Database of Migrants

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The Government has decided to create a **database of migrant workers,** including workers in the **informal economy.**

> As per the Census, India had **45.6 crore migrants in 2011** (38% of the population) compared to **31.5 crore migrants in 2001** (31% of the population).

Key Points

- **Background:**
    - The **Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979,** required all establishments who hired inter-state migrants to be **registered,** as well as all **contractors who recruited** these workers to be **licensed.**
    - Proper implementation of this law would have ensured **information on inter-state migrants** to aid the state machinery in its relief efforts.
        > However, no such **detailed records were maintained,** and information on the number of migrants was unavailable to both **central and state governments.**
    - A comprehensive database for migrant and other unorganised sector workers is seen as **necessary in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.**

- **Recent Government Initiatives to help returning migrants find livelihood:**
  - **The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** (MSDE) has launched **'Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping** (ASEEM)'** portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.
      > **Database of labour migrants** in Indian states and overseas citizens, who returned to India under the **Vande Bharat Mission** and filled **SWADES Skill Card,** has been integrated with the **ASEEM portal.**
  - The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** has developed an online dashboard called **'National Migrant Information System** (NMIS)'**
      > The online portal (NMIS) would maintain a **central repository of migrant workers** and help in speedy inter-state communication to facilitate the smooth movement of migrant workers to their native places.
  - The Maharashtra Government has launched a portal named **'Mahajobs' for job seekers and employers,** owing to the economic situation caused by Covid-19 pandemic.
  - **Atma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rozgar Abhiyan:**
      - The scheme seeks to **promote local entrepreneurship and create partnership** with industrial associations to provide **employment opportunities to 1.25 crore migrant workers** who lost their jobs during the **Covid-19 pandemic.** The state government has already mapped the skill of the workers so that they can be provided employment as per their expertise.
      - The **migrant commission announced by the Uttar Pradesh government will map skills of workers** who have returned to the state, providing data to employment exchanges.

- **Causes for Migration:**
  - Migration is a global phenomenon caused not only by economic factors but many other factors like social, political, cultural, environmental, health, education are included under the broader classification of Push and Pull factors of migration:

| Push-factors | Migrants | Pull-factors |
Countries of origin		Countries of destination
⇒ Population growth, young age structure ⇒ Inadequate educational institutions, medicare and social security	**Demographic factors and social infrastructure**	⇒ Stable population, population decline, demographic ageing ⇒ Welfare state benefits, educational institutions, medicare, social security
⇒ Unemployment, low wages ⇒ Poverty, low consumption and living standard	**Economic factors**	⇒ Labour demand, high wages ⇒ Welfare, high consumption and living standard
⇒ Dictatorships, shadow democracy, bad governance, political upheaval ⇒ Conflict, (civil) war, terrorism, human rights violation, oppression of minorities	**Political factors**	⇒ Democracy, rule of law, pluralism, political stability ⇒ Peace, security, protection of human and civil rights, protection of minorities
⇒ Ecologic disaster, desertification, lack of natural resources, water shortage, soil erosion, lack of environmental policy	**Ecological factors**	⇒ Better environment, environmental policy, protection of natural resources and environmental protection
⇒ Decisions of the family or the clan ⇒ Information flows, media,	**Migrant flows and migrant stocks**	⇒ Diaspora, ethnic community ⇒ Information flows, media, transferred picture of

  - **Push Factor:** Push factors are those that compel a person, due to different reasons, to leave a place of origin (out-migration) and migrate to some other place.
  - **Pull Factor:** Pull factors indicate the factors which attract migrants (in-migration) to an area (destination).
- **Patterns of Migration:**
  - Internal migrant flows can be **classified on the basis of origin and destination:**
    - Rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural and urban-urban.
  - Another way to classify migration is:
    - Intra-state, and inter-state.
- As of 2011, **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar** were the largest **source** of inter-state migrants while **Maharashtra and Delhi** were the largest receiver states. Around 83 lakh residents of Uttar Pradesh and 63 lakh residents of Bihar had moved either temporarily or permanently to other states.

- **Plan for the Database:**
  - The plan aims to get data from existing databases of government schemes such as **MGNREGA**, and the **one nation-one ration card** to create a **unique registration** of migrant workers.
  - Details of those working in unorganised sectors not covered by such schemes, are likely to be **added separately.**
  - **Aadhaar platform** would be used to address the problem of duplicity and ghost cards.
- **Issues:**
  - **No collection of data of intra-state migrants:**
    - The scope of the database needs to be expanded to include both sets of migrants.
  - **Discrepancy in definition of employed:**
    - The extent of migration in the country depends on the definition of employed. For example, the definitions used by the **National Sample Survey and the Census** are different.
    - A comprehensive definition needs to be worked out for employment.
  - **Technological Constraints:**
    - Merging the **existing databases** at the state level may be problematic as the **softwares and structures of data storage** may be different.
    - Aadhaar-linked databases may have security concerns.
  - **Lack of clarity over registration of workers:**
    - No **procedure of registration** yet mentioned, whether the process to register will be voluntary or by a government agency.
    - **Track over migration flows** etc has not been discussed.
  - **Portability Issue:**
    - Governments will also have to examine the issue of portability of benefits across states.

Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979

- The Act seeks to regulate the employment of inter-State migrants and their conditions of service.
- It is applicable to every establishment that employs **five or more migrant workmen from other States;** or if it had **employed five or more such workmen** on any day in the **preceding 12 months.**
- It is also **applicable to contractors** who employed a similar number of inter-State workmen.
- It envisages a system of **registration of such establishments.** The principal employer is prohibited from employing inter-State workmen **without a certificate of registration** from the relevant authority.
- The law also lays down that **every contractor who recruits workmen** from one State for deployment in another State **should obtain a licence to do so.**

Source:IE