

What is the scale of displacement in Himachal Pradesh?

Himachal Pradesh is home to approximately 10,000 'environmental refugees'. They are spread across the state in clusters of temporary shelters, located on main highways and on the outskirts of the towns and cities. Most have been living in this situation for over 20 years - they have too little with which to build a more stable life. New families arrive each year, and settlements are swelling, as with ever-decreasing prospects in the home region, temporary living conditions in Himachal provide a preferential option.

Settlements are located primarily in the southern districts of the state. The north has too harsh a climate and with no major urban settlements, job prospects are too few. The southern districts of Bilaspur, Hamirpur and Mandi have the most prospects, with major highways and new developments that offer construction and labour work. Kangra, being the most populous district however, has the largest number of settlements, with major communities from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Many displaced people continue to be evicted from sites across the state, and so locations are constantly shifting. This makes recognition of the status and needs of such communities difficult. However, Tong-Len has mapped the locations and characteristics of 19 existing settlements, and knows of the presence of a further 20-25 in Kangra District. Listed on this factsheet are summaries of the communities currently resident in the districts of Himachal Pradesh.

Rajasthani Settlements

Families from Rajasthan make up the largest proportion of the displaced groups in the state. They can be found in 13 different settlements, 7 of which are in District Kangra. Their total population numbers approximately 3800-4500. By estimating the demographic makeup of this number using known data from one settlement, we can assume that almost half of this group is under the age of 16. The vast majority of this youth group do not go to school, but work in the same professions as their parents from an early age.

There are two distinct groups of Rajasthanis. Approximately 1/3rd come from the district of Hanuman Garh in northern Rajasthan; the remaining 2/3rds come from districts around the cities of Nagaur and Jodhpur in the centre of the state. The former work in small informal trades - the men predominantly repair shoes and leatherware, whilst the women and children collect and sell dry waste. This work is irregular and insecure, and many migrate between different towns, following festival crowds. Those from central Rajasthan work exclusively in the construction sector. They tend to be more organised, and undertake formal contracts with private agencies and with the Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department. Still, however, this is seasonal, and many struggle to find work during the monsoon season.

Uttari Settlements

Within the Kangra Valley, there are an estimated 20-25 small settlements of people from eastern Uttar Pradesh. From information collected in 2 clusters, we know that many of these families were displaced through flooding in their home regions, and received no assistance from their government. For this reason, they came to Himachal Pradesh to start new lives. Extended families share shelters, with 7-8 people living together, having a total population of approximately 2900. They live in industrial areas and transport hubs, often away from the town centres, where they can make a living from rubbish collection and begging. They are extremely poor, and have no assets. They do not migrate - they have nowhere to go.

Other Settlements

There are other groups also resident in the state, although it is difficult to locate and collect information about them. In Dharamsala, there is one group of *Maharashtri* families, numbering 132. They came here because of the opportunities available from the large tourist influx that comes for the Tibetan diaspora. Sharing a settlement with Rajasthanis in the region, they remain separate, and suffer from serious social problems, particularly alcoholism. The only income comes from the women and children begging amongst the tourists.

In Hamirpur, there is a settlement of over 150 *Orissan* migrants. They came over 20 years ago having lost all their land in Orissa through corruption. They work in construction and shoe repair, and like others suffer from discrimination - they have faced eviction on numerous occasions.

Known Locations

	Pop.	Home Region
<u>District Kangra</u>		
Dharamsala	633	Rajasthan
	95	Maharashtra
	23	Uttar Pradesh
Palumpur	702	Rajasthan
	252	Uttar Pradesh
Maranda	132	Rajasthan
Paraur	78	Rajasthan
Nagrota Bhagwan area	2816	Uttar Pradesh
	31	Rajasthan
Sunehar	128	Uttar Pradesh
Icchi	126	Rajasthan
<u>District Hamirpur</u>		
Hamirpur	498	Rajasthan
	160	Orissa
Nadaun	840	Rajasthan
<u>District Bilaspur</u>		
Bilaspur	62	Rajasthan
	228	West Bengal
<u>District Mandi</u>		
Mandi	300	Rajasthan
<u>District Kullu</u>		
Manali	unknown	Rajasthan
Kullu	unknown	Rajasthan
<u>District Una</u>		
Una	unknown	Rajasthan

All figures apart from those of Dharamsala are estimates, based upon an average household size of 5.6, as observed in Dharamsala.