

## General Studies-1; Topic– Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

### State of Internal Migration in India

#### 1) Introduction

- The Economic Survey 2017 has brought in new evidence to indicate that Indians are much more mobile than it was generally believed.
- There seems to have been an upsurge in mobility for economic reasons in the recent decade across states.

#### 2) Present Status

- With income from agriculture falling and being increasingly unreliable, there is massive outflow of labour.
- Internal migration – movement within national boundaries – is far greater than movement beyond the shores.
- According to 2011 Census, the total number of internal migrants in the country is 139 million.
- Internal migrants, especially the poor, face roadblocks in their own countries even though they are legitimate citizens.
- Migrant workers are mostly in informal employment across several sectors and industries.
- Between 2011 and 2016, close to nine million people migrated between states annually, up from about 3.3 million according to successive censuses.
- India is projected to add 404 million people to its urban population between 2014 and 2050.

#### 3) Positive Effects

- Labour mobility has a positive effect on the economy because they are engaged in the construction industry, domestic work, textiles, mines and quarries, agriculture, food processing and the hotel and restaurant business.
- The rising contribution of cities to India's GDP would not be possible without migration and migrant workers.
- Migrants also take their skills and knowledge back with them, generally called 'social remittances'.
- The backbone of the Green Revolution in Punjab was actually migrant labour.
- With rising incomes, migrant remittances also encourage investment in human capital formation.
- Migration may provide an opportunity to escape caste divisions and restrictive social norms.
- Migrants may return with renewed social attitudes and act as a channel of knowledge.
- Migration and inter-cultural dialogue between populations bring in new ideas, energy, and diversity to urban spaces.

#### 4) Government Efforts

- Kerala is the only state in India with a scheme which treats migrant welfare as the 'duty of the state'.
- It offers financial support for the medical treatment of migrants, grants for their children's education in the state and also provides retirement benefits to those who have completed five years under the scheme.
- Karnataka ensures that all migrant pregnant women, lactating mothers and young children get nutrition benefits under the Mathru Poorna scheme.

### 5) Negative Effects

- Internal migration has created a demographic divide among states.
- Unplanned migration and urbanisation can also create serious development challenges.
- The problem is multiplied in cases where there is a high level of segregation between the migrants and the host community.
- There are examples where conflicts between the two have turned violent.
- The host states are increasingly under pressure to keep up with the needs of the incoming migrants.
- The source states suffer from outflow of human capital.
- People's ration cards are invalid in their destinations of work.
- So a migrant family will lose out on their rations in their new homes and purchase food in the open market.
- This significantly increases their cost of living and reduces the additional earnings they might hope to remit to their families.
- A migrant's family may also lose out on schooling and health.
- Many smart city proposals identify slums as a "threat" to the city in their "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis while totally failing to account for migrant labour in the schemes.
- Women migrants are victims of gender-based violence, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.

### 6) Concerns / Challenges

- They have little organised space to voice their grievances or articulate complaints.
- A large number of migrant labourers' shelter and work are deemed "illegal" within Indian cities.
- Sometimes these labourers are exploited, required to work below subsistence levels, and reside in subhuman conditions.
- Inter-State migrants votes do not count in the destination city, so politically they are of less importance.
- Internal migration still receives far less attention from governments, researchers, and international organisations.
- There exists a serious data gap on the extent, nature and magnitude of internal migration.
- Internal migrants face numerous constraints, including lack of political representation; inadequate housing and lack of formal residency rights.

### 7) Way Forward

- India must safeguard the rights of internal migrants.
- The central government must now take note of mobility and make social and political rights portable.
- This means people should not lose the rights they have in their localities of origin when they move; and share in the same rights as held by others in their destination areas.
- The state's role in ensuring equality, basic dignity, livelihood and providing minimum social security must be upheld.
- Fill knowledge and research gaps to enable evidence-based policy making.
- Promote public-private partnerships (PPP) for the promotion of safe internal migration.
- The need of the hour is for the government to consider the needs of this section of the economy and design special assistance for them.