Business News > News > Politics and Nation > Rise of blue-collar workers from Uttar Pradesh in Gulf countries

04:04 PM | 11 FEB CLOSED MARKET STATS *

DID YOU KNOW? Unleash the power of SIP -Invest in Mutual funds

SPONSORED

DSP Midcap Direct Plan-Growth Class Equity

Category: Mid Cap

Pradesh in Gulf countries Over the last 10 yrs, the no. of blue-collar workers migrating to Gulf nations from Kerala

Rise of blue-collar workers from Uttar

fell by over 90%. By Ishani Duttagupta, ET Bureau | Updated: Jan 27, 2019, 10.02 AM IST Save

18 Comments







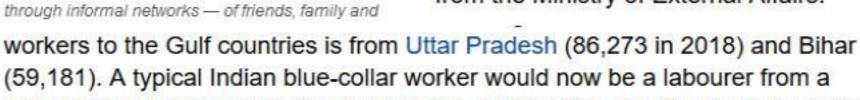
according to the latest ECR (emigration

clearance required) passport information

From Which States are They

Source: MEA, 2019

from the Ministry of External Affairs.



3,21,721 in 2018 — according to the MEA data.

Arabia and it is no longer attractive to go there," he says.

Which Middle East Countries

recruitment of rural workers is still happening largely

Despite the state government's outreach, the

village near Varanasi slogging away at the construction site of a football stadium in Qatar for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. It's not just Malayalis. The overall number of Indian workers going to the Middle East has fallen significantly over the last 10 years — from 7,62,484 in 2008 to

The MEA numbers confirm the findings of the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) in Thiruvananthapuram. Its Kerala Migration Survey, released in September last year, found an 11.6% fall in the number of workers going to Gulf countries from Kerala in 2018 over the previous year.

S Irudaya Rajan, professor, CDS, says the decline is largely due to falling wages in the Middle East after the 2008 recession. "Due to the rising wages in Kerala, most countries in the Middle East are no longer attractive for young immigrants from the state. Following the global economic downturn, the wages in the Gulf countries have fallen to as low as \$100 a month in some cases. The wage differential is insignificant between Kerala and countries like Bahrain and Saudi

Going to Gulf Countries? are Indians Going to? 2009 2009 2018 2018 Uttar 86.273 1.29.581 1.12.059 1.25.548 UAE Pradesh 72.399 50.162 59.181 2.80.991 Saudi Arabia Bihar 41.729 57.613 77.665 31.588 Tamil Nadu Kuwait 46.239 34.471 1.19.188 14.496 Kerala Qatar 36.037 Andhra 15.528 74.644 42.023 Oman Pradesh 9.142 17.381 28.648 West Bengal Bahrain *Numbers are based on emigration clearance required for passports. These would be of blue-collar workers

skills that countries like Australia and Canada demand.

Over the last decade, CDS data point out, low-skilled workers from Kerala have

Young workers from Kerala, says Rajan, are more aspirational than their

counterparts in the North and many who want to immigrate are now learning

neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Nepal. The NRI Department of Uttar Pradesh is making efforts to address the issues of

its migrant workers. "We understand that due to our demographic advantage,

Uttar Pradesh now has the highest number of workers going to the Gulf

countries," says Swati Singh, NRI minister, UP.

been replaced with workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as well as from

The government of Uttar Pradesh, through UPFC-OMRA (UP Financial Corporation-Overseas Manpower Recruitment Agency) is directly engaged in pre-departure orientation programmes that provide information on visa, emigration rules, employment contracts, customs regulations, travel formalities,

among others. It also organises skill upgrade programmes for job aspirants from courses in spoken English and communication to training in computers. The state has also launched UP NRI Grievance Redressal System, with cells at

Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Meerut, Noida and Varanasi districts. Despite the state government's outreach, the recruitment of rural workers is still happening largely through informal networks — of friends, family and local agents. Experts point out that once they reach the Middle East, working

conditions can often be miserable: they live in cramped labour camps and their passports could be confiscated by employers. There are many exceptions as well. "There are anecdotal examples of village boys from economically backward families in eastern UP who have gone to work in the construction industry in Gulf countries for a few years and have returned with a lot of money and bought property. Their families are better off and the state government is benefitting

of Development Studies in Lucknow. He adds that many youngsters are arming themselves with training and diplomas in plumbing and carpentry — skills required in the construction sector. "National data shows that employment opportunities in UP have been declining

over the last decade in both formal and informal sectors. Also, unlike Kerala, the

from remittances," says RP Mamgain, economics professor at the Giri Institute

UP government has not been able to implement higher minimum wages. Hence migration to other states and overseas is likely to become a growing trend in the coming years, especially for men in the age group of 20-50 years," says Mamgain.