Invisible citizens- the barriers and durable solutions for internally displaced people due to climate diversity

Renjini PS

Assistant Professor, Kerala Law Academy Law College, Peroorkada, Thiruvananthapuram-695005

KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

Peoples, Climate change, Policy dimensions

Internally Displaced This article, "Invisible Citizens: Barriers and Durable Solutions for Climate-Induced Displacement," explores the significant challenges faced by individuals displaced by climate change and presents strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Invisible citizens refer to displaced people who are often overlooked or marginalized in discussions about climate-induced displacement. The article examines various solutions, such as Establishing legal frameworks that recognize and protect the rights of climate-displaced individuals, implementing targeted policies and integration programs that facilitate social and economic, and improving access to resources like education, healthcare, and employment opportunities is essential for their stability and growth. Involving displaced individuals in the planning and implementation of solutions can lead to more effective and equitable outcomes.

> Another area of discussion is national and international regulations which address their rights and protections in various ways. While International and national laws provide important frameworks for the protection of IDPs, their effective implementation is often hindered by issues such as the non-building nature of international guidelines, inconsistent national legal frameworks, resource limitations, and political instability. Addressing these challenges requires improved coordination between stakeholders, increased resources, and stronger political commitment to ensure that IDPs receive the protection and support they need.

> In summary, addressing the challenges faced by climate-induced IDPs requires a multifaceted approach that integrates legal, financial, and policy dimensions. By recognizing and addressing the unique needs of these "invisible citizens," stakeholders can develop more effective and durable solutions to support displaced communities in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Always hope that a small but devoted group can make a big difference. It is the only thing that has ever existed. **Margaret Mead**

The concept of internal displacement takes us very close to understanding how vulnerable humans are or are forced to be, unlike refugees who cross international boundaries and internally displaced persons. (IDPs) (Hereinafter referred to as IDPs) are persons who are uprooted within their own 'homeland '.The UN Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons describes internally displaced persons (or IDPs) as

66 persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular, because of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

The 30 guiding principles on how IDPs must be treated in this document set out the pertinent standards that States, governments, humanitarian organizations, armed groups, and other entities should follow. An internally displaced person (IDP) is a term used to describe people who are compelled to flee their country yet stay inside its borders. Here, the word homeland refers to the socio-cultural emotional context in which a citizen resides and feels a sense of ownership over it.

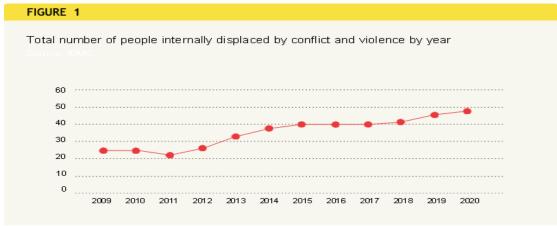


"Invisible Citizens" often refers to marginalized or excluded people from mainstream society. This exclusion can result from various factors such as poverty, discrimination, or statelessness. Internally displacing such people—meaning forcing them to leave their homes or communities within their own country—can occur due to conflict, natural disasters, or socioeconomic pressures. This displacement often happens without adequate support or recognition, leading to further marginalization. "invisibility" stems from the term "Invisible citizens," which typically refers to marginalized or excluded from mainstream society. This exclusion can be caused by poverty, discrimination, or statelessness. These individuals may be internally displaced, meaning they are forced to leave their homes or communities within their own country due to conflict, natural disasters, or socioeconomic pressures.

Unfortunately, such displacement often occurs without adequate support or recognition, further marginalising these individuals. Their "invisibility" arises from their lack of political voice, legal recognition, or access to resources, making their struggles less visible and a priority for policymakers and the public. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies, including legal recognition, support systems, and inclusive policies to meet their rights and needs. Their lack of political voice, legal recognition, or access to resources makes their plight less visible and less prioritized by policymakers and the public. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies, including legal recognition, support systems, and inclusive policies to meet their rights and needs.

A Global Crisis

Every year, people around the world face the devastating impacts of conflicts, violence,



disasters and climate change. Tens of millions of them flee their homes but never cross an international border. These individuals, known as internally displaced persons or 'IDPs', make up the vast majority of displaced people around the globe today. At the end of 2020, 55 million people were internally displaced. Displacement is possible in every country, even though certain areas are more affected than others. Women and girls make up over half of the world's IDPs; Five million IDPs are living with disabilities. And an estimated 2.6 million are elderly. Over 30.5 million are children and youth.

There can be no doubt that this is a global crisis. It is a crisis defined by three compelling features. First, the number of IDPs has been climbing unrelentingly. While the historical data on disaster displacement is limited, the figures from conflict settings paint a stark picture. Over the past two decades, the total number of people displaced internally by conflict and violence has more than doubled. The number at the end of 2020 - over 48 million - was the highest ever recorded.

Reasons for the current growth in Internal Displacement

A primary reason for the growth is new displacement, as millions of people are forced to flee their homes yearly. Several factors are driving this trend. Conflict and violence continue to rage around the world, often leaving civilians with no choice but to flee to protect themselves and their families. Disasters and the adverse effects of climate change are another major driver responsible for most new internal displacements each year. Criminal and gang violence,



persecution, human rights violations, and the effects of development mega-projects All further contribute to displacement and technological disasters, such as the Chornobyl and Fukushima nuclear accidents, which have also permanently displaced populations. Many of these threats intersect and compound one another. According to one analysis, an estimated 7 million people who fled disasters remained trapped in internal displacement at the end of 2020. In many contexts, displacement is unplanned and arbitrary. It represents a breakdown of the social contract between States and their citizens and residents—a breach of the State's promise and obligation to keep its people safe from harm. As subsequent chapters will illustrate, recovery from displacement is thus also about recovering the trust and confidence of populations in the State.

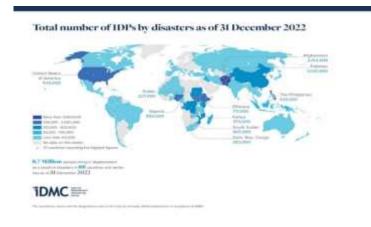
The third defining feature of the global displacement crisis is its impact on development, stability, and societies at large. Internal displacement not only devastates those who are displaced but can also put a strain on the communities hosting them. Large-scale protracted displacement can stall and even reverse advancements made in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by increasing poverty, exacerbating inequality, and exposing IDPs and host communities to heightened risks to their health and safety. Within local economies, influxes of displaced populations can affect markets and influence average wages and housing prices in displacement-affected areas. If the impoverishment and marginalization of IDPs are not addressed and host communities do not receive sufficient support, displacement can also contribute to fragility, create tensions, and plant the seeds for future displacement risks.

Climate change, disasters, and displacement

Every year, natural disasters like fires, earthquakes, and floods force millions of people to escape their homes. 8.7 million people were internally displaced due to disasters at the end of 2022. Although not every disaster relocation is caused by climate change, more people are in danger of having to leave their homes as extreme weather events become more frequent and intense. Climate-related hazards like storms, floods, wildfires, and geophysical hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis are part of climate change disaster displacement. In addition to these sudden-onset disasters, they increasingly include new displacements associated with slow-onset hazards such as droughts, desertification, sea-level rise, and water salinization.

According to a report by the UN, calamities and climate change caused about five million people to be internally displaced in India in 2021. Four categories of internal displacement in India: · I -Political causes, including secessionist movements · II -Identity-based autonomy movements · III -Localized violence · IV - Environmental and development-induced displacement.

India has made investments in new cities, mines, power plants, roads, dams, and industrial developments - all made possible by enormous land acquisition and consequent population displacement—to achieve rapid economic expansion while addressing environmental concerns. The 21.3 million internally displaced people (IDPs) caused by development include



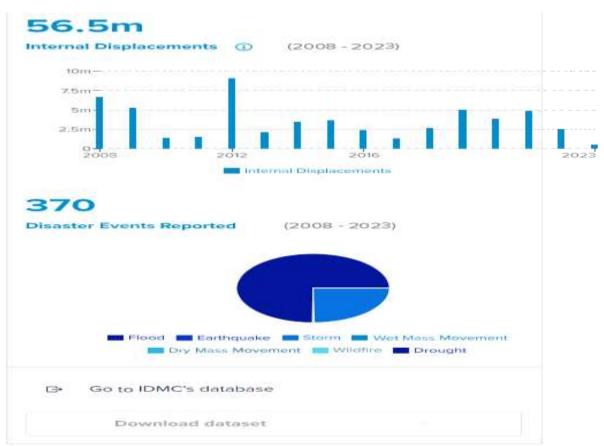


Those affected by dams (16.4 million), mines (2.55 million), industrial development (1.25 million), animal sanctuaries, and national parks (0.6 million), according to data published by

Natural disaster-induced displacement

the Indian Social Institute.

Massive and recurrent displacement has occurred. Large-scale, frequent displacement is brought about by landslides, cyclones, and floods. Over 30 million people are displaced each year due to flooding, with India being the country most affected after Bangladesh, according to a 1991 estimate by the Centre for Science and Environment.



INDIA IDMC Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 7/30/24; 8:34 pm Recently, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre has released a report titled- **The Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023 (GRID-2023),** which cites that Compared to 2021, the number of individuals displaced by catastrophes increased by 40% in 2022. The IDMC is the world's leading source of data and analysis on internal displacement. It provides **high-quality data, analysis and expertise on Internal Displacement, intending to inform policy and operational decisions** to reduce the risk of future displacement. Findings of the GRID-2023

- The number of people living in internal displacement reached a record high of 71.1 million across 110 countries and territories.
- 62.5 million due to conflict and violence, and 8.7 million due to disasters.
- By 2021, 30.7 million new displacements were due to disasters. In 2022, some 150 countries/territories reported such displacement.
- Pakistan had the world's highest number of disaster displacements in 2022, at 8.16 million.
 - o In Pakistan, floods displaced millions, accounting for a quarter of the global disaster displacements.
- The **Philippines ranked second** and reported 5.44 million displacements, and China was third with 3.63 million.



- With 2.5 million displaced due to disasters, India had the fourth-highest documented displacements, and Nigeria ranked fifth with 2.4 million.
- Factors for Displacement:
- O **Disaster:** The impacts of **La Niña** are mostly to blame for the rise in disasters, especially those connected to the weather. (The Equatorial Pacific Region's fluctuations in ocean temperatures give rise to intricate weather patterns known as La Niña).

• Implications:

Entrenched conflict, disasters, and displacement aggravated Global Food Security in 2022, which was already a concern because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recovery has been inconsistent and sluggish. Low-income countries, many dealing with internal displacement, were most affected, partly given their reliance on food and fertilizer imports and international humanitarian aid.75% of the countries assessed as facing crisis levels of food security have IDPs.

Scenario of India: In 2022, India recorded **thousands of internal displacements—631,000 from conflict and violence** and 2.5 million from natural disasters. Flooding began in India and Bangladesh before the monsoon season, which typically remains from mid-July to September, officially began. Early May 2022 floods in the north-eastern Indian State of Assam were followed by another wave of flooding in June. In all, the State's impacted population was close to five million. The July 2022 rainfall in certain parts of India was the lowest in 122 years. 2.1 million Displacements were reported throughout India before the end of the monsoon season, a markdown from the five million during the 2021 season.

Global Report on Internal Displacement

The Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) has recently released the 2024 "Global Report on Internal Displacement." It attempts to count the total number of internally displaced people and internal displacements worldwide. The latter category includes each new forced movement of a person within the borders of their country recorded during the year, while the former indicates the number of people living in internal displacement at the end of the year. The report highlights the worrying increase in internally displaced people worldwide.

The IDMC defines internally displaced people as "those who have been forced to flee their homes as a result of conflict, violence, or disasters and who have not crossed a State border acknowledged by international law" According to its report, 75.9 million people lived in internal displacement at the end of 2023, up from 71.1 million in 2022. It recorded 20.5 million internal displacements caused by conflict and violence and 26.4 million due to disasters. The number of internally displaced people is often higher than the number of internal displacements, as the former category includes all people displaced in previous years and still living in internal displacement.

The report divides the number of internally displaced people into two broad categories—conflict- and disaster-induced displacement. Most internal displacements occur due to the former, with 68.3 million conflict-induced and 7.7 million disaster-induced displacements. The five countries that reported the highest numbers of conflict-induced displacements in 2023 were Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Palestine, Myanmar, and Ethiopia, while China, Türkiye, the Philippines, Somalia, and Bangladesh reported the highest number of disaster-induced displacements in 2023.

Prolonged conflict in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo and natural disasters like drought in Somalia and floods in Ethiopia made the region of sub-Saharan Africa account for the highest number of internally displaced people at a record 34.8 million in 2023, up from 31.7 million in 2022 and constituting 46% of the global total. Sudan faced an overlap between conflict- and disaster-induced displacements. Around 70% to 80% of hospitals in conflict-affected areas in Sudan were no longer operational, leading to a cholera outbreak in the country. Moreover, the rainy season between May and October 2023 caused flooding along the River



Nile and the South Darfur state in Sudan, which disproportionately affected the relief camps, sheltering the people who had already fled from conflict and violence.

The region of West Asia and North Africa came second, with 15.3 million internally displaced people in 2023, up from 12.8 million in 2022. Palestine reported the highest number of internal displacements in this region. One of the most alarming findings of the IDMC report is that the war in Gaza left around 83% of its population internally displaced in less than three months. The report highlights that despite ordering over a million civilians to evacuate from the northern part of the Gaza Strip to the south, the Israeli military nonetheless bombarded the areas in southern Gaza that were earlier marked safe for the evacuees. This tremendously increased the overall number of civilian deaths in Gaza, on top of causing massive internal displacement, food insecurity, and health risks in the region.

South Asia reported 8.2 million internally displaced people, slightly down from 8.7 million in 2022. Countries with the most internally displaced people in 2023 were Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. South Asia recorded 69,000 internal displacements in 2023, with Manipur alone accounting for 67,000. In other words, Manipur recorded around 97% of all internal displacements in South Asia in 2023. The report also notes that more than 75% of these internal displacements occurred within Manipur, while around 20% of these movements were to the neighbouring states of Mizoram and fewer numbers to Nagaland and Assam. Internally displaced people (IDPs) are individuals who have been forced to leave their homes but remain within their country's borders. International and national laws address their rights and protections in various ways:

International Laws

United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998): - These principles, while not legally binding, provide a framework for the protection and assistance of IDPs. They outline rights and standards for IDPs and suggest that governments and international bodies should uphold these principles.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol:- While primarily concerned with refugees who cross international borders, some aspects can apply to IDPs, especially in terms of non-discrimination and protection against persecution.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL):- In conflict situations, IHL, including the Geneva Conventions, provides protections for civilians, including IDPs, ensuring they are not subjected to violence or exploitation.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):- These treaties outline fundamental human rights that IDPs are entitled to, including the right to adequate housing, food, and health care.

National Laws

National laws regarding IDPs vary widely. Some countries have specific legislation or policies to address their needs, while others rely on general humanitarian or emergency frameworks: Specific Legislation:- Some countries have enacted specific laws to address the needs of IDPs. For example, Colombia and the Philippines have laws or policies designed to protect and assist IDPs within their borders.

Emergency and Humanitarian Laws:- In many countries, emergency or disaster management laws provide the framework for responding to the needs of IDPs, including shelter, health care, and financial assistance.

Constitutional and Human Rights Protections:- Many countries have constitutional provisions or human rights laws that guarantee protections for all citizens, including IDPs, which can be used to advocate for their rights.

Local Regulations and Policies:- Local governments may have their own policies and programs to address IDP needs, which can vary significantly from one region to another.

Overall, the protection of IDPs involves a combination of international standards and national regulations. The effectiveness of these protections often depends on the commitment and capacity of national governments and the involvement of international organizations. While International and national laws provide important frameworks for the protection of IDPs, their



effective implementation is often hindered by issues such as the non-building nature of International guidelines, inconsistent national legal frameworks, resource limitations, and political instability. Addressing these challenges requires improved coordination between stakeholders, increased resources, and stronger political commitment to ensure that IDPs receive the protection and support they need.

The Need for a National Policy on Internal Displacements

Experts studying the problem of internal displacement in India have emphasized the need for a national policy and legislation to tackle conflict-, disaster-, and development-induced displacements. With a national policy or legislation, it becomes nearly possible to maintain accurate data and monitoring protocols required to protect, assist, and ensure the rights of internally displaced people. Due to the lack of a comprehensive policy governing refugees and internally displaced people in India, the response of the government to their needs is often arbitrary and ad hoc, with notable variations in the rules and guidelines among the states that often threaten or undermine their civil and constitutional rights.

The proposed Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, 2005, did attempt to resolve some problems of those displaced due to communal and ethnic violence in India. However, this bill was never passed and was eventually withdrawn in 2014. However, this bill was never passed and was eventually withdrawn in 2014. Moreover, a private member's bill titled the Rehabilitation and Relocation of Persons Displaced due to Climate Change Bill 2022 was introduced in the Lok Sabha, and it sought to address disaster- and climate change-induced displacements in India. However, this bill is pending, and there needs to be more visible urgency in ratifying it in Parliament.

The IDMC's report, along with severe conflict- and disaster-induced internal displacements recorded in the past year, clearly underlines the need for a national policy to tackle internal displacements in India. Any such policy would need to be sensitive to regional differences in India without, however, adopting an arbitrary stance where the displaced people's civil and constitutional rights come under threat due to unfair political considerations.

Enhancing Safety and Support

Around the world, millions of IDPs face critical gaps in protection and humanitarian assistance. This is often characterized by continued threats to people's safety, security, and rights, as well as shortages in food, adequate shelter, and other survival needs.

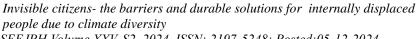
National governments should prioritize protection and humanitarian aid when making larger decisions and allocating funds. They should also take the initiative to actively consult IDPs of all ages, genders, and backgrounds about their needs and concerns. When access to humanitarian aid is unnecessarily restricted or denied, the UN and donor states should create space so humanitarian actors can provide neutral, unbiased, independent protection and assistance without undue interference.

Future scenario

There isn't an immediate solution for India's IDP problems. This could be due to several factors, including i) the complexity and nuances of the circumstances that force them to flee their homes, ii) the low priority that the federal and State governments place on the issue of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees; iii) the withdrawal syndrome that has been demonstrated by interest and pressure groups and civil society; and iv) the lack of a clear national legal framework, institutions, and policies to address both pre- and post-displacement situations. If the Indian government does not consider addressing the root reasons, displacement will escalate and become more intricate. The State has a primary obligation. It is necessary to take action to lower the amount of violence directed at non-combatants.

Conclusion & Recommendations

• The scope of the problems displaced persons face requires more and more long-lasting solutions. This includes increasing financial aid and livelihood initiatives that increase the economic security of internally displaced people (IDPs) by putting money into risk-reduction strategies that fortify the resilience of their communities.





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- In addition to providing emergency humanitarian aid, investments in proactive planning and risk mitigation strategies that increase the resilience of displaced communities are required.
- Developing the livelihoods and skill sets of IDP communities and nations would boost food security and their self-reliance, contributing to the facilitation of longterm solutions.
- States are urged to prioritize addressing internal displacement (IDPs) and their situations as a national priority. They should adopt a development-oriented approach, integrating IDPs into national and local development plans and reporting on their efforts. They should support local authorities in addressing displacement as part of urban planning and use cities' resources for solutions. States should include IDPs in peace processes and promote compensation, restitution, transitional justice, and social cohesion initiatives. They should work with IDPs, host communities, local authorities, civil society, the private sector, the UN, NGOs, and international financiers to develop solutions and operational plans.
- Local and national actors should drive change and raise awareness about internal displacement, cultivate public pressure, and hold leaders accountable. Regional organizations should adopt relevant legal and policy frameworks, facilitate State-to-State engagement, strengthen diplomacy, and appoint a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Solutions to Internal Displacement. The UN should enhance States' access to predictable technical support and investigate and prosecute those who forcibly displace populations or commit violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian, and Criminal Law.
- States and other actors should recognize the rights and agency of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and promote their capacities. They should ensure IDPs can participate in decision-making processes related to displacement, including voting and community-based planning. Civil society actors should be involved in strategic planning and responses, and the media should report on internal displacement to foster tolerance and understanding. Researchers should be supported in displacement-affected countries and the Global South, and civil society groups should raise awareness about the prevention and resolution of internal displacement situations.
- Private sector actors are encouraged to contribute to solutions to internal displacement by adopting policies and regulations that incentivize engagement. Governments, private sector actors, financers, the UN, and NGOs should collaborate to establish national and local platforms for knowledge sharing and strengthened partnerships. Committed actors should serve as champions, and donors and humanitarian organizations should source local products whenever possible.
- The Secretary-General should formalize Resident Coordinators' role in leading UN efforts and number solutions at the country level, including incorporating their responsibilities into their Terms of Reference and performance assessments. They should be supported by relevant UN agencies, NGOs, and donors, and an appropriate mechanism for coordination efforts should be ensured. The Secretary-General should communicate the importance of UN development actors' engagement in internally displaced persons (IDP) solutions, set clear expectations for all UN systems, and appoint an SRSG on Solutions to Internal Displacement.
- Donors should support local authorities and civil society to strengthen institutional capacities. Development financers should include solutions for internal displacement in fragility financing and plan for predictable institutional engagement. In line with the OECD DAC Recommendation, resources should contribute to a joined-up approach. The UN, donors, and IFIs should scale up engagement on solutions and establish a Global Fund on Internal Displacement Solutions.
- States and the Security Council should demonstrate political leadership and commitment to a rights-based order, putting humanity first. They should recognize the



responsibility of sovereignty and work together to end cultures of impunity. When conflicts arise, the UN, states, and mediators should mobilize for de-escalation, political negotiation, and conflict resolution. Policies should be adopted to mitigate civilian harm in armed conflicts and integrate forced displacement prevention into laws and training. The UN should confront threats to civilians and take immediate action to prevent the worsening of the global climate crisis.

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