

6. National Survey on Migration in India- Social Issues

The National Statistics Office (NSO), under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), has announced a dedicated nationwide Survey on Migration

National Survey on Migration in India- Context, Significance and Policy Linkages

About the National Survey on Migration (2026–27)

Overview

The National Survey on Migration will be conducted from July 2026 to June 2027. It aims to generate fresh, granular and nationally representative data on migration patterns in India. The survey is being undertaken by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). It seeks to address long-standing data gaps on internal migration, which is a critical yet under-measured driver of India's economic transformation.

Rationale for the Survey

India's migration data has largely been derived from-

1. Decennial Census
2. Labour force surveys

These sources-

1. Do not capture dynamic and seasonal migration adequately.
2. Often under-represent short-term, circular and informal migration.

Rapid urbanisation, labour mobility, and post-pandemic shifts have created the need for updated evidence.

Objectives of the Survey

Mapping the Extent and Nature of Migration

To estimate-

1. Rural-urban migration
2. Urban-urban migration
3. Inter-state and intra-state migration

Helps assess spatial patterns of labour mobility and regional imbalances.

Understanding Reasons for Migration

Captures diverse drivers such as-

1. Employment and income opportunities
2. Education
3. Marriage
4. Distress factors (climate shocks, agrarian stress)

Studying Return and Seasonal Migration

Focus on-

1. Temporary and circular migration
2. Post-crisis return migration (e.g., pandemics, economic shocks)

Crucial for designing responsive labour and welfare policies.

Profiling Migrant Workers

Collection of data on-

1. Employment status
2. Sectoral distribution

3. Wages and job security
4. Living and working conditions

Enables assessment of informality, vulnerability and social protection gaps.

Measuring Labour Mobility and Economic Linkages

Helps understand-

1. Labour market integration
2. Contribution of migrants to urban growth and productivity

Fills critical gaps in existing labour and demographic datasets.

Significance and Policy Impact

Evidence-Based Policymaking

Survey data will support informed decision-making in-

1. Urban planning and affordable housing
2. Public transport and mobility infrastructure
3. Employment generation strategies
4. Social security and welfare targeting

Urban Governance and Planning

Enables cities to-

1. Anticipate migrant inflows
2. Plan housing, sanitation and basic services

Supports sustainable urbanisation and reduces pressure on informal settlements.

Labour and Skill Policy Design

Helps align-

1. Skill development programs
2. Industrial and employment policies

Ensures better matching between labour supply and demand.

Migrant Welfare and Social Inclusion- Assists in designing portable and inclusive welfare systems.

Strengthens protection for migrants and host communities alike.

Previous Migration Data and Trends

Major Data Sources

1. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2020-21
2. Multiple Indicator Survey 2020-21

Key Findings from PLFS 2020-21

Overall Migration Rate- Total migration rate in India- 28.9%

Gender-Wise Migration Pattern

1. Males- 10.7%
2. Females- 47.9%

Indicates strong gender differentiation in migration drivers.

Gender-Specific Reasons for Migration

Female Migration- Marriage accounts for 86.8% of female migration. Reflects persistent social and cultural norms.

Male Migration- Employment and search for better jobs constitute 22.8%. Closely linked to urbanisation and regional economic disparities.

Measures to Address Migration in India

Rural Development Initiatives (Reducing Distress Migration)

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)

Promotes–

1. Self-Help Groups (SHGs)
2. Skill training
3. Sustainable livelihoods

Special focus on women through initiatives such as Lakhpati Didi. Aims to generate local income opportunities, reducing forced migration.

Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025

Replaced MGNREGA, 2005.

Key features– Statutory guarantee of 125 days of wage employment per rural household annually.

Provision for unemployment allowance. Seeks to provide income security and stabilise rural livelihoods.

Urban Resilience Initiatives (Managing Migration Inflows)

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

Focus areas–

1. Water supply
2. Sewerage
3. Urban transport
4. Green spaces

Improves liveability in cities experiencing migrant inflows.

Smart Cities Mission

Develops 100+ cities with–

1. Technology-enabled governance
2. Improved service delivery
3. Better urban mobility and housing

Helps cities absorb migration pressures more efficiently.

Transit-Oriented Development (ToD)

Encourages–

1. High-density, mixed-use development near public transport hubs

Reduces–

2. Urban sprawl
3. Commute time and costs for migrant workers

Enhances access to jobs and services.

Workers' Welfare and Social Security Measures

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana (PMSYM)

Provides– Old-age pension to unorganised workers, including migrants. Government matches worker contributions. Enhances long-term income security.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)

Ensures– Free or subsidised food grains during crises. Acts as a crucial safety net for migrant households.

One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)

Enables- Interstate portability of PDS benefits. Addresses food insecurity among mobile populations. Strengthens the idea of “portability of entitlements”.

Concluding Assessment

The National Survey on Migration (2026–27) marks a decisive shift towards data-driven governance in managing internal migration. By capturing the scale, nature and vulnerabilities of migrant populations, it will–

1. Improve urban and rural planning
2. Strengthen labour market policies
3. Enable inclusive and portable social protection

When combined with ongoing rural, urban and welfare initiatives, the survey can help transform migration from a distress-driven necessity into a development-enabling choice.

Source- <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2222097®=3&lang=1#~~~text=According%20to%20the%20Periodic%20Labour,male%20and%2047.9%25%20among%20female.>

