

## Migration, Displacement, and Identity: Stories from the Margins

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### ABSTRACT

Migration and displacement are not merely movements across geographical boundaries but deeply transformative processes that reshape individual and collective identities. This paper explores the lived realities of marginalized communities who experience forced or voluntary migration, focusing on how displacement affects their sense of belonging, cultural continuity, and political recognition. Drawing on interdisciplinary literature and selected case narratives—including those of Dalits, Adivasis, refugees, and gender-nonconforming individuals—this research highlights the intersections of caste, gender, ethnicity, and class in shaping migratory experiences. While state and institutional narratives often homogenize displacement through policy frameworks, the voices from the margins reveal nuanced struggles for identity, survival, and dignity. This study also examines the role of memory, resistance, and cultural adaptation in constructing post-displacement identities. By foregrounding subaltern perspectives, the article challenges dominant discourses that neglect the socio-political complexities of migration and displacement. Furthermore, it critically engages with the limitations of state responses and the possibilities offered by civil society interventions. The aim is to emphasize the need for inclusive, context-sensitive approaches to migration policy and scholarship. This research contributes to broader debates on migration, citizenship, and belonging by centering those historically excluded from mainstream narratives.

**Keywords:** *Migration, Displacement, Identity, Marginality, Subaltern Voices, Belonging, Citizenship*

Migration and displacement are increasingly central to the global political, social, and cultural landscape. Whether driven by conflict, development, environmental degradation, or socio-economic inequality, these movements are often fraught with precarity and trauma, especially for communities already situated at the margins of society. The processes of moving across physical and metaphorical borders bring about fundamental transformations in identity, belonging, and citizenship. However, mainstream discourses on migration typically focus on economic metrics, national security concerns, or demographic impacts, often overlooking the lived experiences and socio-cultural dislocations of marginalized populations (Chatterji, 2019; Chimni, 2009).

This research examines the intersection of migration, displacement, and identity from the perspectives of those who experience structural exclusions—Dalits, Adivasis, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), transgender individuals, and migrant laborers. These

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communities often navigate not only physical dislocation but also symbolic erasure in policy, media, and academic discourse. The erasure is compounded by caste, gender, ethnicity, and class-based hierarchies, which shape their experiences of displacement in complex ways (Guru, 2009; Menon, 2012). For example, while upper-caste or elite migrants may retain certain forms of privilege and mobility, Dalit or tribal migrants are often subjected to multiple layers of marginalization in both their places of origin and destination.

This study is rooted in a critical, intersectional approach that centers the voices of the displaced. It explores how identity is disrupted, reconstructed, or reasserted in the aftermath of migration, particularly when state policies, border regimes, and societal structures fail to acknowledge the agency or personhood of those affected. Through a combination of theoretical analysis and case-based narratives, the article investigates how displaced individuals contest exclusion, reclaim space, and forge new meanings of belonging. It also reflects on the role of memory, resistance, and cultural practices in sustaining identity amid fragmentation and loss.

The research aims to challenge dominant paradigms by foregrounding subaltern experiences and advocating for a more inclusive understanding of migration and displacement. It poses key questions: How do marginalized communities experience and narrate displacement? What strategies do they employ to survive and resist erasure? How does the state construct or deny identity through legal and bureaucratic means? In addressing these questions, this study contributes to a growing body of scholarship that seeks to humanize migration and recognize the pluralities within it.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

Migration and displacement are not merely physical movements but deeply affective processes that intersect with questions of identity, power, and belonging. Understanding these experiences—especially from the perspective of marginalized communities—requires an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that draws from cultural studies, political sociology, feminist theory, and subaltern studies.

#### **Identity Formation and Cultural Representation**

Stuart Hall's (1990) conceptualization of identity as a "production" rather than a fixed essence provides a foundational lens through which to understand how displaced individuals continually reconstruct their sense of self. For Hall, identity is formed through representation, difference, and history—making it particularly relevant for communities whose narratives are shaped by marginalization, exclusion, and migration. Similarly, Castells (2010) argues that identity, especially in the context of social movements, becomes a source of resistance when dominant power structures attempt to erase or assimilate difference.

In the case of marginalized migrants—such as Dalits, Adivasis, refugees, and religious minorities—identity is often produced at the intersection of displacement and systemic exclusion. These experiences are compounded by caste, class, gender, and religious markers, which not only influence mobility but also the narratives that emerge in exile or migration (Guru, 2009; Baviskar & Sundar, 2008).

#### **Displacement and the Politics of Space**

Theories of displacement emphasize the entanglement of space, memory, and loss. Edward Said (2000) explores exile as both a traumatic rupture and a creative force, suggesting that displacement can lead to the formation of new cultural imaginaries. In the Indian context,

internal displacements—whether due to development, caste violence, communal riots, or climate-induced migration—create fractured spaces where identity must be renegotiated. Fernandes (2008) argues that development-induced displacement disproportionately affects the Adivasi and Dalit populations, displacing them not only from physical land but also from traditional knowledge systems and cultural worlds.

Further, Massey (1994) challenges the notion of space as fixed and singular, advocating for a relational understanding of place as constituted through movement and interaction. This theoretical lens allows us to see how displaced people build new forms of belonging and spatial identity through diasporic networks, urban informal settlements, or migrant enclaves—despite precarity and exclusion.

### **Intersectionality and Subalternity**

Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality is essential in understanding how displacement impacts individuals differently based on overlapping social positions such as caste, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. For instance, displaced Dalit women face structural violence not only from their displacement but also from patriarchal norms and caste-based exclusion. This multidimensional marginality is often overlooked in state policies and mainstream migration narratives.

Subaltern studies also provide a critical framework for re-centering the voices of those historically silenced in nationalist or elite discourses. Spivak's (1988) question, "Can the subaltern speak?" is particularly relevant when exploring whose stories are told in migration discourses and how. While humanitarian or policy narratives may frame marginalized migrants as passive victims, subaltern frameworks insist on recognizing agency, resistance, and self-representation from below (Chatterjee, 2004).

### **Narrative and Representation**

Narrative theory, especially as articulated by scholars like Arthur Frank (2010) and Veena Das (2007), highlights the role of storytelling in making sense of suffering, displacement, and social trauma. Stories from the margins not only document loss but also serve as tools for reclaiming identity, dignity, and agency. The everyday narratives of migrants and displaced persons often challenge dominant representations by foregrounding resilience, community-making, and cultural continuity.

In ethnographic and qualitative research, the narrative becomes both method and theory—offering insights into how individuals interpret their dislocation and reimagine belonging (Chakrabarty, 2000). For marginalized groups, storytelling is not only therapeutic but also political: it resists erasure and asserts presence in spaces that routinely deny recognition.

### **Gaps in Existing Literature**

While migration studies have significantly expanded in recent years, much of the scholarship remains dominated by economic or geopolitical analyses that overlook lived experiences and intersectional identities (Sassen, 2014). There is limited engagement with how displacement affects marginalized populations differently—especially in the Global South. Moreover, few studies explore the narrative strategies employed by displaced individuals to reconstruct their identities or resist hegemonic representations.

This research thus contributes to an emerging body of work that bridges structural analysis with narrative inquiry, centering the lived experiences of those on the margins of nation-states, economies, and cultures.

### **Contextualizing Marginalized Migration**

Migration and displacement in the Indian subcontinent are shaped not only by economic and political factors but also by deeply entrenched social hierarchies and historical injustices. While mainstream migration studies often focus on labor markets, remittances, or border conflicts, marginalized migration—particularly of Dalits, Adivasis, religious minorities, women, and queer individuals—remains underrepresented in dominant academic and policy narratives. To fully understand migration from the margins, it is necessary to situate these movements within a broader socio-historical and political context.

### **Historical Roots of Displacement**

Colonial and postcolonial histories in India are rife with displacement. During British rule, vast tracts of forest land were appropriated, displacing indigenous Adivasi communities and reordering traditional land relations (Guha, 1999). The Partition of 1947 was one of the largest mass migrations in history, leading to the displacement of approximately 14 million people across newly created borders (Zamindar, 2007). Many among these were from lower castes and minority religions who, even after relocation, continued to face discrimination, loss of citizenship, and identity fragmentation.

Post-independence, the Indian state has continued to displace marginalized communities through large-scale development projects. According to Fernandes (2008), over 60 million people have been displaced in India due to dams, mines, and infrastructure development, and a significant proportion of them belong to Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. Displacement in these cases is often involuntary, accompanied by inadequate rehabilitation and loss of cultural and ecological ties.

### **Caste and Internal Migration**

Caste remains a critical factor in shaping internal migration patterns. Lower-caste individuals, particularly Dalits, often migrate from rural to urban areas to escape caste-based violence, discrimination, and limited occupational mobility (Desai & Dubey, 2012). However, migration does not necessarily erase caste hierarchies. In urban informal economies, Dalits are often relegated to low-paid, precarious, and stigmatized forms of labor such as sanitation work, manual scavenging, or street vending (Still, 2014). Urban slums—spaces where many migrants reside—become contested arenas where caste, class, and regional identities intersect and conflict.

Moreover, inter-state migration in India is significantly shaped by linguistic, cultural, and ethnic prejudices. Migrants from Bihar or Uttar Pradesh, for instance, often face xenophobic attitudes in Maharashtra or Karnataka. These tensions are compounded when the migrants belong to Dalit, Muslim, or tribal communities, making them doubly vulnerable to exclusion and violence (Rajan & Bhagat, 2012).

### **Gendered Dimensions of Displacement**

The experience of migration is not uniform and is significantly inflected by gender. Women from marginalized communities often migrate under coercive or distress-driven circumstances—such as trafficking, domestic violence, or forced eviction. In many cases, they find work as domestic laborers, construction workers, or in informal service sectors,

where exploitation and lack of legal protections are rampant (Kabeer, 2007). Displaced women also face heightened risks of sexual violence, especially in refugee camps, informal settlements, and conflict zones.

Gender non-conforming and queer individuals also face unique displacement trajectories. Many are forced to migrate due to familial rejection, social stigma, or lack of legal recognition in their home states. However, migration for queer individuals does not guarantee safety; they often encounter discrimination in both host communities and migrant networks (Narrain, 2015).

### **Religious and Ethnic Minorities**

Religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, have experienced displacement due to communal violence and state-backed exclusion. The 2002 Gujarat riots, the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots, and the NRC-CAA controversy in Assam are prominent examples of state and societal mechanisms that render religious minorities vulnerable to dispossession and statelessness (Banerjee, 2020). Refugee groups like the Rohingya, Chakmas, and Sri Lankan Tamils also face legal precarity, often denied basic rights such as education, healthcare, or employment in the name of national security.

The Indian state's refugee and asylum policy remains largely discretionary, lacking a consistent legal framework. This absence disproportionately affects minority and undocumented migrants who lack access to due process or protections under international law (Samaddar, 2003).

### **Climate Displacement and Environmental Marginalization**

Climate-induced displacement is an emerging concern, particularly in coastal and drought-prone areas. The Sundarbans in West Bengal, the flood-prone plains of Assam, and the drought-hit regions of Bundelkhand have all seen increasing climate migration. Marginalized communities—who often depend on land, forests, and water bodies for survival—are the first to be affected and the last to be rehabilitated. Environmental policies rarely incorporate the knowledge or rights of Adivasi and Dalit populations, leading to further ecological and cultural erasure (Baviskar, 2011).

Migration from the margins is not a linear process but one deeply entangled with systemic violence, structural inequalities, and intersecting identities. From caste and gender to religion and ecology, multiple axes shape the conditions under which individuals are displaced and how they negotiate survival and belonging. By situating marginalized migration within this broader context, the study challenges homogenized narratives and calls for a more intersectional and justice-oriented approach to displacement discourse.

### ***Lived Experiences and Narratives***

Migration and displacement are not only structural phenomena but also profoundly personal experiences etched into the everyday lives of individuals and communities. For those at the margins—Dalits, Adivasis, women, religious and sexual minorities, and refugees—displacement is not a temporary event but an ongoing condition of uncertainty, exclusion, and resilience. Narratives, testimonies, and oral histories become essential tools for capturing the complexity of these experiences and making visible what often remains invisible in state-centric or development-driven discourses. This section explores such lived realities through the lens of narrative inquiry, emphasizing the voices and stories of those historically excluded from dominant migration narratives.

### **Displacement as Loss and Trauma**

For many marginalized individuals, displacement is characterized by profound emotional and cultural rupture. A Dalit family displaced from their ancestral land in Bihar due to caste-based violence may recount not only the physical loss of land but also the severing of intergenerational belonging, ritual space, and social cohesion. One such narrative from the People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR, 2015) describes how entire communities were forced to migrate to urban peripheries, only to be further marginalized in slums and informal economies.

These experiences often involve cumulative trauma. As Das (2007) explains in her ethnographic work on violence in urban India, trauma is not limited to exceptional moments but infiltrates the ordinary fabric of life. Women displaced during communal riots in Gujarat (2002) or Muzaffarnagar (2013), for example, spoke not only of physical loss but also of the social death that followed—loss of kinship, livelihood, dignity, and safety (Engineer, 2004; Menon & Bhasin, 1998). Their narratives reflect layers of silencing, particularly when justice mechanisms fail to acknowledge their suffering or offer redress.

### **Gendered and Queer Experiences of Migration**

The migration experiences of women and LGBTQ+ individuals reveal a distinct set of vulnerabilities and negotiations. Dalit women who migrate to cities for domestic labor often find themselves in hyper-exploitative relationships, caught between caste, class, and gender-based hierarchies (Neetha, 2009). Yet, these same women also develop networks of solidarity and resistance—through collectives, unions, or informal support systems—that allow them to reassert control over their lives.

Queer individuals, too, often narrate migration as a forced escape from patriarchal violence, heteronormativity, and rural stigma. Their narratives involve navigating urban anonymity, but also new forms of exclusion, such as housing discrimination and economic precarity. Narrain (2015) documents the stories of trans individuals who migrated to cities like Bangalore or Delhi, only to confront hostile state institutions and systemic neglect. Still, migration also enabled the formation of chosen families, queer kinship networks, and alternative forms of community-making that challenge dominant notions of home and belonging.

### **The Politics of Belonging and Recognition**

Narratives from displaced Adivasi communities underscore a struggle for recognition—not just in legal or bureaucratic terms, but in epistemic and cultural ways. In Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, for instance, Adivasis displaced by mining or dam projects speak of the erosion of sacred landscapes, traditional knowledge systems, and customary governance (Baviskar, 2011). Their testimonies challenge extractive models of development that treat land as property rather than as a relational entity deeply embedded in community identity.

In many cases, displaced persons are forced to prove their legitimacy—through identity documents, ration cards, or biometric registrations—highlighting the violence of bureaucratic recognition. Rohingya refugees in India, for example, live under constant threat of deportation, lacking formal refugee status or access to basic services (Banerjee, 2020). Their narratives are filled with expressions of fear, dispossession, and uncertainty, but also with endurance and hope for dignity and safety.

### **Narrative as Resistance and Reclamation**

While displacement often involves suffering, narratives from the margins also reveal acts of resistance and survival. Oral histories, songs, autobiographies, and even graffiti become tools through which displaced individuals reclaim agency. The autobiographical writing of Bama (2000), a Dalit Christian woman, narrates her migration from village to city and her confrontation with both caste and gender oppression. Her narrative disrupts dominant development discourses by foregrounding subaltern voice and dignity.

Similarly, community theater in bastis (urban slums) or refugee settlements functions as a mode of collective storytelling and political critique. These cultural practices become spaces where identity is not just mourned but actively redefined. As Appadurai (1996) suggests, imagination itself becomes a social practice—a means of envisioning alternatives to marginality.

Veena Das (2007) emphasizes the importance of "life histories" not merely as data but as embodied archives of experience. By listening to these stories, researchers and policymakers can begin to understand displacement not simply as a statistic or logistical problem but as a deeply human phenomenon shaped by structural violence and everyday resilience.

Lived experiences and narratives of marginalized migration challenge dominant paradigms that view displacement as exceptional, apolitical, or solely economic. They highlight how migration is deeply entangled with identity, power, and survival. More importantly, these stories assert the right to be seen, heard, and remembered on one's own terms. Whether through oral testimony, literature, or performance, marginalized individuals continue to assert their presence and agency—even in the face of invisibility. Recognizing and amplifying these voices is essential for a more just and inclusive discourse on migration and displacement.

### ***Identity, Belonging, and Resistance***

The intersection of migration, displacement, and marginalization often produces fractured experiences of identity and belonging. However, these fractures are not merely signs of victimhood; they are also sites of resistance, negotiation, and reimagination. For marginalized migrants—Dalits, Adivasis, religious minorities, queer individuals, and others—identity is not a stable, inherited category but a dynamic and contested space shaped by structural violence, cultural memory, and acts of everyday resilience. This section explores how displaced individuals and communities reconstruct identity and belonging through various forms of resistance—symbolic, spatial, cultural, and political.

### **Fragmented Identities and Shifting Belongings**

Displacement frequently results in identity disorientation, as individuals are removed from their cultural and social anchors. Migrants are often forced to navigate between the loss of rootedness and the pressure to assimilate into hostile or indifferent host environments. For marginalized groups, this tension is particularly acute, as their identities are already devalued within dominant social hierarchies.

Hall's (1990) conception of identity as fluid, performative, and formed through difference is crucial to understanding how displaced people make sense of their selfhood. Identity becomes a process of negotiation between past attachments and present survival strategies. Adivasi migrants in urban India, for instance, may adopt new forms of cultural expression while still maintaining affective ties to their indigenous heritage (Baviskar, 2011). Similarly,

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Dalit migrants often assert pride in caste-based identity as a mode of resistance against erasure, transforming stigma into solidarity (Guru, 2009).

In diasporic and refugee contexts, feelings of unbelonging are often institutionalized through bureaucratic exclusion and social marginalization. Refugees like the Rohingya in India, who lack formal legal recognition, live in a constant state of liminality (Banerjee, 2020). Yet, within these liminal spaces, they forge informal networks of care, economy, and shared identity—demonstrating that belonging is as much about relationality as it is about legal status.

### **Spatial Resistance and Everyday Acts**

Belonging is not only an emotional or cultural construct but also a spatial one. Displaced people often inhabit informal settlements, refugee camps, or ghettos that are seen as peripheral or illegitimate. However, these spaces are also reimagined and reclaimed through everyday acts of resistance. Massey (1994) argues that space is not fixed but constituted through social relations. Migrants, then, inscribe their presence through the naming of places, collective rituals, localized economies, and community organizing.

For example, in Delhi's resettlement colonies, evicted slum dwellers—many of them Dalit and Muslim—establish mohallas (neighborhoods) with local mosques, shrines, schools, and shops. These are not merely survival mechanisms but expressions of belonging that counter the alienation of displacement (Bhan, 2009). Similarly, Adivasi communities displaced by mining in Odisha often reclaim forested spaces through cultural festivals and resistance songs, asserting an enduring relationship with the land even in the face of dispossession.

Women's resistance in displacement contexts often takes the form of what Scott (1985) calls "everyday resistance"—small, subversive acts that challenge power without overt confrontation. These can include storytelling, mutual aid, informal education, and protest through art. Such practices keep cultural memory alive and enable the continuation of identity in altered geographies.

### **Cultural and Political Assertion**

Marginalized migrants often use culture as a means of resisting invisibility and asserting presence. Dalit literature, oral histories, and autobiographies have become powerful mediums through which displaced voices challenge caste hegemony and reframe identity (Satyanarayana & Tharu, 2013). Bama's *Karukku* (2000), for instance, reclaims Dalit Christian identity and narrates migration as both burden and breakthrough. Her writing becomes a site of both mourning and empowerment.

Political resistance also emerges through grassroots organizing and movement-building. Dalit and Adivasi migrants in urban centers have formed unions and advocacy groups to demand housing rights, labor protections, and recognition. These movements not only seek material justice but also affirm marginalized identities as legitimate and powerful (Teltumbde, 2010). In Assam and West Bengal, for example, displaced Bengali-speaking Muslims have organized collectively to resist the NRC-CAA regime, asserting their right to belong through documentation drives, legal action, and protest marches (Samaddar, 2020).

Queer and trans migrants, often excluded from both family and state support, build chosen families and activist networks that challenge heteronormative and cisnormative structures.

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Their assertion of identity in the public sphere—through pride marches, art collectives, or legal campaigns—signals a refusal to remain invisible.

### **Reimagining Belonging Beyond the Nation-State**

One of the most radical aspects of marginalized resistance is the reimagination of belonging itself. Instead of seeking inclusion within exclusionary nation-states or majoritarian cultures, many displaced communities envision alternative modes of relationality. Belonging is redefined not as possession of documents or alignment with dominant norms, but as mutual care, shared memory, and collective survival.

Subaltern theorists like Spivak (1988) and Chatterjee (2004) remind us that the margins are not just sites of suffering but also of epistemic creativity. Migrants and displaced persons resist not only through political action but also through the narration of alternative modernities, sovereignties, and identities. These acts of resistance challenge the very terms through which displacement and identity are understood.

For marginalized migrants, identity and belonging are constantly negotiated and contested. Yet, amid displacement and exclusion, they assert their presence through everyday resistance, cultural production, and political mobilization. Their narratives and practices compel us to rethink identity not as a given but as an act of survival and resistance. In doing so, they unsettle dominant frameworks and push us toward more inclusive and justice-oriented understandings of migration and belonging.

### ***Critical Reflections and Gaps***

Despite a growing body of scholarship on migration and displacement, significant gaps remain in how these phenomena are conceptualized, researched, and addressed—particularly when it comes to marginalized populations. Critical reflection reveals that dominant migration discourses often erase the complexities of caste, gender, sexuality, indigeneity, and religious identity, treating migrants as a homogenous group and displacement as an economic or administrative issue. This flattening of experience contributes to policies and academic narratives that fail to capture the lived realities of those at the margins.

One of the most pressing issues is the epistemological bias in migration studies. Much of the literature continues to privilege economic or geopolitical frameworks, focusing on labor migration, remittances, or state security (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2013). Such approaches tend to overlook the socio-cultural and affective dimensions of migration—particularly the experiences of Dalit, Adivasi, and queer migrants whose movements are not always captured by official data or categorized as "forced migration" in legal terms (Rao, 2010; Samaddar, 2003). As a result, their displacement is rendered invisible within both academic research and policy interventions.

Another gap lies in the limited engagement with intersectionality in migration research. While caste, class, and gender are occasionally mentioned as factors, few studies systematically analyze how these axes of identity intersect to shape differentiated migration experiences (Crenshaw, 1991; Guru, 2009). For example, Dalit women who migrate for domestic work experience a unique form of triple marginalization—caste discrimination, gendered exploitation, and class-based precarity—which requires nuanced methodological approaches and ethical attentiveness (Neetha, 2009). Yet, mainstream research often treats such experiences as peripheral.

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Further, there is a noticeable lack of participatory and narrative-based methodologies in the study of marginalized migration. Quantitative and policy-oriented research tends to dominate, leading to the exclusion of oral histories, testimonies, and cultural expressions as legitimate sources of knowledge (Das, 2007; Satyanarayana & Tharu, 2013). This epistemic exclusion perpetuates a top-down perspective, wherein the voices of the displaced are mediated through institutional lenses rather than centered as primary sites of meaning-making and resistance.

Lastly, there is a critical gap in theorizing alternative imaginaries of belonging. Migration studies often frame belonging in terms of integration, citizenship, or return, thereby reinforcing nation-state logics. However, marginalized migrants frequently create non-state, relational forms of community and belonging—through kinship, faith, resistance, or cultural memory—which are rarely recognized as legitimate (Chatterjee, 2004; Spivak, 1988). This calls for a rethinking of foundational concepts such as home, nation, identity, and borders.

A critical examination of current migration scholarship reveals both theoretical and methodological limitations in addressing the complex realities of marginalized displacement. To move toward a more just and inclusive understanding of migration, researchers must foreground subaltern narratives, embrace intersectional analysis, and engage with non-hegemonic forms of knowledge. This shift is not merely academic—it is essential for informing ethical and effective responses to the global crises of displacement and identity.

### CONCLUSION

The exploration of migration, displacement, and identity through the lens of marginality reveals a complex tapestry of structural violence, survival, and resistance. Dominant frameworks in migration discourse often obscure the specific and layered experiences of those at the margins—Dalits, Adivasis, women, religious minorities, queer communities, and refugees. This research has attempted to foreground their stories, not as footnotes to broader migration narratives, but as central to understanding the socio-political realities of displacement in India and beyond.

By situating migration within the contexts of caste, gender, indigeneity, and state power, we see that displacement is not merely a physical relocation but a dislocation of identity, belonging, and citizenship. These processes are mediated through legal regimes, urban policies, labor exploitation, and cultural erasure, all of which disproportionately impact marginalized groups. Yet, as the narratives demonstrate, marginality is not a passive condition. It is a site of resistance, creativity, and collective struggle. Migrants reclaim space through everyday acts, redefine belonging through community and memory, and assert identity in defiance of exclusionary norms.

Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of alternative epistemologies—oral histories, life narratives, cultural expressions—as legitimate sources of knowledge. These offer not only insight into lived experiences but also challenge dominant notions of what constitutes home, identity, and mobility. The inclusion of such voices is not just a methodological choice but an ethical imperative in reimagining migration scholarship and policy.

As the global crisis of displacement deepens due to conflict, climate change, and economic inequality, the need for intersectional, justice-centered approaches becomes increasingly urgent. Future research must build on the narratives and frameworks presented here to advocate for inclusive policies, community-driven solutions, and transformative

understandings of migration. Only by centering the margins can we move toward a more equitable and empathetic engagement with the realities of migration and belonging.

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