

‘Migrant workforce the most deprived lot’

- Staff Reporter

Migration of the non-skilled workforce has benefited India and countries where the Indian Diaspora lives but for the migrants themselves. It has not brought much improvement rued migrants’ rights activists here on Monday.

Recounting development of economies across the globe which benefited from migrant population, mainly countries in the Middle East, they said quality healthcare, lack of income assurances and protection of their rights in a foreign country were matters of concern for the migrants.

Indian Government should use its diplomatic clout to bargain hard for the welfare of its people, said retired diplomat B.M. Vinod Kumar.

“Country of origin and the destination are equally important. That apart, migrant populations also deserve better healthcare,” said Venkat Manthana, of the American Telangana Association while speaking at a session during the All Indian Thematic Social Forum here on Monday. K.V. Swamy of the Andhra Pradesh Overseas Manpower Company of Andhra Pradesh said that migrants were responsible for \$ 250 billion remittances but their contributions are invisible. Schemes that encourage savings should be introduced, he added.

Burning issues

Later in the day, noted civil society activists discussed various burning issues in the country ranging from Bastar to Kashmir.

Tribal rights activists Soni Sori said the plight of adivasis in Chattisgarh had largely gone unnoticed and the Central Government in the garb of fighting naxalism was out to grab their lands. “Policemen, who commit crimes against women, are rewarded by the Government while tribal people are harassed under the ruse of being naxal,” she said adding that what is happening in Chattisgarh is not different from happenings in Kashmir. Blaming Pakistan for ‘mischief’ Kashmir-based journalist Bashir Manzar said that the Kashmir problem can be solved if India takes Pakistan into confidence, reaches to the Hurriyat and more importantly to the youth.

Noting division of society along lines of caste and religion, former Haryana legislator and social activist Swami Agnivesh called for greater unity among people to preserve the country’s diversity and democratic values.