

# THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants  
*Executive Summary*



For nearly a decade, the *Direzione Generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione* (Generale Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies) has aimed to provide a detailed and balanced account of the complex phenomenon of the presence of foreigners in Italy and to do so by setting forth the various distinct aspects of the question while analysing the characteristics noted and also anticipating today's trends. The directorate does so by means of its *Rapporto nazionale sui migranti nel Mercato del lavoro italiano* (national reports on migrants in the Italian labour market) (tenth edition), the *Rapporti nazionali sulla presenza in Italia delle principali Comunità straniere* (National reports on the main foreign communities in Italy) (ninth edition) and the *Rapporti sulla presenza dei migranti non comunitari nelle 14 città metropolitane italiane* (Reports on the presence of non-EU migrants in the 14 metropolitan cities of Italy) (fifth edition).

The series of national reports on the presence of the main foreign communities aims to investigate and study in depth the presence on Italian soil of the more numerically significant non-EU nationals: Moroccans, Albanians, Chinese, Ukrainians, Indians, Filipinos, Bangladeshis, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Moldovans, Nigerians, the Senegalese, Sri Lankans, Tunisians, Peruvians and Ecuadorians.

For each grouping, the main features from the socio-demographic and employment dimensions are considered, alongside presence of minors and their education, occupational integration and welfare policies. Each report starts with comparison among the various communities. The data used for the analysis relate to periods prior to the spread of the SARS-COV-2 virus. Therefore, this edition of the reports does not provide for an overview of the effects of the pandemic crisis on the social and labour integration of migrants.

Again, this year we duly acknowledge the contributions of institutions and bodies that have provided information in their possession. These entities include the Italian National Institute of Statistics; the general statistical and actuarial coordination body of INPS (National Social Security Institute); the Ministry of Education, University and Research; the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture; the International political studies organisation, CeSPI; the trade unions CGIL, CISL, UIL and UGL; and the *Divisione Studi e Ricerca* (Study and research division) of ANPAL Servizi.

The full series of *Rapporti Comunità* (community reports), editions 2012 - 2020, can be accessed – in Italian and in the main foreign languages – in the section “Studi e statistiche” (Studies and Statistics) on the institutional website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – [www.lavoro.gov.it](http://www.lavoro.gov.it) and on the institutional portal [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it). This addresses also provide access to a statistical annex providing information that supplements the reports or that, within a comparative framework among the main national communities considered, enables in-depth study of the data analysed.

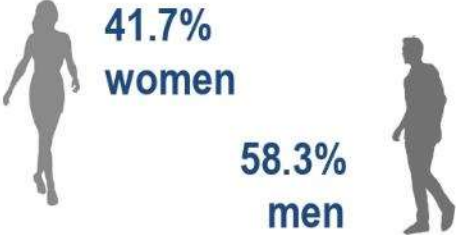
Within the ambit of the projects, *Assistenza tecnica per il Supporto alla governance integrata delle politiche migratorie tra lavoro e integrazione sociale* (PR.Au.D. - Protezione, Autonomia, Dignità dal lavoro) and *Supporto nelle politiche per l'immigrazione e di cooperazione bilaterale con i Paesi di origine*, ANPAL Servizi has drawn up and translated the 2020 edition of its *Rapporti nazionali sulle principali Comunità straniere* (National reports on the main foreign communities) – analytic reports provided in summary form.

# Executive Summary



**165,663** legally residing Indian citizens  
*Ranking fifth for number of presences*

**113,979** new Italians in 2019  
**(4% are Indian)**



**41.7%** women  
**58.3%** men

*53.7% under the age of 35*

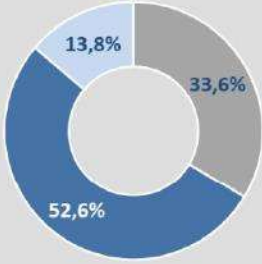


**37,577** minors under the age of 18

present in:

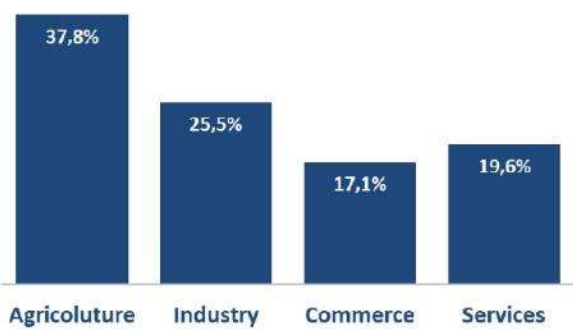
- 30.9%** Lombardia
- 20.2%** Lazio
- 10.6%** Emilia-Romagna

**60.7%** Long-term residents



**39.3%** short-term permits

- Work
- Family
- Other reasons




**55.3% employment rate**  
*83 % male 16% female*

**76.2% female inactivity rate**

**37.8%** employed in **Agriculture**

**44%** unskilled manual workers



**Ranking tenth for number of sole proprietorships (2%)**

**7,532** sole proprietors (+2.4%)

**43%** sole proprietorships in the **Commerce and Transport** sector

## Demographic characteristics

**165,663 Indian citizens** are holders of a residence permit valid as on **1 January 2020**, accounting for 4.6% of the non-EU citizens in Italy. For the second consecutive year, the Indian community ranks fifth among the main foreign communities in Italy.

On analysis of the main demographic characteristics of the Indian citizens residing in Italy as on 1 January 2020, we may note:

- a fairly marked **gender imbalance** with men predominating at 58.3% of the community and women standing at 41.7% (the lowest value among the legally residing non-EU communities, which value for resident women stands at 49%);
- a high **quotient of minors**. The more than 37,500 minors represent approximately 23% of Indian legally residing citizens. On average, the community is also younger than non-EU citizens as a whole with a mean age of 32, vs 34 recorded for the non-European citizens as a whole.

As to geographic distribution, this community favours Northern Italy, where 59.5% of Indian citizens reside. Accordingly, two of the three regions with most Indians are northern: **Lombardia** is the major region of settlement for this community, with 31% of the total number of Indian citizens vs 25.9% of non-EU citizens as a whole, and **Emilia-Romagna** (ranking third for number of Indian citizens) presents an incidence of 10.6%. The region ranking second is **Lazio** with a particularly marked presence in the area of Rome, with its more than 33,000 citizens of Indian origin (20.2% of the total, vs 11.2% for citizens of non-EU origin). Notably, the **Campania** region hosts 4.7% of this community as residents.

The **process of stabilization** of the Indian community is **ongoing**, and the quotient of holders of long-term residence permits is constantly on the rise, reaching 60.7% as on 1 January 2020. While significant for the Indian community, the quotient is 2.4% lower than that for the non-EU population as a whole. 39.3% are holders of a short-term permit. For issuance of short-term residence permits, **family reasons** prevail (more than 1/2 of the permits subject to renewal issued to migrants from this community: 52.6%). Work permits totalled 21,847 (33.6%). Study-related permits entitle 5.7% of Indian citizens to reside in Italy.

## Current trends

For the first time, after years of stability in the presences, we note a significant reduction in the number of legally residing members compared to the previous year: -2.7%. The presence of non-EU citizens in Italy decreased by 101,580 units between 1 January 2019 and 1 January 2020. The reduction concerns all the main foreign communities with the exception of Indian and Bangladeshi which record increases of 1.7% and 1.8%, respectively. The most significant reductions concern the Nigerian community (-8.2%), which from ranking eleventh now ranks fourteenth, the Ecuadorian community (-6.2%) and the Chinese community (-5.3%).

Two main opposite factors affect the trends of presences: on the one hand, the new permits issued attesting to an inflow impacting the stock of legally residing members, and, on the other, the granting of citizenship (which latter practice entail a replacement effect in the statistics as those who become Italian citizens are removed from the stock of foreign citizens).

Turning to admissions, 2019 marks a negative record with approx. 177 thousand new residence permits, 26% less vs 2018; this is the most significant reduction recorded since 2012 and the first six months of 2020 seem to consolidate the negative trend, with a further decrease of 57.7% vs the same period of 2019<sup>1</sup>. The reduction concerns all reasons for admissions, and it is particularly relevant for permits ascribable to the request or possession of a form

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<sup>1</sup> Istat, *Cittadini non comunitari in Italia*, Statistica Report (Non-EU citizens in Italy, Statistics Report), October 2020.

of protection: -57.5%. This is a value ascribable to the sharp reduction of the so-called "unexpected flows", with a sharp decline in the number of migrants landed on the Italian coasts: 11,471 in 2019, i.e., 51% less than 2018 and 90.4% less than 2017<sup>2</sup>.

The growth trend in the quotient of new permits issued for family reunification consolidates, thus reaching 56.9% of admissions in 2019 (vs approx. 51% in 2018), while the percentage relating to the request or possession of a form of protection decreases: 15.6% of new permits<sup>3</sup> vs 28.8% in 2018. The percentage relating to study reasons (11.5% vs 9.1% in 2018) and work reasons (6.4% vs 6% in 2018) is slightly on the rise. On the other hand, the failure to plan entry flows for job purposes, with the exception of seasonal work, has now led to a sharp decrease in new permits issued for this reason.

With **11,405 new residence permits**, the Indian community ranks third for number of admissions in 2019, largely motivated by family reunification (56.5%). However, we note a significant decrease in Indian presences compared to the previous year (-16.3%), mainly linked to the acquisitions of citizenship (which entail a replacement effect in the statistics). Accordingly, the Indian community ranks third in terms of acquisitions of citizenship: out of 113,979 permits granted to non-EU citizens in 2019, 4,683 (4% of the total) concern citizens of Indian origin. The main reason for citizenship acquisition by Indian citizens is residence, (47% of cases, i.e., 2,200 new citizens). The high incidence of citizens of Indian origin among the new Italian citizens suggests the existence of a process of stabilization of the community.

### Minors and educational paths

One of the indicators of geographical stabilization of this community is the high presence of families and minors within it. As on 1 January 2020, there were 37,577 Indian minors, i.e., 5% of the total for non-EU minors. Indian children born in Italy were 2,732 in 2018 (5.9% of non-EU children born in 2018). Overall, between 2010 and 2018, more than 25,000 Indian children were born in Italy.

**Admission of Indian minors into the Italian schooling circuit remains high.** Thanks to the high quotient of minors in its community, India ranks fourth as country of origin of non-EU students. Indeed, 29,458 students of Indian origin enrolled for academic year 2019/2020 (4.2% of the non-EU school population as a whole). Compared to the previous year, the students of this community increased by 5.6%. The growth rate was decidedly higher than that displayed by non-EU students as a whole (+2.6%). The number of enrolled students increased in all schools and grades: the main areas of growth were junior secondary schools (11.3%), senior secondary school (+8%) and preschool institutions (5.8%). The incidence of students from this community vs non-EU students as a whole is higher in preschool institutions (5% of the enrolled are Indian citizens) and lower in senior secondary schools (3.4%). There is also a high number of university students, reaching approx. 4,634 (6.2% of non-EU students). India ranks third in terms of presence of non-EU academic population.

Among the main non-EU communities, India ranks highly also as regards the number of **NEETs** (i.e., persons aged between 15 and 29 not in employment, education or training). Young NEETs of Indian citizenship are more than 14,000 (i.e., 40% of the Indian youngsters in this age bracket).

### Work and employment

The Indian community is markedly characterised by its engagement in the *Primary Sector* (thanks to a relevant involvement of Indian workers in this sector) – which is the prevalent sector for employment, accounting for more than 1/3 of the Indians employed in Italy (37.8%, vs 6.2% of non-EU workers as a whole) – and in *Industry* (accounting for 25.5% of the workforce). The low incidence of female Indian employees determines an overall employment index

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto\\_statistico\\_giornaliero\\_31-12-2019.pdf](http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_31-12-2019.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> In all likelihood, the reduction in the number of permits linked to the possession of a form of protection is affected by the entry into force of the decree-law no. 113/2018 from 5 October 2018, converted with amendments by Law no. 132/2018, which abolished the residence permit for humanitarian reasons, replacing it, only under certain specific conditions, with some residence permits for "special circumstances".



that is lower than that for the non-EU population as a whole. This also has an adverse effect in terms of rate of inactivity within this community. The **employment rate** stands at **55.3%** vs 60.1% for the non-EU population as a whole; the inactivity rate for Indian citizens (38.3%) is 8.1% higher than the mean value. The unemployment rate stands at 10.5% (vs 13.8% in the non-EU population as a whole). Gender bias in Indian workers sees men predominate. It is much more relevant here than in non-EU migrants as a whole. Females make up a mere 12.1% of the Indian employed workforce, vs 39.6% in the non-EU employed workforce as a whole.

Turning to **wage subsidies** granted to workers in Italy by INPS (the National Social Security Institute) in the event of interruptions or reduction of production, only 1.502 of the non-EU beneficiaries are Indian (2.7% of CIGO - ordinary redundancy fund, and CIGS - extraordinary redundancy fund beneficiaries).

This incidence is low if one considers that this community accounts for 5% of the non-EU workforce. Under-representation of this community among those granted wage subsidies is ascribable to the fact that Indians are mainly employed in the agricultural sector, which benefits little from policies governing wage subsidies. Indeed, this sector benefits more from agricultural unemployment measures. 6.2% of non-EU workers granted unemployment benefits were Indian: 29,082 beneficiaries mainly receiving agricultural unemployment benefits (18,017 i.e., 1/5 of non-EU beneficiaries as a whole), followed by NASPI (*Nuova Prestazione di assicurazione sociale per l'impiego*, a social employment insurance scheme) (11,052).

During 2019, **82,358 new employment relationships** were activated for citizens of Indian origin (approx. 4% more than the previous year). Indicating that women from this community are not drawn to the labour market to any considerable extent, the data provided by the *Comunicazioni Obbligatorie* (mandatory notices) reveal that only 13.8% of Indian citizens recruited are women (vs 31.3% for non-EU citizens as a whole). Most of the new subordinate and para-subordinate jobs that began during 2019 for Indian workers were in the Agricultural sector (a level approaching 61%). However, gender analysis indicates that only slightly more than 2/5 of work contracts activated for women regarded this sector. The incidence for male Indians is nearly 64%; conversely, in the second sector of employment (Services) the female workforce exceeds the males of this community (50.5% vs 26.8%).

We note the prevalence among Indian employees of *manual unskilled workers*, accounting for 44% of the workers in this community vs 36% of non-EU workers as a whole. Numerically speaking, we then note the number of people employed as *skilled manual workers* (36%), which records a higher value than that found among those employed from other non-EU countries (28%). Approx. 17% of Indian employees are employed, in *sales and personal services*, while the incidence of *managers and professionals in the intellectual and technical fields* stands at 3%.

Involvement of this community in the world of entrepreneurship is not highly significant. While this community ranks fifth in terms of number of residents, it ranks tenth among countries of origin for incidence of sole proprietorships. As on 31 December 2019, there are **7,532 sole proprietors** of Indian origin (2% of non-EU sole proprietors in Italy). However, compared to the previous year, the number of sole proprietorships run by Indians rose by 2.4% (+178). The main sector of investment is *Commerce and Transport*, accounting for 40.8% of sole proprietorships owned by Indians, followed by the Business Services sector, with an incidence in terms of percentage that is higher than that noted for enterprises owned by non-EU citizens as a whole (15.6% vs 6.3%), attesting to a degree of specialization of this community within this sector, which accounts for 5% of non-EU enterprises operating in the *Business Services* sector

## Socio-economic conditions

The marked commitment to agriculture and industry and an impressive skills base have led to benefits in terms of earnings. If we compare mean levels of **remuneration** according to type of work, among Indian workers, monthly earnings are on average higher than among non-EU workers as a whole: 1,373 euros vs 1,191 euros (+182 euros on average). Turning to agricultural labourers, the gap is greater (+228 euros), although the mean monthly earnings come to 853 euros. Conversely, in the context of home help, Indian workers earn on average 72 euros less than non-EU workers as a whole.

We note, however, that Indian women are at a disadvantage in regard to earnings. Indeed, the gender pay gap is fairly high among employees and agricultural workers, with mean monthly salaries for females standing at approx. 500 euros less than men. The gap is less marked in the context of home help, in which women's salaries are higher than men's (614 vs 528 euros, respectively).

Among employed Indian citizens in Italy, a medium-low level of education prevails. Nearly 3/4 of Indian workers hold at most a junior secondary school leaving certificate (72.1%) standing at 12.5% more than for the non-EU population as a whole. 19.3% received, at least, a senior secondary school leaving certificate. 8.6% are holders of a higher education certificate. Educationally, within this community, women are more qualified than men especially in terms of university education (20.8% vs 6.5% among men); this value is higher than that recorded for the non-EU female population as a whole (16.3%).

The quotient of **IVS (disability, old-age and survivors') pensions** granted to non-EU citizens has always been rather small. In 2019, this quotient stood at 0.5% of the total (out of almost 14 million pensions, 65,926 regard non-EU citizens). Non-EU citizens receive old-age pensions (in 43% of such cases), followed by survivors' pensions (37.4%); 19.8% are linked to disability. In the Indian community, among IVS pensions, those for survivors prevail (41.3%) followed by disability pensions (34.7%), and the remaining 24% are old-age pensions. Overall, with its 1,154 IVS pensions, the Indian community accounts for a mere 1.8% of the total for non-EU citizens who are granted such benefits.

The level of **social assistance measures** provided by INPS to Indian citizens (solely welfare services for the most vulnerable, due to age conditions reached or civilian invalidity) is low: 2,003 (a mere 2% of those for migrant beneficiaries of non-EU origin). 44% consist in constant attendance supplements. 34.6% are attendance allowances. The remaining 21.2% are social benefits.

With reference to **monetary transfers to families** (maternity benefits, parental leave and family allowances provided by INPS), in 2019 a total of 304,465 women received maternity benefits, 9.1% of whom were non-EU citizens (27,714) (3.1% less than the year before). During the same period, the beneficiaries of maternity allowances with Indian citizenship totalled 659, i.e., 2.4% of non-EU female beneficiaries (maternity allowances fell in number by 0.9% vs 2018). As to parental leave, in 2019 there were a total of 299,028 such beneficiaries, denoting a 10.3% decrease vs 2018, 7.2% of whom were of non-EU origin (21,564). A total of 646 Indian citizens benefited from this measure (3% of non-EU beneficiaries). During 2018, as many as 2,446,795 beneficiaries were granted family allowances (-13.8% vs the year before). 12.5% of the beneficiaries were non-EU citizens (305,000) denoting a 13.5% increase vs 2018. In 2019, 16,431 members of this community were granted family allowances (5.4% of non-EU citizens as a whole; -10.8% vs 2018).

As to transfers made by the Indians in Italy to their country of origin, India ranks sixth as nation of destination of **remittances** sent from Italy in 2019 (311.7 million euros), accounting for 6% of the total outgoing remittances (-3.2% million vs 2018).

