

Displacement and Development: Long Term Impacts of the Partition of India

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Abstract

The partition of British India in 1947 resulted in one of the largest and most rapid migrations in human history. This paper examines how areas affected by the partition fare in the long run. Using migrant presence as a proxy for the intensity of the impact of the partition, and district level data on agricultural output between 1911-2009, we find that areas that received more migrants have higher average yields, are more likely to take up high yielding varieties (HYV) of seeds, and are more likely to use agricultural technologies. These correlations are more pronounced after the Green Revolution in India. Using pre-partition data, we show that migrant placement is uncorrelated with soil conditions, agricultural infrastructure, and agricultural yields prior to 1947; hence, the effects are not solely explained by selective migration into districts with a higher potential for agricultural development. Migrants moving to India were more educated than both the natives who stayed and the migrants who moved out. Given the positive association of education with the adoption of high yielding varieties of seeds we highlight the presence of educated migrants during the timing of the Green Revolution as a potential pathway for the observed effects.

Speaker Profile

<https://economics.ucsd.edu/faculty-and-research/faculty-profiles/bharadwaj.html>