

# The Integration of Interstate Migrants in India: A 7 State Policy Evaluation

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## ABSTRACT

Interstate migration in developing countries is a key income generating strategy for low-income households. In India, despite the importance of migration between states, interstate migrants continue to face significant integration barriers in their destination states. The impact of state borders on migration within India is significant and large. This study presents one of the first attempts at creating a set of indicators to understand the role of state-level policies for the integration of interstate migrants in a developing country. After illustrating the process behind the creation of this tool and the tool in itself, we compare seven of the major migrant destination states of India, based on their policy frameworks relevant to the integration of interstate migrants. Out of these states, we found that Kerala state is the most inclusive of interstate migrants but that overall, policymakers in the considered Indian states have a long way to go to improve the integration of interstate migrants.

## INTRODUCTION

This article addresses policies for the integration of interstate migrants in a developing country (India). Comparative studies have analysed integration policies mainly at the national level and/or with a focus on international migration (Manatschal, 2011). Despite the great importance of internal migration in developing countries (Bell et al., 2015), no studies comparatively assess the integration policy framework at the subnational level for interstate migrants in developing countries.

To contribute to close this gap, we present the Interstate Migration Policy Index (IMPEX), which represents one of the first attempts at creating a set of indicators to understand the role of state/regional-level policies for integrating internal migrants. The contribution of the paper is, therefore, to provide an explorative conceptualization and empirical measurement of state integration policy for internal (interstate) migrants in a developing country. The aim is to showcase a tool that accounts for subnational variations (Manatschal, 2011).

Internal migration in developing countries is a crucial livelihood strategy for low-income households and communities and it has positive changes in both sending and receiving areas (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2005; McKenzie and Yang, 2010; Mohanty et al., 2016; Srivastava and Sutradhar, 2016; Nayyar and Kim, 2018). Despite this, internal migration continues to be viewed as a destabilising process by policy makers and they do not acknowledge the beneficial effect that it has on

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development (Nyberg-Sørensen et al, 2002; Deshingkar and Grimm, 2005; Kundu and Sarangi, 2007; Geiger and Pécoud, 2013; Bhavnani and Lacina, 2015).

As in most other countries, the right to move within India and reside in any part of it is a fundamental right guaranteed for all citizens of India under Article 19(1) of the Indian Constitution. Therefore, the Indian Government is also constitutionally obligated to ensure that citizens do not face obstacles when they move within the country. Despite this, extant literature points at the limiting role of administrative barriers, in particular state borders (Bhagat, 2015). For example, a recent research from the World Bank on the various barriers to migration in India shows that administrative barriers are one of the most powerful obstacles to interstate migration (Kone et al., 2017). This reflects in the figures, which show that interstate migration represents a small proportion of the migration flows, accounting for less than half of internal migration and the 13.5% of total migration flows (Chandrashekar et al., 2017; Kone et al., 2017; Nayyar and Kim, 2018).

Migrating from one state to another can lead to loss of certain entitlements enjoyed in the home/source state (Dreze and Khera, 2013). Even in central government schemes, the benefits reach the people through state or local governments, available only to the permanent residents or “domiciles” of the respective state. In such a situation, the interstate migrants lose their entitlements when they cross the borders of their native state (Nayyar and Kim, 2018). The existence of such integration barriers also influences internal migration in other developing countries, such as Vietnam (Nguayen-Hoang and McPeak, 2010).

Despite this, there is no systematic analysis and comparison of the nature of the Indian state policies on integration of interstate migrants (Kone et al., 2017). Therefore, besides showcasing a tool that accounts for state/regional variations in policy, this article also aims to explore the extent to which state-level policy frameworks favour integration of interstate migrants in India and how these vary from state to state.

We address this through the construction of the Interstate Migration Policy Index (IMPEX). IMPEX is inspired by the Migration Policy Integration Index (MIPEX, Huddleston et al., 2015), which is one of the leading indexes for evaluating migrant integration policies (EU-JRC, 2018). We decided not to consider intra-state migrants, as literature shows that they face to a lesser extent the legal and administrative barriers that inter-state migrants seem to face, as entitlements, such as the Public distribution system and access to higher education and government jobs are linked to the domicile status of the individual in the state (Kone et al., 2017). An interstate migrant is defined as a person residing away from their usual state of residence and residing longer than six months in their destination state. From now on, we refer to interstate migrants as “migrants”. Integration refers to the process of (permanent and non-permanent) settlement, interactions with the receiving society, and social change due to (international or internal) immigration (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003; Garcés-Masareñas and Penninx, 2016). The process of integration includes finding a job, accessing the health system, registering with the municipality, and so on.

To provide an empirical application of IMPEX and to analyse the subnational Indian policy framework, we evaluate policies in seven Indian states. We decided to focus on these states as they are the most relevant destination states for interstate migrants, in terms of migration stocks and flows.

Based on our IMPEX evaluation, Kerala’s policies are significantly more inclusive for migrants than any of the other major migrant receiving states considered in our analysis, while Delhi and Gujarat score the lowest. Although there is a clear need to scale up IMPEX and cover all the states in India, our initial evaluation of seven states suggests that policymakers in some of the major receiving states have a long way to go in smoothing integration of interstate migrants in India.

## BACKGROUND

### **The nature of integration and the assessment of integration policies**

Integration refers to the process of (permanent and non-permanent) settlement, interactions with the receiving society, and social change due to (international or internal) immigration (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003; Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninx, 2016). Integration is something practical and tangible for migrants. Migrants need to secure their livelihood in the destination society, find a job, access the health system, register with the municipality, and so on. The receiving society needs to create conditions that allow migrants to do this. Integration is also a multidimensional process which includes a variety of areas: employment, education, health, civil rights, social welfare, housing, etc. This applies to both international migrants and internal migrants. Literature shows that inter-regional/interstate migrants go through the same process as international migrants (Hopkins, Bastagli and Hagen-Zanker, 2016). They face the same difficulties and have the same needs, and they are also facing forms of social exclusion. As international migrants, they earn low wages, are subjected to poor sanitation facilities, etc. This applies in particular in big countries such as India or China, which are characterised by significant internal cultural and geographical differences (Deshingkar, 2006; Li and Rose, 2013; Hopkins, Bastagli and Hagen-Zanker, 2016; UNESCO, 2018, 2019).

Integration policies need to pay attention to all these areas and ensure access to rights, opportunities, and services in order to make it easier for migrants to integrate. Integration policies are all policies that directly or indirectly may have an effect on integration of migrants. The analysis of such migration policies has been the subject of extensive academic debate (Bjerre et al., 2015; Beine et al., 2016; Rayp et al., 2017; EC-JRC, 2018). A number of projects have developed indicators to address migration to assess the nature (usually openness/restrictiveness) of these policies. However, these undertakings have been focused almost exclusively at the national level and integration policies have been the focus of a small number of projects only (EC-JRC, 2018).

Among these, one of the most comprehensive and widely used indices when it comes to the assessment of integration policies is the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX, see Huddleston et al., 2015). MIPEX is designed as a tool to assess the extent to which equality principles are applied to integration policies (Niessen and Huddleston, 2009). MIPEX identifies the highest European and international standards aimed at achieving equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all residents, and measures policy changes through the 160+MIPEX policy indicators. It covers eight policy areas: labour market mobility, education, political participation, access to nationality, family reunion, health, permanent residence, and anti-discrimination.

In the field of comparative assessment of integration policies, the analysis of subnational variations has been largely neglected (Manatschal, 2011). Few empirical applications at the state level have been carried out concerning federal states in developed countries, in particular Switzerland, (Manatschal, 2011) and the US (Reich, 2018; Filindra and Manatschal, 2019). However, no previous efforts have been carried out to assess either subnational variations or policies for interstate migrants.

Following the approach of previous undertakings, IMPEX applies an established international framework – in this case, MIPEX – to the subnational level (Manatschal, 2011). Although MIPEX originated in a European context, its methodology is applicable and comparable, at least geographically and administratively, to the current situation in India. First, the federalist structure of India gives its states a certain degree of policy autonomy, especially with respect to policy areas relevant for the integration of migrants, much like the EU and its Member States. The same has been noted by Goodman & Kirkwood (2019) for the USA. Second, significant disparities were noted in the level of legal integration of third country nationals as compared to that of European Union (EU)

nationals living in an EU country. The same applies to India in comparing the integration of natives and interstate migrants (Faetanini and Tankha, 2013; Kone et al., 2017).

## THE INDIAN CONTEXT

### Internal migration, migrant characteristics, and regional trends

In India, the level of internal migration is lower than in other developing countries (Bell et al., 2015). This is especially true for interstate migration, with the number of Indians migrating between states growing at a stagnant rate for the past three decades (Chandrashekhar, Naik and Roy, 2017; Kone et al., 2017). The Census of India data sets point out that the percentage of interstate migrants in 1991 was 11.8 per cent, 13.3 per cent in 2001 and 12.1 per cent in 2011.

Nonetheless, interstate migration is an important factor affecting socio-economic development in India (Working Group on Migration, 2020). Internal migration – including both intra- and interstate movements – is an important pathway out of poverty through employment and an adaptive strategy to escape the negative impacts of climate change and environmental disasters on livelihood, especially in the rural context (Bhagat, 2017).

Data from 2011 census shows that the total number of interstate migrants in India was close to 54 million. States from northern, western and southern regions of India are generally receiving states, while eastern states are sending states of interstate migrants. The five most important states for number of interstate migrants are (see Table 1): Maharashtra (9 million); Delhi (6.3); Uttar Pradesh (4); Gujarat (3.9); Haryana (3.6). Furthermore, the Indian Economic Survey 2016-2017, using a Cohort Based Migration Survey, found that Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, and Karnataka were the highest receivers of interstate migrants (Government of India, 2017; see Table 1). In addition, the 2004 and 2011 India Human Development Survey confirmed that Delhi,

TABLE 1  
MIGRATION TRENDS IN INDIAN STATES (IN BOLD STATES THAT HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN IMPEX EVALUATION)

Rank (based on Census 2011 figures)	State	Total interstate migration (Census 2011 Table)	Net in Migration (based on: Economic Survey 2016-17 Net in Migration based on Cohort based Migration Metric 2001-2011) Into brackets the position in the rank based on the net in migration – if in the top 10
<b>1</b>	<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>9 million</b>	<b>0.50 million (#3)</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Delhi</b>	<b>6.3 million</b>	<b>0.46 million (#4)</b>
3	Uttar Pradesh	4.06 million	-5.8 million
<b>4</b>	<b>Gujarat</b>	<b>3.9 million</b>	<b>0.34 million (#6)</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Haryana</b>	<b>3.6 million</b>	<b>-0/08 million (#9)</b>
6	Karnataka	3.2 million	0.3 million (#5)
7	Madhya Pradesh	2.7 million	-0.7 million
8	Rajasthan	2.6 million	-0/8 million
<b>9</b>	<b>Punjab</b>	<b>2.4 million</b>	<b>-0.08 million (#8)</b>
10	West Bengal	2.3 million	-0.2 million
<b>12</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<b>1.6 million</b>	<b>1.01 million (#1)</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>0.6 million</b>	<b>0.9 million (#2)</b>

Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala recorded the highest rates of net in migration (Nayar and Kim, 2018).

Interstate migration in India is characterised by semi-permanence with male migrants typically remitting wages to their home villages (Tumbe, 2018). The languages and origins of migrants in India reflect the country's diversity, along with widely varying degrees of education, income levels, skills, caste, religion, family composition, age, and other characteristics (Deshingkar and Akter, 2009; Government of India, 2017). Most migrants are between the ages of 16 and 40 years.

Internal, interstate migration is often informal. A significant proportion of interstate migrants work in the informal or unorganised sector. For example, the informal economy in India employs over 80 per cent of non-agricultural workers (Rothboeck and Kring, 2014). Broadly the informal labour market comprises of workers in the informal sector plus casual workers employed in the formal sector (Shonchoy and Junankar, 2014). In India, the dichotomy between formal and informal is not distinctive and policy makers tend to factor in both. Policies apply to (migrant) workers irrespective of their status. For example, the Builders and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 is a central legislation that applies to all workers who work in Building and related construction work. State governments then make the rules for the implementation of the Act. Similarly, Maharashtra's Domestic Workers Welfare Board ACT, 2008, is a state legislation applicable to all domestic workers in the state, irrespective of the nature of employment.

In India, migrants live in precarious conditions and face numerous difficulties in their destination state. They often have unsafe and insanitary working and living conditions, limited access to health and social services, and non-familiarity with the local culture and language – adding to their vulnerabilities (Kundu and Saraswati, 2012; Srivastava, 2016). For example, on health, a report by UNESCO and UNICEF (2011) showed that migrant workers are frequently exposed to occupational hazards like toxic chemicals, dust, accidents at sites and unsafe working conditions. Furthermore, they live in poor and unhygienic living conditions and share a single room with a number of people (Department of Planning Report, 2008). Even though migrants are highly vulnerable to health risks like communicable diseases, under-nutrition, workplace accidents and injuries, healthcare access and utilisation rates among migrants remain extremely low (Faetanini and Tankha, 2013).

The children of these migrants are in a position of high vulnerability too. The Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM) of UNESCO (2019) has estimated that 80 per cent of seasonal migrant children lack access to education near worksites and 40 per cent are at high risk of exploitative child labour. It also highlights that for youth aged 15–18, who have grown up in a rural household with a migrant, 28% per cent are illiterate or have had an incomplete primary education, while test scores are lower for children whose parents are migrants.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to foster migrant integration in the popular destination states of India (Sridhar et al., 2012; Mohanty et al., 2016). Interstate migrants need integration measures such as access to poverty alleviation/employment guarantee schemes (Mohanty et al., 2016).

## THE INDIAN LEGAL SYSTEM AND NATIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL MIGRATION INTEGRATION POLICIES IN INDIA

The Indian political system is a federal set-up, with distribution of power between the Central government and States. The National Parliament is led by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet of Ministers, comprising the Executive. State Parliaments (called Vidhan Sabhas) function similarly, with a Chief Minister as the leader of the chosen representatives. Legislation is passed in both the Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies, according to the Union, State, and Concurrent Lists which specify the issues falling within the mandate of these different bodies. For example, while

defence falls in the Union List, public health falls in the State List, and education falls in the Concurrent List (allowing both the Centre and State to legislate on it). Central legislation, while it is applicable to all states, is often supplemented by State level Rules which add to the provisions.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the mobility of Indian citizens, the principles of free migration are enshrined in clauses (d) and (e) of Article 19(1) of the Indian Constitution, which guarantee all citizens the fundamental right to move freely throughout the territory of India, and reside and settle in any part of the territory of India (Working Group on Migration, 2017).

To foster integration of interstate migrants, certain provisions exist at the central level. These are normally policies/laws that apply to Indian nationals irrespective of whether they live in the state where they are born (e.g., *National Policy for Children, Integrated Child Development Services*, and *Integrated Child Protection Services*). These central level schemes have, in turn, provided broad frameworks for state-level policies.

Other policies/laws directly impacting migrants include a set of laws addressing the working conditions of interstate migrant workers and preventing their exploitation, such as the following ones: the *Inter State Migrant Workmen (Regulation and Conditions of Service) Act 1979*, the *Minimum Wages Act 1948*, the *Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970*, the *Equal Remuneration Act, 1976*, and the *Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1996*.

However, policy measures in India have proved to be inadequate to address internal migrants' social and economic marginalisation (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003; Ashok and Thomas, 2014), as policies often assume that people are sedentary (Dasgupta, 2018; UNESCO, 2013). In India, integration of interstate migrants is inhibited by non-portability of social benefits and rights across state borders and the administrative barriers to move those benefits and rights from one state to another (Kone et al., 2017). Access to services, benefits and rights is frequently linked to the residence in one state and it cannot be easily or automatically kept when the person moves to another state.

There are many policy areas in which policies fail to address and include migrants due to the aforementioned issues. The access to social benefits is a case in point. Social benefit schemes like the Public Distribution System (PDS), a particularly important source of food for poor households, depend on the ration card, which can be transferred from one state to another only if the migrant gives up their ration card at source and gets a residential proof at destination, thus creating a situation where migrants lose access to essential services when they move to another state (Dreze and Khera, 2013).

Migrants often lack proper personal identification in the destination states. In addition to the national identification system (Aadhar), India provides for a system of state identification known as domicile/residency. This certificate is issued for those born in a state or for migrants who have resided for a stipulated period (which varies from state to state) and have applied for a domicile certificate. The ration card also serves as a proof of identity at the source state because it is issued by state governments. The process of transferring a ration card from one state to another is time-consuming. The migrant is first expected to get their name removed from the source state's list (Kone et al., 2017). In addition, it requires one to submit a proof of residence of the changed address. The result is difficulty in accessing housing, education, healthcare, and social services.

Similarly, although in theory Indian citizens are entitled to vote wherever they want, in practice migrants from other states are at a disadvantage in terms of exercising this right, since voting is determined by one's inclusion in the local constituency's electoral roll. The process of having one's name added is time-consuming and has no relevance for, e.g., seasonal migrants who are not permanent settlers at their destination.

The cyclical nature of interstate migration in India contributes further to this vulnerability, since migrants are not accounted for either at source or at destination and often miss out on voting.<sup>2</sup> This was confirmed by a study conducted by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (2015) for the Election



Commission of India, which found that states with higher rates of migrants were associated with lower voter turnouts.

In health, although there are overall national policies (e.g., the National Health Policy 2017, and National Population Policy 2002) which broadly promote equitable access to public health services across the country, health schemes implemented by the State Governments (such as the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana in Maharashtra) and state life insurance schemes (such as Atal Pension Yojana in Punjab) typically have domicile barriers.

The health area also shows that it is important not only to provide equal access to services and benefits but also to have targeted measures for (interstate) migrants, as they face additional vulnerabilities (see above and also UNESCO and UNICEF, 2011; Borhade, 2012). This results in health-care access and health conditions among migrants remaining extremely low and poor (Faetanini and Tankha, 2013).

In conclusion, interstate migrants continually face difficulties in becoming a full part of the economic, cultural, social, and political lives of their destination state. In India, interstate migration is inhibited by non-portability of social benefits across state borders and difficulties in transfer benefits and rights when possible (Kone et al., 2017). In general, there is a need for greater intra- and inter-government coordination to improve the delivery of social support services to migrants (Working Group on Migration, 2017). The difficulties faced by migrants in destination states reveal the crucial role of overall and targeted policies for ensuring access to services and support for interstate migrants (Kone et al., 2017; Nayyar and Kim, 2018).

## THE INTER STATE MIGRATION POLICY INDEX (IMPEX)

The observations and policy gaps noted widely in the literature on internal migration in India (UNESCO-ICSSR, 2011; Chandrasekhar et al, 2017; Nayyar and Kim, 2018), and the successful model of the MIPLEX gave birth to the Inter-State Migration Policy Index (IMPEX). To develop our index for assessing integration policies in Indian states, we took inspiration from MIPLEX and we created IMPEX according to our scope and the Indian context.

IMPEX consists of a set of indicators reflecting state-level policies needed to facilitate the integration of interstate migrants. IMPEX evaluates policies and schemes of states through a migrant welfare lens. It determines the level of access migrants have to these benefits, as compared to the native residents of those states. The index allows for the evaluation and comparison of what state governments are doing for the promotion of interstate migrant integration. Policymakers benefit from the index as they can learn from the best practices of different states and understand the specific policy areas which need further attention and improvement.

IMPEX, like MIPLEX, is an ex-ante policy evaluation tool. The IMPEX 2019 scores are not reflective of the quality of policy implementation (intermediate evaluation) or the policy impact on migrant outcomes (ex-post evaluation) (Niessen and Huddleston, 2009; Koslowski, 2014). Rather, it focuses on policies and initiatives that are formally put in place to foster integration of migrants. Policymakers choose from policy options and bring policies closer or further from the best practices for the integration of migrants (Nielsen, 2009). The IMPEX framework captures these options and choices, while setting a benchmark for the best policy practices.

Based on previous literature on the topic and on MIPLEX (Niessen and Huddleston, 2009; Vink et al., 2013; Bjerre et al., 2015; Huddleston et al., 2015; Beine et al., 2016; Rayp et al., 2017; EC-JRC, 2018; Perna, 2018), IMPEX starts from the assumption that states need to consider the following principles when the develop migration and integration policy framework:

The *principle of equality of opportunities* between migrants and state residents: State-level policies should offer state residents and out of state migrants' access to equal opportunities.

The *principle of migrant vulnerability*: In policy areas where migrants face vulnerabilities on account of their unique circumstances, migrants require additional and ad-hoc policy initiatives in order to have equality with state residents.

On this point, a challenge that we faced during the creation of the indicators concerned the decision on which indicator falls into which principle. This might seem a theoretical issue and a fussiness, but it was actually rather important and practical. For example, given the RTE legislation that already guarantees the right to education at a national level, a state could only score a 100 in the Education Access indicators if they had truly gone above and beyond to include migrants or enact special legislation for them (as Kerala has). However, in several other indicators (such as state health/life insurance), a state's inclusion of migrants in the general schemes available to domiciles was enough for a score of 100.

Furthermore, as it is possible to note from what mentioned below, and as in the case of MIPEX (Goodman, 2010, 2012), IMPEX has a normative feature. It implies that migrant-specific, targeted policies – in addition to mainstream policies – are needed to favour the integration of migrants – or, at least to grant or favour access to rights and services set by mainstream policies – due to the fact that migrants face additional challenges in comparison to the general population.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, as MIPEX, IMPEX measures the extent to which a state provides opportunities for migrants to achieve integration (Goodman, 2010). As noted by Michaelowski and van Oers (2012), this does not seem to affect the overall validity of the analysis, as, for example, MIPEX presents similar country scores than other indexes on integration adopting a less normative approach.

### Policy areas, dimensions and indicators

Migration policymaking has been largely ignored in India and hence there were no guiding principles or frameworks for the conception of the policy areas, dimensions, and indicators used to construct IMPEX 2019. MIPEX utilised EU and international level policy directives on the integration of immigrants to derive policy areas and benchmark principles (Niessen and Huddleston, 2009). No such directives exist for internal migration. Therefore, for the conceptualisation and wording of IMPEX policy areas and benchmark principles, we used the closest approximation to multilateral directives such as committee of experts' reports, expert feedback, best practices and wide scale meta analyses of the internal migration policy literature (academic papers, reports published by civil society organizations, etc.). We also leaned heavily on the effective interventions and programmes of non-profit organisations and migrant welfare associations across India.

MIPEX includes the following policy areas (called strands), which cover the main areas of integration identified by literature on the topic (see Garcés-Mascreñas and Penninx, 2016): education; labour market; political participation; access to nationality; permanent residence; family reunion; anti-discrimination; health. Starting from those, the decision of including or excluding one policy area was driven, at every stage, by evidence from academic studies, government reports, and other literature. IMPEX considers economic, political and social rights in its assessment of policies based on the MIPEX indicators (Niessen and Huddleston, 2009; Manatschal, 2011; Huddleston et al., 2015).

Some of the areas covered by MIPEX do not hold relevance at the regional level and for inter-state migrants. We did not consider access to nationality and permanent residence, as well as family reunion. However, similar issues arise also for internal migrants in terms of *identity and registration* and *children's rights*. Since most entitlements at destination states are linked to the residency status of the migrant in the state, IMPEX assesses the process of getting residency. MIPEX on the other hand, assess the process of getting nationality at the destination state.

While MIPEX assesses policies for family members and partners of migrants, IMPEX specifically focuses on the rights of children. Children are a particularly relevant and vulnerable group.



According to the 2011 Census, there were 63 million child migrants in India, 30 million of them female. Children of migrants are as vulnerable as migrants, because their access to social security and education is linked to the migratory status of their parents. They also face additional vulnerability, as they are often forced to work (as bonded labour), lack access to education, etc. (ILO, 2013; UNESCO, 2019).

We also decided to create two strands for *social benefits* and *housing*, which are already included in MIPEX but were spread over different strands, as literature shows that this is particularly critical for internal migrants (Li and Rose, 2013; Faetanini and Tankha, 2013 and 2018; Hopkins, Bastagli and Hagen-Zanker, 2016).

Anti-discrimination was a particularly tricky area. After serious consideration, we decided not to include it for a number of reasons. First, discrimination is particularly related to other factors such as caste system or gender (IDSN, 2016). Second, India – at both the national and state level – does not have comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation outside of Article 17 of the Constitution (banning untouchability) and various provisions relating to atrocities against caste and tribes (SC/ST communities). Finally, although discrimination is not addressed as a stand-alone strand, IMPEX assesses it indirectly in connection to other areas. For example, IMPEX assesses the extent to which migrants are discriminated in the access to entitlements due to their status.

We identified the following eight policy areas on the basis of which migrant integration in Indian states can be evaluated: *education, labour market, children’s rights, political participation, identity and registration, social benefits, housing, and health and sanitation*.

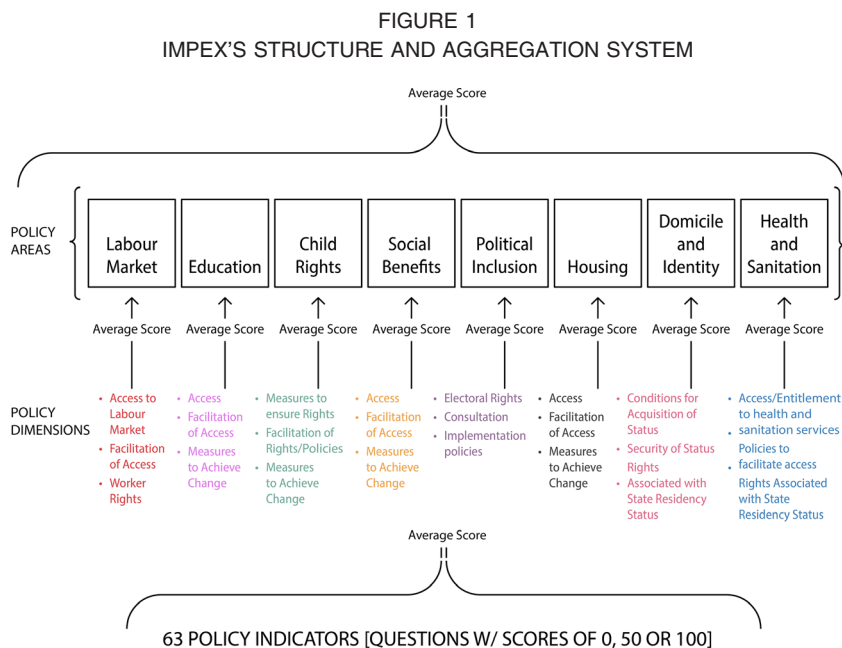
To understand its granular aspects, each policy area is broken down into policy dimensions, which are further broken down into policy indicators (see Figure 1). This follows the standard and widely recognised procedure in the creation of policy indexes (Bjerre et al., 2015; Beine et al., 2016; Rayp et al., 2017; EC-JRC, 2018).<sup>4</sup>

As for the selection of policy areas, the inclusion of each indicator was based on evidence collected from academic studies, reports, and surveys. Furthermore, in some areas, we followed MIPEX approach and sub-areas. For instance, the *Education* policy area is broken down into the dimensions of *access, facilitation of access, and measures to achieve change*. Furthermore, in Education, the *Access* dimension is broken down into five indicators related to state level measures for providing access to all levels of education for out of state migrants. In the policy area of Political Participation, like MIPEX, IMPEX also addresses migrants’ access to stand in local elections at destination, along with voting rights.

Each indicator is framed in the form of a question pointing at to what extent a state policy measure is addressing the benchmark needs of interstate migrants. As in MIPEX, and following its overall normative approach, the scores of the indicators depend on whether or not policies facilitate participation of migrants and the extent to which migrants are legally entitled to equal rights and access to benefits and services. A full list of policy areas, dimensions and indicators can be found in Appendix S1.

### From policies to scores

As Figure 1 and Table 2 show, each indicator (framed in the form of a question) has three potential answers. Following MIPEX scoring system, each of these three answers generates one of three possible scores: 0, 50, and 100. The average score of all indicators per dimension gives a dimension score, the average score of all dimensions gives a policy area score and finally, the average score of all the policy areas gives the final state level score. This is the aggregation procedure used by the large majority of indexes (Bjerre et al., 2015; Beine et al., 2016; EC-JRC, 2018), including MIPEX (Huddleston et al., 2015).<sup>5</sup>



We conducted an exhaustive policy review; this included any policy, legislation, scheme, government order, drive, campaign or programme. We matched these policies with the relevant indicator answer option. For instance, in *Access to Higher/Tertiary Education*, any state-level policy serving migrant needs such as migrant scholarships got a 100, while policies which helped the whole state population including migrants got a 50 and the policies that restricted migrant access to colleges such as state domicile quotas got a 0.

Extensive feedback from academics, field practitioners, and experts of migration in the country was taken to validate the choice of every single policy area, dimension, indicator and the final evaluation. The external review of the methodology was done in two phases with the first phase focusing on the assumptions and conceptual underpinnings of the IMPEX methodology. The second phase ensured that each policy area, dimension and indicator was clearly worded and relevant.

For MIPEX, the process of matching the policy indicator, answer options and policies was guided by equality principles derived from the various EU and international directives. The extent to which each national policy framework moved away from or closer towards the equality principle captured by each indicator was evaluated by the final score. IMPEX follows a similar process, except that we are guided by the policy consensus, best practices and the literature on internal migration in India.

It is important to emphasise that IMPEX focuses on state-level policies only. Therefore, central government policies in place addressing the needs of the migrants are not included in the score. This is due to the fact that IMPEX aims at accounting for subnational variations (in India). Therefore, IMPEX scores also do not reflect the absolute integration or deprivation of migrants in a state. IMPEX indicators attempt to evaluate and analyse the extent to which ideal standards (for migrant-related policies in specific) have percolated, from the international and national benchmark policies, into the state-level policies.

TABLE 2  
AN EXAMPLE OF POLICY IMPEX INDICATOR AND SCORING

Policy Indicator	Description	Option A score 100	Option B score 100	Option c score 100
Access to Higher/Tertiary Education	Does the state policy provide support to access Higher/Tertiary Education to migrant pupils? Do Explicit State supported targeted measure (e.g. financial support, campaigns, quotas and other means) exist to increase participation of migrant pupils?	Specific provision exist in the state laws or policies, for all migrants and migrants also benefit from general support for all students.	Ad hoc initiative or scheme exists for migrant pupils but no benefits from general support for all students.	No specific provisions and migrants face admission restrictions due to state residency requirements.

The extent of this percolation determines the numerical scores assigned to states for each indicator. For example, the *2009 Right to Education* act (RTE 2009) ensures access to education for all children in India. However, if a state government goes above the minimum requirements of RTE 2009, then the IMPEX evaluation will capture that. The zero score for access to elementary education does not, however, mean that migrant children in the state have absolutely no access to elementary schooling, which is guaranteed to all children in India between the age of 6- 14 by the RTE 2009.

### IMPEX APPLIED TO SEVEN INDIAN STATES

To test our tool and provide an overview of integration policy in a number of Indian states, we applied the IMPEX indicators to assess the policies of seven Indian states: Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Punjab. The selection of states was driven by three criteria: number of interstate migrants; migration flows; geographical variation. The selected states are among the major migrant receiving states in India and the ones that had higher immigration flows in recent years (Kone et al, 2017; Nayyar and Kim, 2018). Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, and Haryana have had longer experiences of receiving migrants and the highest stocks of interstate migrants, while Punjab and the southern states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu have emerged as major destinations relatively recently, with the last two having the highest migration net values (Government of India, 2017). Furthermore, these states have been chosen to cover northern, western and southern regions of India, where most of interstate migrants live. The selected states represent key immigration states in each of these regions.

These seven states account for the 51 per cent of the total interstate migrants in India, the 2011 Census data illustrates. Out of this number, 9 million were located in Maharashtra, 6.3 million in Delhi, 3.9 million in Gujarat, 3.6 million in Haryana, 2.4 million in Punjab, 1.6 million in Tamil Nadu, and 0.6 million in Kerala.

The assessment of policies and the scoring process was conducted by the principal investigators consisting of legal and migration experts. The following types of publicly available documents

were referred to for the evaluation: State Legislations (Acts), State Rules; State Government Orders, Schemes/Initiatives/Drives, Government Policy Documents, Reputed Secondary Sources and Directly Querying relevant Government Departments. Accessing government records proved to be challenging, given the varying nature of upkeep of government websites. Furthermore, in most of the states, state government orders, acts and rules are in the official language of the state. Translation of these documents was an additional major challenge. In order to overcome these challenges, we used translators, made formal enquiries with lawyers practicing in the particular states, and directly contacted state government departments and representatives.

The results of each state evaluation process were reviewed and vetted by the principal investigators. The finalised data for the seven states were collated and analysed centrally by the principal investigators.

### States' overall scores

Overall, the seven considered states got a score below 50, with the exception of Kerala (Figure 2). On a scale of 0-100, their average overall score is 41, with their scores ranging from 33 to 62 (the full set of scores can be found in Appendix S2). To provide a reference, it should be noted that the IMPEX average for the countries considered is 54, with their scores ranging from 24 to 80 (maximum) (Huddleston et al., 2015).

All seven states have taken minimal initiatives to provide effective access to social benefits, healthcare, and labour markets for migrants. Even when central governments have enacted access measures, states fail to put in policies to facilitate access. This confirms what was underlined by the literature; migrating from one state to another in India can lead to loss of most entitlements enjoyed in the home state (Kumar, 2017; Nayyar and Kim, 2018).

With a score of 62, Kerala's policies are the most considerate of migrants in India (see Figure 3). In Kerala, policies are in place to, at least partially, include migrants in the state's welfare system.

FIGURE 2  
IMPEX 2019 OVERALL SCORE FOR ALL 7 STATES

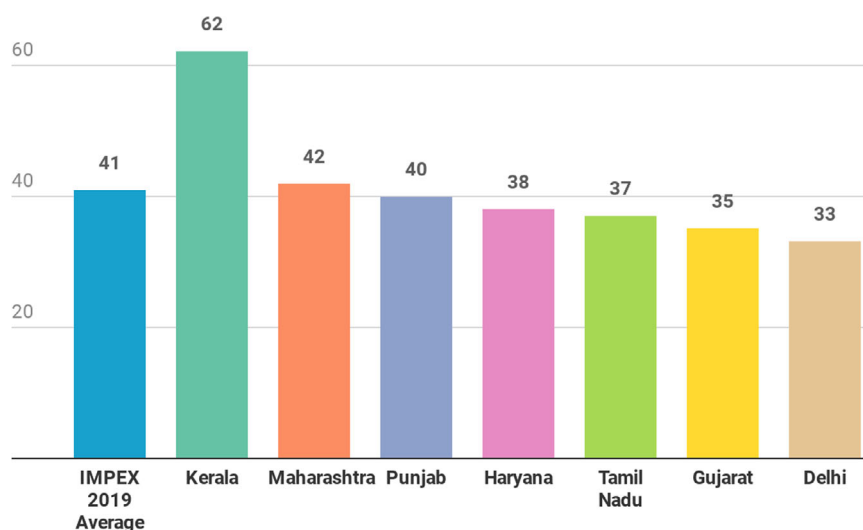
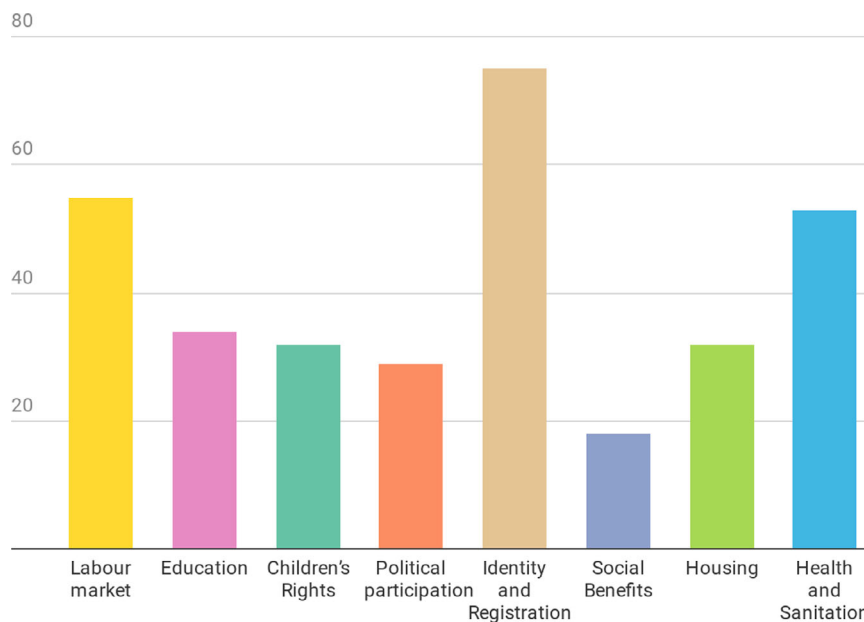


FIGURE 3  
IMPEX 2019 AVERAGE SCORE FOR EACH POLICY AREA



Delhi, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu have low scores which are extremely worrying given the magnitude of migration into these states. Migrants in these states face barriers in almost every policy area evaluated: accessing formal housing, employment, social benefits, healthcare, and education.

MIPEX scores show that traditional destination countries (e.g. Australia, US) perform better than other countries (Huddleston et al., 2015). However, this is not the case in the IMPEX evaluation. More traditional destination states like Maharashtra, Haryana, and Gujarat fare worse than a relatively recent destination like Kerala.

Previous literature at the national level shows that there is a relation between the number/share of migrants and the state of integration policies (Czaika and de Haas, 2013; Huddleston et al., 2015). In the case of MIPEX, for instance, countries with a relatively high number of immigrants have higher overall scores (Huddleston et al., 2015; Gregurović and Župarić-Iljić, 2018). However, this is not the case in IMPEX, where the states with the largest migrant populations like Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu and those with the largest proportion of migrants like Delhi scored low, while Kerala scored the highest with a smaller stock of migrants.

Another possible factor determining IMPEX scores is the type and duration of migration (migration strategy). Except for Kerala, migration to all the other states evaluated by IMPEX is dominated by semi-permanent<sup>6</sup> migrants.

It is possible the relatively inclusive policies in Kerala are a response to more permanent forms of migration. Interstate migration to Kerala has been more permanent<sup>7</sup> in nature, with whole households shifting and settling in the state (Peter & Narendran, 2017a,b). A UNESCO report states in most of the sectors, entire families migrate to Kerala. For example, the plantation sector and Brick kilns witness family migration from central, eastern and north eastern states. The textile and fishing industry largely employ female migrants from eastern and north eastern states.

Kerala's high score can also be explained by non-migration related factors such as its historical labour friendly policies and declining fertility rates, which have enhanced the importance of migrant labourers in the state economy. Furthermore, Kerala's extensive experience as an migrant sending region to the Gulf countries and international remittances dependent economy can also be credited for raising policy awareness about migrant welfare (Zachariah, Mathew, and Rajan 2001a, 2001b). However, policies in other traditional emigration and remittances dependent states like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat are not as considerate of migrants.

Overall, Kerala's consistently better performance in almost all policy areas can be attributed to two broad policy trends. Firstly, there is the recognition of migrants as a considerable force guiding the demographics of the state and subsequently, their recognition as a relevant group in policy documents. Kerala's high scores in areas such as Child Rights and Education are because Kerala's state-level policy documents, such as the Kerala Child Policy 2016, and the Kerala RTE Rules 2011, specifically mention migrants in various relevant provisions.

The second trend is the implementation of separate policies and schemes to address specific integration needs of migrants in the state. For example, the Kerala Migrant Workers' Welfare Scheme of 2010 offers financial support for treatment of migrants for specific illness, grants for their children's education in Kerala, and retirement benefits to those who complete five years under the scheme. The Awaaz health insurance scheme was rolled out in 2017 with a dual objective to provide health insurance coverage to migrants and prepare a comprehensive database of migrant labourers in the state.

### States' scores in different policy areas

The results by policy areas show that in a large number of the policy areas evaluated there are inadequate measures from the state-level policy framework to include interstate migrants.

The performances of the seven states differ from policy area to policy area (see Figure 3 and Appendix S3 online, which provides an area-by-area summary of the main results). Some areas have "quality" policies, in particular *Identity and Registration* (average score of 75). The reason being that once migrants get state domicile access, they get automatic access to all other entitlements. All the states have high scores for this policy area (more than 70), with the exception of Gujarat.

Two other areas positively stand out among the eight considered: *Labour Market* (55) and *Health and Sanitation* (53). In the *Labour Market* area, all states score above 50 – although with some variations – with the exceptions of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Powerful political movements promoting state natives' interests are prevalent in older migrant destinations like Maharashtra, resulting in employment reservations for state residents in key public and private sectors (Verma, 2011).

The average score of *Health and Sanitation* reflects two rather opposite situations. Some states provide either ad-hoc measures for migrants (e.g., Kerala and Gujarat) or they give migrants access to measures available for the general population (e.g., Delhi). By contrast, other states (e.g., Punjab and Maharashtra) have extensive residency restrictions for most government schemes.

Other areas need significant improvements, as states score very low, with the *Social benefits* area negatively standing out with an average score of 18. Therefore, our findings confirm that there is a serious issue with access to social benefits for interstate migrants. Barriers in the form of state-level residency quotas prevent migrants from accessing social benefits related schemes.

All in all, our exercise shows that there are variations between states in all areas, with the main exception of *Political Participation* where all states score 33 (except for Gujarat).



## CONCLUSION

Comparative studies analysing integration policies have largely neglected migration and integration policymaking in developing countries and at the subnational level. Furthermore, they have been largely focused on international migration, while internal migration in developing (and developed) countries is still a very relevant phenomena (Bell et al., 2015). This is particularly true for the Indian case, especially when it comes to integration of interstate migrants (Bhagat, 2015; Nayyar and Kim, 2018).

To fill this gap, based on previous literature on migrant integration policy index (in particular, MIPEX), we constructed the Interstate Migration Policy Index (IMPEX), to assess policies on integration of interstate migrants. The index focuses on the subnational policy level to create a tool that accounts for state legislation and interstate variations.

In the creation of IMPEX we faced several challenges. Unlike MIPEX, there were almost no guiding principles or frameworks for the conception of the policy areas, dimensions, and indicators used to construct IMPEX. We had to fine-tune international standards to the subnational level and utilise the relatively limited literature on migration policies and internal migration in India. Even within this literature, there is little consensus on the experiences and needs of internal migrants. Other challenges rested in the difficulties to access the texts of state laws as those were in the state language and the state government websites were often outdated.

We analysed the seven of the major migrant-receiving states in India. By showing there are variations between states in almost all areas, the empirical data confirms the importance of analysing the different subnational policy frameworks. The results of the evaluation suggest that that policy-makers in India have a long journey ahead in adopting inclusive policy frameworks – at least in the states considered in our research, which, however, account for 51 per cent of interstate migrants. In particular, social welfare systems and political participation policy measures need to be improved to ensure integration of Indian migrants in their state of destination. Often, policy measures are restricted to the domiciles of state; and when access measures exist, migrants' unique vulnerabilities are ignored, making it very difficult in practice for them to access to benefits and provisions. This holds true across almost all the policy areas covered by IMPEX 2019. Kerala represents the major exception due to its historical labour-friendly, welfare-oriented policy regime and emigration history, while Delhi and Gujarat largely ignore interstate migrants in their policies.

IMPEX in its present form also has several limitations. The index, like MIPEX, is an *ex ante* policy evaluation tool and the scores are not reflective of the quality of policy implementation (intermediate evaluation) or the policy impact on migrant outcomes (*ex post* evaluation). There are other limitations of the MIPEX methodology which carry over to IMPEX, such as the equal weightage of all policy indicators, which does not consider the relevance of the measured dimension (EC-JRC, 2018). Furthermore, there is also a need to understand the relative importance of different policy indicators for different migrants. For instance, the needs of Bengali migrants in rural Kerala are different from the needs of Bihari migrants in urban Maharashtra. All these limitations leave room for future refinement of IMPEX and its empirical applications. On this, there is a clear need to scale up IMPEX and cover all the states in India, to have a complete picture of the subnational policy frameworks in India.

Nonetheless, IMPEX's evaluation exercise provides the preliminary steps towards recognising the policy areas and the institutional structure required for formulating an effective internal migration policy framework. The primary contribution of the article is to the field of policy indicators at the state/regional level, by introducing the Interstate Migration Policy Index (IMPEX). To our knowledge, IMPEX is one of the first attempts to address state/regional policies for integration of internal/interstate migrants, in particular for developing countries. IMPEX individuates the relevant policy areas and illustrates the methodology to assess state/regional

policies. Despite IMPEX being tailored to the Indian situation, the methodology employed can be replicated in other developing (and developed) countries where the state/regional administrative levels are particularly relevant.

The article also provides insights on the policies to foster integration of interstate migrants. The IMPEX exercise is also the first step towards creating a framework for comparability – between states and overtime for the same state. Not only will it allow for tracing the improvement or deterioration of state policies for interstate migrants, it will also allow for the facilitation of knowledge sharing among states.

In this regard, from a policy making perspective, the article draws attention to the importance of having policy frameworks that address interstate migration in developing countries, rather than only international migrants. Integration policy in developing countries should address interstate migrants as they face the same difficulties as international migrants, and there is an overall lack of overall and targeted policies to support their integration – at least in the Indian states that were object to our evaluation. Furthermore, the article calls for a constant monitoring of the nature and state of the policies to foster integration of both international and internal migrants, at a state/regional level in the countries where the state/regional level is particularly relevant.

## NOTES

1. IMPEX, being a review of state legislation does not take into consideration any Central legislation, but does account for State Rules which build on existing Central level provisions. For example, the Right to Education Act is a centrally passed law, but only some states have focused on the RTE rights of migrant children in their Rules; this influences their IMPEX Education score.
2. This limits the political agency of migrants to a great extent (Bird and Deshingkar, 2009). While rights such as right to protest are also a key part of political agency, they are constitutionally guaranteed ones and as such, do not hold relevance in the IMPEX evaluation which focuses on state level integration policies.
3. By and large, literature on the national level has confirmed this assumption, by showing the positive effect of IMPEX scores on international migrants' integration outcomes (Bilgili et al, 2015).
4. Literature also underlines that an alternative strategy is to ex-post create different sub-areas based on the underlying dimensions in the data, based on statistical analysis (e.g., Principal Component Analysis) (see, Ruedin, 2011 and 2015). Also due to the explorative nature of our undertaking and limitations in the number of cases, we decided to opt for the ex-ante procedure.
5. However, other different aggregation methods in index construction are available, such as the geometric mean and the Condorcet approach (Bjerre et al., 2019). Furthermore, also ex-post aggregation based on the different underlying dimensions disclosed by statistical analysis (e.g., Principal Component Analysis) can be also used (Ruedin, 2011 and 2015). The discussion of the different aggregation methods goes beyond the scope of this article.
6. If individuals migrate leaving their families, land and property in the area of origin (source), they may do so with the intention of reverting back to the source. This is highly applicable to those migrants who work in precarious conditions at destination or if the cost of permanent relocation is high relative to its benefits. In such a case, although individuals may have a hold in the destination areas, such migration can be termed as semi-permanent or long-term circular, see UNESCO AND UNICEF (2011).
7. As per National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) permanent migration is defined based on nature of movement. If a migrant intended to stay at the place of enumeration and does not plan to move again to the last usual place of residence or to any other place, then she is a permanent migrant.

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Supporting Information may be found online in the supporting information tab for this article:

**Appendix S1.** IMPEX 2019 List of Policy Indicators.

**Appendix S2.** IMPEX 2019 Final Results for all 7 States.

**Appendix S3.** Area-by-area summary of the main results.