Indian Women’s Migration to the EU

India-EU Cooperation and Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Project:

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Indian Women’s Migration to the EU

Parvati Raghuram
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Executive summary

It is a well-documented fact that the number of women migrants has increased exponentially across the globe, and Indian women migrants are a small but important contributor to these stocks. This study aims at shining a spotlight on Indian migrant women with regular immigration status, living and working in the European Union (EU). However, there was not enough data to put together information on Indian women with irregular immigration status in the EU.

The study begins with an overview of Indian migrant stocks and flows into the EU-27 and goes on to focus on the key migration categories for first permits: employment, family and education. The paper also examines migration trends, definitions and the experiences of Indian women migrants in the EU.
Methodology

The data for this paper is drawn from available quantitative data on migration into the EU-27. The primary source used was Eurostat along with a literature review. In addition, 36 interviews were conducted with migrant students, workers, family migrants, academics working on migration and migrant community representatives and journalists.

Overview of findings

As per data from 2020, there were 23 million non-EU-27 citizens living in the EU, of which 1 per cent were Indian. The total Indian population in the EU-27 has been steadily increasing over time, numbering 275,533 persons in 2011 to 447,781 persons in 2019; it is noteworthy that 43 per cent of this population is women.

Indian women come to the EU under three main categories:

1. Workers
2. Family members
3. Students

Indian women migrating as workers

In 2019, women made up nearly 18 per cent of the migration flows from India into the EU for employment, and Germany (1,400) Netherlands (1,254) and Sweden (902) received the largest number of Indian women migrants.

Indian women are employed in the public and private sectors and occupy a variety of roles. They work as waged employees in small, medium and large firms and also as entrepreneurs running niche businesses. Depending on their reason for entry to EU, Indian women are engaged in different sectors including IT, medicine and nursing, research, manufacturing, language assistants and cultural mediators, caregiving and domestic work.

As workers, Indian women face a number of barriers to employment, and these often tend to be sector-specific. For example, in the IT sector in the EU, jobs tend to be short term and have little certainty about the length of stay with a particular client or in a country or town as these depend on the client’s requirements. This uncertainty is usually problematic for women with children as frequent mobility disrupts children’s education. Housework often remains gendered, placing additional pressure on working women. Further, they sometimes also struggle to be accepted at work because of their ethnicity and gender because even when there are women employees in a company, they are likely to be in secretarial or HR roles, leading to women dropping out of the workplace.

In the healthcare sector, doctors whose qualifications are from outside the EU are not offered training posts. Indian women doctors often take non-consultant posts, which are not as well paid and where doctors are not allowed to work independently, to avoid the repeated mobility that training requires. As these are not career-grade posts, it means that women’s career growth is stalled. Indian nurses, like all non-EU migrant nurses, are likely to be employed in the private sector, or as employees of co-operatives or by temporary work agencies. These jobs are characterized by lower wages, poor working conditions, long working hours and doing harder shifts than locally trained colleagues.

Issues for Indian women workers migrating to the EU

Deskilling has been acknowledged as a global issue for migrant women, and for Indian women it may be related to:

- their visa category,
- the characteristics of the labour market,
- lack of relevant local social networks,
- inability to speak the language, or
- the nature of their qualifications.
Indian women migrating as family members

In 2019, women made up over two thirds of the annual migration flows for family reasons from India to the EU. Of the total 41,091 first residence permits in the family category issued to Indian migrants in 2019, nearly 70 per cent were issued by a small group of countries: Germany (22 per cent), Italy (16 per cent), Netherlands (14 per cent), Sweden (11 per cent) and Spain (8 per cent).

Some of the issues that women migrating as family members include issues of unemployment because where women enter through the family reunification route without a Single Permit, they may acquire residence status but not access to employment. There are also a number of variations in the rights to work for dependants of intra-company transfer workers coming through the Single Permit.

In addition, there are a number of other stereotypical perceptions that Indian women face, and there is little awareness of their skills, leading to deskilling. Employers also assume that because Indian women have entered through the family route, they are not interested in their careers. Hence, despite having access to a labour market, they are not recognized as economic entities and are only seen as dependents.

Women joining migrants working in lower-skilled sectors join families with more tenuous rights. An important factor affecting Indian migrant women entering through the family route is the period they must remain with their partner before they achieve autonomous rights. This is a very important issue for migrant women facing domestic abuse. They may, however, also put up with abusive partners as they do not know what rights they have or to whom they can turn.

Indian women migrating as students

Students are the fastest growing group of migrants from India to the EU. Globally, students from India make up the second-largest cohort of international students in the EU after China. In 2019, there were 31,000 students from India in the EU, and women made up 30 per cent of the annual flows for education, with Germany (2,048), Ireland (1,706) and France (1,473) being the countries which received most international Indian women students.

One of the key issues Indian women students face is the male-dominated STEM focus of previous migration streams. Women who take up social sciences or pure sciences subjects are often left out, or are not aware, of the information available on social media.

Recommendations

This paper makes a number of recommendations to address the issues faced by Indian women migrants in regular immigration status and to enable better access to rights and opportunities. These include:

- Gender mainstreaming by enabling greater ease in switching visa categories, permitting spouses the right to work across visa categories and improving messaging about Indian women migrants
- Improving the portability of skills and qualifications by ensuring that a refreshed Blue Card Scheme is reviewed through a gender lens and standardizing professional qualification recognition to minimize skills mismatch
- Improving access to and ensuring the portability of rights by encouraging women to find out about and join workers organizations for more information of their rights, have bargaining power and protection.
- Addressing social welfare and family concerns by provide flexible, low-cost childcare for migrants
- Improving research on Indian women migrants by ensuring improved granularity (by gender and source country) of data for different employment sectors and for this data to be made available through Eurostat
The number of migrant women globally has grown rapidly during the past two decades. In 2019, the share of women among all international migrants reached 51.4 per cent (United Nations et al. 2019). In EU-27 in 2020, there were 23 million non-EU-27 citizens, of whom 54 per cent were men and 46 per cent women (Eurostat 2021). However, there are significant differences between countries in the gender breakdown of migrant stocks: Croatia had the highest proportion of men in its migrant stocks (75 per cent), while Cyprus had the highest proportion of migrant women (53 per cent).
India is a growing contributor to these migrant stocks. In 2019, Indian women and men constituted 2.1 per cent and 2.4 per cent respectively of Europe’s international immigrants1 (with permits for durations of over 12 months; including intra-European migrants). In the same year, Indians were among the top three non-EU nationals entering 15 of the EU-27 countries for reasons of employment (van Nierop et al. 2021). In some countries such as Denmark, Indian nationals have been the second largest non-EU, non-refugee migrant group (Bontenbal and Lillie 2019).

There is a growing body of academic research examining these migrant streams. Publications such as the India Migration Report (Rajan 2019) provide a cross-sectional view of the different types of mobility streams – labour migration, education, family unification and undocumented migrants. More focused studies explore skilled, seasonal and student migration along particular routes (Khadria 2004; Tejada et al. 2014), such as seasonal migration for agriculture between India and Italy (CARIM–India project2) and student migration between India and Germany (Jayadeva 2020). Moreover, both the EU–India relations that underpin some of these mobilities (Jain and Sachdeva 2019) and the specific issues facing Indian women in the diaspora have also been explored (Pande 2018).

Since 2001, there has been a rise in women migrants from third countries entering the EU as primary migrants, rather than through family reunification (European Commission 2019). This increase in women workers migrating to the EU is largely attributable to labour shortages in the services sector, in jobs such as nursing, care and domestic work. In fact, migrant women working as personal care assistants are one of the largest contributors to the feminization of migration flows to Europe (Lazaridis 2015). Other sectors where migrant women from non-EU countries are overrepresented in comparison to European-born women include cleaning and restaurant services (OECD 2017). However, migrant women are also present and play an important part in other sectors such as nursing, medicine and information technology (IT) (Stievaño et al. 2017). Similar increases in migrant women entering the EU for reasons of employment can also be seen among Indian migrants.

Most studies have focused on Indian women who have migrated into the EU as family migrants or on the familial roles played by Indian migrant women (Köu et al. 2017). This background paper focuses on Indian migrant women who are living and working in Europe. It begins with an overview of Indian migrant stocks and flows in Europe. The next three sections focus on the key migration categories for first permits: employment, family and education, addressing (1) definitions, (2) migration trends and (3) the experiences of women. The policy frameworks currently shaping each migrant group are provided in Appendix 1.

1.1. Methodology

This paper draws on quantitative data on migration into the EU-27 where available. The primary source was Eurostat, and this was accompanied by a review of the existing literature. Finally, 36 interviews were conducted with migrant students, workers, family migrants, academics working on migration, migrant community representatives who advocate on behalf of migrants, and journalists. The interviews were conducted online by Parvati Raghuram, Gunjan Sondhi and Caterina Mazzilli between November 2020 and May 2021. Further details of the interviews are provided in Appendix 2.

In choosing interviewees, attempts were made to cover major groups by origin regions in India, spread across the EU-27, and to capture key policy

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1 Eurostat, online data code: MIGR_IMM1CTZ; Eurostat definition immigration is the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country [Eurostat International Migration Statistics].

2 India–EU Migration website
issues. The interviews began with an explanation of the purpose of the study, the output and assurances around anonymity, and the data management procedure. Responses to the questions asked enabled a better understanding of the migration flows, the experiences of the migrants and the issues they faced. The fieldwork received ethical approval from the Open University (HREC/3778/Raghuram), and all the data has been anonymized. This was accompanied by an analysis of social media and sharing platforms – YouTube, WhatsApp groups and Facebook. All this data was analysed to obtain a deeper understanding of what is happening in the Indian community’s social media. However, given the breadth of the topic and the amount of material collected, not all our findings could be presented in this study.
Indians in the EU: Migrant stocks and flows

Migration flows and stock data are important to understand migration patterns. Flow data shows new migrant arrivals, i.e., residence permits granted in each year, while stocks show the number of migrants already in a country. First permits are issued to third-country nationals (TCNs) for stays for a minimum period of three months. The data on first permits (also called resident permits) issued by EU countries therefore captures the main flows into the EU.
2.1. Stocks

Over the past decade, the total Indian population in the EU-27 has increased from 275,533 in 2011 to 447,781 in 2019 (see figure 1), accounting for about 1 per cent of the total foreign-born population in the EU. Italy accounts for approximately 34 per cent for the total Indian-born population across EU countries.

In 2019, Indian women made up 43 per cent of the total Indian population across the EU-27 countries (figure 2). Caution is advised when considering these figures, as granular gender-disaggregated data on the Indian-born population for each Member State (MS) is not necessarily available.

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**Figure 1.** Total Indian-born population in the EU-27, 2011–19

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop3ctb)

**Figure 2.** Indian-born population in the EU-27 by sex, 2019 (in percentage)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop3ctb)
The percentage varies across EU MS. In 2019, the MS with near gender parity in their Indian-born population were Denmark, Belgium and France (all at 48 per cent). In the same year, the top five EU countries with the largest Indian-born population were Italy, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. These MS also have high proportions of women, ranging from 55 per cent in Sweden and 51 per cent in the Netherlands to 40 per cent in Italy.

In 2019, Indians were the third-largest recipients of first permits in the EU-27 countries, with 130,947 total permits issued across the permit categories of family, education, employment and others. Employment and family made up the largest categories in which residence permits were issued.

The proportion of Indians entering as family migrants fell from 42 per cent of the total Indian migrants in 2015 to 32 per cent in 2019. The employment stream proportions increased from 35 to 38 per cent and student migration from 15 to 25 per cent in the same period (figure 3).

Figure 4 provides the breakdown of residence permits by sex. The family stream is female-dominated (70 per cent), while the employment stream is male-dominated (80 per cent).

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3 Data for work extracted from table migr_resocc; family from table migr_resfam; education from table migr_edu; and other from table migr_oth.
In 2017, across the EU MS, the gender composition of the flows of Indian migrants was 62 per cent male and 38 per cent female. This pattern of flows is also seen in selected EU countries. The highest proportion of men are in new countries of migration, such as Latvia (85 per cent) and Lithuania (85 per cent). Countries such as Italy, which already have significant numbers of employed women migrants, have comparatively more gender-balanced profiles with regards to Indian migrant flows (see figure 5). This is especially the case where there are also significant flows of women moving as family migrants.

4 Author’s calculations based on data available in Eurostat table Migr_Resfas

5 Data unavailable for Germany, Malta, Slovakia and Finland; 2017 data has been used rather than the most recent available, as complete gendered data is unavailable by country.
Those who enter the EU through residence permits for employment are categorized as labour migrants. However, Indian women migrants, like all labour migrants, may be in employment even when they have not entered the EU through the labour market route. For instance, students may be in work while studying; others may move into post-study work visas as part of a two-step migration process, mirroring the practices of other settler states such as Canada, where students convert from student status to employment visas. Those who move for employment may also move out of work if their spouses take on work. Finally, labour migrants also move between different types of work and across categories, although current data often does not capture this.
Although labour migration between India and the EU has a long-standing history, it has changed over time based on labour demands within the EU and resultant changes to the EU policy framework (Fairst et al. 2017). Moreover, the discourse of migration has also changed as countries recognize that migration is often not temporary. Countries like Germany have therefore shifted from the language of migration to that of immigration (Thym 2019).

Labour migrants were the single largest group among Indian migrants in the EU in 2019, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the annual flows (see figure 3). However, the proportion of labour migrants to family migrants varies across Europe and by gender. Labour migrants are usually distinguished by their skill level: highly skilled (highly qualified) and low-skilled, which often includes agricultural and seasonal workers and those working in care and domestic work. Both skilled and unskilled women move from India to the EU in significant numbers. This section focuses on some of the wide range of sectors, identifying specific concerns and issues faced by Indian migrant women.

3.1. Definition

Migrants moving to the EU for work may stay for periods varying from three months (especially for seasonal work) to several years (Eurostat 2020). Educational status and qualifications work to sort migrants with EU qualifications from those who have obtained their qualifications outside the EU, and also by level of qualifications (Raghuram 2021). Highly skilled migrants are usually defined as those with tertiary qualifications.

The EU has adopted common rules, through several EU directives, on admission conditions to obtain a residence and work permit for the following categories of migrants:

- Intra-corporate transferees (ICTs)
- Seasonal workers
- Blue Card holders (highly qualified workers)
- Students and researchers

In the case of the EU Blue Card permit, the EU scheme coexists with highly qualified worker schemes that fall under national legislation.

However, there are some difficulties in collating data using these categories alone. For a study that covers the EU-27, one way to address this variability in data definitions, programmes and data availability is to look at the labour market sectors in which women are employed. Moreover, as stated in chapter 2, Indian migrant women may be in employment even if they have not entered the EU for reasons of employment. Focusing on different labour market sectors also captures some of the empirical variability across sectors and offers policy insights based on the experiences of Indian women in different parts of the EU labour market. We have therefore adopted this approach in the rest of this study.
3.2. Trends and patterns

In 2019, a total of 50,182 first residence permits were granted to Indian men and women for reasons of employment within the EU-27, and Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden were the top three destination countries (figure 6).

Table 1. Countries where Indians are amongst the top 3 nationalities receiving first permits for remunerated activities, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Per cent of all residence permits for remunerated activity</th>
<th>Position in top 3 nationalities receiving residence permits for remunerated activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Cyprus</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-27</td>
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Until recently, migrant women who were TCNs were analysed through a welfare lens, i.e., as those who required welfare rather than as workers (Kofman et al. 2000). More recently, researchers and policymakers have begun to recognize the role of migrant women in the low-skilled sectors of the labour market. Much of this research has been on feminized sectors such as domestic work and care (EFFAT 2015), with much less attention paid to male-dominated sectors, where women also play a role (Raghuram 2008). However, there is still very little research that fully recognizes women’s roles in the range of sectors and their varieties of skills across the socially reproductive sectors as well as within production (Kofman and Raghuram 2015). This is also important for research on Indian women migrants in the EU.

6 Extracted from van Nierop et al. (2021, p 82) drawing on Eurostat data on 26/05/2020.
As per Eurostat data, in 2019, women made up nearly 18 per cent of the flows from India into the EU for employment. Germany (1,400), the Netherlands (1,254) and Sweden (902) received the largest number of women migrants from India in 2019 in mainly the high-skilled category. Cyprus received the highest proportion of women migrants – over 50 per cent of all migrants were women. The large female flow to Cyprus can be attributed to the high demand for domestic work (Interview 35), a female-dominated sector.

Of the total permits for employment issued to Indian migrants in Europe in 2019, nearly 32 per cent were issued to highly skilled workers. Four per cent each were given to seasonal workers and research-related work but, significantly, 60 per cent of the permits were issued for the “other” category, which may include high-skilled workers (who did not go through the Blue Card scheme), seasonal workers, au pairs, missionaries, or members of a religious order, work permit trainees, etc. Sex-disaggregated data for these variables is unfortunately not publicly available.

The destination countries for Indians (men and women) migrating for “other work” are varied. In 2019, the top four destination countries for Indian migrants within the EU-27 were Portugal, Germany, Poland and Malta. Many of these workers are employed as taxi and bus drivers in the hospitality industry and in parts of the agricultural sector. Some of these sectors are heavily male-dominated but are indicative of the shifting patterns of the wider Indian mobility to Europe in the last decade. Even sectors such as hospitality, which are usually female-dominated, have seen greater recruitment of Indian men than Indian women (Indian male recruiter, Interviewee 36); however, gender-disaggregated data for occupational sectors by nationality of migration is not publicly and consistently available.

The following section explores the experiences of Indian migrant women in selected sectors of the EU labour market, irrespective of the entry visa under which they came. This is because women who move as spouses and students also enter these sectors and share commonalities with those who move for work.

3.3. Experiences

One of the most notable findings from our research is the varieties of sectors and roles in which Indian women are employed. They work in
3.3.1. Information technology

IT has become one of the major sectors of the Indian economy and is an important export earner for India. Fourteen per cent of this revenue comes through the movement of people to work in client sites (Reserve Bank of India 2018), including in Europe. Moreover, Indian IT firms are also undertaking near-shoring (Kugiel & Pedziwiatr 2014), investing in offices in eastern Europe in order to be near the large Western European market, leading to the migration of Indian IT workers – men and women – into these countries (Gmaj 2017). According to the Indian Government (Ministry of External Affairs 2020), there are 13 Indian IT companies operating in Poland. They employ over 10,000 professionals in Poland, including many Indian male and female migrants (Ministry of External Affairs 2020).

IT workers in India opt for on-site work as it is seen as very important for career development, for developing soft skills, particularly managerial experience, and for earning a good income (Sondhi et al. 2019). However, these jobs are greatly sought after and are difficult to get. Women face multiple barriers in accessing these roles at an individual level, including low self-confidence, issues around family care responsibilities and, lastly, limited progression opportunities at the firm and sectoral levels (Raghuram et al. 2020). For instance, only just over 10 per cent of the work permits issued to migrant IT workers in Sweden between 2008 and 2010 were given to women, although 13 per cent of those reporting as computer specialists were women (Hedberg et al. 2014).

Many IT workers are on short contracts. They are not told in advance about how long they will stay with a particular client, town or country (Indian migrant woman in the IT sector, Sweden, Interviewee 9). This uncertainty poses particular challenges for women who have to move from city to city, especially where the employers do not provide or facilitate housing. The length of stay also raises issues for women who move with children, as frequent mobility disrupts children’s

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8 Those entering as family or for study may also be employed in some Group 1 sectors.

9 In 2019, overall Indian imports in all sectors into Poland totalled a value of US$3 billion, while investment by Poland in India is estimated at US$672 million (Ministry of External Affairs 2020).

10 More recent data is not freely available.
education. Women with children in middle school are sometimes reluctant to take up such postings even if they are good for their careers. Where women do move with partners, it is not always easy for the partners to obtain work permits or find jobs commensurate with their skills (see table 2 in section 5.4 for more details). Moreover, housework still often remains gendered, placing additional pressure on working women (Kõu and Bailey 2017).

Indian migrant women are usually based in the clients’ offices, and both workplace and after-work socialization can be limited (Indian migrant worker, interviewee 9; Butsch 2018). Moreover, they often move within a team and report to an Indian manager, so women are managing the gendered expectations of Indian bosses as well as those of the destination country workplace (Amrute 2016).

The gendered cultures of work became particularly significant when IT workers entered through the Blue Card scheme (Niraula and Valentin 2019) and moved into small firms where most other employees were nationals. Indian women struggle to be accepted at work because of both their ethnicity and their gender (Migrant intermediary, Denmark, Interviewee 20; and for Germany, see Grigoleit-Richter 2017) as even when there are women employees, they are likely to be in secretarial or human resources (HR) roles.11 This has led to women dropping out from work (Interviewee 20). Getting back into another job also becomes difficult in smaller cities and in smaller countries with a culture of recruiting through social networks. Where there are large groups of Indians working, in an IT park for instance, they socialize with other Indians, often remaining relatively distinct from local populations (Indian migrant woman in the IT sector, Sweden, Interviewee 9). The ability to mix with other women IT workers, usually Indians, enables such women to continue more easily in their workplace. Mentoring schemes have been set up to support skilled migrant women in the workplace, including the Swedish Minerva Foundation and the Danish Center for Research on Women and Gender’s (KVINFO) Mentor Network in Denmark, who, together with the Norwegian Centre for Equality, established a Nordic mentor network in 2014. Their programmes are in different degrees of maturity, but all of them pay particular attention to gender issues. Indian women in the IT sector were participants in the Danish programme (Migrant intermediary, Denmark, Interviewee 20). Support for targeted gendered mentoring programmes for migrants and gender awareness programmes for nationals is particularly relevant in the case of Indian migrant women in the IT sector, where the gender discrepancy between the national IT workforce (Layton 2019) and Indian migrants is high.

There are differences between the rights of those who come in as ICTs and those who move as posted workers.12 ICTs are TCN employees of a non-EU company who move to the EU but continue to be employed by their parent company. Posted workers, on the other hand, can be non-EU nationals who are posted in companies that are located in EU countries for tax purposes but then onshore workers to sites in other EU countries.13 The role of Indian women in posted working and their rights needs further study.

3.3.2. Medicine

Within the EU-27 group of countries, Germany and Ireland are among the most important destination countries for Indian-trained doctors. In most other EU countries, the number of Indian qualified migrant doctors remains very small (Bhattacharjee 2018).

Germany is notable here, as there has been a continual increase of Indian-trained doctors in Germany over the past 10 years (figure 7). Gender-differentiated data on the sector is hard to obtain, but, following figures from countries like the UK (Raghuram et al. 2006), which is also a destination country for Indian doctors, it may be surmised that women form a substantial minority of these flows.

Ireland also has a significant intake of non-EU doctors, including from India. Doctors who trained in non-EU countries including India – men and women – overwhelmingly occupy non-training service posts (non-consultant hospital doctors). Non-EU migrants hold 74 per cent of all such posts in Ireland, and Indian-trained doctors form an important part of this cohort

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11 Although there are no detailed studies of the different pathways of Indian migrant IT workers and EU nationals working in their own countries, data from the UK suggests that Indian women tend to occupy technical roles, while British women in IT often move into HR or management (Raghuram et al. 2020; Raghuram and Sondhi 2020).
(Talbot 2013; Tyrrell et al. 2016). This is because doctors who have qualified outside the EU are not offered training posts. They therefore occupy the non-consultant posts, which are less well paid and where doctors are not allowed to work independently (Kamal 2020). Women doctors often take up these posts as they have fewer on-call requirements, and this also avoids repeated mobility – changing hospitals and cities – that training requires (Indian migrant nurse, Ireland, Interviewee 10). As doctors in India often marry other doctors, this allows them to manage childcare rather than juggling on-call rotas of both partners (Raghuram 2009). However, as these are not career-grade posts, it means that women’s career growth is stalled. The availability of such posts however helps to meet labour market shortages (Raghuram et al. 2014). Additionally, the type of posts offered to foreign-trained doctors also pose barriers to their transition to permanent residency, which has led to issues of retention within a sector in which there are significant skills shortages (Brugha et al. 2015).

Due to this barrier, countries such as Ireland are likely to be temporary stops on international career trajectories rather than final destinations for a migrant health workforce. These issues are not specific to Indian women but, as in the case of the UK, Indian-trained women doctors form an important part of the flow of migrant doctors to Ireland and are likely to have similar outcomes, given the structural similarities between the UK and Irish medical services (Ireland 2020). The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on these mobilities is currently unclear.

3.3.3. Nursing

India had a history of exporting nurses to countries like Germany in the 1960s and ’70s (Butsch 2018; Migration scholar, Denmark, Interviewee 31). These flows became a trickle over the decades, and India is only a minor contributor to EU nurse flows currently. For instance, in 2016, only 4 per cent of those applying for recognition of foreign nursing qualifications in Germany reported their country of origin as India (Reiff et al. 2020). Comparable country data on migrant Indian nurses is unavailable due to incomplete datasets. Amongst the EU-27 group of countries, Ireland, Italy and Belgium are the top three destination countries for Indian-trained nurses. However, data for Ireland is not comparable.
As figure 8 shows, the stocks in Italy are larger than those in Belgium. This is, in part, because Italy has a longer history of employing Indian-trained nurses (figure 9). Although there were substantial flows of Indian nurse migrants to Italy, especially between 2000–10, since 2011 there has been a steep decline because of the financial crisis there. This drop in Indian migrant nurses has, since 2016, begun to impact the stocks, as seen in the figure below. There appeared to be a change in the trend in 2018; however, the impact of COVID-19 is likely to shape future trends of this flow and, consequently, the future stocks of Indian nurses in Italy.
Nursing remains a female-dominated sector, with women making up approximately 90 per cent of the nursing workforce (WHO 2020), although men are a growing part of these flows. Research on migration from India suggests that there is a higher proportion of men amongst the migrant nurses abroad than there is in India (Walton-Roberts 2019). Indian migrant nurses in Italy primarily come from Kerala, which has a long history of out-migration of nurses. It is salient that a number of the nurses are Catholic, making it easier for Italians to accept nurses (and carers) from this region of India, where Catholics are a significant minority (Interview, Manfred; Kodoth and Jacob 2013).

The other major source of migrant nurses is Punjab. There is only one substantive study of Indian migrant nurses that offers gender-differentiated data by region of origin in India (Bourgeault et al. 2020). Although it focuses on migrant nurses to Canada, the findings are worth repeating because of the unique insights they offer on the drivers of migration in source regions. The future of the next generation appeared as a common reason for emigration for those from Punjab but was less important for those from Kerala. Malayali men, and to some extent Punjabi women, were most concerned about the low wages for nursing in India, while personal safety was an important concern for female migrant health workers from Punjab. Similar studies need to be undertaken in the EU context.

Indian nurses, like all non-EU migrant nurses, are likely to be employed in the private sector or as employees of co-operatives or temporary work agencies (Castagnone and Salis 2015). A five-country study (Germany, Italy, Spain, Ireland and the UK) found that foreign-trained health workers were usually in lower-paid jobs, had poorer working conditions, worked longer hours and did the harder shifts than locally trained colleagues.

These issues are likely to affect Indian nurses in Italy and Ireland in particular, the two countries where we see larger numbers of Indian nurses (Villosio 2015). All nurses in Italy and Ireland have been particularly affected by the economic downturn. They have seen falls in salaries as countries have cut back on welfare spending. Stievano et al.’s study of migrant nurses in Italy (2017) suggests that nurses regret moving to Italy but are reluctant to move on despite job opportunities because they want to accrue citizenship and pension rights. They found that staffing shortages have resulted in all nurses being overworked, leaving them with little time for professional development activities. Indian-qualified nurses are particularly disadvantaged by these highly hierarchical medical systems, as they are not treated as well as Italian-qualified migrants. In Ireland too there were redundancy schemes that led to a reduction in the workforce while the population that requires nursing care increased (Rafferty et al. 2019), leading to increased work pressures for all nurses (Indian migrant nurse in Ireland, Interviewee 10). Moreover, nurses did not get adequate information about the cultural aspects of nursing in Ireland, career pathways and the rights of dependents, which led some nurses and their families to feel frustrated with their experience in Ireland (Interviewee 10). These pressures have led to the outward migration of foreign-qualified nurses from Ireland (Humphries et al. 2015).

How these movements are being reshaped by COVID-19 is yet unclear. Some rules about recruitment and registration of migrant healthcare professionals have been changed to meet the sharp increase in demand due to the pandemic. In Italy, this led to the introduction of a decree, Cura Italia, which allows public sector hospitals to recruit foreign-trained health professionals. This overturns Article 38 (introduced in 2001), which restricted Italy’s public sector employment legislation to EU citizens, permanent residents and those living with refugee status or humanitarian protection. This is an evolving picture.

India is not on the Health Workforce Support and Safeguards List of the World Health Organization (WHO), so there is no official ban on the migration of Indian nurses to the EU. However, Germany, for instance, which has a chronic shortage of nurses, does not allow active recruitment of placement of nurses from India by recruiters or private employers because the per capita average of healthcare professionals in India (along with another 56 countries) falls below the reference value that is set by the

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14 Seventeen per cent of all nurses in Ireland are foreign-qualified and 89 per cent of all nurses are women.

15 In 2020, the WHO’s Expert Advisory Group on the Relevance and Effectiveness of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel recommended that countries with the most pressing universal healthcare-related health workforce needed be identified and that support and safeguards be targeted in these countries.
Indian nurses can be matched by the Federal Employment Agency or can also apply directly to employers but can’t come through recruiters. This makes it very difficult for Indian migrant nurses (male and female) to enter the German nursing sector, as they often depend on recruiters to migrate to other countries (Indian male recruiter, India, Interviewee 36). These regulations should be refreshed regularly to ensure that they are in line with the changing realities of nurse education (rapid rise in the number of nurse training schools) and availability of nurses in India.

3.3.4. Researchers

Researchers, defined as those who are in doctoral and postdoctoral research positions, are a small but important subgroup among Indian migrants in the EU-27. They constitute 4 per cent of all migrants coming through the labour route (Eurostat table: MIGR_RESSOC).

Doctoral and postdoctoral researchers who came to Europe were primarily moving from India because of research synergies between their interests and those of their supervisors. In some cases, such as in the sciences, access to laboratories and technology and group projects was also crucial. Moreover, there were far fewer opportunities for interdisciplinary research in India (Indian migrant researcher, Sweden, Interviewee 1).

Researchers are in an apprentice relationship in their appointing institution – their study is their work and so they could be classified either as employees or as students. In the Netherlands, an interviewee (Indian woman migrant researcher, the Netherlands, Interviewee 3) reported that researchers on researcher/employee visas had more rights than those who were classified as students. They could travel within the EU-27 more easily, which enabled them to expand their networks. They also often had the perks of an employee, more resources for materials and a better work environment.

Researchers were usually able to extend their stay after their research projects, but mobility is a highly valued commodity in building research careers. Researchers are aware that, ideally, they should obtain a postdoctoral position in a country other than that in which they undertook their doctoral study, and should move to higher ranked institutions. University rankings, such as the Academic Ranking of World Universities, which evaluate and provide a global league table of universities and by subject, were consulted in order to decide onward migrant destinations (Indian woman migrant researcher, Denmark, Interviewee 5). This mobility was particularly important in sciences where exposure to different technologies, instruments and research networks was highly valued. Hence, researchers were often not clear about their next steps and whether or where they should move to. This uncertainty made them anxious, especially as they neared the end of their study period (Indian woman migrant researcher, Sweden, Interviewee 1). A gender-sensitive buddy system to help researchers could be trialled to help migrant researchers (Indian migrant researcher, Czech Republic, Interviewee 4).

This need for mobility usually makes it difficult for researchers to form families. This is particularly important for Indian women as there are high social expectations that all women will marry. The uncertainties of mobility and the difficulty of finding partners who are as well qualified may be presumed to be a deterrent in the context of hypergamy, but we did not find this to be true, confirming the findings of existing research on Indian women who have undertaken doctoral studies abroad (Sondhi 2013). Rather, families encouraged the Indian migrant women we interviewed to pursue their careers, to save money and remit where necessary, and to obtain European citizenship and settle abroad. The gender trope that young women need to return home, marry, and marry men who are better qualified was seen as a social perception rather than a personal issue. In fact, Indian women are likely to be more mobile than men upon completion of their studies (Sondhi and King 2017). Researchers who had partners or were married were also reluctant to forego their independent study visas and the opportunities these offered. However, the benefit of moving to dependent visas and then taking up doctoral and postdoctoral research was that they could

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16 The restrictions are covered by sections 38 and 39 of the German Ordinance on the Employment of Foreigners (Employment Ordinance of 6 June 2013 [Federal Law Gazette I, p. 1499], amended by Article 1 of the Ordinance of 18 December 2020 [Federal Law Gazette I, p. 3046], 2020) and limit how Indians can be recruited into long-term care professional roles such as doctors, dentists, pharmacists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.
pay local rather than international student fees (Migrant intermediary, Denmark, Interviewee 20).

The Indian government also offers short-term mobility schemes which provide valuable opportunities for researchers to access international networks without migrating for a long period (Indian government policymaker, Interviewee 34). Women and men take these up in order to network and to get exposure to new skills. In India, there are strong national (but not always institutional) programmes to help women in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). One example is the SERB-POWER fellowship offered to women scientists for three years (Department of Science & Technology, Government of India 2020). These initiatives provide good examples of how issues around gendered support for women in STEM can be developed in the EU-27.

Researchers frequently save money, which they use as a buffer for their post-employment stay. This pressure was particularly high for Indian migrants, because in countries like Sweden, they needed to show evidence that they would not depend on unemployment insurance (Indian woman migrant researcher, Interviewee 1) if they wanted to extend their stay. Transitioning to post-doctoral positions usually involved gaining better knowledge of the language, especially if these positions also involved teaching.

3.3.5. Caregiving

Indian women were employed as care workers in a range of EU countries. This is, in part, because of high demands for care workers across Europe because of the ageing population, shifts in the welfare state and the inability of families to provide care in family-based welfare systems (southern Europe) (Kofman and Raghuram 2015). Many Indian caregivers are trained as nurses but are deskilled after migration as they navigate the intersecting hierarchy of health work and care work but are then employed as live-in care workers or care aides (Migration academic, Malta, Interviewee 30).

Malta and Cyprus are two countries where Indian migrant women are being recruited through this route. In Malta, for instance, nurses are sought as care workers to look after an ageing population. Care workers looking after older people are required to have formal nursing training and a minimum of three years of experience (Migration academic, Malta, Interviewee 30). They may also be requested to do personal household work, as studies with other migrant groups have
noted (Vassallo and Debono 2020). The first challenge of these roles is the deskilling that occurs. Second, studies of Filipina caregivers (Debono and Vassallo 2019) suggest that caregiving women (and men in some cases) become vulnerable because they are live-in workers and are dependent on the sponsoring family. There are no studies on Indian migrant live-in caregivers, but it may be assumed that similar issues apply to Indians too. Although they have qualifications and work experience, they are not able to enter EU countries to practise as nurses, and because of the poor wages in India they opt to work as lower-skilled care aides or care workers in Malta. A cross-European study (van Hooren 2014) has shown that care workers who have migrated on work permits are more likely to accept employment with poorer working conditions than those who have more rights. The study suggests that offering greater employment and social rights to migrants increases their bargaining powers with prospective employers and makes them less vulnerable to exploitation.

3.3.6. Domestic work

Domestic work across Europe is dominated by women, especially migrant women. According to Eurostat data, in 2021, there were 9.5 million workers in this sector, but this is widely acknowledged to be an underestimate as many of those working in this sector are irregular workers. Domestic work occupies large numbers of migrants, especially female migrants, and is therefore a crucial sector for studies on migrant women (Arango et al., n.d.). However, many of those moving into this sector across the EU are other Europeans, from sub-Saharan Africa (France) or Latin America (Spain) (Pavlou 2021). It is an important source of employment for Indian migrant women in some countries such as Cyprus and Italy but less important in other countries.

In Cyprus, women domestic workers from India account for the high proportions of women in the Indian migration stream (Migration academic, Cyprus, Interviewee 32). Overall, the recruitment of migrant workers is managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, but domestic worker recruitment comes under the purview of the Ministry of the Interior. This is because it was assumed that while migrant work in other sectors had to be balanced against local employment, these local labour market conditions were not of relevance in the case of domestic work. This exceptional treatment of domestic work is not uncommon. For instance, in Spain too, domestic workers are not treated as equivalent to other workers (Arango et al. n.d.).

It is easy enough to migrate to Cyprus as a domestic worker, but the conditions of stay are much harder. The employment contract has not been revised since 1991, with dispute mechanisms for migrant domestic workers referred to the District Aliens and Immigration Unit of the police rather than to the Department of Labour Relations. Domestic workers also suffer poor conditions – low wages and long hours – but there is no law covering private households and work. Working time directives are not seen as applying to domestic work (Pavlou 2021). Moreover, their migrant status means that their permit does not allow them to change employers unless they are severely abused. They also face restrictions on family reunification rights, not because they are excluded but because, as in many countries in the EU, they don’t meet the requirements, such as minimum salary (Pavlou 2021).

Similarly, in Italy, Ciccarone (2015) found that although migrant domestic workers had similar worker rights to national workers, migrants, who had to work for five years before getting resident status, and who had often indebted themselves by taking loans to pay informal recruiters before coming, were willing to accept poorer conditions so that they could retain their jobs (Migration researchers, Italy, interviewees 19 and 22).

3.3.7. Group 2

There is a second group of employment sectors which we have reviewed briefly in this section. These are some of the sectors of employment in which we noted the presence of migrant Indian women. There is no quantitative data on these sectors currently and the numbers involved are often small. However, some of these sectors are emergent and likely to raise new policy questions in the future, and we have therefore briefly outlined them here.
Manufacturing

One of the sectors where Indian migrant women are employed is manufacturing. A number of women enter manufacturing either through subcontracted services supplying factories or by directly working in factories (Indian recruiter, Interviewee 36). In Italy, many of the Indian migrant women came in as dependents, stay-at-home mothers who decided to take up these jobs on an informal basis after their children started school. They heard about the jobs through gendered migrant networks, often through other migrant mothers from other parts of the world whose children attended the same schools, and occasionally through Italian mothers (Migration academic, Italy, Interviewee 27). They started working informally—working without contracts and being paid cash wages—but later obtained regular positions when they felt it suited their lifestyle.

Others were working in two areas—manufacturing and the hospitality industry—to “check out” which they wanted to pursue. These women often welcome the opportunity to try work informally before committing to full-time work. Initially, they enter the labour market through gendered networks because they take up jobs that are seen as women’s jobs, but later they tend to use migrant networks to find other jobs. Women thus transition from irregular to regular workers. The women tend to be in their late 30s or early 40s and almost all of them have children who are at school, often middle school. Very few take up paid work when their children are at a preschool age or even in primary school. The organization of work and childcare are both shared within an internal network of family and friends with whom they share kinship or fictive kinship, i.e. they are treated as family members even though they are not consanguineal blood relatives or related by marriage. The women juggle eight-hour work shifts with childcare, sharing work rotas and childcare rotas with these kin.

Trade in goods and services

There is a small but growing group of Indian migrant women entrepreneurs who run businesses aimed at other Indian migrants, especially other migrant women. In Spain, there is a significant network of entrepreneurs running finance companies serving migrants who want to remit money (Moré Martinez 2015). However, much more common and wide-ranging are those servicing the needs of the Indian diaspora. Where the Indian communities are sizeable, some women sell Indian clothes, work as make-up artists for weddings or do henna for migrant and non-migrant women (Migration scholar, Poland, Interviewee 29; Raghuram and Kofman 2004). These businesses are very niche and most of the clientele are other women.

Another growing business sector involves making and selling Indian food to other Indian migrants, especially migrant men who move alone through the intra-corporate transfer route (Indian migrant woman, Poland, Interviewee 8). Other businesses include teaching dance and yoga, which garners a larger and more diverse clientele (Indian migrant woman, Poland, Interviewee 7). Significantly, many of these young women who are recent migrants are themselves skilled and coming in as family migrants. They may find it difficult to find jobs in their sector, especially in engineering, which tends to be male-dominated in Europe but less so in India (Raghuram et al. 2017). They therefore use their enforced unemployment to bring up young children, but they combine this with entrepreneurship. The businesses sometimes enable migrant women to follow their other interests, abilities and skills, which may have been stymied while they pursued their educations and careers in engineering in India. This period outside the profession in which they trained nevertheless acts as a break in their career paths and can affect their long-term career prospects.

There is also a significant group of women who help run family businesses. These businesses are sometimes registered in the names of their spouses and the women may have limited rights or liabilities in the enterprise. The businesses range from restaurants, especially Indian restaurants, to corner shops, and in some countries like Italy, they may include working on small family-owned farms (Migration academic, Italy, Interviewee 26). The women may live above the shop or restaurant and may manage childcare alongside working behind the till. They play a crucial role in family subsistence and have developed remarkable entrepreneurial skills and confidence, including through personalized relationships with clients.

Language assistants

While the numbers are not clear, a growing number of women take up jobs as language assistants, teaching English in EU countries such as Spain and France (Indian migrant language
teacher, France, Interviewee 14). Through language assistance programmes offered by the Spanish and French governments (Alliance Française), women from India work in English language teaching at government-funded primary and secondary schools. Since these posts are funded by the destination country government, they are considered more secure than going through private recruiters. It is assumed that the terms and conditions of work will meet all statutory regulations. The program requires that the position holder has completed a bachelor’s degree at minimum; however, there is no requirement of work experience. While overall a positive experience, those interviewed expressed concern around finding housing upon arrival; as little guidance was provided. A second issue was that the allowance they were given was insufficient to cover the cost of living in large cities such as Paris and Barcelona. Finally, local populations sometimes took advantage of the migrants’ lack of language knowledge by, for instance, charging for medical expenses despite having health insurance. There are few Indian migrant women migrating as au pairs (Migrant intermediary, Denmark, Interviewee 20). Women from countries like Thailand and Philippines appear to have the links and reputation to work in that sector more than Indian women.

In some countries, such as Germany, dependent family migrants, especially those from middle class families, are now employed as cultural mediators (Interviewee 17). In Germany, the demand for such mediators rose with increases in asylum seekers from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Indian women who speak Hindi/Urdu offer support to these families by working as cultural mediators on behalf of the state. For instance, they provide information on maternity benefits, psychosocial facilities and children who have disabilities, helping these families access and navigate state systems. In Germany, they are not recognized as official translators because the women do not have translation qualifications. However, their knowledge of both the language and the culture of the migrants and refugees and that of the German welfare state makes them invaluable to both (Indian cultural mediator, Germany, Interviewee 15). The savings to the government are even greater in small towns where asylum seekers have been distributed. Official translators are often located in bigger cities and therefore need to be paid travel and subsistence costs when they come to the smaller towns to work. On the other hand, the cultural mediators live locally and have already learnt German because they have lived in Germany for many more years than the recent migrants. Some women also offer their language skills to the judiciary or in courts. The women are then paid translation rates and extras such as travel costs, unlike when working for the welfare services. Regardless, for the women, providing translation services is flexible work that draws on their existing knowledge, and it allows them to take part in the labour market.

**Hospitality**

There is a small but growing group of Indian women who come to work in the EU-27 in the hospitality sector (Indian recruiter, Interviewee 35). A recruiter from India who has recruited migrants for this sector to Germany and was interviewed as part of this project (Indian recruiter, Interviewee 36) reported that many of the Indian migrant women working in this sector were from north-east India. They were placed in countries like Germany, Romania and Malta. Those who are recruited usually hold a diploma in hotel management from India. In addition, they require a minimum of three years’ work experience in India before they can be recruited to work in Malta (Indian recruiter, Interviewee 36). They are usually recruited to work in small hotels and restaurants, including fast food restaurants.

The prospective employers use recruitment agents to find employees in this sector. The employees usually come in through temporary visas but can apply for permanent residence after working for a fixed number of years, which varies between countries. In Germany, this period is two years. The workers are paid minimum wages and the recruiters expect that those whom they recruit will, over time, upskill and improve their position so that they can get into higher-paid jobs (Indian recruiter, Interviewee 36). As this is a new route, it is not clear whether this upskilling will indeed occur, but this may be an area for future research. According to a study commissioned by the European Parliament (Duell and Vetter 2020), in Germany, 34.2 per cent of the sector was not complying with the minimum wage regulations. This can be a risk for migrant workers too, including Indian women, but there are no studies specifically on Indian women in this sector in the EU currently.
3.4. Issues identified

3.4.1. Qualifications and skills

Deskill has been acknowledged as a global issue for migrant women (Raghuram and Kofman 2004), including in the EU (Kofman and Raghuam 2009; Raghuram and Sondhi 2019). It is also common among Indian migrant women in Europe (Niraula and Valentin 2019). This may be related to their visa category, the characteristics of the labour market, lack of relevant local social networks, inability to speak the language (Migration intermediary, Denmark, Interviewee 20), or the nature of their qualifications, many of which they share with Indian migrant men. Some of the reasons for deskill are explored below.

Visa category

The EU Blue Card Scheme uses several selection criteria that potentially limit women’s ability to reach thresholds to acquire a visa. Raghuram and Sondhi (2019) highlight concerns about the potential gender selectivity of the policy with salary thresholds, years of professional experience and an inflection towards male-dominated sectors of the labour market influencing how many women receive these cards. Systematic gender pay gaps between women and men in the same sector but also the preponderance of women in lower paying sectors, caring responsibilities and hence, career breaks and the gender selectivity of the sectors, all shape the outcomes of such directives. For instance, as Niraula and Valentin’s analysis of the Danish skilled worker schemes showed, Indian migrants entered Denmark through this scheme but were unable to get jobs equivalent to their skills (see Kofman and Raghuam 2009 for a detailed discussion). Criteria such as income thresholds and years of work are

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17 Some of these issues, such as access to childcare and schooling, will also be relevant to family and education migrants.

18 European Commission, official EU Blue Card website.
gender-discriminatory as women’s pay is often lower than men’s, and women also have career breaks for child-bearing that make it harder for them to meet these thresholds. Besides, even where women enter through this scheme, the labour market is not always willing to take in Indian women. The EU Blue Card Scheme has been recently reviewed. Although the revised scheme does not address gender issues directly, it is now a more inclusive scheme (lower salary threshold, possibility for refugees to apply), and it could address it indirectly.

**Characteristics of the labour market**

In some sectors and in some countries, there is little tradition of internationalization, making it difficult to enter skilled sectors, even in sectors where there are labour shortages (such as IT in Denmark). For instance, the Italian labour market is relatively impermeable, and where jobs are available, as in the public sector, there is very little experience of hiring foreign talent (Migration scholar, Italy, Interviewee 27). As a result, Indian women migrants do not easily get jobs in such sectors, leading to a period out of work followed by incorporation, often at lower levels than their qualifications justify. Labour markets are also influenced by their gendered nature, as seen in the case of Denmark and the IT sector. Even where they found jobs because they had the required qualifications and talent, they might leave, as in the case of those employed by small, relatively ethnically and gender-homogenous firms where Indian women are made to feel that they do not fit in.

**Lack of social networks**

In some of the smaller European countries, the importance of social networks in accessing new jobs was noted as an important barrier for skilled migrant women.

**Equivalence of qualifications**

In sectors like medicine and nursing, the country of qualification can stratify job opportunities and lead to deskilling among Indian migrant women. However, for new groups of skilled women, often moving through career pathways, many of the issues arise from their employment contracts and are related to the entanglements of HR policies at institutional levels with migration policies (Indian migrant woman IT worker, Interviewee 11). Women report being paid lower salaries but the route for addressing these is often through HR offices, which are themselves not gender-sensitive (Migrant woman who is also a migration scholar, Belgium, Interviewee 23).

**Language**

Language appeared as a barrier for some sectors and in some sites – such as small and medium-sized towns – but less so in large multinational corporations, in sectors such as IT and in cosmopolitan cities, where the language at work and the presence of a significant and wide-ranging migrant workforce meant that the knowledge of national languages was not essential (Indian migrant student who had studied in France, Interviewee 2). Some languages are harder to learn. Moreover, a language like Danish might be easier to read and write but when spoken, the extra vowels might be harder to enunciate and the migrants always sound like foreigners, affecting their acceptability. This can influence their integration into labour markets and reduce their job opportunities (Migration intermediary, Denmark, Interviewee 20). When women are employed in service industries, such as domestic work, caregiving and hospitality, which involve client interactions, then language is a key issue.
3.4.2. Access to rights

The rights of labour migrants are operationalized through a series of directives (Appendix 2 below) which relate to the sectors in which migrants are employed. As such, they differentiate between different groups of migrants in the rights offered. Several of the directives aim to provide equality between migrants and non-migrants, but this has not always been achieved (for instance, for a detailed analysis, see Minderhound and de Lange 2018). These are issues that all migrants face, and not just Indian women migrants. Some directives allow for variations between countries through "soft clauses", giving opportunities for MS to opt out, or by offering precedence to national schema of rights.

As a result, for instance, skilled worker schemes differ in the period required for gaining permanent residence, the rights of spouses and so on. Moreover, the implementation report19 on EU Directive 2003/109/EC, concerning the status of TCNs who are long-term residents, points out that TCNs often lack information about their rights. This hampers the directive’s objective of promoting integration and non-discrimination. Moreover, social security arrangements will vary based on bilateral agreements between the destination country and India-specific arrangements. This is particularly important for posted workers. Currently, India has bilateral agreements with 12 MS (Melin 2018). Greater coverage in bilateral agreements and more publicity of the rights accrued through the agreements would be helpful. For instance, the convention between India and Sweden only covers some areas—sickness, retirement and survivor pensions (skatteverket.se 2021). A gender-sensitive focus on rights would help this process.

These rights can be underpinned by greater and easier access to gender-disaggregated data on the experiences of women migrants. The data on women migrants by occupational sector and country of nationality for each of the MS, for instance, is not available, making an in-depth understanding of the labour market experiences of Indian migrant women or the policy implications of their integration patterns difficult to follow.

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Family migration is the single largest constituent of migration across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, forming 40 per cent of all permanent migration to OECD countries (OECD 2017). Women constitute the majority of this migrant stream (Raghuram and Sondhi 2019). Within the EU flows, women make up over two thirds of the family migration stream, with children and men making up the rest of the flows. Family migration is usually viewed through the lens of integration, with women migrants often framed as struggling to integrate (Eggebø and Brekke 2019).
4.1. Definition

Globally, family migration programs were developed in response to the fundamental right to family life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Family migration is the term used to “categorize the migration of people who migrate due to new or established family ties”. It includes several subcategories: family reunification (reunification with a family member who migrated earlier); accompanying family (i.e., those family members who accompany a principal migrant); family formation (marriage between a migrant and a citizen); and international adoptions (Migration Data Portal 2021). However, most of the literature uses family reunification for the first two subcategories.

4.2. Trends and patterns

Of the total 41,091 first residence permits under the family category issued to Indian migrants in 2019, nearly 70% were issued by a small group of countries: Germany (22%), Italy (16%), the Netherlands (14%), Sweden (11%) and Spain (8%). The remaining 30% are divided among the remaining EU countries.

Figure 10. Indians in EU-27 for family reasons, 2019 (in percentage)

Over the years, the countries receiving Indian family migrants (male and female) have changed. Over the past decade, the number of permits issued by Italy for family migration from India has declined from 8,012 in 2010 to 6,449 permits in 2019. By contrast, countries such as Germany have seen a four-fold increase from 2,156 permits in 2010 to 8,943 permits in 2019.

In 2019, women made up over two-thirds of the annual flows for family reasons from India to the EU. The Netherlands and Sweden have also experienced increases in numbers of Indian female family migrants.
4.3. Experiences and issues identified

Across the EU-27, the experiences of family migrants vary based on the visa status of the sponsor. This influences the definition of the family and who is allowed to migrate. For reasons of brevity, we only deal with the visa status of the sponsor, as this has the most consequences for access to meaningful employment. These issues also impact Indian family migrants – most of whom are women and children.

4.3.1. Visa status of sponsor

Family migration regulations are covered by the Family Reunification Directive 2003/86/EC, which provides a common framework for TCNs seeking to exercise the right to family reunion. It applies to all EU countries other than Denmark and Ireland. It does not cover TCNs who want to join or form a family with an EU citizen. Thus, an important variable affecting the outcomes of female migrants is the visa category of the sponsor – whether they are a citizen or a migrant and, if the latter, what migrant categories they belong to. Where Indian migrant women are marrying EU citizens, they usually marry Indian men who have come and settled in the EU or are children of earlier Indian migrants (i.e. second generation), as is common in Italy. In this group, Indian migrant men may also move to join ethnically Indian women who were either born in Italy or came here when they were very young (Bertolani 2012). It is notable that it is more common for Indian migrant men to marry EU citizens who are not of Indian origin, such as Poles (Gmaj 2017) and Romanians ( Marinescu 2014), than it is for Indian migrant women to do so.

Many of the recent Indian migrant women entering the EU through the family migration route are sponsored by migrants from outside the EU rather than by EU citizens. Although all migrants are eligible to bring family into the EU, the need for a minimum income means that lesser skilled migrants are often unable to make use of this route, as they may not meet the thresholds required to sponsor a family member. These thresholds are usually income-based but can also be based on other criteria such as access to a basic level of accommodation.

The income criterion particularly affects Indian migrant women who move to undertake domestic work, as in Cyprus. They cannot bring in family members. However, it also affects men who move to work in meat packing and agro-food industries, as they may not meet either the income or the accommodation thresholds required. Where Indian migrant men bring in family, usually their wives, they come in separately as independent workers in the same industry (Indian recruiter, Interviewee 36).

A second criteria affecting many migrants, irrespective of country of origin, is the definition of family. Parents, grandparents and adult children are not usually included in the definition of migrant families. These family members are only allowed to accompany migrants in the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Portugal. Moreover, the definition of the family is more restrictive than that adopted for nationals. For instance, in Denmark, migrants can only bring in children until they are aged 15, suggesting that 16- to 18-year-olds, who are defined as children in Danish families, are seen as adults in the case of migrants. This affects migrants from all countries but is a particular issue for Indians, who are an important group in highly skilled migrant streams. Women, who are often seen as responsible for socially reproductive work, may decide to move on to countries that have a more expansive definition of family; more studies are required on this.

A third set of criteria which deter family migration is based on the requirements from the family members themselves. Austria, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands impose pre-entry language requirements, while the Netherlands also imposes a pre-entry integration test (MIPEX 2020). These issues are not specific to Indian migrant women but are likely to affect Indian migrants, who are a growing group in migrant flows to several EU countries.

Notably, the rise in numbers of women who migrate to the EU through the employment route means that men may be moving as the dependent family member. This is particularly true for women nurse migrants who meet the income threshold for bringing in family members.
In such cases, female-led migration can become part of family migration strategies (Percot 2012) as families support and encourage women to migrate to pull other family members. This pattern is also seen among IT workers (Roos 2013).

4.3.2. Access to employment

Access to employment is deeply hampered for many family migrants. One key issue is the rights of the migrant whom they join. Because marriage, the primary basis for Indian migrant women to move as family migrants to the EU, usually occurs between people of similar social class and educational status, with these relationships increasingly formed through workplace associations, the women who come in as family migrants of skilled men are themselves highly skilled. The issues they face may be similar but not always identical to those faced by men.

The economic situation in the destination country at the time that women enter the country can ossify the career opportunities of family migrants. For instance, family migrants who entered countries during and just after the 2008 economic crisis, where employment was negatively impacted by the crisis, were negatively affected as they could not find work when they arrived. By the time the economy recovered and job opportunities opened up, these women had a career gap and were overtaken by newer migrants, who looked more labour market fit.

An important directive affecting the rights of family migrants is the Single Permit Directive. This directive does not influence the rights to employment or entry but rather sets the procedural rules which should be applied to TCNs who have been granted the Single Permit. It aims to streamline the process so that there is a single process for right to residence and right to work. It ensures that Article 12 of the directive provides for equal treatment of third-country workers with nationals of the MS where they reside and also simplifies the process. Although, due to a series of exceptions based on specific issues such as options to restrict equal treatment or reference to national laws, the actual rights accrued are not equal (see Groenendijk 2015 for a detailed discussion), where people have got the Single Permit, the administrative process has been much simpler. 20

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**Skilled women**

However, not all women have access to the Single Permit. For instance, table 3 shows some of the variations in the right to work for dependants of ICT workers. These differences affect Indian migrant women who come through some national work permits too. They lead to poor labour market outcomes for family migrants.

**Table 3. ICT permits and dependents’ right to work**

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<th>EU countries permitting spouses to work (further conditions may apply)</th>
<th>EU countries that do not currently permit spouses to work (require additional permits)</th>
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<td>Germany</td>
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| Greece | Sweden (if the ICT permit is for greater than six months, then can apply for work permit) *
| Italy | **Ireland and Denmark have not adopted the ICT directive.** |
| Latvia | |

**Unemployment:**

Non-EU migrant women have lower labour market participation rates than EU women. Non-EU born migrant women with tertiary-level qualifications, who are married or have children, have the lowest labour force participation rate amongst all women with tertiary education (Grubanov Boskovic et al., 2020). Qualitative studies suggest that this applies to Indian migrant women too, but there is no quantitative data on this currently.

One of the reasons for Indian family migrant women’s unemployment is that where they are entering through the family reunification route without a Single Permit, they may acquire residence status but not access to employment (such as for family members reuniting with ICT workers in Hungary, Interviewee 12). A study of migrant women and Single Permits in Belgium found that employers who have to apply for work permits for spouses may be unwilling to wait to get people in postion (Purkayastha and Bircan 2020). Another issue Indian migrant women reported was the lack of awareness of the Single Permit. Many migrants heard about this permit through informal channels. In some countries, employers may also be reluctant to spend the money it takes for such applications to be processed or to take the risk of an application which could well be turned down.

**Deskilling:**

Skilled women often enter through the family route but deskilling amongst this group is noticeable globally (Vouyioukas and Liapi 2013).

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Non-EU born migrant women, particularly those who have a tertiary-level education and are highly qualified, face significant challenges in accessing meaningful employment equivalent to their qualifications, as discussed in the previous section. There are many reasons for the deskilling faced by family migrants.

An interviewee researching migrant women in Belgium (and herself an Indian migrant woman) reported that their study of skilled migrant women in Belgium found that Public Employment Services (PES) were attuned to Indian women doing low-skilled work (Indian migrant woman researching migration, Belgium, Interviewee 26). PES officials assume that because the women have entered through the family route, they are not interested in their professional careers. This is further exacerbated for Indian migrant women because street-level bureaucrats have only been exposed to stereotypical representations of Indian women; there is little awareness of the skills that Indian migrant women can bring. Despite having access to the labour market, family migrants fail to be recognized as economic entities, their high skill levels, work experience, and even those with jobs in Belgium are discounted and clubbed into one category of "dependent" (Purkayastha and Bircan 2020, p. 155).

Similarly, a study in Spain found that the only time that Indian women appear in the news is when they have been subject to domestic abuse or feature in attention-grabbing media articles about violence against women in India (Fernández 2015), and similar negative stereotyping of Indian migrant women was also noted in Finland (Mustonen 2015). This influences the public perception of Indian women so that they are not routed into jobs that recognize or reward their skills. At the same time, skilled women migrants are not used to accessing the PES and have low capability to navigate the system.

Women with broken careers often moved into consultancy and had career experiences that were like those of women in the gig economy. They faced the same insecurities as this group, such as struggling to obtain health insurance because they do not meet the financial thresholds (Indian migrant woman researching migration, Belgium, Interviewee 23). They thus enter a cycle of dependency.

Indian female migrant nurses in the EU are often the lead migrants. In many countries, they meet the threshold income to bring
family, and it is husbands and children who enter through the family reunification route. This creates challenges for these families, as men have given up their jobs in their home countries and then struggle to adapt to the local labour market (Percot 2012). Deskilling among family migrants can lead to marital strife for the women who have sponsored their partners.

**Fulfilling employment aspirations:**

However, existing research also suggests that Indian migrant women used their agency to remain in employment. They did this in several ways.

Some of them followed separate migratory paths from their partners if they found that their employment opportunities would be limited by staying together in the same country. This was particularly apparent amongst those migrants who had moved or were moving from education to work. Others had moved to the EU from India after very rapid career progression there, as they had been successful members of global teams and had then moved to international postings. They were in highly transferable roles or were continuously seeking roles in other countries as they aimed for career progression. Mobility was itself a valued asset in some of these sectors, making women reluctant to move to reunite with family without a clear career path (Indian migrant woman researcher, the Netherlands, Interviewee 3). For some of these women, the portability of the years they had accrued towards citizenship of the countries where they had lived was a matter of concern (Interviewee 3). The portability of pensions was also raised as an issue. As a result, one of the strategies that Indian migrant women are adopting is separate migratory routes than those of their spouses. Similarly, Roos (2013) found in her study that Indian migrant women ICT workers in Belgium would return to India when their career aspirations were not met rather than risk a career cul-de-sac.

Some women moved out of their sector and into entrepreneurship as a way not only of remaining in employment but also of following life aspirations (Roos 2013). Others took up opportunities to retrain (Vouyioukas and Liapi 2013).

For this skilled group, often women without children, the challenges were very specific. As in India (Raghuram et al. 2018), they found that their careers paralleled those of men until they had children but not afterwards. “Women face the ‘motherhood penalty’ across all categories, irrespective of educational level and/or migrant status” (Grubanov Boskovic et al. 2020, p 21).

**Lesser skilled migrant family members**

For lesser skilled female family migrants, where families are able to sponsor migrants, the experiences of family members will mirror the conditions experienced by the sponsor, as the family migrants’ class status is usually related to that of the migrant (Kofman 2018). Language and ability to change jobs were identified as key issues. Language ability was identified as a key barrier across various MS. It was often used as a culturally acceptable reason by business owners to discriminate against migrants (Indian women family migrants, France and Italy, Interviewee 11 and 13) even for roles that did not require strong local language ability. In Italy, where women work in rural areas, a driving license was essential for them to access the labour market. However, the ability to secure a driver’s license is dependent on knowledge of Italian. Hence, only a few migrant women were able to secure their driver’s licenses. Women who had obtained a license would take other women with them to reach the farms and agricultural factories where they were employed (Migrant intermediary, Italy, Interviewee 19).

Many of them are also unable to access the labour market except through informal and unpaid work because they are themselves less skilled and much of the employment in sectors such as domestic work and care work is informal (Indian migrant woman cultural mediator, Interviewee 13). They are subject to insecure employment, often in the care sector. European research (Ballarino and Panichella 2018) suggests that women family migrants who moved to join spouses who were in low-quality jobs or were unemployed were more likely to find employment, albeit in low-quality jobs, than those who whose husbands were in jobs with better occupational conditions. There is no clear evidence whether this is true for Indian migrant women too, but the comparison between family migrants’ labour market participation and the quality of the jobs they take up is a key issue that should be addressed in future research.
4.3.3. Access to rights

Women joining migrants working in lesser skilled sectors join families with more tenuous rights. An important factor affecting Indian migrant women entering through the family route is the period they must remain with their partner before they achieve autonomous rights. This is a very important issue for migrant women facing domestic abuse. They may, however, put up with abusive partners as they do not know what rights they have or to whom they can turn.

In strongly federated political structures, the difference between provinces/municipalities and the differential rights and responsibilities was identified as an important barrier. Women from India were unfamiliar with this form of governance, as the Indian regulations for foreigners are much more centralized. Some women reported that they did not understand their rights and the welfare benefits that they could access.

Access to rights can be impeded due to inability to speak the local language. For instance, in Italy, one of the largest groups of family migrants are the Punjabi women joining male migrants working in the agricultural sector (Kahlon 2021). Some of the women also work in this sector. One of the issues these women face is that they often arrive speaking only Punjabi. Because they do not speak Hindi, English or Italian, they struggle to access both Italian services and Indian consular services. Punjabi women are thus very dependent on the translation services offered by the few Punjabi-speaking women who have learnt Italian, especially when they work together in small firms where everyone speaks Italian. Their husbands worked long hours and were not usually available during the working day when women needed this support.

The type of official language used also influences access to rights, with countries like Germany using very dense language in their documents, which is hard even for native German speakers to navigate (Migration scholar, Germany, Interviewee 28). Use of everyday language and easy communication strategies has been successfully deployed in Denmark to improve access for migrant women.

Access to language learning interacts with rights. In Spain, irregular workers need to learn Spanish and a regional language to apply to be regularized. They are therefore offered access to language classes irrespective of status. On the other hand, in Italy, irregular workers are not entitled to access language learning classes (Garha and Paparusso 2018).

Women who migrate as family members also face particular challenges arising from their status as women. For instance, interviewees in Italy reported that women migrants accessing Indian consular services struggled to communicate their needs when most consular officials are men (Indian migrant women, Italy, Interviewees 16 and 17).

4.3.4. Family life

Our desk research and interviews suggest that Indian migrant women are largely living in nuclear households. The exception may be where women join households in long-settled communities, as in France and Italy, or families running enterprises where family labour is used. For instance, the Punjabis in Italy sometimes lived in extended, multigenerational families (Migration scholar, Italy, Interviewee 26). In such instances, women were squeezed between caring for their children and for older adults but with little wider social support. However, nuclear families were often supported by the extended families in terms of their migratory plans, because amongst skilled labour migrants, career progression is seen not only as individually prestigious but also something that makes the family proud (Indian migration researcher, Sweden, Interviewee 2).

Hence, individual career progression is folded into familial welfare and status rather than being seen as an individualistic pursuit. There are therefore intergenerational and class differences in how migrant Indian women experience the family. These shifts are noted by older migrants too, who remarked on how new arrivals were very different from them (Indian migrant woman and cultural organization lead, the Netherlands, Interviewee 18).

There is little clear evidence of how far household roles have been renegotiated due to migration. Some interviewees (e.g. Indian migrant IT worker, Interviewee 9) suggested that there is little change, but a study comparing Indians working in the IT sector and those working in entrepreneurship and the restaurant trade found that the extent to which housework is shared depended on the class status of the migrants.
(Säävälä and Martikainen 2015) and that amongst IT workers much of the work is shared. Shared household work is an important issue influencing women who enter through the family route, as women who take all the burden of housework will have little time for training and upskilling and hence future employability.

Although there are few studies on Indian migrant women, the larger migration literature points repeatedly to how welfare regimes influence migrant women's outcomes (Ballarino and Panichella 2018). They point out that the receiving country context matters in how migrant families share housework and childcare (for instance, for Italy, see Santero and Naldini 2020). For instance, access to good quality childcare and the price of childcare varies across Europe and can strongly influence migrant women's access to the labour market. Moreover, gendered norms around who should look after the children and what is considered to be an appropriate role for women with young children varied significantly between countries following a male breadwinner model (e.g. Austria) compared to a more equal model as in Sweden. This influences the acceptability of Indian migrant women with children staying in work (Migrant intermediary, Denmark, Interviewee 20).

Family disputes and marital discord were particularly noted in some communities (Indian woman migrant, cultural mediator, Italy, Interviewee 16). Marital breakdown was difficult to navigate if there was no independent access to money in order to return to India. Moreover, women could not always depend on support from their natal families as they were themselves resource-strapped and had little ability to manage a woman who was returning, often with children. In addition, families would also sometimes refuse to support these women, because of the status loss for the whole family (Indian woman migrant, cultural mediator, Italy, Interviewee 16).

At the same time, the family was also a strong basis for support in the context of racism. As other research shows, it is likely that female family migrants offered strong resources for other family members, especially children, who face discrimination (Erel et al. 2018).

These factors and circumstances do not, however, mean that Indian women lack agency: they perform the crucial tasks of maintaining ties with families in the country of origin, of caring for families in destination countries, and of engaging in community work (Indian woman migrant, cultural mediator, Italy, Interviewee 17). Where families are running transnational businesses, women often maintain the social relations and do the family work required to make some of these businesses run smoothly.
Students are the fastest-growing group of migrants from India to the EU. Many of these students will work while they study or may move into work after study as part of a two-step migration system, potentially forming a part of current or future skilled migration stocks.
5.1. Definition

As the name suggests, this category includes people who move for the purpose of education. Most Indian migrants move for higher education, although some also move to study language courses that can vary from one month to one year depending on the program. Moreover, others come on language internships which involve working in other posts, such as teaching assistants. This section focuses on education migrants in higher education. It does not look at the short-term mobility of researchers or students although it recognizes that there is evidence of some short-term mobility.

5.2. Trends and patterns

Globally, students from India make up the second-largest cohort of international students after China. This trend is mirrored within EU-27 countries. In 2019, there were over 43,000 students from China and 31,000 students from India in the EU.

In 2019, Germany, Ireland and France together accounted for 55 per cent of the Indian students studying within the EU-27 countries (figure 11). Germany and France have historically been the main destination countries. However, over the past decade, the destination choices of Indian students have grown. Ireland and Cyprus are two relatively new destinations for Indian students. Cyprus is of note. Over the past five years, while Germany, France and Ireland have seen continual increases in student flows, the flows to Cyprus have fluctuated, pointing to other factors that might influence the destination choice of Cyprus. But overall, since 2016, there has been a general increase in the number of Indian international students travelling into the EU countries.

In 2019, women made up 30 per cent of the annual flows for education between India and the EU, with Germany (2,048), Ireland (1,706) and France (1,473) being countries which received most women international students (Eurostat online code: migr_Resfas).

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22 Degree mobility refers to the movement for education to undertake a whole degree program – an undergraduate, master’s or doctorate. Credit mobility, by contrast, refers to study exchanges or shorter periods of study – where students move to undertake a few courses/modules as part of their degree program but attain their degree in the home country.
5.3. Experiences
There has been a sharp rise in the number of Indian students studying in countries such as Germany, Poland and Hungary. Indian women make up less than 40 per cent of the annual flows for the top five receiving MS. This is in contrast to the EU-wide trend of women making up the majority of the annual flows into the EU for education (Raghuram and Sondhi 2019). STEM programmes are the most popular subjects of study for international students, especially in countries such as Germany, where 41 per cent of international students are enrolled in engineering degrees, with law, economics and social sciences as the other programmes in demand (DAAD & DAAD 2021).

5.3.1. Motivation to study abroad
Female students who move abroad often do so because they want to choose interdisciplinary subjects that are not offered in India. Thus, there are specific gendered reasons why women migrate to the EU-27 countries, which distinguish this stream from international student flows to the “traditional” countries such as the US and the UK. It also means that women students may sometimes be older and have had more circuitous routes relating to unsatisfactory employment in India before commencing study in Europe (Migration scholar, on Germany, Interviewee 24).

5.3.2. Pre-migration advice and familiarity
One of the key issues facing Indian women students is the male-dominated STEM focus of earlier migration streams. Information about the courses, living conditions and support is usually produced at the level of subjects or disciplines and is primarily targeted at (male) engineering students and circulated via YouTube channels. Women who take up social science or pure science subjects are often left out or not aware of this information loop.

5.3.3. Destination choice
Fee-free education is a key draw for students going to eastern European countries. For instance, one of our interviewees suggested that the majority of students from India are from social classes for whom foreign education was otherwise unthinkable (Migration scholar, on Germany, Interviewee 28). Amongst such families, parents of both women and men students had concerns about their children taking on international study as this destination was less
familiar than the US. Parents are more likely to be worried when children are travelling straight after university. Parental concern reduced when the children had already worked for some years. These findings on parental influence mirror the findings of research about Indian international students in Anglophone contexts, such as Canada (Sondhi 2013) and Australia (Baas 2019).

The choice of destination is also shaped by the political situation of destination countries. For example, Muslim students sometimes choose European countries over the US because of President Trump’s anti-Muslim rhetoric; parents did not want their children going to the US (Interviewee 28).

5.3.4. Integration of students

In many countries charging international fees, there is a culture of migration into which students tap. They can draw on the knowledge held by family and by wider social networks. This is not, however, the case for the students moving to the newer destinations in the EU-27. Many students are from families where studying abroad would not previously have been an option without a scholarship. However, there are a range of YouTube videos targeting both prospective students and their families, and these are watched in order to help them familiarize themselves with the campuses and cities to which students plan to migrate (Jayadeva 2020). One implication of the “lower” social class of students studying is poor integration, because they live in housing with other Indians, in conditions more crowded than those of other students. These students generally only live with and meet other Indians, and the concentration results in isolation.

The low or no-fee countries, however, offer rich opportunities for Indian students from poorer class backgrounds. Indian students from wealthier backgrounds, on the other hand, share accommodation with other international students. Most Indian students also study in English language programmes, and because 80 per cent or more of these English-only courses are taken by Indians, they have limited opportunities to meet other international students. Choosing English language education thus intensifies isolation, because Indian students rarely get to speak the national language, further delaying integration.

5.3.5. Post-study transition

A key concern for prospective students is knowing about post-study job opportunities before they choose their destination. In the engineering discipline, there are placements in some countries making the shift from study to work easier, but there is less information on other subjects, especially those that women choose.

Moreover, the varieties of institutions and courses available makes it difficult to know which ones allow for post-study visas. For instance, an Indian student in France who completed her course was notified that her qualification was not RNCP-certified (Indian migrant woman, language assistant, Interviewee 14). RNCP, or the Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles, is the National Register of Professional Certification that provides approval/accreditation of educational institutes. She only found this out when she attempted to secure her APS – Authorisation Provisoire de Séjour – which allows her to stay for one year in France after completion of study. This is not an isolated issue, as ineligible and non-accredited institutions have grown in number because of the marketization of the university sector.
6

Associational life
There are a variety of migrant organizations set up by Indians in the EU-27 countries. Most of the pan-Indian organizations are led by men (Government of India, n.d.). Women, where included in leadership roles, are often in welfare roles. However, there are many regional associations where women hold roles as cultural leads and co-organizers of cultural events (Indian migrant woman, the Netherlands, Interviewee 18; Indian migrant man, formerly in Hungary, Interviewee 12). Regional associations (e.g. Telugu or Malayali) have a vibrant presence and are often more important than national ones. They shape everyday social life because language, festivals and cultural activities such as regional dances are more easily shared.

There are a number of Indian student associations set within universities (Migration scholar, Germany, Interviewee 28). They may be started by an enterprising student but several lapse after that student completes their studies. Again, most are founded and led by men. Associations are sometimes able to use the Indian Embassy to foster their work and to co-host events that benefit the Indian diaspora. There is also a growth of Indian membership and leadership in new organizations that are less focused on a single diaspora and are cross-cultural (Indian migrant woman, the Netherlands, Interviewee 18). This is an emerging trend and the role of women in these groups will need further research.

In countries with small diasporas, Indian community groups thrived. These communities were close-knit, and women were important actors in social life, organizing festivals and social events. However, migrants who move frequently found it much harder to access these communities, as they can morph into friendship groups which are more closed in character. Moreover, students almost always remained outside of these groups, as future mobility plans figured large in their commitment to local Indian-based social groups. Countries with larger Indian diasporas had less cohesive Indian associations.

Indian women found it easier to access some services, childcare and shops in societies where Indian migrant communities have built up over time (Indian migrant women, the Netherlands and Belgium, Interviewees 18, 23). For instance, the role of the older Indian diaspora such as Surinamese Indians in the Netherlands in paving the way and providing household services that later Indian migrants could access was also noted (Interviewee 18).

Another notable feature is the exemplary role of gurudwaras in distributing food and clothes where required, irrespective of migration status or of religious or political affiliation. They also offer other advice – legal, counselling and employment-related (Indian migrant woman, cultural mediator, Italy, Interviewee 19). Moreover, civil society organizations and migrant organizations have actively helped migrants by routing their work in and through gurudwaras. The church was also very active in these endeavours.

Sikh women obtained important information and some services there (Butsch 2018; Interviewee 19). The gurudwaras are particularly important for community building in small villages and towns where agricultural workers are located. Local town offices also employ Indian migrant women who have learnt Italian to act as cultural mediators and undertake translation work (Migrant intermediary, Italy, Interviewee 19). Thus, women are mediating on behalf of others with lower language skills. These ethnic communities are large enough to be supportive of migrant women, building resilience amongst women but also preventing too much marital violence or domestic abuse, as the community polices such incidents (Indian migrant cultural mediators, Italy, interviewees 16 and 17).

However, at times, they can also prevent women from breaking out of gendered ethnic niches by providing pathways for labour market integration that do not acknowledge the rising level of knowledge and skills that newer migrants offer (Indian migrant woman, migration scholar, Belgium, Interviewee 23). Instead, women are drawn into the less remunerative, informal sector niches. Censure when women are thought to be breaking accepted gendered norms can also act as a disincentive preventing women from pursuing more challenging careers.

One notable feature of current associational life is the role of social media (Marinescu 2014). YouTube remains a very significant platform for sharing knowledge about the destination country (Migration scholar, on Germany, Interviewee 24; Jayadeva 2020). The videos are made by recruiters and consultants, by current migrants, and also by generic content producers. They play
a significant role in shaping the understandings of those intending to migrate. Facebook groups are also another important source of specific and targeted information. The groups are often closed and are managed by migrants. These are particularly important in helping migrant men find out about the rights of their spouses. Finally, WhatsApp groups are also formed to help those who are already in the country.

Two-step migration is an increasingly important feature amongst Indian migrants. Students moving into the labour market through post-study visas are the primary example, but women also move from study to family or from work into family. The portability of rights is an important issue facing migrants planning a two-step migration. Women who enter as dependent migrants may use study or entrepreneurship to re-enter the labour market. Easing their route to new visa statuses and allowing them to accumulate the years they have acquired on their previous status for accruing citizenship can help EU MS to retain skilled and less skilled workers. It will also ease the lives of Indian migrant women who are moving through a fast-changing economy and are therefore continuously seeking to upskill and pursue new economic opportunities.

This portability of rights across statuses is important because, as Garha and Paparusso (2018) found in their study of Indians in Italy and Spain, migration and citizenship plans were important factors shaping men and women. Even in jobs which require high mobility, career options and mobility chances were turned down in order to secure citizenship in the countries in which they had settled. Hence, many migrants seek to integrate into the societies of the countries where they live. There appeared to be some preference among Indian migrants in Spain for countries offering greater welfare or ones where English is spoken, but these were tempered with the wish to secure citizenship. Future plans are also significantly affected by the opportunities available to children, especially those for English language learning.
Next steps
7.1. Recommendations for policies, programs and services for Indian and EU stakeholders

These recommendations aim to address some of the issues faced by Indian migrant women in the EU. Some of these issues are shared with Indian men while others are true for migrants in their cohort – e.g. for migrants in their employment sector.

7.1.1. Gender mainstreaming

- Ease switching of visa categories and permits spouses the right to work across visa categories, to allow more women to join the workforce commensurate with their qualifications.
- Improve messaging about Indian women migrants so that the range of skills and sectors in which they are engaged is better highlighted. This will reduce stereotypical images of Indian women, which influences their access to the labour market. Target these at job centres and other job search facilities.
- Improve gender awareness among employers and workers in male-dominated sectors (such as IT) and in research areas, such as STEM, where Indian migrant women are also engaged.
- Offer state-funded support for mentoring services to enable women to undertake second careers, further study or re-entry into the labour force.
- Offer support to migrant women to help them upskill (including driving licenses like in Italy, or for nurses working as caregivers in Malta and Cyprus), especially where they have had career breaks.
- Promote social networking amongst women through integration activities.
- Encourage ownership of small businesses by women through incentives (for example, by reducing registration costs).

7.1.2. Portability of skills and qualifications

- Support migrants in sectors where mobility is highly prized (such as research) to easily switch jobs and to accrue the years they have stayed in an EU country towards citizenship. This is particularly important for women as these sectors tend to be male-dominated.
- Standardize professional qualification recognition to minimize skills mismatch. Women who move as family migrants have greater difficulty in having their skills recognized than the primary (often male) labour migrant.
- Provide low-cost, or free, accessible pre-departure language training for migrants. As women often move as family migrants, they may not have acquired the language skills even where they have other skills.

7.1.3. Access to and portability of rights

- Ensure migrant domestic workers have secure status and the ability to move from jobs where they are treated unfairly by providing pre-departure orientation information and by improving their rights.
- Encourage women to find out about and join workers, organizations to be informed of their rights and have bargaining power and protection.
- Ensure standardized and full implementation of social security agreements and ensure a gendered lens while drafting such agreements. Women are more dependent on
social security as they bear unequal responsibility for family care and can be affected by family break-ups.

- Improve conditions of work in sectors where women are often employed, such as caregiving, domestic work and cultural translation.
- Improve messaging amongst communities where vulnerability and abuse are prevalent and generate better awareness amongst women in origin communities with regard to their post-migration rights.

7.1.4. Social welfare and family

- Have clear messaging of rights of dependent family members, with targeted support for dependent male migrants who accompany women lead migrants.
- Standardize definitions of child and associated rights; provide affordable, quality childcare.
- Have more female counsellors at embassies and social welfare offices.
- Delink health insurance from financial thresholds.
- Support women’s associations through embassies, encouraging female students to also join.
- Sensitize local community leaders, including gurudwara/temple leaders, on gender issues to avoid social censure for women breaking gendered norms.
- Provide flexible, low-cost childcare for migrants, especially in areas where there are concentrations of Indian migrants but where few facilities exist.

7.2. Future research recommendations

- Improved granularity (by gender and source country) of data for different employment sectors to be made available through Eurostat.
- More academic and policy-oriented research on Indian migrant women, particularly on gig work and employment opportunities, and challenges beyond the feminized sectors.
- Research focused on posted workers and the extent to which Indian migrant women are part of these flows (helpful to inform policymaking in the future).
Appendix 1

Secondary data sources
Comparable data on Indian female migration to the EU-27 is not easy to obtain. Each country has its own data collection, analysis, and reporting systems that are then merged into international databases. There is also a great deal of variety between individual country statistics with respect to quality, completeness, gender disaggregation and base year for which data is reported (Raghuram and Sondhi 2019).

Secondary data research for this report included: EUROSTAT, OECD, the Migration Data Portal, the European Data Portal, IOM, UNDESA, Eurostudents and Europol. There is some data overlap between these portals (Pandey and Pandey 2015). The Migration Data Portal and the European Data Portal are part of IOM, which, in turn, relies on UNDESA’s data. Europol features news pieces and reports rather than data, while Eurostudents reports on European students moving abroad rather than on foreign students moving to the EU-27.

As a result, the primary sources for this report are EUROSTAT, OECD and UNDESA, and the migration and statistical agencies of the EU-27 countries. The EUROSTAT database is the most complete, including statistics on the number of female migrants from India to each of the EU-27 countries. It identifies four categories of migration reasons: work, education, family reunification, and “other reasons”, and this report is organized around these categories. There are, however, overlaps between these categories. Moreover, women also move from one category to another. The OECD too provides overall migration data to each of the EU-27 countries based on reason for migration (work or education) but does not provide origin country data. UNDESA provides gender-disaggregated data on international migrant stock but the data has a high level of aggregation.

Other data sources included 36 interviews with migrants, migrant organizations, activists, academics, journalists and recruiters.
Family

Family reunification rules are harmonized through the Directive on the Right to Family Reunification, which applies to all MS except Denmark and Ireland. The Directive was adopted in 2003 and determines the conditions for the exercise of the right of family reunification by TCNs residing lawfully in the territory of the MS (which does not include the situation of TCNs who are family members of EU citizens). The Directive gives a certain margin of appreciation to MS, including to adopt more favourable conditions. In this context, some differences can exist in MS with regard to the definitions of eligible sponsors and family members and the different threshold requirements for exercising the right to family reunification, such as minimum income or access to accommodation.

According to Article 3(1), the Directive applies to sponsors who hold a residence permit valid for at
least one year and have reasonable prospects of obtaining the right to permanent residence. Once admitted, family members are normally granted a renewable residence permit of at least one year’s duration and obtain the same rights to education and work as the sponsor. Family members of refugees have more favourable conditions for the exercise of their right to family reunification.

MS often require applicants to meet some conditions before allowing family reunification. They may require the sponsor to have adequate accommodation, sufficient resources and health insurance, or may impose a waiting period.

Remunerated activities (work)

The EU framework for labour migration includes four categories.

1. Intra company transfer (ICT): Directive 2014/66/EU on the conditions of entry and residence of TCNs in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer makes it easier for businesses and multinational corporations to temporarily relocate their managers, specialists and trainee employees to their branches or subsidiaries located in the European Union. This section does not examine the ICT separately.

2. Seasonal workers: Directive 2014/36/EU regulates the conditions of entry and residence of TCNs for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers. Migrant seasonal workers are allowed to stay legally and temporarily in the EU for a maximum period of between five and nine months (depending on the MS) to carry out an activity dependent on the passing of seasons, while retaining their principal place of residence in a third country. The directive also clarifies the set of rights to which such migrant workers are entitled. However, EU countries do not have to apply equal treatment with regards to unemployment and family benefits and can limit equal treatment on tax benefits, education and vocational training.

3. Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU) sets out a common, simplified procedure for TCNs applying for a residence and work permits in an MS, as well as a common set of rights to be granted to regular immigrants. This permit is separate from those for highly qualified employment.

4. Highly qualified migrants: Directive 2009/50/EC on the conditions of entry and residence of TCNs for the purposes of highly qualified employment created the EU Blue Card, a fast-track procedure for issuing a special residence and work permit, on more attractive terms, to enable third-country workers to take up highly qualified employment in the MS.

Education

Directive (EU) 2016/801\(^24\) on the conditions of entry and residence of TCNs for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing replaces the previous instruments covering students and researchers, broadening their scope and simplifying their application. A researcher is defined as a “third-country national who holds a doctoral degree or an appropriate higher education qualification which gives that third-country national access to doctoral programmes, who is selected by a research organization and admitted to the territory of a Member State for carrying out a research activity for which such qualification is normally required.” A student means a TCN who has been accepted by a higher education institution and is admitted to the territory of an MS to pursue as a main activity a full-time course of study leading to a higher education qualification recognized by that MS, including diplomas, certificates or doctoral degrees in a higher education institution, which may cover a preparatory course prior to such education, in accordance with national law, or compulsory training.

Researchers and students are covered by the same directive, along with volunteers, au pairs, and trainees. Interns who come through the intra-corporate transfer scheme are not included in this Directive.

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Appendix 3

Interviews
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