

Strategic Recommendations to Improve International Migration Data Management Frameworks in India

January 2023



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Acknowledgment

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List of Abbreviations

ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
BOI	Bureau of Immigration
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CPV	Consular, Passport and Visa Division
ECR	Emigration Check Required
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
ICWA	Indian Council of World Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
OCI	Overseas Citizen of India
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Summary

India's diaspora is the largest in the world, counting 32 million in 2020. It is primarily distributed across the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United States of America (USA), and Saudi Arabia. More recently, migration flows have been increasingly directed towards the European Union, Japan, and Australia, among others. With more and more students applying for higher education in countries like the US, UK, and Australia, education is increasingly being seen as a route to better-paid employment in urban centres. There has been a paradigm shift in the nature, pattern, volume, and composition of migration flows.

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This dynamic nature of the country's migration patterns has also meant a need for more data-focused migration governance. A deeper understanding of the nuanced composition of the Indian workforce with a concurrent mapping of opportunities and analysis of countries where labour shortages exist is required. It would present India with opportunities to create a high-quality skilled workforce for the rest of the world and

inform international dialogue to facilitate safe and well-managed labour migration. To thus leverage the opportunity of the need for a consolidated migration database in India and the ever-evolving new terrain of global migrant corridors, this collaborative project titled "Strengthening data-informed and migrant-centred migration management frameworks in India" led by IOM India in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC)³ was conceptualized.

One of the primary objectives of the Project is to improve migration data in the country and equip the Government of India with a comprehensive and gender-sensitive Migration Data Management Strategy. Such a Migration Data Management Strategy would be vital in developing a comprehensive evidence base on migration through an improved data collection, processing and dissemination framework. The Strategy report builds on the findings and recommendations

1 Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Population of Overseas Indians, Available at: Population of Overseas Indians.

2 European Union (2021), India-EU Migration and Mobility Flows & Patterns| EU-India Cooperation & Dialogue on Migration & Mobility, Available at: ICM PD (2021). India-EU Migration and Mobility Flows and Patterns, India EU Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility.

3 The Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) was set up as part of IOM's wider response to calls for better international migration data and analysis in 2015.

outlined under the Data Needs Assessment which provided a detailed overview of the availability and utilization of statistical data on international migration from India. This report aims to strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement, by a) harmonizing existing data collection platforms; b) mobilizing industry stakeholders to share employment opportunities and skill requirements; and c) streamlining migrant support services into data collection platforms.

The report recommends a human rights-based approach to data collection, where the participation of migrant workers is actively

facilitated. Data disaggregation is emphasized in line with international human rights law prohibiting discrimination against age, sex, migratory status, health status, socio-economic status, place of residence and other factors as nationally relevant. Data privacy and protection are also highlighted. Gender is being mainstreamed in the Migration Data Management Strategy through recommendations on how to collect and analyse trends to help devise gender-responsive solutions for challenges unique to women and girls on the move.

National Migration Data Management Strategy

New mobility pathways and the evolving nature of migration patterns are raising fundamental questions and considerations worldwide, having intergenerational social, economic and political implications. These developments also led to adoption of the Global Compact for the Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in December 2018. To inform migration governance at local, national, regional and global levels, the first of the 23 objectives of the GCM is to “collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies”.

Overview

New mobility pathways and the evolving nature of migration patterns are raising fundamental questions and considerations worldwide, having intergenerational social, economic and political implications. These developments also led to adoption of the Global Compact for the Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in December 2018. To inform migration governance at local, national, regional and global levels, the first of the 23 objectives of the GCM is to “collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies”. This primacy accorded to having accurate, reliable, and comparable data across various parameters on the emerging terrain of migration patterns is further underlined in Target 10.7⁴ of the United Nations’ Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Given the emergence of India as an important country of origin, transit, and destination, its

commitment towards these guiding global migration frameworks is reflected through its ratification of the GCM, as well as a signatory of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. India has further strengthened its commitment by signing and ratifying many core UN and ILO Conventions for the protection and advancement of Indian workers.^{5 6 7}

India’s diaspora is the largest in the world, counting 32 million in 2020.⁸ It is primarily distributed across the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United States of America (USA), and Saudi Arabia. More recently, migration flows have been increasingly directed towards the European Union, Japan, and Australia, among others. With more and more students applying for higher education in countries like the US, UK, and Australia, education is increasingly being seen as a route to better-paid employment in urban centres.⁹ There has been a paradigm shift in the nature, pattern, volume,

4 10.7 facilitates orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

5 Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, India & ILO, Available at <https://labour.gov.in/lcandilasdivision/india-ilo>

6 United Nations, Human Rights Treaty Bodies, UN Treaty Body Database: India, Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/Treaty-BodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=79&Lang=EN.

7 Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, List of United Nations Conventions Protocols & Agreements India has not Signed, or Signed but not Ratified, Available at: List of United Nations Conventions Protocols & Agreements India has not Signed, or Signed but not Ratified.

8 Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Population of Overseas Indians, Available at: Population of Overseas Indians.

9 European Union (2021), India-EU Migration and Mobility Flows & Patterns| EU-India Cooperation & Dialogue on Migration & Mobility, Available at: ICM PD (2021). India-EU Migration and Mobility Flows and Patterns, India EU Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility.

and composition of migration flows. A case in point is the gradual transition in the skill set and occupational profile of Indian emigrants to the Gulf region, from blue-collar to white-collar expatriate workforce. Another salient feature of the shifting migration flow to the Gulf can be attributed to the increasing participation of women migrants.¹⁰ North Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are emerging as key emigration regions.

This dynamic nature of the country's migration patterns has also meant a need for more data-focused migration governance. A deeper understanding of the nuanced composition of the Indian workforce with a concurrent mapping of opportunities and analysis of countries where labour shortages exist is required. With extensive data on mobility volume, flow, and corridors widely available, the socio-economic and sector-specific factors ranging from the impacts of emigration from India to the integration of immigrants in the country of destination is also an imperative need. It would, thus, present India with opportunities to create a high-quality skilled workforce for the rest of the world and inform international dialogue to facilitate safe and well-managed labour migration.

To thus leverage the opportunity of the need for a consolidated migration database in India and the ever-evolving new terrain of global migrant corridors, this collaborative project titled "Strengthening data-informed and migrant-centred migration management frameworks in India" led by IOM India in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC)¹¹ was conceptualized. The primary objectives of the Project included; a) to improve migration data in the country and equip Government of India with a comprehensive and gender-sensitive Migration Data Management Strategy; b) improve access to labour migration opportunities for aspiring Indian migrants. Such

a Migration Data Management Strategy would be vital in developing a comprehensive evidence base on migration through an improved data collection, processing and dissemination framework.

The Indian Context

Evidence-based migration policies and strategies allow for comprehensive responses, such as reducing vulnerabilities, increasing access to basic services, strengthening consular protection and coordinating border management. Comprehensive and accurate migration data and statistics also allow for monitoring and evaluating government initiatives. For instance, the Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana of the Government of India aimed at enhancing the skill sets of potential emigrant workers in line with international standards to facilitate overseas employment.

Improving data on return migration would also better enable the Government of India and State governments to formulate reintegration schemes to leverage skill sets or develop sustainable business models for overseas returning citizens. Such data would align well with the current Draft Emigration Bill 2022 introduced by the Ministry of External Affairs in July 2021, which aims to address the whole of the migration cycle, including the reintegration of the returning migrants.

A compelling case in point is the Indian state of Kerala. The Kerala Migration Survey (KMS) (conducted by the Center for Development Studies) focuses exclusively on generating reliable migration data through its eight rounds of large-scale household surveys. The surveys have been expanded to cover data on remittances and the nature of their utilization and migration-induced changes in the family and society across various disaggregated groups. This data had prepared Kerala to receive large influxes of international migrant workers returning from overseas in light of the pandemic and its devastating consequences.¹²

10 Rupa, Chanda & Pralok, Gupta (2018), Indian Migration to the Gulf: Overview of Trends & Policy Initiatives by India, Gulf Research Centre (Cambridge, UK), Available at: <https://repository.iimb.ac.in/handle/2074/12591>.

11 The Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) was set up as part of IOM's wider response to calls for better international migration data and analysis in 2015.

12 S. Irudaya Rajan (2020), Migrants at a crossroads COVID-19 and challenges to migration, Migration and Development, Migration & Development, Vol. 9, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21632324.2020.1826201?journalCode=rmd20>

Data on the 2.1 million expatriate Keralites living abroad allowed the state government to prepare 2.5 lakh hospital beds and quarantine facilities for the returning expatriates in April 2020.¹³ Such a reliable and credible migration database has led the Kerala model of migration survey to be replicated today across the Indian states of Goa, Gujarat, Punjab and Tamil Nadu. The COVID-19 pandemic also provided an opportunity to reassess and reform migration policies to attune them to migrant and national interests. The Department of Non-Resident Keralite Affairs (NORKA) and its field agency NORKA-ROOTS currently implement numerous other reintegration initiatives utilizing data gathered during the KMS round of studies.

Existing data collection framework on International Migration in India

In India, three Union Ministries collect data on international migration at various points during the entire migration cycle. The Ministry of External Affairs (via its eMigrate Portal, a system that automates the current emigration process through data collection, integration of insurance systems and provision of electronic emigration clearance), the Ministry of Home Affairs (by the Bureau of Immigration and the Office of the Registrar General) and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Central Statistics Office). On the legislative front, the Government of India has enacted The Emigration Act of 1983 and most recently formulated the Draft Emigration Bill 2021 which is yet to be approved by the Parliament. The latter progressively incorporates recent developments by recognizing and regulating intermediaries, removing the emigration clearance

system, and adopting measures to address the reintegration of return migrants. Furthermore, migration is a process with a significant gender dimension. It is, therefore, crucial to understand how gender interacts with migration to facilitate evidence-based interventions. Considering gender-specific migration trends would aid a better understanding of how gender influences access to social services, economic growth, employment, capacities, risks and vulnerabilities. Consequently, data disseminated through eMigrate portal statistics do not reflect an accurate picture of women's migration trends.

The screening of available data sets and reports dealing with international migration at the national level shows that only a few studies and overviews on migration processes in India are based on statistical figures. Concretely, the Indian research community and Government bodies concerned with designing various social protection schemes use the limited available datasets. For instance, the National Sample Survey 2007/2008 (which includes a special section on international migration) and the two recent censuses conducted in 2001 and 2011 (which included some migration-related questions) are used to calculate state-wise coverage.¹⁴ Therefore, this has necessitated the institutionalization of systematic cooperation between Departments and Ministries in producing international migration statistics in India. The enclosed strategic recommendations are thus an in-depth assessment and analysis of migration data collection practices in India, and examples of data management and production of statistics related to international migration to several European, Asian, and African countries.

13 Onmanorama Staff, COVID-19 lockdown: Over 3 lakh Keralites register on Norka-Roots to return home, Onmanorama (29 April, 2020), Available at <https://www.onmanorama.com/news/kerala/2020/04/29/covid-lockdown-keralites-norka-roots-return.html>.

14 S. Irudaya Rajan, P. Sivakumar & Aditya Srinivasan (2020), The COVID-19 Pandemic and Internal Labour Migration in India: A 'Crisis of Mobility', The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, 63 (1021-1039), Available at <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41027-020-00293-8>

Methodology

The research methodology was developed in consultation with ICWA, Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), leading migration experts and practitioners. Following an initial literature review, three in-depth qualitative consultations were conducted for three days to ascertain the good practices, gaps, and needs, based on which recommendations for good migration governance, effective management and preparedness, and socioeconomic development were deduced.

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The first two-day Migration Data Consultations were conducted with MEA Departments and Sub-divisions in coordination with ICWA and GMDAC. MEA stakeholders included representatives from ICWA, eMigrate, Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK), Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), Protector of Emigrants (PoEs), MADAD, Passport Seva Project (PSP), Regional Passport Offices (RPO), Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) and the Consular Grievances Management System (MADAD).

The second Migration Data Consultation was conducted with Academics and Demographers

in coordination with IOM, ICWA and GMDAC. The third was with United Nations Agencies housed in India, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP). Further consultations were conducted with the National Skills and Development Cooperation, the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. To inform gender-inclusive recommendations, additional consultations with three subject matter experts in the field of gender and migration were consulted. Throughout the consultations with various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, it was deduced that migration data-related measures were primarily focused on certain specific migration-related aspects, namely low skilled labour migration to selected countries (such as the Emigration Check Required (ECR)¹⁵ countries), diaspora and remittances.

¹⁵ ECR passports are issued to those Indian citizens who intend to travel on an employment visa to one of the 18 listed countries. Such a passport holder will be required to procure an emigration clearance from the Protector of Emigrants (PoE), unlike for Non-ECR (ECNR) passport holders. ECR status will be printed in the passport of the applicants who fall in the ECR category. For those falling in the Non-ECR category, there will be no specific mention in the passport. For additional information, please refer here.

Recommendations

Collection of data on highly skilled workers migrating to destinations beyond the 18 Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries and low skilled workers to non-ECR countries, for instance, continue to evade the purview of migration data initiatives in India. Data on return migrants and irregular migration is also crucial to strengthen emigration data collection and management methodologies, thus informing comprehensive evidence based policymaking on international migration.

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1. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)

Based on the needs assessment of migration data management in India and with the intent to strengthen international migration data collection, management, and dissemination, the following immediate, medium and long term strategic recommendations are proposed.

1.1. Immediate: eMigrate

To regulate overseas employment, especially for the protection of blue-collared workers, the ECR process is regulated through a unique computerised system called “e-Migrate”. The system is integrated with the Ministry of External Affairs and Bureau of Immigration of the Ministry of Home Affairs,

along with the Indian Missions, Foreign Employers, and Registered Recruiting Agencies, to ensure that all stakeholders associated with the emigrants can coordinate on the same electronic platform. Whenever an emigrant arrives at the port of exit or checkpost to proceed abroad, their passport details are validated online by the Immigration Officers, and only those who have obtained Emigration Clearance are allowed to travel. Such measures ensure protection against the possible exploitation of Indian workers.

The eMigrate mandate ensures the coverage of Indian emigrants, ECR, and non-ECR passport holders. While registration for the non-ECR category is voluntary, registration requirement for ECR category passport holders is mandatory. Hence, the portal holds immense potential to carry a growing database of valuable information on skilled emigrants. On this note, the following recommendations are made to eMigrate:

A. Robust communication: Directives on the advantages of registering and incentivizing the process could stimulate voluntary and mandatory registration on eMigrate. Robust regular communication can mitigate misinformation on recruitment procedures and the costs involved. Registrations can be

linked to existing national initiatives such as the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (see National Initiative box 1), thus informing emigrants of the social security measures available to them and contributing to the overall benefits of voluntary registration. Initiating measures for an eMigrate form to be filled on the issuance of a visa or passport could help leverage data collection initiatives at the points of the source. Customized needs and gender-specific incentives for various skill sets are highly recommended.

- B. Attention on the duration of stay:** Special attention may be devoted to registering multiple stays during a particular migration cycle (residing in different countries of destination), repeated stays (returning to the same country of destination), and the related intervals within India. Therefore, delineating a set criterion on the duration of stay both within and overseas could provide the necessary clarity to categorize emigrants and returning migrants.
- C. Enhance the scope of the portal:** The potential of the eMigrate portal is remarkable. Therefore, to enhance the availability of migration statistics, there is a need to re-assess the practicality of this portal, given the constantly evolving migration realities. The following parameters to improve the availability of the data and scope of the published statistics could be considered:
1. To focus migration data collection towards utilizing the data for emigration mapping and maximizing emigration benefits. Mapping is an integral component of the administrative data collection process which can ensure essential data is available for effective policy support as recommended by the GCM objectives.
 2. Statistical databases and user dashboards support the optimal use of collected data for policymaking. The dissemination of the statistical figures could benefit from attractive visualization on eMigrate, facilitating their interpretations and correct usage. The produced statistics must be simple, clear and accompanied by relevant metadata.

National Initiative 1: Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana (PBBY)

The PBBY is a mandatory insurance scheme aimed at safeguarding the interests of Indian emigrant workers falling under Emigration Check Required (ECR) category going for overseas employment to ECR countries. The Scheme, initially launched in 2003, operates with the overarching objective of strengthening the coverage of emigrant workers. It provides an insurance cover of Rs. 10 lakhs in case of accidental death/permanent disability at an insurance premium of Rs. 275 and Rs. 375 for a period of two and three years respectively.

The revised scheme has also been made compulsory for various professions falling under work categories under Section 2(o) of Emigration Act, 1983 irrespective of the passport categories. PBBY also includes global insurance coverage irrespective of employer and location, has facility for online renewal and a simplified process for certification of accidental death/permanent disability. The scheme is now more beneficial for emigrant workers and is aimed at ensuring an expeditious settlement of claims. At present, PBBY is available to all candidates, including non-ECR passport holders. Candidates for the non-ECR category must first voluntarily register on e-Migrate and the same registration number can be used to apply for PBBY.

Source: <https://www.mea.gov.in/pbby.htm>

Presenting concrete illustrations and short statistical overviews would help interpret data and assess recent trends for the efficiency of policy decisions. The statistics on all variables relevant to migration (country of destination, duration of contract, industry) should be available distinctly for gender and age groups (single-year or five-year group).

Global Practice 1: Insurance Coverage & Other Benefits in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) the lead agency of overseas employment administration, is the primary agency dealing with foreign employment. Although SLBFE does not provide for contracts or the rights and privileges of migrant workers, the legislation under which this was created itself offers wide scope for safeguarding and improving the situation of migrant workers.

However, despite migrants being reluctant to pay the required registration fee (a minimum of SL Rs. 5,200), they are gradually realizing the benefits that come with registration, such as insurance cover. This insurance cover, the Jathika Suraksha Overseas Employment Insurance, implemented by the National Insurance Corporation Limited, provides support in the event of death, permanent and total disablement, partial disablement as a consequence of serious illness and meet transport expenses. Apart from this, Savings Certificates are awarded at a lottery held for every batch of 10,000 migrant workers who register with the SLBFE, and the certificates carry values of between Rs. 5,000 – 50,000.

Dias, M., & Jayasundere, R. (2002). Sri Lanka: Good practices to prevent women migrant workers from going into exploitative forms of labour. International Labour Office: Gender Promotion Programme.

Global Practice 2: Double Matrix Approach for India-European Union (EU) Migration

Since the 1970s, the UNECE has been producing migration matrices for its member states, with the intention to support the work of data suppliers, particularly in EU Member States, and that of Eurostat to produce reliable, harmonized and comparable data on migration and asylum in the EU. This allows for better knowledge of migration flows to the EU to compare the similarities and differences in the statistics between Member States.

For instance, the MEA data revealed that in 2019 there were 14.5 Lakh overseas Indians (NRI and PIO) in the European Union, of whom 32.64% lived in France (including its foreign territories) followed by the Netherlands (16.54%), Italy (14%), Germany (12.76%) and Portugal (5.61%). Member States like Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Estonia, Romania, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, and Malta had very few overseas Indians in 2019. MEA data also estimates a total of 5.4 Lakh NRIs in the EU in 2019, however, the total number of Indian immigrants in the EU estimated by UNDESA in the same year was 5.3 Lakh. In 2019, Italy (29.08%) had the highest share of NRIs followed by Germany (26.3%), Spain (9.05%), and the Netherlands (7.38%).

Therefore, comparing statistics between Member States would identify the problems causing and resulting from statistical differences, bearing in mind the different data collection methodologies used. This would allow for developing reliable datasets, that would help contribute to policies targeted towards needs and sensitivities related to outward migration.

Poulain, M., Perrin, N. & Singleton, A. (eds.) (2006). THESIM Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration. Presses Universitaires de Louvain

3. A special focus must be placed on the gender dimension of migration with the possibility of producing and disseminating statistical figures that might be different across the gender spectrum to cover some gender-specific domains (see section 1.3).
4. As the eMigrate portal is now open for voluntary registration for emigrants to non-ECR countries, it allows for a better understanding of the nuances of all different categories of migrants (like women and students), their vulnerabilities and migration processes. Data collection may be expanded to returning international migrants. An ad hoc survey (qualitative), possibly at border points, would help identify the need for additional variables in the continuous data collection within the eMigrate system, including on gender-sensitive topics.
5. Since eMigrate data collection is focused on emigrants, the collection of information on their returns can be done by linking records of border crossing data with eMigrate data. Therefore, coordination with the Bureau of Immigration (BOI) is necessary for developing an environment and methodology for data exchange and harmonization between these two datasets.

D. Comparing data sets: International migration flows are collected twice, by the country of departure as the number of emigrations and the country of arrival as the number of immigrants. If the two figures related to the same period differ vastly, it may be due to under-registration or differences in the criteria used. Nevertheless, comparing the figures might help improve the validity of the migration flow of Indian citizens worldwide.

For Indian emigrants, OCI's and NRI's estimates provided by the MEA should be compared with the estimates collected by their immigration counterparts on Indian citizens living in the different countries of destination. As far as emigration flows are concerned, statistical figures provided by the receiving countries may be compared with similar data produced by eMigrate in close cooperation with other Ministries dealing with border control, passport issuance and support to emigrants.

E. Academic statistical analysis: The trends and patterns emerging from the collected data may be made available for academic usage or scholarly usage to analyse the characteristics and behaviours related to outward migration from the country.

Global Practice 3: Information Portal on recognition in Germany

Reaching out to potential users (individuals and their employers) via a digital platform is a way to promote awareness and understanding of processes, outcomes, and benefits, and boost participation. The website Recognition in Germany serves as an information portal of the German Government on professional recognition for migrant workers. To boost their understanding, trust, and confidence in the process, the website has the following features to enhance user-friendliness as well as guidance and assistance on accessing the system:

- Step-by-step process of recognition for selected occupations
- Searchable via a user-friendly "Recognition Finder" function
- Success stories of skills recognition
- Hotline and counselling information
- Relevant authorities, institutions and their contact information

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_748721.pdf

1.2. Engagement with the Indian Diaspora & the Use of Big Data

Indian emigrants living abroad for at least six to nine months and having Indian citizenship are counted as Non-residential Indians (NRIs). Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders, on the other hand, are those who are (1) citizens of India at the time of, or at any time after the commencement of the

Constitution; or (2) eligible to become a citizen of India on 26 January 1950; or, (3) belonged to a territory that became part of India after. Since OCI card holders (the Indian Diaspora) do not fall into the category of emigrants, their untapped potential in socio-economic development may be significantly overlooked.

Big data¹⁶ or web-based analytics to map diaspora cannot replace traditional research methods for diaspora mappings. However, it can serve as a valuable tool to provide nuances to existing research methods and fill in the gaps and challenges observed with traditional methods. In particular, it can provide more detailed information on the following:

- Where diaspora communities are concentrated (and to what extent) within countries of destination
- The growth of diaspora communities in different countries
- Specific “waves” or trends in migration patterns

- Different characteristics and interests of the diaspora
- The extent to which they engage with the country of origin

The changing migration patterns and trends will likely be reflected in changing patterns of web traffic as well. The wide availability of data sources (e.g. website analytics, Google analytics, social media usage data, onomastic analysis, spatial or geographical data) would support different levels and types of analysis through digital data patterns. Big data can enhance a broader understanding of the diaspora to develop targeted communications strategies for strengthened diaspora engagement.

Data on the potential contributions of the diaspora is also important to better understand the foreign capital inflows (through investment, trade and tourism) made by members of the diaspora. Such data can be utilized to develop policy interventions and programmes to engage diasporas as development actors. Philanthropy can also be measured by creating a map of diaspora foundations and charities abroad.

National Initiative 2: Recognition systems for the diaspora

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) is the highest honour for overseas Indians. PBSA is initiated by the President of India as a part of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Conventions organized annually since 2003 for the Indian diaspora who has made a significant contribution in different fields.

The Convention provides a platform for the diaspora to support India in a tangible way, improve understanding of the country, build closer links between India, the diaspora communities and their country of residence, promote philanthropic and charitable work, and enable smoother transfer of skills.

<https://www.mea.gov.in/pravasi-bharatiya-samman.htm#:~:text=The%20Pravasi%20Bharatiya%20Samman%20Award,honour%20conferred%20on%20overseas%20Indians.>

¹⁶ “Big data” is a collection of data from various sources in the public domain (e.g. social media) and refers to understanding patterns in the data that can be used for various purposes such as improving market intelligence, educational research and population mapping, without involving the individual.

Global Practice 5: Examples of Diaspora Engagement

The diaspora organizations play an important role in diaspora skills transfer. For example, AFFORD (African Foundation for Development) creates pathways for members of African diasporas in Europe to return temporarily to Africa to upskill SMEs on a voluntary basis. Similarly, interventions in channelling diaspora remittances and investment towards broader community development often aid in tackling issues such as education, food security and nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, utilities, or enterprise and access to decent work.

Canadian and Australian project TRIANGLE supports migrants to maximise remittances through its Saver Asia programme, which allows users to compare the costs of remittances across money transfer operators, connecting migrants with local support agencies in host countries offering financial services and courses on insurance and financial literacy.

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1.3 Gender-Responsive Migration Data Management

As previously stated, migration is a process with a significant gender dimension. It is, therefore, crucial to understand how gender interacts with migration to facilitate evidence-based interventions. The propensity to migrate and the context of migration are often gender-specific, and a better understanding is needed of how gender influences access to social services, economic growth, employment, capacities, risks, and vulnerabilities. Concretely, it is important to include the gender dimension in the existing migration data collection since many women international migrants are not included in the currently collected statistics. Accordingly, the following recommendations aim at improving the availability of data on women international migrants. Such data should be collected during the pre-migration and migration phases.

Global Practice. 4: Use of Big Data

Governments around the world have recognized the benefits, potential, and opportunities of engaging with their diaspora populations. New tools using “big data” methods to fill in the gaps and shortcomings of traditional diaspora mapping techniques add new layers of understanding and provide actionable data and information to be used in policy development, communications strategies, and program development.

Big data analysis techniques such as web analytics and onomastic analysis are techniques piloted in Poland to map the Ukrainian diaspora and the Armenian population in the United States, respectively. Onomastic analysis is when “big data” is used to categorize personal names according to various taxonomies (such as gender, linguistic and cultural and ethnic origin).

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General considerations

- A. On a pilot basis, engaging with the local administration, primarily at the Panchayat level, in major source states/regions to collect data within its territorial purview is to be considered. Collecting data through Surveys on the intention to emigrate, particularly for women migrants, at regular intervals is the need of the hour. For this, collaboration with employment information centres and/or social workers (e.g. Anganwadi, ASHA workers) with a nuanced understanding of their localities may assist the local administration in conducting such surveys.
- B. The latter may also be leveraged to generate awareness of the benefits of voluntarily providing accurate information during such exercises and on the eMigrate portal. It will assist in capturing the constantly emerging newer realities of migration and facilitate evidence-based policy interventions with a special focus on women.

- C. The decadal Census of India can better capture gendered migration trends by including women-centric questions and modules related to migration. The Census currently infers migration data through the two fundamental Census questions that record the place of birth and current place of residence of the respondent. It may be supplemented with a separate schedule for all international migrant workers, including women. Such information may be sought to understand whether women migrants work and the sectors in which they are employed. The questionnaire may also provide options to include the realities of self-employed women or homemakers.
- D. The draft Emigration Bill 2021 under Chapter 2, entitled 'Emigration Authorities, Section (1), (2), and (3)' provides for the setting up of Emigration check posts to check and prevent contravention of the provisions of the Act. Such check posts may also be further leveraged to serve as additional data collection centers to collect gender-disaggregated data, including specific data on women emigrants.¹⁷

Pre-migration Phase

- A. Women labour migration today is highly heterogeneous, comprising workers of different skill categories in the rapidly growing sectors, including healthcare, nursing and domestic care work. Such developments have necessitated the need to equip and capacitate all processes and stakeholders in tune with the emerging challenges at the pre-migration phase, including collecting data on migration intentions to disseminate accurate information to aspiring migrants. Against this background, migration policies and practices must adopt tailored content and methodology to address and serve women-specific interests and demands.
- B. The pre-migration phase should consist of obtaining knowledge of possibilities and vulnerabilities related to migration and collecting qualitative data on migration intent

and past experiences. Focus group discussions with women migrant workers during training (such as Pre-Departure Orientation Training) will provide inputs on potential migration trends and allow for tailoring interventions to increase the awareness of potential aspiring migrant women efficiently. For this, the reformulation of existing PDOT curricula may be needed, considering the 'whole-of-the-society' approach.

- C. Ad hoc workshops involving fundamental stakeholders and returnee women migrants would be profitable. Civil society organizations, representatives of women migrants, and

Global Practice 6: Pre-departure Training (PDT) for Women Workforce in Sri Lanka

The commitment to protect migrant workers, both men and women, is embodied in two major policy initiatives, namely the registration of all migrant workers at the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) and the licensing of recruitment agencies in terms of the SLBFE Act, as well as in the formulation of model contracts and the negotiation of minimum wages.

Pre-departure training was made compulsory for female migrant workers, particularly for domestic workers and a training certificate became a mandatory requirement for registration with the SLBFE. The training was designed by needs required by women such as basic knowledge in language, pre-migration arrangements, financial management, including information on banking and savings, childcare and health as well as strategies to overcome disorientation

Dias, M., & Jayasundere, R. (2002). Sri Lanka: Good practices to prevent women migrant workers from going into exploitative forms of labour. International Labour Office: Gender Promotion Programme.

¹⁷ Further consultations with civil society organizations, representatives of women migrants, and academicians are required to chart methodologies for disaggregated data collection (quantitative and qualitative) at such check points.

to core values, emotional pressure, loneliness, culture shock, anxiety, and psychological breakdown and re-integration.

In India, PDOTs specifically tailored for women migrants are readily available as well. Therefore, conducting regular focus-group discussions with returning women migrants can further inform on the evolving nuance and needs, crucial for women aspiring to migrate overseas for employment.

academicians with field experience may be leveraged during such consultations to serve as intermediaries capable of transforming the knowledge and experience of women migrants into methodologies.

- D. Also, involving returnee women migrants as a part of the consultative methodological process will help the government reach out and rebuild trust and credibility as a facilitator of safe, legal, and regular migration. It will also help leverage the immense information and first-hand understanding of migration processes. Based on this, pre-departure information and training on social and working conditions abroad, life and medical insurance, as well as basic language training, thus ensuring a smooth transition of the women migrant workers and members of their families to the country of employment.
- E. There is a crucial need for decentralized awareness generation in India. The draft Emigration Bill 2022 encourages the establishment of Emigrants Welfare Committees at Indian Embassies and Consulates. However, there is also a need to extend such a measure to source regions in India. Migrant Resource Centres in the source regions may be established to address migration concerns, including misinformation

about recruitment and overseas employment. Such a shift in the geographical focus will ensure that all necessary information reaches the most vulnerable populace. On the other hand, it would also facilitate the collection of data, particularly on international migration trends and experiences and unethical and irregular recruitment practices.

- F. The recent provision in Section 17, (x) of the Draft Emigration Bill 2022 allows for a network of sub-agents to operate in different parts of the country. To ensure due diligence is applied to its operating standards, formal agreements between recruitment agencies and their sub-agents may be enforced to address unethical and irregular recruitment practices. It may lead aspiring migrants, specifically women, to gain trust and confidence in authorized public sector agencies, particularly when sharing information.

At the time of migration

Article 7 of the International Convention on the Protection of Rights of all Migrant Workers mandates member states to respect and ensure the rights of migrant workers and their families. In this perspective, any well-targeted intervention necessitates a holistic understanding of the migration process. There is a need to see the process of migration as a social process as well. It entails acknowledging the involvement and role played by communities, kinship ties, and other social networks. It will help explain why migration takes place in some regions more than in others (for example, women are seen migrating from certain sections of Andhra Pradesh versus no women migration observed from states like Uttar Pradesh).

Qualitative surveys¹⁸ may be conducted in source states/regions for a nuanced sociological understanding of the statistical data. Such data will facilitate a better understanding of women's migration process, which, in turn, may facilitate more responsive policy provisions considering the region-specific realities.

¹⁸ Such surveys may be formulated to capture the reasons underlying migration from some regions and communities and not others. For example, why is there a strong geographical cluster of women migrants in specific regions of Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu but not in other parts of the country? Evidence shows these source regions have a history of women's migration and strong network and connection with destination countries. Such movements have progressed independent of governmental policies and interventions.

Global Practice 7: Frameworks and special channels for the protection of Filipino female migrant workers

Through instruments including Bilateral Labour Agreements and Memorandum of Understandings with major labour-receiving countries, the Philippines has provided a considerable measure of protection to migrant workers at work sites. As a general rule, the Philippine Government enters into bilateral labour agreements based on the Framework of protection for migrant workers. However, negotiations under such agreements are met with obstacles such as wage theft. Under such situations, the Philippines Government establishes a special communication channel between the Philippines embassy and the relevant Ministries at the country of destination. An example would be one such channel established between the Philippine Embassy and the Ministry of Manpower in Singapore for Filipino domestic workers.

For instance, through the domestic legislative frameworks, there is a recognition of the specific vulnerabilities of female migrants and calls for policies that apply gender-sensitive criteria in the formulation and implementation of programmes and bodies tasked with the welfare of migrant workers. There is also a provision that ensures at least one-woman migrant worker has a seat on the Boards of the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to accommodate the vulnerabilities and needs of female migrant workers.

Villalba. C. Philippines: good practices for the protection of filipino women migrant workers in vulnerable jobs. International Labour Office: Gender Promotion Programme.

1.4. Medium term: Consular, Passport and Visa (CPV) Division

The CPV Division manages several databases concerning the consular matter, visa and passport issuances and registration of OCIs. Linking these databases with other administrative databases for producing aggregated statistical data related to international migration is strongly recommended. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) support under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation would be highly beneficial in this case.

The linkage of various administrative databases at an individual level may help produce meaningful statistical figures for policy support. Additionally, the linkage between the issuance or re-issuance of passports, registration of OCIs, and other data collected by consulates and embassies worldwide will help analyze emigration trends and characteristics of the diaspora at an individual level.

1.5. Long term: National Migration Data Management

Establishing a high powered inter-ministerial agency or Secretaries Committee, which may include the Ministry for External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship to conduct bi-annual meetings with the following mandates:

- To initiate and facilitate collaboration between all relevant authorities to ensure coverage and production of the most valuable and accurate international migration data. This collaboration would include creating the prerequisites for possible data linkage from various administrative sources so that all the collated data would be used as effectively as possible.
- Establish a statistical commission (representatives from state governments, statistics specialists, migration experts, and academic institutions) and topic-focused

task forces to facilitate cooperation and develop methodologies for data collection (including set variables, definitions, metadata descriptions, and strategy for publication).

- Gather and harmonize data (aggregated or disaggregated) collected by various ministries and authorities for centralized dissemination of national statistics.
- A sub-group could be organized to streamline definitions and guide data analysis and projections in international migration. Furthermore, the analysis could support the development of data-related guidelines to equip relevant ministries and structures with approaches to data management.
- Additionally, a sub-committee could be established to develop and promote a national strategy for data collection and statistics on all matters of international migration as a tool to inform policy development.

1.6. Additional considerations on migration data management for the MEA

1. **Internal and international migrations:** These are not distinct phenomena to be studied separately as many migrants start their migration with an internal move followed by international emigration. There is a clear distinction made in the administrative apparatus between international and internal migrants, while the two types of migrations are closely linked.
2. **State-specific repository:** Through think tanks, institutions and migration-relevant international organizations, the MEA can promote in-depth qualitative and quantitative studies in high migration districts identified via the e-Migrate database. Furthermore, such agencies would also be aptly placed to facilitate the creation of a state-specific repository of academic scholars specializing in migration and integration studies which may be expanded to developing a portal for civil society organizations. Such portals would support international migrants, particularly by informing them on trends related to the geography of mobilities, the complexity of migration processes, diaspora, migration-related diversity, gender, health, and social dimensions.
3. **Data Protection:** When collecting data about any individual or group, including diaspora members, strict data protection principles must be applied. Data protection is paramount for the safe exchange, secure storage, and confidential treatment of personal data.
4. **Token Issuance system:** Indian migrants (including students) intending to go abroad may be mandated to seek an online token before submitting their visa application. The system would provide more accurate information to the MEA on the number of Indian students globally. The information may also assist the respective Indian Diplomatic Missions match their database with the information obtained through the token issuance process.
5. **Policy inclusion:** In the Draft Emigration Bill 2021, the need for statistical data and better access to administrative databases to elaborate international migration statistics could be incorporated. Therefore, stronger cooperation between various ministries is needed.
6. **eGate:** An important aspect is that the data linkage at border control is on an individual basis. The eGate system linked with the eMigrate system will help limit the burden of capturing the flow at border crossings, allowing for a more digitalized and comprehensive management of migration statistics.

Global Practice 8: Smart Borders

The increased influx of migrants into several European Union (EU) Member States since 2015 has driven the technologization and digitalization of border security. In addition to GPS and satellite-assisted surveillance of “pre-frontier” areas, the use of passport readers, biometrics for identity verification, automated processes and monitoring of flows of people through automated border control (ABC) has mainstreamed border security including large-scale data management in cyberspace.

A key process in this is the “Smart Borders” policy the European Commission introduced in 2011. It seeks to better secure the Union’s external borders and streamline border-crossing by relying increasingly on automated information sharing and self-service. This includes the legislative proposal of a common entry/exit system (EES) for third-country nationals and corresponding amendments to the Schengen Borders Code, and concomitant suggestions for further technologization.

This facilitated the harmonization of ABC processes and gates in the EU not only for cost efficiency and security but also due to their usefulness in the European integration process. However, there is a caution of restricting the use of data for other purposes and informing passengers transparently and efficiently of the use made of their personal data.

Lehtonen, P., & Aalto, P. (2017). Smart and secure borders through automated border control systems in the EU? The views of political stakeholders in the Member

2. Ministry of Home Affairs

Within the Ministry of Home Affairs, several departments are responsible for data collection related to the administrative registration of the population with their usual residence in India (internal migrants) and arriving international migrants (returning migrants). The Ministry oversees population registration (through the National Population Register and issuance of ID cards), population account (through censuses), and population change (through the registration of vital statistics and border control). Considering this pivotal position of the Ministry within the international migration framework, the following are recommended:

1. **Mainstream international migration:** While migration is an important demographic aspect, data collection, management, and the subsequent production of statistics, are currently limited. Mainstreaming international migration-related data collection in various departments should be part of the strategic development aiming at improving international migration-related statistics management.
2. **Leverage channels to populate data:** The Ministry of Home Affairs is best placed to obtain and regulate most data on population and movement in the country (according to the current mandates of the Ministry and its different departments on Population and Migration-related data management in India). It may leverage its channels to collect administrative records and census enumeration data and publish regular and annual flow statistics on migration.
3. **Harmonizing data from different departments:** For the most effective use of all existing data sources, enhancing the coordination and activities with relevant MHA departments managing administrative databases that include migration-related data may be prudent. It would allow for identifying the most suitable sources and producing essential migration flow statistics based on administrative records.

4. **Harmonizing data from different ministries:** Enhancing coordination with other ministries working on international migration is crucial for centralized disaggregation and disseminating international migration statistics.

2.1. Office of the Registrar General and Census Commission

In preparation for the next Census and considering the intention to present it digitally, the following additions could be included in the data collection in the subsequent census and any other inter-censal statistical data collection activity:

- A. Providing clear definitions of the migration-related indicators in line with international statistical recommendations.
- B. People living outside the country for six months or more, even if they expressed their intentions to come back to India, should be excluded (persons being abroad for less than six months should be included in their household of origin but identified as temporarily absent).

2.2. Bureau of Immigration

Efforts may be made to strengthen a deeper understanding of the volume and flow of international migration. Capacity development activities could be conducted to enhance technical knowledge related to international migration data management.

The Border police at Immigration Check Posts play a crucial role in identifying international migrants when registering all entries and exits while monitoring the visas and passports of emigrating individuals. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- A. The development of border control databases is essential to produce statistics on arrivals and departures based on the essential socio-demographic characteristics of travellers and by identifying the origin of travellers and the duration of stay in or outside India.
- C. It can be accomplished through close cooperation of the Office of Registrar General, Census Commission, and the Bureau

of Immigration, wherein the harmonization of their respective databases can contribute to the production and delivery of migration flows of both foreigners and Indian nationals based on the collected data.

Data on the **last arrival from abroad** (a foreign country) including **year and time of last arrival and country of previous residence** for both foreign immigrants and returning Indian emigrants. This question is important to distinguish between internal and international migrants, as this cannot be ensured when the question on the last place of usual residence is only asked.

Data on the **place of usual residence one or five years ago** (inside India or abroad), or/and **at the previous census**. This question is simpler and more useful for population forecasting. The five years' question may be more appropriate as many low-skilled workers migrate for two or more years for every cycle.

The Migration module of the Census could be improved by considering the **last three cycles of migration**, capturing more than one reason for migration etc.

3. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Central Statistics Office

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) is the key institution to produce and disseminate international migration statistics. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- A. CSO should aim to produce all statistical figures recommended at the international level in international migration.

- B. Since some of these statistical figures might be obtained by processing the data from various administrative databases, CSO should initiate and enhance cooperation with the different institutions managing these databases. Specifically, with the MHA and its Office of the Registrar General and Census Commission to plan and coordinate data collection and statistical processing, as recommended above in 3.1.
- C. The CSO should participate actively in the inter-ministerial committee recommended above to help identify the role of each Ministry in producing all data related to international migration requested by Indian policymakers, academics, and international organizations
- D. Concerning the statistical tools currently developed by the CSO and, more specifically, sample surveys, it is recommended to add an ad hoc migration module on an annual basis either to the Labour force survey or to any other Household sample survey. The sample surveys should represent people having migration experiences and include people of foreign (non-Indian) origin who have been living in India for at least six months at the time of the survey (applying the definition of the usual place of residence). Thus, the population coverage and definitions used for the sample surveys and census enumeration should be harmonized.- The following key points and questions related to the migration background may be considered in the questionnaire of the survey:

For the person interviewed:

- country of citizenship (if not India), plus status OCI if has Indian origin but foreign citizenship
- country of birth
- country of previous/last residence abroad
- year/time of last arrival from another country after living abroad / being away from India for at least 6 months or duration of living in India after arrival from abroad
- reason for changing residence from abroad to India
- duration of residence abroad if person returned to India (Indian-born or

For the household:

- Data on the household members who left abroad during the year before survey - basic demographic data, duration of being away/time of emigration, reason, country of current residence.

- E. The inclusion of additional questions related to international migration in existing surveys may help produce and update some important statistical figures related to emigration. The proportion of households having a close member living abroad varies across states. Including questions on members living abroad in surveys may help understand the nuances between the States and provide data on nationwide trends. The purview of this survey may be further extended to include information on household remittances which will provide a much-needed economic dimension to measure development.

Summary of the Key Recommendations

A. Robust communication: Directives on the advantages of registering and incentivizing the process could stimulate voluntary and mandatory registration on eMigrate.

B. Attention on the duration of stay: Register multiple stays during a particular migration cycle, repeated stays, and the related intervals within India to categorize emigrants and returning migrants.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)

1.1. Immediate: eMigrate

- A. **Robust communication:** Directives on the advantages of registering and incentivizing the process could stimulate voluntary and mandatory registration on eMigrate.
- B. **Attention on the duration of stay:** Register multiple stays during a particular migration cycle, repeated stays, and the related intervals within India to categorize emigrants and returning migrants.
- C. **Enhance the scope of the portal:** The following parameters to improve the availability of data and scope of the published statistics could be considered:
1. To focus migration data collection towards utilizing the data for emigration mapping and maximizing emigration benefits.
 2. Statistical databases and user dashboards can benefit from simple, clear, concrete, engaging visualization and illustrations, short statistical overviews, and relevant metadata.
 3. The statistics on all variables relevant to migration should be available distinctly for both gender and age groups (single or five-year group).
 4. A special focus needs to be placed on the gender dimension of migration to cover some gender-specific domains.
 5. Expand the scope of the portal to understand better the nuances of all different categories of migrants, their vulnerabilities, and migration processes, including returning international migrants.
 6. An ad hoc survey (qualitative), possibly at the border points, would help identify the need for additional variables in the continuous data collection within the eMigrate system, including on gender-sensitive topics.
 7. Linking records of border crossing data with eMigrate data to collect information on returning migrants.
- D. **Comparing data sets:** Comparing migration flow data between the country of departure as the number of emigrations and the country of arrival as the number of immigrations would

help improve the validity of the emigration flow of Indian citizens worldwide.

- E. **Academic statistical analysis:** The trends and patterns emerging from the collected data may be made available for academic usage to analyze the characteristics and behaviours related to outward migration from the country.

1.2. Engagement with the Indian Diaspora & the Use of Big Data

- A. Big Data is a valuable tool to provide nuances to existing research methods and fill in the gaps and challenges observed with traditional methods. It can provide more detailed information on the following:
- Where diaspora communities are concentrated within countries of destination
 - The growth of diaspora communities in different countries
 - Specific “waves” or trends in migration patterns
 - Different characteristics and interests of the diaspora
 - The extent to which they engage with the country of origin
- B. Availability of data sources such as website analytics, Google analytics, social media usage data, onomastic analysis, and spatial or geographical data.
- C. Data on the potential contributions of the diaspora to better understand the foreign capital inflows made by members of diasporas to develop policy interventions and programmes for engaging diasporas as developmental actors.
- D. Philanthropy can also be measured by creating a map of diaspora foundations and charities abroad.

1.3. Gender-Responsive Migration Data Management

General Recommendation

- A. Collecting data through Surveys on women’s intention to emigrate at regular intervals through collaboration with employment information centres and/or social workers (e.g. Anganwadi, ASHA workers) may assist the local administration in conducting such surveys.
- B. Social workers may also be leveraged to generate awareness of the benefits of voluntarily providing accurate information during such exercises and on the eMigrate portal to assist in capturing the constantly emerging newer realities of migration.
- C. The decadal Census of India can be better equipped to capture gendered migration trends by including women-centric questions and modules related to migration, particularly international migrants.
- D. The Emigration check posts to check and prevent contravention may also be leveraged to serve as additional data collection centers to provide gender-disaggregated data, including specific data on women emigrants.

Pre-migration Phase

- A. **Focus group discussions with women migrant** workers during training (such as Pre-Departure Orientation Training) will provide inputs on potential migration trends and allow for tailoring interventions to increase the awareness of potential aspiring migrant women efficiently.
- B. **Ad hoc workshops** involving fundamental stakeholders such as civil societies, representatives of women migrants, and academicians may be leveraged to serve as intermediaries capable of transforming the knowledge and experience of women migrants into methodologies.

- C. There is a crucial need for **decentralized awareness generation** in India to ensure all necessary information reaches the most vulnerable populace and also facilitate the collection of data.
- D. To ensure due diligence is applied. The formal agreements between recruitment agencies and their sub-agents may be enforced to address unethical and irregular recruitment practices, resulting in aspiring women migrants gaining **trust and confidence** in the authorized public sector agencies, particularly when sharing information.

At the time of migration

- A. There is a need to **acknowledge the involvement and role played by communities, kinship ties, and other social networks explaining** more intensive migration trends in some regions than in others to comprehend the larger context of the migration process more comprehensively.
- B. **Qualitative surveys** may be conducted in source states/regions for a nuanced sociological understanding of the statistical data to facilitate a better understanding of women's migration process, which, in turn, may facilitate more responsive policy provisions considering the region-specific realities.

1.4. Medium term: Consular, Passport, and Visa (CPV) Division

- A. Linking CPV-related databases with other administrative databases for producing aggregated statistical data related to international migration is strongly recommended.
- B. The linkage of various administrative databases at an individual level may help produce meaningful statistical figures for policy support.
- C. Additionally, the linkage between the issuance or re-issuance of passports, registration of

OCIs, and other data collected by consulates and embassies worldwide will help analyze emigration trends and characteristics of the diaspora at the individual level.

1.5. Long-term: National Migration Data Management

- A. Establish a high-powered inter-ministerial agency or a high-powered Secretaries Committee to conduct bi-annual meetings to take stock of the necessary coordination needed to perform the following tasks.
 1. To **initiate and facilitate the collaboration** between all ministries/authorities to ensure the coverage by statistics of all fields of international migration and the production of the most useful and accurate data.
 2. **Establish a statistical commission** and topic-focused task forces to manage the cooperation and develop methodologies for data collection.
 3. **Gather and harmonize data** (aggregated or disaggregated) collected by various ministries and authorities for centralized dissemination of national statistics.
- B. A sub-group could **streamline definitions, guide data analysis and projections** in the field of international migration, and support the development of data-related guidelines to equip relevant ministries and structures with approaches to data management.
- C. Additionally, a **sub-committee** could be established to develop and promote a national strategy for data collection and statistics on all matters of international migration.

1.6. Additional considerations on migration data management

- A. **Internal and international migration:** These are not distinct phenomena to be studied separately as many migrants start their migration by an internal move followed by international emigration.

- B. **State-specific database and repository:** Through institutions such as the Centre for Migration, Mobility and Diaspora Studies (CMMDS) at ICWA and migration-relevant international organizations, the MEA can promote in-depth qualitative and quantitative studies in high migration districts identified via the e-Migrate database
- C. **Data Protection:** When collecting data about any individual or group, including diaspora members, strict data protection principles must be applied. Data protection is paramount for the safe exchange, secure storage, and confidential treatment of personal data.
- D. **Token Issuance system:** Indian migrants (including students) intending to go abroad may be mandated to seek an online token before submitting their visa application to provide more accurate information to the MEA on the number of Indian students globally.
- E. **Policy inclusion:** In the Draft Emigration Bill 2022, the need for statistical data and better access to administrative databases to elaborate international migration statistics could be incorporated.
- F. **eGate:** Data linkage at border control on an individual basis by linking the eGate system with eMigrate system, allowing for a more digitalized and comprehensive management of migration statistics.

Ministry of Home Affairs

General Recommendations

- A. **Leverage channels to populate data:** Leveraging the MHA's channels to collect administrative records and census enumeration data and publishing regular and annual flow statistics on migration may be considered.
- B. **Harmonizing data from different departments:** Enhancing the coordination and activities with relevant MHA departments

managing administrative databases that include migration-related data may be prudent.

- C. **Harmonizing data from different ministries:** Enhancing coordination with other ministries working on international migration is crucial for centralized disaggregation and disseminating international migration statistics.

Office of the Registrar General and Census Commission

In preparation for the next Census and considering the intention to present it digitally, the following considerations would be useful:

- A. Providing clear definitions of migration-related indicators, possibly in line with international statistical recommendations.
- B. Persons who live outside the country for six months or more, even if they expressed their intention to come back to live in India, should be excluded (persons being abroad for less than six months should be included in their household of origin but identified as temporarily absent).

Bureau of Immigration

- A. Strengthen a better understanding of the difference between the **stock and flow** of international migrants through capacity development to enhance the technical knowledge of migration data.
- B. The development of border control databases is essential to produce statistics on arrivals and departures based on the essential socio-demographic characteristics of travellers and by identifying the origin of travellers and the duration of stay in or outside India.
- C. Close cooperation of the Office of Registrar General, Census Commission, and the Bureau of Immigration, wherein the harmonization of their respective databases can contribute to the production of migration flows of both foreigners and Indian nationals based on data collected.

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Central Statistics Office

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) is the key institution to produce and disseminates international migration statistics. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- A. CSO should aim to produce all statistical figures recommended at the international level in international migration.
- B. CSO should initiate and enhance cooperation with the different institutions managing migration databases.
- C. Add an ad hoc migration module on an annual basis either to the Labour force survey or to other Household sample surveys.
- D. Including additional questions related to international migration in existing surveys may help produce and update some important statistical figures related to emigration, including questions on members living abroad to understand the nuances between the States and provide data on nationwide trends.
- E. The purview of the surveys may be further extended to include information on household remittances to provide a much-needed economic dimension to measure development.

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