



Academics condemn TISS migration study for bias, flawed methods, and ethical violations

They term the study on “illegal immigrants” to Mumbai a “calculated act of political interference”.

Published : Nov 20, 2024 12:51 IST - 5 MINS READ

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People wait for a suburban local train at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in May 2024. The TISS study titled “Illegal Immigrants to Mumbai” makes sweeping claims about Muslim migrants in Mumbai, a city of 22 million people, and academics say that the data is riddled with inconsistencies. | Photo Credit: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Over 500 academics, researchers, and public intellectuals have issued a sharp rebuke of a migration study by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), condemning it as “a deliberate attempt to polarise the electorate, vilify marginalised communities, and incite violence against migrants in Mumbai”. The statement, released on November 19, 2024, targets the study “Illegal Immigrants to Mumbai: Analysing Socio-economic and Political Consequences”.

The statement has drawn support from a broad coalition of prominent voices across academia, media, arts, and civil society. Among the over 500 signatories are renowned economists like Jayati Ghosh and political scientist Zoya Hasan. Journalists and writers including Geeta Seshu, Ziya Us Salam of *The Hindu*, and economist Ritu Dewan have endorsed the statement, which has got support from leading activists and public intellectuals such as Harsh Mander, human rights activist Cedric Prakash, and Henri Tiphagne of People's Watch. Artists and cultural figures including filmmaker Anand Patwardhan, performer Danish Husain, and artist and curator Riyas Komu have joined the cause, alongside public health experts and social scientists like Sarojini N., sociologist Ravi Duggal, and former JNU professor Mohan Rao.

The signatories argue that the timing and presentation of the study's findings reflect political motives rather than academic integrity. "The release of this incomplete and heavily biased interim report of an unethical "study", coinciding strategically with Maharashtra Assembly elections, is not an academic exercise but a calculated act of political interference," the statement declares. "Such conduct from academics is a betrayal of the foundational ethics of teaching and scholarship."

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/news/tiss-study-controversy-illegal-immigrants-mumbai-targeting-muslims-academics-rebuttal/article68889014.ece>