Domicile Quota

What is the issue?

- Madhya Pradesh has reserved government jobs for the locals.
- By doing so, it has joined the bandwagon of States playing ‘sons of the soil’ politics.

What did the other States do?

- Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have resolved to reserve jobs in both the government and private sectors.
- Telangana has decided to reserve 80% of semi-skilled jobs and 60% of skilled jobs for locals.
- Andhra Pradesh and Haryana have decided to reserve 75% of jobs.
- Karnataka is in the process of preparing a law in this regard.

What would be the legal challenges?

- The laws passed by these States could face a legal challenge for going against Article 19 (d) and (e) of the Constitution.
- Article 19 (d) spells out that all citizens shall have the right to move freely throughout the territory of India.
- Article 19 (e) spells out that all citizens can reside or settle in any part of the territory of India.

Where did this kind of politics originate?

- This strain of parochial politics has its origins that can be traced back to the politics of the Shiv Sena in the 1960s.
- It initially targeted ‘South Indians’ for monopolising white-collar jobs and later the blue-collar workforce from northern States.
- Ironically, the Shiv Sena has of late moved away from ‘Marathi manoos’ mobilisation, while other States are playing the domicile card.
- Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have mercifully not followed up on quota promises for locals.
- Even so, such rhetoric can distort the labour market, particularly when local fringe groups create law and order complications.

What is so odd?

- Oddly enough, both the labour-supplying States as well as the receiving ones have played the domicile card.
- In the first case, the effort is to win over psychologically scarred migrants who have reverse migrated to 'home' in the wake of Covid.
- If the intent is to prevent forced migration, it should be addressed through sustained economic development initiatives.

What could be the impact of the domicile quotas?

- These quotas can raise costs and inefficiencies in labour-receiving States.
- It will also exert short-term pressure on labour-supplying States to create productive capacities.

What is the reality?

- According to the Economic Survey (2016-17), migrants account for over 20-30% of the workforce, or more than 100 million.
- Workers go to where jobs are available and labour is needed because locals are either unavailable or unwilling to do these jobs.
- Therefore, the concept of "outsiders snatching jobs from locals" is just an easy political sell - does not reflect reality.
- Shackling the individual rights of workers amounts to poor economics.
- It will also create conditions for social and economic instability.

What needs to be done?

- As for meeting the challenge of joblessness, a more inclusive, employment-centred model of growth is the need of the hour.
- An education and skilling ecosystem which produces "job-ready" workers is needed.

Source: Business Line

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