

SKILLING OF WORKERS AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ^{1*}

I. Introduction

People have always migrated in search of better lives, to flee conflict or seek safety, or simply to find new opportunities. Most migration is regular, safe and orderly – regionally focused and often directly connected to work. In a globalising economy, the migration of workers from one country to another has become an increasingly important issue. Besides demographic transitions, as well as economic and social transformations, major geopolitical, environmental and technological transformations have shaped migration and mobility profoundly in the recent years.

The current United Nations estimate is that there are about 281 million international migrants in the world, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population.

Table 1: Key migration data at a glance (latest available)

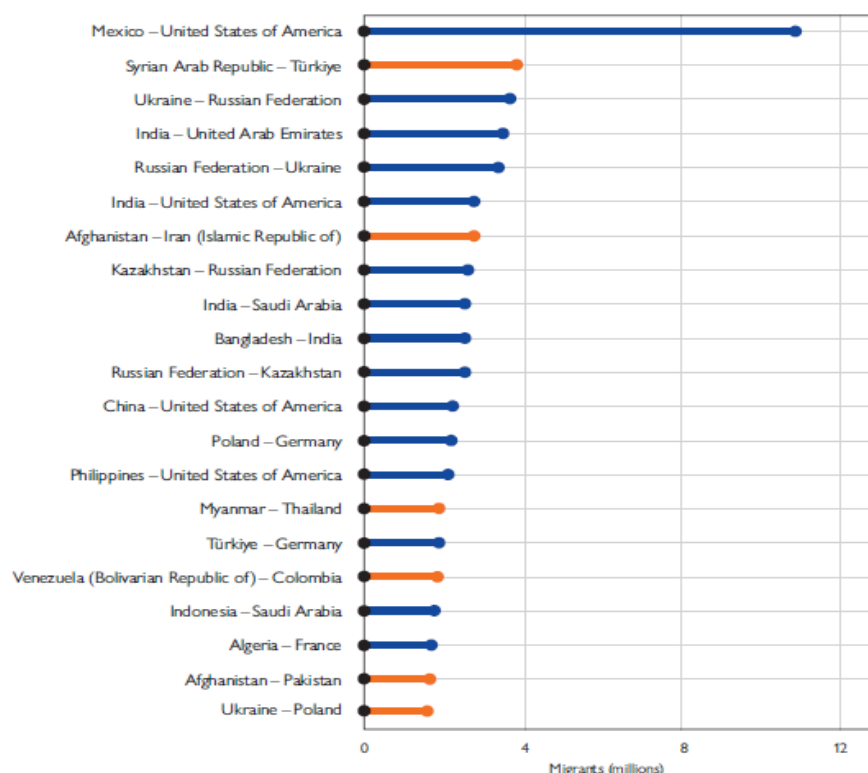
Females	135 million	international female migrants globally in 2020, or 3.5 per cent of the world's female population
Males	146 million	international male migrants globally in 2020, or 3.7 per cent of the world's male population
Children	28 million	international child migrants globally in 2020, or 1.4 per cent of the world's child population
Labour migrants	169 million	migrant workers globally in 2019
Missing migrants	Around 8,500	dead and missing globally in 2023

Source: World Migration Report 2024, IOM, UN Migration, 2024

The available international migrant data include estimates of origin and destination links between two countries, allowing for the estimation of bilateral migration corridors globally. The size of a migration corridor from country A to country B is measured as the number of people born in country A who were residing in country B at the time of the estimate. Migration corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

^{1*} Prepared by Dr. Ruma Ghosh, Senior Fellow, VVGnLI.

Figure 1: Top international country-to-country migration corridors, 2024²



Source: UN DESA, 2021a; UNHCR, 2023a

Between 2010 and 2021, 10 countries saw a net outflow of migrants exceeding by 1 million. In many of these countries, the outflows were due to temporary labour movements, such as for Pakistan (net flow of –16.5 million), India (–3.5 million), Bangladesh (–2.9 million), Nepal (–1.6 million) and Sri Lanka (–1.0 million). In other countries, including the Syrian Arab Republic (–4.6 million), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (–4.8 million) and Myanmar (–1.0 million), insecurity and conflict drove the outflow of migrants over this period.

The migration of workers is linked to remittances which are financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants directly to families or communities in their countries of origin. The World Bank compiles global data on international remittances, notwithstanding the data gaps caused due to unrecorded flows through formal or informal channels. Despite these issues, available data reflect a long-term increasing trend in international remittances in recent years, rising from around USD 128 billion in 2000 to USD 831 billion in 2022. In 2022, India, Mexico, China, the Philippines and France were (in descending order) the top five remittance recipient countries, although India was well above the rest, receiving more than USD 111 billion, the first country to reach and even surpass the USD 100 billion mark. As can be seen from Table-

² The corridors represent the number of international migrants (millions) born in the first-mentioned country and residing in the second. Corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

Those corridors comprising mainly displaced persons are coloured **orange**. Revisions have been made based on large-scale displacement from Ukraine to neighbouring countries (as at end October 2023).

2 below that over the years, there has been a sharp increase in remittances in case of India which means a significant increase in the number of workers who have migrated from India to other countries.

**Table 2. Top 10 countries receiving/sending international remittances (2010–2022)
(current USD billion)**

Top countries receiving remittances							
2010		2015		2020		2022	
India	53.48	India	68.91	India	83.15	India	111.22
China	52.46	China	63.94	China	59.51	Mexico	61.10
Mexico	22.08	Philippines (the)	29.80	Mexico	42.88	China	51.00
Philippines (the)	21.56	Mexico	26.23	Philippines (the)	34.88	Philippines (the)	38.05
France	19.90	France	24.07	Egypt	29.60	France	30.04
Nigeria	19.75	Nigeria	20.63	France	28.82	Pakistan	29.87
Germany	12.79	Pakistan	19.31	Pakistan	26.09	Egypt	28.33
Egypt	12.45	Egypt	18.33	Bangladesh	21.75	Bangladesh	21.50
Belgium	10.99	Germany	15.57	Germany	19.32	Nigeria	20.13
Bangladesh	10.85	Bangladesh	15.30	Nigeria	17.21	Germany	19.29

Source: World Bank latest data

One of the reason for the increase in numbers of workers migrating from India is the demand for skilled workers. India is a major source of skilled workers for countries around the world. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) reports that there is a growing demand for Indian talent in many sectors, including in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Germany, and the United States.

From the supply side point of view, India is a significant source of low- and semi-skilled workers, as well as professionals in the health-care and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.

Government initiatives:

The Government of India has prioritized facilitating skilled mobility for Indian migrants. This includes initiatives to ensure that migrants have the necessary skills and are aware of the various schemes available to help them thrive abroad. The Government of India has implemented several skill development initiatives in the last decade, including:

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY): Launched in 2015, this scheme has trained over 1.42 crore people, with 1.13 crore receiving certification. PMKVY has also introduced new skill courses and increased the participation of women.
- Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana (PM-YUVA): This scheme aims to educate and support aspiring entrepreneurs. It also links candidates to the government's MUDRA scheme for initial business funding.
- National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS): This scheme provides financial benefits for apprenticeship.
- National Skill Development Mission: This mission focuses on quality assurance and policy research.
- National Policy for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship 2015: This policy was launched along with the Skill India initiative.

- Skill Loan Scheme: This scheme is part of the Skill India initiative. Other initiatives include:
- Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS)
- Crafts Instructor Training Scheme (CITS)
- Advanced Vocational Training Scheme (AVTS)
- Vocational Training Programme For Women
- SANKALP
- Aspirational Skilling Abhiyan
- Rozgar Mela
- Indian Institute of Skills (IISs)

It is important to understand that remittances from high-skilled migrants can be an important part of India's private transfers and can help the country to contain the country's current account deficits. Therefore the skill development initiatives of the country which has promoted international migration of workers to developed countries is highly appreciable.

Dr. Ruma Ghosh, Senior Fellow

PH: 9810649269

References

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