FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF MIGRATION AND THE INTEGRATION OF THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN ROMANIA

Hilda-Hedvig Varga[1],
Cristina Coculescu[2]
Ana Maria Mihaela Iordache[3*]

Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the phenomenon of migration in Romania from an interdisciplinary perspective, integrating legal, sociological, and econometric dimensions. The qualitative component is based on an analysis of international, European, and national legislation in the field of migration, as well as on the specialized literature regarding the social integration of migrants. The quantitative component consists of applying a multiple linear regression model estimated using the ordinary least squares (OLS) method, utilizing immigration data to identify the relationships between the explanatory variables and the phenomenon under analysis. The analysis highlights Romania's transformation from a predominantly emigration-oriented country into a major destination for non-EU workers. The Indian community represents a relevant example of new migration flows and the challenges associated with social and professional integration. The results of the econometric model show that it explains approximately 85.8% of the variation in the analyzed phenomenon and is statistically significant overall, but only one of the explanatory variables has a significant individual impact. This study contributes to the academic literature by integrating legal, sociological, and econometric perspectives into a unified framework for analyzing migration and the integration of migrants in Romania.

Keywords: immigration, Romania, India, regression, discrimination, rights

JEL Classification: J15, J61, J71, K38, C21

1. Introduction

International migration is one of the major issues in contemporary law and international relations, as it brings into interaction the principles of freedom of movement, states' security needs, labour protection, and the social integration of individuals residing outside their country of origin. According to the International Organization for Migration, approximately 281 million people were living in a country other than that of their birth in 2020, confirming the global nature of this phenomenon (IOM, 2024).

[1] PhD at the Romanian - American University, Bucharest, hilda.hedvig.varga@rau.ro
[2] Professor at the Romanian - American University, Bucharest, cristina.coculescu@rau.ro
[3] Associate Professor at the Romanian - American University, Bucharest, mihaela.iordache@rau.ro
[*] Corresponding author

For Romania, this topic is particularly relevant, as the country has long been analysed almost exclusively through the lens of Romanian emigration, while over the past decade it has also become a destination for workers originating from outside the European Union (Breaz et al., 2024).

Romania is mainly a transit country in the context of migrant smuggling. According to the Council of Europe, Romanian prosecution offices registered 1,488 migrant smuggling cases in 2022. The number of DIICOT cases involving both migrant smuggling and organised criminal groups also increased, from 65 in 2019 to 152 in 2022 and 186 by the end of September 2023 (Council of Europe, 2024). Similarly, the Global Organized Crime Index notes that groups operating along Romania's western border have facilitated the movement of migrants from Asian countries, including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, towards Western Europe. These groups are generally composed of both Romanian and foreign nationals, although most land-based facilitators are Romanian (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2023).

The aim of this paper is to examine the evolution of migration in Romania by combining three perspectives: human rights and the applicable legal framework, the sociology of migration, and the integration of the Indian community. Given the marked diversity that characterizes India, the term Indian community will be used to avoid undermining the distinct socio-cultural, linguistic, and religious identities that coexist within this population (Bori, 2023). The heterogeneity of the Indian state cannot be adequately captured by expressions such as Hindi community, a common misconception arising from the frequent confusion between the terms Hindi, Hindu, and Hinduism. Hindi refers primarily to a language and a cultural reference point, rather than to a unified legal, ethnic, or national category (Chakravarty, 2020).

The research questions that this study seeks to address are:

RQ1. How has the phenomenon of migration evolved in Romania?

RQ2. Does Romania possess a sufficiently developed legal and institutional framework to protect the rights of migrants and to facilitate the integration of newly arrived communities?

The answers to these questions cannot be formulated solely through the enumeration of legal provisions, as the existence of legislation does not automatically guarantee its effective implementation. For this reason, the present research incorporates both international and European legal instruments, as well as recent institutional data concerning work authorization, legal residence, and the economic demand for foreign workers. The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, as migration is not merely an administrative matter, but also a social process that reshapes the relationships among the majority, minority, employers, and public institutions.

2. Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study comprises the following stages:

Stage 1. Qualitative research based on the analysis of the legal framework and the relevant scholarly literature on migration.

Stage 2. Identification of the indicators considered most suitable for the quantitative analysis.

Stage 3. Quantitative research conducted through the statistical and econometric analysis of immigration-related data.

Stage 4. A case study examining the integration of the Indian community in Romania.

The indicators used in the empirical analysis, which, in the authors' view, most accurately characterize the migration phenomenon, are presented in Table 1.

Table no.1 Indicators Used in the Analysis

Indicator Code	Description of the Indicator
Y	Total number of immigrants
X_1	Total number of temporary male immigrants
X_2	Total number of temporary female immigrants
X_3	Total number of immigrants from other countries

The empirical analysis employs a multiple linear regression model to examine the relationship between the dependent variable (Y) and the three explanatory variables (X_1, X_2 and X_3) presented in Table 1. The model specification is given in Equation (1).

$$Y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1t} + \beta_2 X_{2t} + \beta_3 X_{3t} + \varepsilon_t \quad (1)$$

where:

Y_t – the value of the dependent variable Y observed at time t;

β_0 – the intercept (constant term) of the regression model;

β_1, β_2, β_3 – the regression coefficients associated with the explanatory variables;

ε_t – the random error term at time t;

X_{1t}, X_{2t}, X_{3t} – the values of the explanatory variables X_1, X_2, X_3 observed at time t;

t – the time considered in the analysis, taking values from 1 to 15.

3. Literature review

Migration may be broadly defined as the movement of an individual or a group from one territory to another, whether temporary or permanent, voluntary or forced. The definitions employed by the International Organization for Migration encompass both international and internal migration and do not

reduce the phenomenon to the legal status of the individual (IOM, 2024). This approach is particularly important for the analysis of human rights, as the protection of human dignity does not depend exclusively on the administrative form of residence. Nevertheless, from a legal perspective, the status of a migrant influences access to employment, social services, long-term residence, family reunification, and protection against removal (Arowolo, 2021).

The sociology of migration explains mobility through the interaction of structural causes and individual decision-making. The Push–pull theory suggests that migration is driven by both push factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and insecurity, and pull factors, including higher wages, political stability, and access to services (Urbański, 2022). While useful, this theory is incomplete when considered in isolation from its social context, as migration decisions are often shaped by family networks, informally transmitted information, and the experiences of previous migrants. In the case of Indian nationals migrating to Romania, income differentials, employment contracts, and the presence of recruitment agencies constitute key elements influencing migration decisions.

Castles and Miller described the contemporary period as the "age of migration," emphasizing that human mobility has become a permanent feature of the global economy rather than an exceptional phenomenon (Castles & Miller, 2009). This perspective is particularly relevant to Romania, where the importation of labour should not be viewed merely as a temporary solution to workforce shortages, but rather as part of a broader transformation of the European labour market. As the economically active population declines and sectors such as construction, transportation, and hospitality face increasing labour shortages, economic migration becomes an important mechanism for balancing labour supply and demand (Fayzullayev & Khalid, 2024).

Migrants' rights derive from the broader framework of universal human rights, which recognizes that fundamental protections belong to all people irrespective of nationality. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines core values, including dignity, liberty, equality, and the right to work, without restricting their application to citizens alone (United Nations, 1948). However, states maintain sovereign authority over immigration matters, including the admission and residence of foreign nationals. This dual reality gives rise to an ongoing legal and political tension between the sovereign interests of states and the imperative to ensure the protection of individual rights. Contemporary law seeks to balance these competing considerations through regulations governing visas, residence permits, working conditions, and safeguards against discriminatory or degrading treatment (Mattila, 2001).

The European Convention on Human Rights does not establish a general right for foreign nationals to enter a particular state; however, it imposes clear limitations regarding treatment, private life, family life, and non-discrimination

(Council of Europe, 1950). For migrants, these guarantees become particularly significant in cases involving expulsion, administrative detention, family separation, or arbitrary denial of services. The jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights has progressively shaped an indirect mechanism for the protection of foreign nationals, whereby states must examine both the proportionality of any restrictive action and its tangible consequences for the persons concerned (Sainato & Jewell, 2015).

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union prohibits discrimination on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or social origin, language, religion, beliefs, membership of a national minority, and citizenship, within the framework established by the Treaties (De Witte, 2025; FRA, n.d.). This provision is directly relevant to workers from third countries, as discrimination may occur during recruitment, within employment relationships, in access to housing, or in interactions with public authorities. From a legal perspective, the issue extends beyond the mere existence of prejudice to include the victim's ability to demonstrate differential treatment and obtain effective redress.

The European Union has developed a regulatory framework that distinguishes yet interconnects legal migration, asylum, border management, and social integration. The Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU) was adopted to create a more efficient procedure for granting residence and work authorization to third-country nationals and to ensure that legally employed non-EU nationals benefit from a common core of rights across EU Member States (European Union, 2011).

The significance of this Directive lies in its recognition of migrant workers not only as economic resources, but also as holders of minimum social rights. In practice, the effectiveness of its implementation must be assessed through the duration of administrative procedures, the transparency of requirements, and the actual accessibility of protection mechanisms in cases of abuse.

The European Commission's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 is based on the principle of "inclusion for all" and places particular emphasis on education, employment, healthcare, and housing (European Commission, 2020). Although the Plan does not replace the competences of Member States, it provides a policy framework for the integration of migrants and persons with a migrant background. For Romania, its relevance is twofold: it offers a European benchmark for policy development, while simultaneously demonstrating that integration cannot be reduced to the mere issuance of a work permit.

Eurostat data reveal that around 3.5 million initial residence permits were issued across the European Union to third-country nationals in 2024. Furthermore, statistics relating to residence and employment authorization schemes suggest that more than 4.6 million individuals secured legal access to

residence and labour markets through single-permit arrangements during the same period (Eurostat, 2025a; Eurostat, 2025b). These figures demonstrate that legal migration is not a marginal phenomenon, but rather a major administrative mechanism within the European Union. At the same time, the data reveal significant differences among Member States, reflecting variations in economic needs, administrative procedures, and institutional capacities.

Following 1990, Romania became primarily associated with the large-scale emigration of its own citizens. Romanian sociological research has shown that international migration evolved into a family strategy aimed at increasing income, acquiring housing, and improving social status (Sandu, 2010). This collective experience is relevant to understanding how Romanian society perceives newly arrived migrants. Although many Romanians are familiar, through their own families, with the challenges of working abroad, such familiarity does not automatically translate into solidarity with Asian or African workers arriving in Romania.

Romania's transformation into a destination country is closely linked to labour shortages and demographic change. In 2025, Government Decision No. 10/2025 established a quota of 100,000 newly admitted foreign workers for the Romanian labour market (Government of Romania, 2025). This quota does not represent the total number of foreign nationals residing in Romania, but rather the administrative threshold applicable to a specific category of newly admitted workers. This distinction is important because public debates often conflate legally employed foreign workers, asylum seekers, international students, and individuals residing under other legal statuses.

4. Results

The indicators used in the empirical analysis were obtained from the TEMPO database maintained by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics and cover the period 2010–2024 (Table 2).

Table no.2 The values of the indicators used in the empirical analysis

year	Y	X_1	X_2	X_3
2010	7059	85486	64399	2551
2011	15538	83931	63754	3862
2012	21684	94047	73219	3077
2013	23897	84790	68856	1467
2014	36644	70841	65194	13687
2015	23093	73670	59125	4895
2016	27863	79387	58068	6187
2017	50199	101036	76399	12013
2018	65678	98271	74307	16989

2019	64479	117643	84779	16887
2020	32250	83727	61792	7807
2021	49769	113914	80728	10947
2022	54839	168215	124809	22437
2023	29830	213594	110497	15569
2024	28431	184932	101606	16592

A preliminary analysis of Table 2 indicates that the total number of immigrants increased from 7,059 in 2010 to a peak of 65,678 in 2018. Following this peak, the figures remained relatively high in 2019 (64,479) before declining sharply in 2020 (32,250), largely because of the COVID-19 pandemic. After a temporary rebound in immigration observed in 2021 and 2022, when the number of incoming migrants increased to 49,769 and 54,839, respectively, a renewed downward trend emerged. Consequently, immigration levels fell below 30,000 in both 2023 and 2024.

A substantial increase in the temporary immigrant population was observed during the study period, from 149,885 individuals (85,486 men and 64,399 women) in 2010 to 286,538 individuals (184,932 men and 101,606 women) in 2024. Regarding the gender distribution of temporary immigrants, men constituted the majority throughout the entire period under analysis. The gender gap widened after 2021, suggesting a significant increase in labour migration directed toward sectors traditionally characterized by a predominantly male workforce.

As for immigrants originating from other countries, their number rose from 2,551 in 2010 to a peak of 22,437 in 2022. Although the figures declined slightly after 2022, they remained substantially higher than those recorded during the 2010–2017 period.

The multiple regression analysis was conducted using SAS Enterprise Guide. The results reveal a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.7505, indicating that approximately 75.05% of the variability in the dependent variable can be attributed to the combined influence of the explanatory variables included in the model. Furthermore, the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.6825$) remains relatively high, demonstrating that the model maintains substantial explanatory capacity even after adjusting for the number of predictors.

The modest gap between R^2 and Adjusted R^2 suggests that the independent variables contribute meaningfully to the explanation of the dependent variable and that the model is not excessively complex. There is limited evidence of overfitting, supporting the robustness and adequacy of the specified regression model. Consequently, the model can be considered to possess a satisfactory level of explanatory capacity for the phenomenon under investigation.

The overall significance of the model was assessed using the Fisher F-test. The value of the F-statistic is 11.03, with an associated probability of p = 0.0012, which is substantially lower than the conventional significance threshold of 5%. Therefore, the null hypothesis that all regression coefficients are simultaneously equal to zero is rejected.

These results indicate that the model is statistically significant and that at least one of the explanatory variables exerts a statistically significant influence on the dependent variable. Equation (2) presents the estimated regression model

$$Y = 22648 - 0.26563X_1 + 0.15963X_2 + 2.86757X_3 \quad (2)$$

The estimated coefficient for variable X_1 is negative (−0.26563), suggesting the existence of an inverse relationship between X_1 and Y. Thus, holding all other explanatory variables constant, a one-unit increase in X_1 leads, on average, to a decrease of approximately 0.266 units in the estimated value of Y. The associated t-test yields the p-value was 0.1266, which is greater than the commonly accepted significance level of 0.05. So, there is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the effect of X_1 on the dependent variable is statistically significant.

The estimated coefficient for X_2 is positive (0.15963), indicating a direct relationship between this variable and Y. However, the associated p-value is 0.7069, which is substantially higher than the 5% significance level. Therefore, the influence of X_2 on the dependent variable is not statistically significant, and the results do not support the existence of a systematic relationship between X_2 and Y.

The estimated coefficient for X_3 is positive and relatively large (2.86757), indicating that a one-unit increase in X_3 is associated, on average, with an increase of approximately 2.87 units in Y, ceteris paribus. The associated p-value is 0.0010, well below the 5% significance threshold, demonstrating that the effect of X_3 is both strong and statistically significant. Therefore, X_3 represents the principal explanatory factor of the dependent variable within the regression model.

To assess the relative contribution of the explanatory variables, the standardized Beta coefficients were examined. The results indicate the following values: β(x1) = −0.655, β(X_2) = 0.180, and β(x3) = 1.062. The largest standardized coefficient corresponds to X_3, confirming that this variable exerts the strongest influence on Y. By contrast, X_2 makes only a limited contribution, and its effect is practically negligible when compared with that of X_3.

To identify potential multicollinearity issues among the explanatory variables, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were calculated for each independent variable: VIF(X_1) = 6.93, VIF(X_2) = 9.54, and VIF(x3) = 2.52. VIF values greater than 5 indicate potential multicollinearity concerns, while values close to or exceeding 10 suggest severe multicollinearity. The results indicate

that X_1 and X_2 exhibit relatively high levels of multicollinearity, which may lead to instability in the estimated coefficients and reduce the individual statistical significance of the predictors. In contrast, X_3 does not raise concerns from this perspective. This conclusion is further supported by the Condition Index, whose maximum value is 29.94, very close to the threshold of 30 commonly associated with severe multicollinearity.

The assumption of homoscedasticity was tested using a Chi-square test, which produced a statistic of 8.37 with an associated p-value of 0.4973. Since the p-value is substantially greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis of constant variance cannot be rejected. Therefore, there is no statistical evidence of heteroscedasticity in the model.

The independence of residuals was assessed using the Durbin–Watson statistic, which has a value of 1.807, very close to the ideal value of 2, while the first-order autocorrelation coefficient is only 0.010. These results indicate the absence of serial autocorrelation among the residuals and confirm that the assumption of error independence is satisfied.

The examination of standardized residuals revealed a maximum value of approximately −2.39. In statistical literature, observations are generally considered potential outliers when studentized residuals exceed the threshold of ±3 in absolute value. Accordingly, none of the observations exceeds this threshold, suggesting the absence of extreme observations that could significantly influence the estimation results.

In conclusion, the estimated multiple linear regression model is statistically valid and exhibits substantial explanatory power, accounting for approximately 75% of the variation in the dependent variable. The Fisher test confirms the overall significance of the model, while the diagnostic tests indicate no evidence of heteroscedasticity or autocorrelation. The analysis of the individual coefficients shows that only X_3 exerts a statistically significant influence on the dependent variable. Variables X_1 and X_2 are not statistically significant, and the relatively high VIF values suggest the presence of potential multicollinearity issues between these predictors.

The legal status of foreign nationals in Romania is primarily governed by Emergency Ordinance No. 194/2002, which establishes the conditions for entry, residence, and departure, as well as the rights and obligations of foreign citizens residing in the country (Government of Romania, 2002). This legislative act is of fundamental importance because it translates migration policy into concrete administrative procedures, including visa issuance, residence permits, extensions of residence rights, termination of lawful stay, and removal measures.

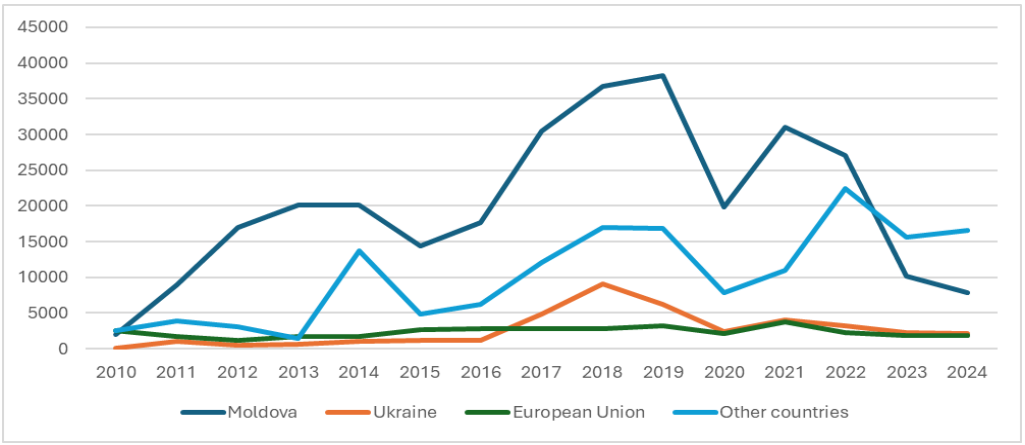


Figure 1. Evolution of the Number of Immigrants in Romania, 2010–2024.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from the Romanian National Institute of Statistics.

During the period 2010–2024, migration to Romania (Figure 1) exhibited distinct patterns depending on the migrants' region of origin. The Republic of Moldova emerged as the leading source country of immigrants for most of the study period. The volume of immigrants originating from Moldova exhibited a marked upward trend, growing from 1,973 persons in 2010 to 20,125 persons in 2014. This increase was followed by a downward adjustment, with the number of immigrants decreasing to 14,340 in 2015. Subsequently, the migration flow resumed an upward trajectory, reaching a peak of 38,205 individuals in 2019. Thereafter, significant fluctuations were observed, with the number decreasing to 19,912 in 2020, increasing to 31,041 in 2021, and then declining continuously to 7,891 individuals in 2024.

About immigration from Ukraine, the figures remained relatively low between 2010 and 2016, ranging from 39 to 1,221 individuals. Beginning in 2017, the number of immigrants increased substantially, reaching 4,850 persons, while the highest value of the analysed period was recorded in 2018, with 9,040 immigrants. Following this peak, the number of Ukrainian immigrants gradually declined, reaching 2,154 individuals in 2024.

Immigration originating from Member States of the European Union was characterized by a relatively stable pattern throughout the period under review. The number of immigrants remained within a relatively narrow range, varying from 1,184 to 3,775 individuals and displaying considerably less volatility than the other categories examined. A peak was observed in 2021, when immigration from European Union Member States reached 3,775 persons. Subsequently, this figure declined, falling to 1,794 individuals by 2024.

The category of "other countries" exhibited the highest degree of variability after the Republic of Moldova. Following a decline to 1,467 immigrants in 2013, a substantial increase was recorded in 2014, when the number reached 13,687 individuals. In the following years, the figures continued to fluctuate, reaching 16,989 immigrants in 2018 and 16,887 in 2019. After declining to 7,807 individuals in 2020, the number of immigrants from other countries increased to a peak of 22,437 in 2022. During the final two years of the analysed period, this category accounted for 15,569 individuals in 2023 and 16,592 in 2024.

An examination of immigration patterns over the 2010–2024 period highlights the Republic of Moldova as the leading country of origin for migrants arriving in Romania during most of the years analysed. Nevertheless, a notable shift occurred in 2023 and 2024, when the aggregated category of "other countries" exceeded the number of immigrants originating from the Republic of Moldova and became the most significant source of immigration. The findings further suggest that migration flows from EU Member States remained relatively consistent throughout the period, exhibiting only limited variation. In contrast, immigration from the Republic of Moldova and from the group classified as "other countries" experienced considerably greater volatility, with substantial year-to-year changes.

From a cumulative perspective, the data for the entire 2010–2024 interval confirm the dominant contribution of the Republic of Moldova to Romania's immigration inflows. The second-largest share was represented by immigrants from other countries, whereas migrants arriving from Ukraine and EU Member States constituted comparatively smaller proportions of the overall immigrant population.

From an employment perspective, an important feature of the Romanian legal framework is that the work authorization is generally obtained by the employer rather than by the foreign worker. Euraxess Romania specifies that the work permit application is submitted by the employer, while the foreign worker is required to retain a certified copy of either the employment authorization or the residence permit issued for employment purposes (Euraxess Romania, n.d.). This procedural structure may create a degree of dependency on the employer, particularly when the worker lacks proficiency in the Romanian language, has limited understanding of administrative procedures, or does not have access to independent legal assistance (Gavriș, 2024; Hlaciuc & Rata, 2018).

Legal protection extends beyond the right of residence. The Labour Code, occupational health and safety regulations, anti-discrimination legislation, and wage protection rules apply equally to foreign workers who are legally employed in Romania. Vulnerability arises when migrants are unable to distinguish between the promises made by recruitment agencies, the contractual

obligations agreed upon in Romania, and the rights guaranteed under labour legislation. Consequently, effective protection requires the provision of multilingual information, labour inspections, and close cooperation among immigration authorities, territorial labour inspectorates, and civil society organizations (Toshpo‘Latov, 2024).

5. Discussion

The Indian community in Romania is highly diverse and cannot be reduced to a single religious, linguistic, or professional identity. Indian nationals residing in Romania come from different social backgrounds and are engaged in a wide range of economic activities, including construction, manufacturing, hospitality, information technology, entrepreneurship, and higher education. This diversity demands avoiding generalizations and distinguishing between citizenship, language, religion, regional identity, and professional status (Kaur, 2024).

The presence of Indian workers in Romania should be understood within the broader context of South Asian migration to Central and Eastern Europe. The increasing number of workers from India and other South Asian countries is closely associated with labour shortages resulting from the emigration of Romanian citizens and the ageing of the population. Journalistic accounts provide valuable insights into migrants’ living conditions, recruitment processes, and adaptation experiences (Crețulescu, 2024).

Social integration is a multidimensional process encompassing housing, employment, education, healthcare, civic participation, and cultural recognition. The European Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 emphasizes the importance of access to education, employment, healthcare services, and housing (European Commission, 2020). In Romania, economic integration is often achieved more rapidly than social integration. While an employment contract may provide financial stability, it does not automatically ensure awareness of rights, community participation, or the development of stable social relationships. Integration also has a cultural dimension, reflected in the establishment of restaurants, retail businesses, cultural and religious events, and informal support networks. These mechanisms contribute to preserving cultural identity and reducing the psychological costs associated with relocation.

Language constitutes one of the principal barriers to integration. Limited proficiency in Romanian restricts access to public services and may increase migrants’ dependence on intermediaries. Although English facilitates certain interactions, it does not fully address communication challenges related to public administration, healthcare services, or the housing market. Romanian language courses, translated informative materials, and culturally sensitive legal counselling therefore represent important instruments for promoting successful integration.

Discrimination may take either direct or indirect forms. Direct discrimination involves less favourable treatment because of origin, religion, language, or skin colour. Indirect discrimination may arise from seemingly neutral rules that disproportionately affect certain groups. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and Romanian anti-discrimination legislation provide mechanisms of protection; however, their effectiveness depends largely on awareness and accessibility (FRA, n.d.; Gherghina, 2020).

Labor exploitation constitutes one of the principal vulnerabilities associated with economic migration. The risk increases when workers incur substantial recruitment costs, reside in employer-controlled accommodation, or lack knowledge of local institutions and legal protections. International standards on decent work seek to prevent such situations (ILO, 2014). The prevention of labour exploitation depends on comprehensive regulatory monitoring of contractual employment conditions, wage compliance, accommodation quality, and working-hour practices, complemented by effective and accessible mechanisms for reporting abuses.

From a strictly organised crime perspective, cases in which Indian nationals are explicitly mentioned as suspects or organisers remain relatively limited. In 2008, the Romanian Border Police announced the dismantling of an illegal migration network operating on the India–Russia–Romania–Italy route, whose leader was identified as an Indian national and was supported by two Romanian citizens (Romanian Border Police, 2008). Another significant case occurred in 2021, when Romanian authorities reported the taking down of an organised criminal group composed of Romanian and Indian nationals, suspected of facilitating the movement of Indian migrants to Portugal, Italy and Germany. Europol referred to the same case, noting that migrants allegedly paid between EUR 5,000 and 6,000 for transportation (Europol, 2021; Romanian Border Police, 2021). In 2022, the Timișoara Border Police reported another case in which two Indian nationals, K.A. and S.J., were suspected of sheltering fellow nationals and assisting them in illegally crossing the border (Romanian Border Police, 2022).

From an economic perspective, migration plays a vital role in alleviating workforce shortages, promoting economic productivity, and increasing fiscal revenues through tax contributions. For the Indian community, contributions are evident through the occupation of positions experiencing labour deficits, the transfer of skills in sectors such as information technology and engineering, and the development of commercial activities with a cultural profile (Varma, 2020). At the social level, migration may generate exclusionary reactions in societies with limited experience of ethnic diversity; however, intercultural education and effective institutional communication can contribute to mitigating such attitudes.

Migration is also an important subject within the field of international relations. The recruitment of Indian workers in Romania is the outcome of transnational economic and political processes. The International Organization for Migration promotes safe, orderly, and regular migration through cooperation among states (IOM, 2024). The existence of an active Indian community can facilitate economic, academic, and cultural exchanges between Romania and India, while migrants' experiences contribute to shaping perceptions of the host country (Boangiu, 2024).

Public policies may pursue three principal objectives: informing migrants, supporting local integration, and monitoring recruitment and employment conditions. Information regarding rights, obligations, and working conditions should be accessible, including for individuals with limited literacy skills. Local integration may be supported through Romanian language courses, orientation centres, and partnerships with non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, monitoring employment and accommodation conditions can play an important role in preventing abuse and exploitation.

A responsible policy approach requires recognition of the diversity within the Indian community. Not all Indian nationals share the same language, religion, or migration objectives. Consequently, both public policies and academic research should avoid simplistic categorizations and consider the socio-cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of this population (Debbarma, 2025; Zieliński, 2021).

The right to health is particularly important for migrants, both in relation to the physical risks associated with certain occupations and regarding mental well-being. Cultural, linguistic, and social adjustment challenges may intensify feelings of alienation and emotional distress (Martin et al., 1999). Access to healthcare services depends not only on legal entitlement, but also on an individual's understanding of administrative procedures and ability to communicate effectively with healthcare professionals (Section & (Eupha-MH), 2025; Sangaramoorthy & Carney, 2021). Family separation represents another major challenge for migrant workers, as prolonged distance from relatives may have significant emotional and psychological consequences (Knipe et al., 2019).

6. Conclusion

Migration in Romania can no longer be analysed exclusively through the lens of emigration; it must also be understood as a process of legal immigration involving workers from third countries. The increasing quotas for foreign workers and the growing presence of Asian communities indicate a structural transformation in Romania's migration profile. The Indian community exemplifies the relationship between economic migration, social rights, and integration. From a legal perspective, Indian nationals lawfully residing in

Romania benefit from fundamental and social rights, while their successful integration depends on access to language acquisition, housing, public institutions, and non-discriminatory treatment.

Existing legislative instruments, including Government Emergency Ordinance No. 194/2002, Directive 2011/98/EU, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, establish a solid legal basis for the protection of rights. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these norms depends largely on their implementation at the national and local levels. Where information dissemination is inadequate, labour inspections are insufficient, or integration support services are underdeveloped, the practical enjoyment of these rights may be significantly constrained despite their formal legal recognition. Workplace integration constitutes the first stage of broader social integration, and measures such as anti-discrimination training and accessible communication strategies can help reduce migrants' vulnerabilities.

The institutional sources examined do not support the view that the Indian community in Romania can be treated as a collective actor in organized crime. The available data point only to isolated cases in which Indian nationals appear either as suspects, migrants, or beneficiaries of smuggling networks. Therefore, a rigorous formulation should distinguish between the individual involvement of persons of Indian nationality and the unjustified attribution of criminal behavior to an entire community.

The limitations of this research stem primarily from the lack of detailed public data concerning integration outcomes by nationality, economic sector, locality, and type of vulnerability. Data relating to work authorizations do not provide sufficient information regarding housing conditions, wages, access to healthcare, or experiences of discrimination. Future research should therefore employ aggregated and regularly updated datasets to assess both integration processes and the effectiveness of public policies. Furthermore, greater attention should be devoted to analysing institutional coordination among authorities responsible for immigration, employment, social services, and anti-discrimination measures.

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