Internal Migration in India Initiative

unicef

UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Internal Migration in India Initiative

What is the Internal Migration in India Initiative (IMII)?

The Internal Migration in India Initiative (IMII) was jointly launched by UNESCO and UNICEF in 2011, as a result of a two-day workshop on *Internal Migration and Human Development in India* (New Delhi, 6-7 December 2011), and in order to better respond to the many challenges raised by the internal migration phenomenon in India. Through the IMII, UNESCO and UNICEF wish to support the social inclusion of migrants in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the country, using a three-legged approach combining research, policy and advocacy.

The informal network created under the Internal Migration in India Initiative (IMII) has been recently transformed into a new web-portal titled Gender, Youth and Migration (GYM) which functions as a sub-community of practice of the United Nations Solution Exchange Gender Community. The GYM initiative hopes to bridge the gap and link researchers, practitioners and decision makers working on gender, youth and migration in India (http://www.solutionexchange-un-gen-gym.net).

What are the objectives of the IMII?

▶ Raise awareness on the need to prioritize internal migration in policy-making

▶ Advance knowledge on undocumented research areas on internal migration in India in order to support the design of better informed inclusive policies

▶ Support the development of a coherent legal and policy framework on internal migration

▶ Promote existing policies and creative practices that increase inclusion of all sections of the internal migrant population in society, particularly children and women

▶ Contribute to changing the negative perception of internal migrants in society

Internal Migrants in India: The Millions Who Cannot Exercise their Rights

In India, internal migration accounts for a large population of 309 million as per Census of India 2001, and by more recent estimates, 326 million according to NSSO 2007-2008, nearly 30 percent of the total population. Internal migrants, of which 70.7 percent are women, are excluded from the economic, cultural, social and political life of society and are often treated as second-class citizens.

The constraints faced by migrants are many - lack of formal residency rights; lack of identity proof; lack of political representation; inadequate housing; low-paid, insecure or hazardous work; extreme vulnerability of women and children to trafficking and sex exploitation; exclusion from state-provided services such as health and education and discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, class or gender.

The difficulties faced by internal migrants in India are dismissed on the grounds that the Constitution does not restrict free mobility within the country. In the absence of proofs of identity and residence, internal migrants are unable to claim social protection entitlements and remain excluded from government sponsored schemes and programmes. Children face disruption of regular schooling, adversely affecting their human capital formation and contributing to the inter-generational transmission of poverty. Further, migrants are negatively portrayed as a "burden" to society, discouraged from settling down and excluded from urban planning initiatives.

Most internal migrants are denied basic rights, yet internal migration is given very low priority by the government in policy and practice, partly due to a serious knowledge gap on its extent, nature and magnitude. A growing misunderstanding of the migratory phenomenon is often at the root of misconceived policies or inaction regarding migration.
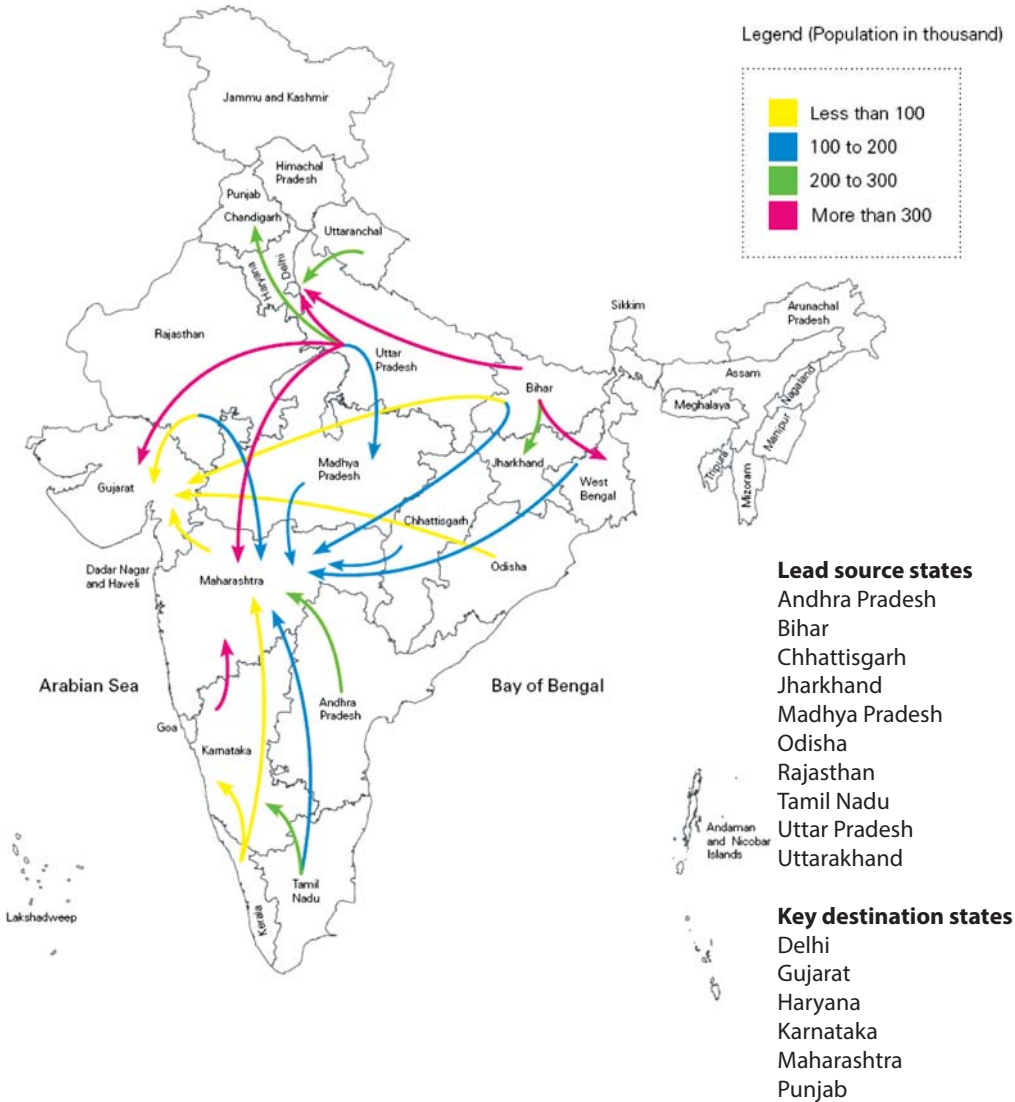
Facts and Figures

▶ 740 million people worldwide are internal migrants – almost four times as many as those who have moved internationally: 214 million (UNDP 2009)

▶ India's total population stands at 1.21 billion (Census 2011)

▶ The Constitution of India (Article 19) gives the right to all citizens to "move freely throughout the territory of India; to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India"

▶ Internal migration in India accounts for a large population: 309 million (Census 2001), and by more recent estimates 326 million or 28.5 per cent of the population (NSSO 2007-2008) – as compared to international migration: 11.4 million (The World Bank 2011)

▶ 70.7 per cent of internal migrants are women (Census 2001). Marriage is given as the prominent reason for female migration in both rural and urban areas. However, women migrate for a number of reasons that are not taken into account in the Census since only one response is authorized

▶ About 15 million children are estimated to be internal migrants (Daniel 2011; Smita 2011)

▶ Estimates of circular/seasonal migration, involving back and forth movement between a source and a destination, vary from 15 million (NSSO 2007-2008) to 100 million (Deshingkar and Akter 2009)

▶ About 30 per cent of internal migrants in India belong to the youth category (15-29 years age group) (Rajan 2013; Census 2001)

UNESCO/UNICEF, 2012, Policy Briefs: For a Better Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India, New Delhi.

Major Net Migration Flow in India
(duration 0-9 years), 2001

Legend (Population in thousand)

▢ (yellow)	Less than 100
▢ (blue)	100 to 200
▢ (green)	200 to 300
▢ (magenta)	More than 300

Lead source states
Andhra Pradesh
Bihar
Chhattisgarh
Jharkhand
Madhya Pradesh
Odisha
Rajasthan
Tamil Nadu
Uttar Pradesh
Uttarakhand

Key destination states
Delhi
Gujarat
Haryana
Karnataka
Maharashtra
Punjab

Bhagat and Mohanty, 2009.

Myths and Facts

MYTH
"Internal migrants are a drain on society and a burden for the economies of the destination"

FACT
Internal migrants contribute cheap labour for manufacturing and services and in doing so contribute to national GDP, but this is not recognised. Far from being a drain and burden, migrants are in fact providing a subsidy

FACT
Poor migrants typically do the 3-D jobs (Dirty, Dangerous and Degrading) which locals do not want to do; this is different to 'stealing jobs'

MYTH
"Internal migrants steal jobs from the local population"

MYTH
"Internal migration can be stopped"

FACT
Migration and urbanisation are an integral part of economic development and societal transformation, and historical experience has shown that it cannot be stopped

FACT
By not accepting migrants or providing facilities for them, governments are merely increasing the risks and costs of migration and reducing its development potential

MYTH
"Inhospitable and harsh cities are the best deterrent to migration flow"

UNESCO, 2013, Social Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India

Ten Key Principles for Better Inclusion of Internal Migrants

1 Promote positive political discourse and avoid a prejudiced, negative portrayal of internal migrants

2 Build awareness for a better understanding of internal migrants' positive contribution to society

3 Adopt a human rights-based approach for internal migrant inclusion in society

4 Develop gender-sensitive and age-sensitive policies and practices for internal migrants

5 Create portability of social protection entitlements for internal migrants

6 Upscale successful innovative practices for a better inclusion of internal migrants

7 Revise and strengthen data collection techniques for the Census to fill knowledge gaps, especially related to circular and seasonal migration

8 Mainstream internal migration into national development policy, and regional and urban planning

9 Ensure policy coherence on internal migration and its cross-cutting impacts

10 Ensure democratic participation of internal migrants in society

Internal Migration in India Initiative
For a Better Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India

Policy Briefs

Internal Migration in India Initiative
National Workshop
on Internal Migration and
Human Development in India
6–7 December 2011
Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, India

Workshop Compendium
VOL 2: WORKSHOP PAPERS

unicef

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) | Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)

Internal Migration in India Initiative
National Workshop
on Internal Migration and
Human Development in India
6–7 December 2011
Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, India

Workshop Compendium
VOL 1: WORKSHOP REPORT

unicef

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) | Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)

unicef

IN COLLABORATION WITH
UN WOMEN
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women | Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

For more information on UNESCO activities on Internal Migration:
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/newdelhi/areas-of-action/social-and-human-sciences/
http://www.solutionexchange-un-gen-gym.net/
https://www.facebook.com/unesconewdelhi

Contact: Marina Faetanini, Chief, Social and Human Sciences (SHS), UNESCO New Delhi
(m.faetanini@unesco.org; newdelhi@unesco.org)

unicef

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Sir Dorabji Tata Trust

UN WOMEN
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

IOM International Organization for Migration

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE