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Support for lives on the move : Internal Migration Issues and remedies

Internal Migration and its Consequences:-

- Internal migration can be driven by push and/or pull factors.
- **Push Factor:** In India, over the recent decades, agrarian distress, poverty, unemployment and other socio economic backwardness are the major push factor and some time natural disaster, political turmoil, epidemics also forced people to migrate.
- **Pull Factor:** An increase in better-paying jobs in urban areas, better living conditions such as health and education services, security of life, stability, better recreational activity have been major pull factor for internal migration
- Data show that employment-seeking is the principal reason for migration for male population in regions without conflict. And for female principal reason for migration is marriage.

Consequences of Migration:-

- Though migration is expected to enhance consumption and lift families out of absolute poverty at the origin, it is not free from distress - distress due to unemployment or underemployment in agriculture, natural calamities, and input/output market imperfections.

Negative Consequence of Migration:-

➤ Economy Related:

- **Lack of Skill:** Migrant's lack of skills presents a major hindrance in entering the labour market.
- **Growth of Urban Informal Economy:** The modern formal urban sector has often not been able to absorb the large number of rural workers entering the urban labour market, thus create an 'urban informal' economy, which is marked by high poverty and vulnerabilities.
 - Urban Informal Economy is not a transient phenomenon but lack of policy intervention by Government.
- **Slum Development:** Overcrowding due to unregulated migration and unable to provide infrastructure with the pace of urbanisation results into development of slums in industrially developed states.
- **Other Cost:** Other cost of migrant workers include search cost of employment, hazard of being cheated (exploitation), cost of loosening state-provided (source state) health care and education system.

➤ Social and Political:

- Employment opportunities, the levels of income earned, and the working conditions in destination areas are determined by the migrant's household's social location in his or her village.

- **Labour market segmentation creates new forms of discrimination:** The division of the labour market by occupation, geography or industry (labour market segmentation), even within the urban informal labour market, confines migrants to the lower end. Often, such segmentation reinforces differences in social identity, and new forms of discrimination emerge in these sites.
- **Social Discrimination hinders the upward mobilisation of migrant labour:** There are various forms of discrimination which do not allow migrants to graduate to better-paying jobs. Migrant workers earn only two-thirds of what is earned by non-migrant workers, according to 2014 data.
- **Environmental cost:** This unplanned growth of slum development and congestion create heavy environmental pollution.
- **Social Decay and Increasing Anti-Social Activities:** Loosening of social capital as urban did not create social network like in source region which in turn result in social decay. And resulted anonymity in urban area create social vacuum and loose social conformity and in case of exploitation and a sense of dejection by urban elites increases the anti-social activities.

Positive Consequences of Internal Migration:-

- **Economic Benefit** : Internal Migration benefits both migrant and destination state by providing agglomeration of economies.

- For migrants it resulted in the increased well being of households ***in form of remittance***, especially for people with higher skills, social connections and assets.
- For migrant state, migrants play ***a vital role in greasing the wheels of growth of the state*** by providing cheap labour in SMEs in manufacturing and construction sector etc and by providing relevant skill labour force for service sector.

➤ **Social:**

- ***Diffusion in ideas*** related to technology, family planning, education etc.
- Intermixing of people from diverse culture, evolution of ***composite culture***.
- Migrants belonging to lower castes and tribes have also brought in enough income to improve the economic condition of their households in rural areas and lift them out of poverty and ***widening of mental horizon of people at large***.

Suggestion:-

- There should be **National Internal Migration Policy** which could be ***twofold***. The first kind could aim at ***reducing distress-induced migration*** and the second in ***addressing conditions of work, terms of employment and access to basic necessities***.

- Policy is needed because study shows less than 20% of urban migrants had prearranged jobs and nearly two-thirds managed to find jobs within a week of their entry into the city. So policy should focus on :
- **Increase the education levels of migrants:** The probability of moving to an urban area with a prearranged job increases with an increase in education levels.
 - **Provide Access to Information on employment before migration:** Access to information on employment availability before migrating along with social networks tend to reduce the period of unemployment significantly.
 - **Capability Approach:** Instead of Only focussing on providing work, policy should focus on enhancing the human development of migrants means enhance the capabilities of migrants that could lead to increased earnings and an eventual exit from poverty.
 - There is also a need to distinguish between policy interventions aimed at ‘migrants for survival’ and ‘migrants for employment’.
 - **Increase role of NGOs:** Local interventions by NGOs and private entrepreneurs also need to consider cultural dimensions reinforced by caste hierarchies and social consequences while targeting migrants.
 - Various interventions must complement each other.

- Policy interventions have to ***consider the push factors***, which vary across regions, and understand the heterogeneity of migrants. As remittances from migrants are increasingly becoming the lifeline of rural households, improved financial infrastructure to enable the smooth flow of remittances and their effective use require more attention from India's growing financial sector.

Way Ahead:-

- There is a lack of focussed intervention aimed at migrants. Interventions aimed at enhanced skill development would enable easier entry into the labour market, these interventions should be complemented by addressing the needs of migrants such as access to infrastructure like housing, sanitation and health care.

THANK YOU

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