Kerala Migration Survey

Why in news?

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Kerala Migration Survey, conducted by the Centre for Development Studies, released its report recently.

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What are the findings of the report?

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- There are 2.1 million emigrants from Kerala across the world, of which 15.8 per cent are women.
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- The emigration from the state has shown a fall of 11.6 per cent in the last five years.
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- It found that there has been a reduction of 3 lakh emigrants in 2013-18, which is one-tenth of the number of emigrants in 2013.
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- The report attributes the following reasons for the dip in migration-
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- **Demography** - Demographic advances have decreased population in the migration-prone age group (15-29 years) as Kerala attained replacement level of fertility as early as 1987.
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- **Wages** - Wages in Gulf countries have not improved after the global economic crisis.
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- It has led to lower savings and demotivating people to migrate.
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- Kerala has the highest wage rate in the informal sector in India, and hence wages in Kerala have increased compared to other states.
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- **Price rise** - Prices of oil have been declining since 2010 impacting the growth of the Gulf economy.
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- Other sectors like Construction too are not as vibrant as it used to be.
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- **Nationalisation** - Policies such as Nitaqat and family taxes in Saudi Arabia provides a non-conducive environment for current and prospective migrants.
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- Increasingly, native youth are trained and employed in occupations that once went to migrants.
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- **Skilled migration** – Of the total emigrants, 42.3% are graduates or have a higher qualification.
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- Investment in education have made Keralites skilled and made them migrate to the developed economies in the West.
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- People are also increasingly migrating to the West through the Gulf.
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How emigration helped Keralites?

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- Emigration and remittances have played a predominant role in enabling households in Kerala to meet their basic needs and to invest in assets.
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- Migrants use over 40% of their remittances on purchasing land, construction and repayment of housing mortgage.
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- One in every five households in Kerala has a migrant.
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- Among religious groups, one in three households is a Muslim, one in five households is a Christian, and one in 10 households is a Hindu.
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- The estimated total remittances to Kerala are Rs 85,000 crore.
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- Remittances to the state have increased with Keralites in the Gulf climbing the social ladder and earning higher wages.
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- With depreciating rupee, more can be remitted to families in Kerala than earlier.
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- Hence, Even Non-emigrant families plan to send someone as a livelihood strategy to cope with the loss of assets and livelihoods.
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- But the trend has reversed with emigration from Kerala is falling and **return migration** is on the rise.
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- The long history of migration from Kerala to the Gulf is in its last phase.
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Where does the future lie?

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- Kerala faces **replacement migration**, which has close to 3 million migrants from other states who have replaced workers who have left for the Gulf countries.
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- Impact of recent floods may find them leaving to their home states for better opportunities.
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- This might require further migration and remittances to rebuild kerala.
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- Also, demographic pressures like ageing might affect the local economy in the future.
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- Hence, Kerala has to slowly move towards a new model from the remittance-dependent economy that it is today.
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Source: Indian Express

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