



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

India's Falling Internal Migration Trends

Introduction

- **Internal migration is a critical socio-economic phenomenon in India**, impacting both the source and destination regions significantly.
- A study by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) highlights a **declining trend in internal migration over recent years**.

Key Findings from the Study

- **Migration rate has dropped** from 37.64% of the population in 2011 to 28.88% in 2023.
- The current estimated number of internal migrants is about 400 million.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic caused a massive reverse migration as workers returned to their home states.**
- Although many have resumed working in destination states, migration levels are yet to recover to pre-pandemic numbers.
- Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal account for 48% of outbound migrants.
- Karnataka is a major destination state, while West Bengal and Rajasthan have emerged as new hubs for migrants.

Reasons for Decline in Internal Migration

- **Enhanced economic opportunities and better availability of services in home states.**
- **Government initiatives such as local job schemes** and development programs have reduced the need for outward migration.
- Migrants are increasingly weighing the economic and social benefits of staying closer to home.
- The pandemic highlighted vulnerabilities and risks associated with migration, prompting many to seek stability in their home regions.

- While migrants occasionally face hostility in host cities, this is not a significant deterrent. However, such challenges contribute to the complexities of migration.

Role of Migrants in Host Economies

- Migrants play a vital role in supporting businesses, agriculture, and other sectors in destination states.
- They are indispensable in providing services and sustaining urban economies.
- There is growing awareness of the importance of migrant workers among host states, reinforcing their necessity in local economies.

Challenges Faced by Migrants

- A large segment of migrants does not receive adequate facilities or legal protections.
- Access to housing, healthcare, and social security remains a challenge.
- Migration patterns exhibit complexity, with some states acting as both sources and destinations.
- The evolving trends underscore the shifting dynamics of migration driven by socio-economic changes.

Implications of Declining Migration

- **Host states might face labour shortages** in key sectors such as construction, agriculture, and manufacturing.
- This could lead to **higher labour costs and slower project execution**, impacting economic growth.
- Reduced migration may **widen regional disparities** if not managed effectively.
- Destination states reliant on migrant labour will need to diversify their economic base and invest in skill development for local populations.
- Reduced migration may foster **stronger community ties and social stability in rural areas**.
- However, it may also **limit cultural exchange and diversity in urban settings**.

Way Forward

- States dependent on migrant labour need to prepare for potential shortfalls.
- The trend indicates a **need for balanced regional development to reduce migration pressures**.
- Policies must focus on creating sustainable opportunities in both source and destination areas.
- Comprehensive frameworks are required to address migrants' needs and ensure their welfare.
- **Governments must enhance the portability of benefits, such as ration cards and social security schemes, to support migrants in both source and destination regions.**

Conclusion

- While the reduction in migration rates highlights progress in localized development, it also signals challenges for host regions heavily reliant on migrant labour.
- Preparing for the evolving dynamics of migration will be essential to sustaining economic growth and social stability in a changing India.