration in one place and then shift their residence and register themselves at another place without getting their names deleted from the electoral roll of the initial place of residence. This has led to an increased possibility of repeated entries in the electoral roll. Thus, the ECI came to the conclusion that the situation warrants the conduct of a part India SIR beginning with the State of Bihar."

Under President Donald Trump, the United States Department of Justice asked all 50 States to hand over their full voter registration databases, arguing that access to complete electoral rolls was necessary to enforce federal election laws. The move triggered resistance from several States. This push coincided with a sweeping executive order signed by Mr. Trump to reshape federal election procedures, including a requirement for documentary proof of U.S. citizenship, such as a passport or birth certificate – measures supporters say strengthen election integrity, but which critics warn could undermine State autonomy and restrict voter access. Around 22 million non-citizens are in the U.S. legally, estimates of undocumented residents vary but run into the millions. In India and the U.S., the notion of alien voters influencing politics is strong.

**A rise in those moving out**  
Though the proportion of international migrants in the world's population has remained broadly stable over the decades, the absolute number of migrants has grown rapidly. Migrants as a proportion of the global population may have increased by only about one percentage point since 1980 according to most estimates. But the number of people living outside their country of birth has expanded dramatically – from about 154 million in 1990 to over 300 million by mid-2024 – nearly doubling in just three decades and rising faster than the overall global population growth.

In western countries, nativist populism is linked to the rise in the proportion of foreign-born residents. In the U.S., about 14%–15%



Varghese K. George

of the population is foreign born, up from roughly 13% in 2010. The United Kingdom has seen a sharper transformation: the share of those foreign-born rose from about 8% in 2001 to roughly 16% by 2021. Canada has one of the highest proportions among large economies, with about 22% of the population foreign-born. Australia stands out, with around 31%–32% of its population born overseas. Immigration is among the top three issues for voters in most developed countries in 2025, though its intensity as a concern has reduced a bit.

Governments want to regulate and manage the flow of people. India wants to 'export human resource', a euphemism for sending more people abroad for jobs. Rich countries that need young workers are increasingly not wanting them to stay on and claim citizenship, but to leave after a certain number of years. Returning migrants will bring back new social and political attitudes. In their host countries, they will form a labour class without political rights – as with H-1B workers in the U.S., though they have a distant pathway to citizenship. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Singapore have created a category of workers without any political identity, and developed countries are now looking at temporary workers on similar lines.

There are about 35.4 million Overseas Indians (people of Indian origin); 15.8 million of them are Indian citizens, and 19.6 million are persons of Indian origin. Under the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 2010, Indian citizens living abroad can enrol and exercise their franchise in their place of residence in India as mentioned in their passport. A petition before the Supreme Court argues that they should be able to vote remotely. The petitioner contends that the 2010 amendment shortchanges non-resident Indians by granting them the right to vote on the one hand, while requiring them to be physically present in India to actually exercise that right.

**Policies and migration**  
Indian government policies have also encouraged migration from rural to urban areas and to specific regions such as Kashmir. In 2020, the rules for domicile in Jammu and Kashmir were relaxed, allowing non-locals – such as government officials posted for 10 years, residents for 15 years, and students for seven years – to obtain domicile status, with access to jobs and property. While critics argue that these changes are intended to alter the region's demographic composition, the government maintains that they are meant to facilitate development and integration.

Within national boundaries, there are other borders, and migrations across them have political and governance consequences. Domicile laws restrict access to many streams of education and jobs to natives of a particular State or region. The most significant implication of movement within the country's borders concerns voting

rights. The right to vote is tied to a particular polling booth where a citizen is ordinarily resident. The SIR exercise is a determination of whether one can vote, but also, perhaps more importantly, where one can vote. The same person voting in Maharashtra or Kerala – net migrant-receiving States – as opposed to Bihar, which is a net migrant-sending State, has different political implications for national politics.

Changes in population composition affect politics, and an example is Mumbai, where Marathi speakers now constitute less than 40%, while Hindi speakers are around 30%. The nativist politics of the Shiv Sena has been decimated, partly now routinely fielding Hindi-speaking candidates in elections. In 2001, 31% of India's population were migrants and by 2011, this proportion had increased to 38%. Two-thirds of these migrants are women, due to marriage. Men, who make up the remaining third, tend to move farther and largely for economic reasons. Census 2027 will capture the enormity of this movement of people after nearly two decades.

Migrating people carry attitudes, values, stories and belief systems. The White House now celebrates Deepavali – a practice that began in 2003. It was through migration that Vedic practices spread from the Aryavarta region of the epics to its eastern and peninsular frontiers, mixing with pre-existing lore and expanding the cultural universe that would later be called Hinduism. Languages move with migrating people. Historically, it has been a case of more men than women who migrated, and migrating men met native women; the languages we speak today reflect this, Peggy Mohan argues in *Father Tongue, Motherland*.

**Birthright citizenship**  
Moving people is now challenging even the idea of birthright citizenship in countries where it once existed unquestioned. The Trump administration is trying to overturn a long-held interpretation of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution that all those born in the U.S. are eligible for citizenship. Until recently, an estimated 30,000 people were travelling to the U.S. annually to give birth, and there were tour companies that made this a business model. A 2015 law made it legal for people to seek visas for giving birth in the U.S., but in 2020, with the rise of Trump-era nativism, this was withdrawn. India, through a change in its citizenship law, has barred children born to an illegal immigrant from acquiring citizenship by birth.

Moving people moves the history of humankind. Moving people is remaking the politics of India. These changes will become visible through the Census, the SIR, and then delimitation, which will redistribute Lok Sabha representation across State borders for the first time in half a century.

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## The story of 'We, the moving people'

### Citizenship and territory: the basic idea

Traditionally, citizenship is linked to a fixed place.

- A citizen is expected to **live in one clearly defined territory** (village, town, constituency, State, country). Rights like **voting, welfare benefits, political representation** are all linked to **where a person normally lives**.

In short:

- **Citizen = person + place**

### How migration breaks this link?

- People move frequently for jobs, education, marriage or safety. They may **live in one place, work in another, and keep legal ties with a third**.

This creates a problem:

A person may be a **citizen of one country or State** But **not actually living there most of the time** This **breaks the old assumption that:**

*Citizenship, residence and political participation overlap neatly.*

This confusion is a **"conceptual drift"**.

## Why governments and politics struggle with this

Modern States and political systems are still designed for a world where People lived **mostly in one place** and Migration was **slow and limited**

### Today:

- Migration is fast, **large-scale and constant** and Governments lack **updated tools** to handle mobile populations fairly

### As a result:

- **Public fear and anxiety grow** and Political parties **exploit this fear**
- Migrants are portrayed as:
  - ♦ “Outsiders”, “illegal voters”, “job stealers”

### This leads to:

- Anti-immigrant mobilisation, Deportations, Strict voter verification drives

## India's case:

**Electoral rolls and SIR:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) has started a **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of voter lists.

**Why?-** 1. People **move cities or States** 2. They **register again** at the new place 3. But **do not delete their name** from the old place

**ECI's argument:** Migration and urbanisation are now **normal and** Electoral rolls must be cleaned to ensure **“one person, one vote”**

**Real meaning:** SIR is not just about **who can vote**.

It is also about **where a person is politically counted**

## The U.S. example: same fear, different system

Under President Trump: The federal government asked States for **complete voter databases**- Required **proof of citizenship** (passport, birth certificate) to vote

### Supporters say:

- It prevents **illegal voting** and Protects election integrity

### Critics say:

- It weakens **State autonomy**, Makes voting harder for: Poor people, Migrants and Minorities

Underlying fear in both India and the U.S.:

**“Foreigners or migrants are influencing elections.”**

**Migration is not new — but its scale is:**

- 1990: ~154 million international migrants
- 2024: **300+ million migrants**

**Societies feel the change more strongly**

Politics reacts emotionally

In many developed countries:

- A visible rise in **foreign-born populations and Immigration** becomes a **top election issue**

This fuels “**Natives first**” politics, **Identity-based mobilisation and Suspicion of cultural change**

**Examples:** U.S., UK, Canada, Australia

**Sending countries (like India):**

- Want to **send workers abroad**
- Call it “export of human resources”

**Receiving countries:**

- Need **young workers**
- But do NOT want them to: Stay permanently or Gain citizenship or Vote

Result: Migrants become: **Workers without political rights and Economically useful but politically invisible**

**Overseas Indians and voting dilemma**

India has:

- **35.4 million Overseas Indians**
- Many are still Indian citizens

Current law (2010):

- NRIs **can vote** But must be **physically present** in India

**Problem:**

- Right exists on paper , But is **difficult to exercise**

Hence Demand for **remote / postal / electronic voting**

Migration **inside India** also matters greatly.

**Domicile laws:** Decide who can get State government jobs and Educational seats- basically Protect “locals”

**Voting rights:**

- Voting tied to **place of residence**
- Migration shifts **political power**

**Example:**

- Migrant-receiving States (Maharashtra, Kerala)
- Migrant-sending States (Bihar, UP)

**Where a migrant votes can:**

- Change electoral outcomes
- Affect national politics

**Migration also reshapes culture**

Migrants carry:

- Language, Religion, Customs and Political ideas

**Examples:**

- Deepavali at the White House
- Spread of Vedic practices in ancient India
- Mixing of languages over centuries

Migration is not only economic — it is civilisational.



## Conclusion

- Movement of people is **reshaping politics, law and democracy**
- Citizenship is no longer tied neatly to territory
- Voting rights, representation and identity are being renegotiated

In India, this will become visible through:

- **Census**
- **Electoral roll revision (SIR)**
- **Delimitation of constituencies**

Moving people are moving politics itself.