

Number of migrant labourers from Odisha rise three-fold in 10 years

TNN | Dec 10, 2016, 04:51 PM IST



BHUBANESWAR: Number of migrant workers from Odisha to other states is rising steadily. Compared to 55,000 workers migrating from Odisha in 2007, 1.46 lakh left the state in 2015, government figures show.

Social activists working for welfare of the migrants said the actual number of people migrating to other states for works would be far more than the government figures because only a miniscule percentage of them get registered.

According to the government figures, 87,000 seasonal migrant workers left Odisha to other states in 2008, which rose to 1.05 lakh in 2012, 1.2 lakh in 2013 and 1.35 lakh in 2014. Maximum migrants were from the

Balangir district all these years (45000 in 2015).

Labour minister Prafull Mallik, in a written reply in the assembly, said the government has been undertaking awareness campaign in 11 migration-prone districts (Bargarh, Balangir, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Sonepur, Ganjam, Gajapati, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada and Khurda).

The government has deployed special police officers to gather intelligence about illegal migration and check them. Since voluntary migration for works is not illegal, migrants are being registered at the panchayat level to ensure they are not

exploited, the minister said. The minister, however, said it would be wrong to say that the migrants were going outside the state due to lack of job avenues in the state.

Umi Daniel, who works for welfare of migrants with a voluntary organisation, said the government figures are only small percentage of the actual volume of migration. "Most migrants don't get registered. Various estimates show highest people from Ganjam migrate for work. However, there number is very low in the government data," Daniel said.

According to the government figures, only 4966 labourers from Ganjam migrated outside the state for work.