

# ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



**ISRG PUBLISHERS**

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

**ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)**

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – II Issue-III (May – June) 2024

Frequency: Bimonthly



## OVERVIEW OF KOREA'S SOCIAL INTEGRATION POLICY FOR IMMIGRANTS

PhD student, MA. Ha Thu Huong

VNU, University of Foreign Languages, Hanoi

| **Received:** 01.06.2024 | **Accepted:** 08.06.2024 | **Published:** 25.06.2024

\***Corresponding author:** PhD student, MA. Ha Thu Huong

VNU, University of Foreign Languages, Hanoi

### Abstract

*People today are living in the period of globalization, whereby multiculturalism has become an inevitable trend in the majority of countries around the world, including Korea. Under the impact of a series of social issues such as low birth rates and population aging, Korea has been receiving a massive wave of international migrants, including international students, workers and international marriage migrants. Thus, multicultural society is an era trend that cannot be denied or resisted in current Korean society. Facing this trend, the Korean government has continuously made efforts to introduce a system of regimes and policies to build an open and inclusive multicultural society. It can be said that Korea's multicultural policy in general and its policy to support immigrants' social integration in particular have achieved some remarkable achievements, but there are still some limitations.*

*This article focuses on understanding policies to support foreigners on social immigrating to Korea, especially the policies to support immigrants' social integration, thereby assessing the limitations as well as future prospects of that policy system.*

**Keywords:** social integration, immigrants, multicultural, international marriage migrants

### Introduction

Along with the development of industrialized society and globalization trends, the process of migrating workforce for the purpose of finding jobs is deployed worldwide and has become a common phenomenon. Over the past decades, worldwide, the trend of international mobility has continued to increase sharply. This is a common phenomenon, taking place throughout the process of human development under the influence of the political, economic, cultural or social context of the originating or receiving country.

In Korea, the appearance of migrant workers due to globalization trends, the strong development of multicultural families stemming from international marriages, and North Koreans fleeing from North Korea to South Korea, started a massive wave of international migration into Korea. Over time, a completely new social phenomenon has been created in this country, called "multicultural society". The benefits that "multicultural society" brings Korea in the modern era are undeniable, in the context that

this country is facing a series of population problems such as low birth rate, population aging, risk of labor shortage... However, the appearance of foreigners, coming from different cultures, not fluent or not fluent in Korean... has also put forward the hot issues of social integration and cross-cultural adaptation. This is not just a problem of a certain country like Korea, but is expected to become increasingly urgent in today's era of globalization and the explosion of international mobility trends.

This article focuses on understanding the policies to support foreigners immigrating to Korea, with a focus on the policies to support immigrants' social integration, thereby assessing the limitations as well as future prospects of that policy system.

## 1. Theoretical basis

Social Integration is a concept mentioned a lot in psychology, often understood in the most general way as the process in which an individual or a certain social group is given favorable conditions by society. These favorable conditions to actively participate in social life on equality with other members of society. Thus, "social integration" includes important factors: *individuals/groups* (usually minority groups, disadvantaged groups in a common community), *society* (which is the common community environment/ the majority) and *that individual/social group participates in the common community equally, with the same status as other majority subjects, and fully enjoys the benefits from the common community like all other mass objects.*

According to the approach of the 1995 Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, the goal of *social integration* is to create "a society for all", based on on the principle of non-coercion, respect for diversity, and promote equality in access to public services. From the practical perspective of the globalization process that some regions/groups enjoy valuable benefits, while others do not; the diversity of immigrant groups with distinct languages, religions and identities, and feelings of marginality, etc., the Conference's view is that it should aim to design appropriate policies to reduce differences and create favourable conditions allowing for people's active participation in political, economic and social life. In this sense, social inclusion is the opposite of social exclusion and the Conference's concern is to promote increasing social integration, respecting for differences, reducing the likelihood of violence and providing a foundation for cooperation (United Nations, 1995; cited by Pham Van Quyet, 2015).

*In Korea, "Social Integration" is translated with the term 사회통합, and this is also the most important keyword, becoming the name of a program to help immigrants integrate into Korean life. Korea Immigration & integration program (사회통합프로그램) is managed by the Ministry of Justice. The Korean Institute of Social Health Research (2012) defines "Social integration is the creation of a common community through minimizing social conflicts, providing equal opportunities for each individual to have feeling of belonging to the community". Thus, this concept also emphasizes three elements: individual, society and the process of becoming an equal member of society. Connecting with the case of immigrants, migrants, feeling "lost, excluded from society" due to different origins and cultural backgrounds, after going through the process of social integration, will become a true citizen and actively contribute to Korean society*

in a multicultural community of equality, without barriers and without discrimination.

*To measure the level of social integration, Pham Van Quyet (2015) synthesized and modeled the concept of social integration in five (5) dimensions, including: 1) Economic dimension (labor employment, income, living expenses); 2) Dimensions related to infrastructure (settlement, housing, living amenities, living areas...); 3) Social capital dimension (social network/social participation, trust...); 4) Human capital dimension (health, education, living environment); 5) Political dimension (understanding about politics, participating in political events). And to meet the necessary indicators of all five aspects, it is necessary to consider what policies and solutions the Korean government has implemented to support immigrants in the process of social integration in the host country.*

## 2. Research methods

To understand the content of Korea's policy system, the main research method used in this study is the document research method. Specifically, to collect information, the writer has done as follows: (1) Researched primary and secondary documents on theoretical foundations related to the research topic (such as migration, immigration, social integration festival...); (2) Read primary documents directly related to the research topic (legal documents, websites of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women and Gender Equality, Multicultural Family Support Center. .. are the main agencies in charge of the research field); (3) Read research results published in publications (specialized books, scientific articles, theses and dissertations)... as well as statistical data of relevant ministries and branches.

Based on the information and data collected, the writer has performed work related to document analysis and information synthesis, thereby drawing conclusions about the presented research results, specifically in the following section of the article.

## 3. Subject and scope of research

The research object of this article is the policy system related to social integration issues in Korea. However, to accurately determine the research object, especially due to the language differences between Vietnamese - English and Korean, it is necessary to clarify some important terms and concepts, which are the concepts about "immigration" and "immigrants".

Migration, emigration or migration is a fairly common phenomenon in recent times, on an international scale, but in each country, the definition of the transnational population movement trend is not completely clear alike. In English, the main term used is "migration". According to the definition of the United Nations (1958), this is a form of movement in space of people from one geographical unit to another, accompanied by frequent changes of residence within a definite migration time. "Migration" includes two processes: "Emmigration" is the process of moving people **from** one region or country to another region or country to live permanently or temporarily; and "Immigration": is the process of moving people **to** one region or another country to live permanently or temporarily.

"Migration" in Vietnamese studies is often translated as "migration", or "immigration". Clause 7, Article 3 of Vietnam's 2003 Population Ordinance defines "Migration is the movement of population from one country to reside in another country, from one administrative unit to another". In the "Vietnamese Dictionary"

(Hoang Phe, 2003, page 254), "Migrate" has two meanings: 1) move to another region or country to live (For example: Migrate to the South. Migrate to America); 2) as "immigration". "Immigrate" is also defined with two layers of meaning: 1) Moving to another place. 2) (phenomenon of some species of birds and animals) moving to live in warm places every year to avoid the cold. (For example: In winter, swallows migrate to the tropics). "Migration" in Vietnam is discussed in two aspects: domestic migration and international migration (also known as transnational migration). However, this article only focuses on the phenomenon of international migration, with hot issues revolving around migrant labor or international marriage.

In Korea, when searching for documents related to international migration, the writer realized that the two most commonly used phrases are 이민 (translated as "immigrant"), and 이주 (translated as "migrant" or "immigrant"). According to the Basic Korean Dictionary of the National Institute of Korean National Languages, "이민 (imin)" means immigration (ie leaving one's own country and going to live in another country), and "이민자 (iminja)" is defined as "migrant". And "이주 (iju)" is migration, emigration, emigration (ie the group of individuals, races or ethnicities... leaving the area where they live and moving to another area to live), "이주민 (ijumin)" means immigrant, migrant.

Thus, from the above searches, some conclusions can be drawn as follows:

- When talking about the phenomenon of population movement from one country to another, corresponding to the English term "migration", Vietnamese can use "migration, migration"; Korean uses the term "이민".
- When talking about the subject of the migration/migration phenomenon mentioned above, in Korean we can use two concepts "이민자, 이주민". In some Vietnamese studies, these two phrases are translated as "immigrants", however, in this article, we will use the same concept "immigrants" to be consistent with the other documents.

Clarifying the above terminology is an important basis for the writer in the process of gathering documents and statistics on policies related to the topic of immigration.

## 4. Research results

### 4.1. Overview of Korea's policy to support immigrants' social integration

#### 4.1.1. Related policies and laws

Multicultural society is an era trend that cannot be denied or resisted in current Korean society. Facing this trend, the Korean government has continuously made efforts to introduce a system of regimes and policies to build an open and inclusive multicultural society in the future. Since 2003, the "Law relating to the recruitment of foreign workers" has been promulgated. Next, on April 26, 2006, "Policy to support social integration for families of marriage immigrants" and "Support plan for mixed-race children and immigrants" were announced. One month later, on May 26, policies such as "General directions and institutions for implementing policies for foreigners", "Basic Law for foreigners in Korea"... were also launched. On March 21, 2008, the "Law on

supporting multicultural families" was issued and took effect from September 2008. Since then, it is possible to list a series of policies directly related to the issue of social integration of immigrants such as "Policies to support social integration for families of female immigrants under the marriage", "Support plan for mixed-race children and immigrants", "General direction and institutional implementation of policies for foreigners", "Basic law for foreigners in Korea"...

It is impossible not to mention the Multicultural Family Support Law promulgated in 2008. The introduction of this Law marked the legal institutionalization of support policies for married immigrant women and multicultural families in Korea, creating a legal basis for Multicultural family policy. The basic contents of the "Law on Supporting Multicultural Families" include: ① Concept of multicultural families, responsibilities and tasks of the state and local autonomous governments, ② Field investigation about multicultural families, ③ Training and propaganda to increase understanding of multicultural families, ④ Providing life information for multicultural families, training them to adapt to society, ⑤ Family counseling, training for couples, training on family life to maintain gender-equal family relationships, ⑥ Protection and support for victims of domestic violence, ⑦ Support health protection after giving birth, ⑧ Teaching and training children of multicultural families, ⑨ Providing multilingual services, ⑩ Designating multicultural family support centers, ⑪ Public training officials involved in the work of supporting multicultural families, ⑫ Policies for unmarried couples and their children, ⑬ Support from private organizations... Thus, it can be seen that the main purposes of the Law are (1) towards a multicultural society where everyone is respected and there is no discrimination; (2) to expand socio-economic participation for multicultural families; and (3) to promote healthy development for children of multicultural families; is also an important component in the social integration of immigrants in general in Korea.

The above policies are quite diverse in scope, regulating most aspects of the economic, political, social life... of foreigners immigrating to Korea. In particular, the "Basic Law for Foreigners in Korea" stipulates the basic direction and institutions for implementing policies for foreigners such as "Nationality Law" and "Immigration Management Law", The "Law on Compatriots Living Abroad" regulates nationality and status of residence, while the "Multicultural Family Support Law" is the legal basis for Korea's policy of supporting women migrating for marriage. Therefore, we can also see a large number of policies and regulations regulating support for immigrants in the process of social integration in Korea.

#### 4.1.2. Programs and actions

Besides legal documents, Korea also implements a series of programs and practical support activities for immigrants to quickly integrate and adapt to Korean society. Specifically:

- *Social integration program*: implemented since 2009 to provide immigrants with basic knowledge such as Korean language, Korean culture, understanding of Korean society and constitutional values that are necessary for immigrants to adapt and become independent members of Korean society. In addition, based on considering the needs of immigrants, the Ministry of Justice also operates online video education

programs and special classes such as night classes and weekend classes.

- *Early adaptation program for immigrants:* with the purpose of supporting early social adaptation for foreigners long-term residing in Korea (marriage immigrants, international students...), the Program Early Adaptation for Immigrants provides information about Korea's basic laws and systems. This program has been actively implemented since 2015.
- *Operating immigrant networks:* supporting the activities of immigrant networks in the form of social groups to help them stabilize their emotions through forming a voluntary social network among people in the same situations and of the same nationality. Thereby helping immigrants become healthy members of Korean society.
- *Deploying an international marriage information program:* implemented since October 2010 to raise awareness about international marriage and minimize problems that may occur during the international marriage process.
- *Developing a team of social integration volunteers:* experts in many social fields including law and health, and settled migrants are appointed as social integration

volunteers exemplary, actively contributing in supporting the social adaptation of migrants in many different ways.

- *Organizing the World People's Day event (May 20 every year)* to create a social environment where Korean citizens and foreigners living in Korea can live together and respect each other.

#### 4.1.3. Implementation organizational structure

At the central government, the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality (MOGEF), Ministry of Health and Welfare, and Ministry of Justice play a central role in promulgating relevant policies. The Ministry of Women and Gender Equality coordinates with the Ministry of Justice to operate the Social Integration program for foreigners, in which the Multicultural Family Support Centers are the main operating agencies of this program. Training Korean language and Korean culture for immigrant brides is handled by the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality, while the Early Post-entry Adaptation Program is the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice.

The specific roles of Ministries and Departments in the policy system related to foreigners can be tracked in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Work undertaken by each government agency<sup>1</sup>**

<i>Ministry of Women and Gender Equality</i>	<i>Judicial Ministry</i>	<i>Ministry of Administration and Security</i>	<i>Ministry of Labor</i>	<i>Ministry of Education</i>	<i>Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism</i>
Law on Multicultural Family Support, operating the Multicultural Family Support Center	Overview of policies to support foreigners	Supporting immigrant foreigners to adapt to society and become independent in social life	Policies for foreign workers	Educational support for the second generation in multicultural families	Developing Korean language textbooks that promote multiculturalism

In particular, If the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality plays a central role in the issue of multicultural families, the Ministry of Justice is the focal point of a series of programs and mechanisms related to the above- mentioned social integration issues.

In fact, before the central government officially issued the above comprehensive policies, policy research was conducted very early at the local level. In the second half of the 90s, the autonomous local government - where there was a large and concentrated immigration of women for marriage - carried out research on the situation of international marriage, arising problems and support plans. And local governments are also the focal units in policy implementation, bringing policies closer to the main beneficiaries who are immigrants.

#### 4.2. Evaluate some limitations

It can be said that Korea's policies are quite diverse and comprehensive, covering all aspects of the lives of immigrants when settling in Korea, from the family to society, from activities economic to participating in political life. However, it cannot be denied that some limitations still exist, and this is also a policy problem that Korea needs to solve in the near future.

- *Regarding policy beneficiaries,* the International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines immigrants as people who have stayed abroad for more than a year, while immigrants in Korea are people who have stayed for more than 90 days. date and registered as a foreigner. This means that the country's immigration policy is currently divided into immigration policy, foreign manpower policy and social integration policy. In addition, the Basic Law on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea defines “재외외국인” (i.e. “foreigners in Korea”) are people who do not have Korean nationality, but have the purpose of staying in Korea and legally stay in Korea. A group of foreigners staying illegally in Korea, also known as “미등록외국인” (ie “unregistered foreigners”) are mentioned only in Article 46 (Subjects are forced deportation), Article 47 (Investigation), Article 67 (Exit request) in the “Immigration Management Law”. Their content related to the issue of treatment of these subjects, or preventing the emergence of illegal residence status, policies to promote the return to the country of illegal residence subjects have not yet been mentioned or clearly stated in any legal document.
- *Overlap in the management apparatus:* As stated in section 2.2, currently the number of central ministries supporting multicultural families and foreigners has exceeded 10, and at the same time, the interest in supporting families is increasing. Multicultural families

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2008, “Policies to enhance support appropriate to each life cycle”; The writer has added and edited further.

are also increasing in local self-government and private organizations. Most projects supporting multicultural families are similar, overlapping or implemented in a fragmented manner. Some projects have been pointed out as charity projects or demonstration projects, but this point has not yet been clarified.

- *Lack of uniformity in policies and people's awareness:* According to the results of a survey on public acceptance of multiculturalism conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family at the end of 2011, it was found that public acceptance of multiculturalism in Korean society was not enough. Unlike the expansion of support projects for multicultural families, there was no any improvement in Koreans' understanding and acceptance of multicultural families. Currently, multicultural acceptance in Korea is generally still at a low level, while negative perceptions of multicultural society tend to increase, so Korea needs to strengthen public education to increase multicultural acceptance.

In his research on the multicultural phenomenon of Korean society, Lee Seong-sun pointed out that multicultural policies are not policies targeting immigrants but policies that recognize immigrants as subjects of society and premised on creating a foundation for them to be active in all areas of society. The basis of multicultural social policy is social inclusion and it is important to create a platform for minority groups to participate in society in all aspects of society, including education, economics, politics treatment, healthcare and population. Meanwhile, Korea's policy to support immigrants' social integration currently only focuses on projects aimed at immigrants and has no projects related to social integration for Koreans themselves. The Basic Law on the Treatment of Foreigners and the Multicultural Family Support Law have tasks such as raising the social awareness of immigrants and raising Korean people's awareness of multiculturalism, strengthening the foundation for integration into a multicultural society, but there is no systematic projects (Lee Seong Sun, 2023).

## 5. Development prospects of Korea's immigration policies

In order to overcome existing shortcomings, Korea needs to clarify the assignment of tasks to relevant ministries and branches, as well as between the central government and local governments in implementing relevant policies to immigrants. A more important task is to build a multicultural social foundation, starting with raising Korean people's awareness of multiculturalism and the sense of accepting immigrants as equal citizens in the community. In 2018, the government drew up plans for a multicultural awareness project focusing on the Prime Minister's Office, and the policy objective is to 'improve understanding of multiculturalism and create a social culture with diverse races and cultures.' The implementation tasks are detailed projects in four areas: strengthening education to promote cross-cultural understanding, strengthening the promotion of cultural diversity through media such as broadcasting, enhancing tolerance through different cultural experiences, strengthening the law-abiding environment, and establishing an institutional foundation. Detailed projects are included in the six policy tasks of the Second Multicultural Family Policy Basic Plan (2013-2017), and each Ministry also includes multicultural awareness content in its own projects. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family has implemented cross-cultural awareness projects, including training and educating professional trainers on cross-cultural understanding education and supporting local cross-cultural programs through the Korea Healthy Family Promotion Agency.

Table 2 below clearly shows Korea's efforts to improve this policy.

**Table 2. Changes in Korea's policy for foreigners**

<b>Immigration management policies (1960s~2007)</b>	<b>1st Foreigners Policy (2008~2012))</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Foreigners Policy (2013~2017)</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Foreigners Policy (2018~2022)</b>	<b>Context changes</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Foreigners Policy (2023~2027)</b>
<b>Formation phase</b>	<b>Startup phase</b>	<b>Expansion phase</b>	<b>n-depth phase</b>		<b>Phase of qualitative change</b>
Promulgation of the Law on Immigration Management (1963) Start of trainee regime (1991) Enactment of the Law on Koreans Abroad (1999) Applying the work permit regime (2004)	Promulgation of the Basic Law on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea (2007) Launching the Foreigners Policy Institute of the Immigration Department (2007) Applying the start-up regime for overseas Vietnamese returning home (2007) Applying a social integration program (2009)	Applying the Law on People in Exile (2013) Applying the regime for exiles to integrate into the community (2015) Applying the seasonal worker regime (2015)	Start of Conversion from permanent residence to regular naturalization (2019) Strengthening the special naturalization regime for elite talents (2020) Strengthening licences of dual nationality, marriage immigrants □ elite talents (2020)	Industrial Revolution 4.0 Covid 19 pandemic The change in population structure and the risk of disappearance of some localities Competition among countries in Southeast Asia The spread of Hallyu	The reform aims to specialize immigration policy in an integrated way Creating financial resources to implement immigration policy based on people's sympathy Expanding international cooperation, beyond the boundaries of domestic policy perspectives.

## Conclusion

Korea's multicultural policy in general and its policies to support immigrants' social integration in particular have achieved some remarkable achievements, but there are still some limitations. To move towards a healthy, sustainable multicultural society in the future, Korea needs to continue to focus on tasks such as anti-discrimination and increasing support for school-age children of multicultural families, supporting married women immigrating to Korea to adapt to the new living environment early and creating employment conditions, enhancing cross-cultural understanding for Korean citizens to improve multicultural acceptance,...

## References

### *Vietnamese documents*

1. Cao Thi Hai Bac (2012), "Social capital of married immigrant women through multicultural family support activities of the immigrant support center in Seongnam", *Journal of Korean Studies* 2012
2. Do Thi Thu Phuong (2021), "Social integration of orphans at SOS Children's Villages and Birla Children's Villages, Hanoi City", Doctoral thesis, Hanoi National University, Vietnam Male
3. Kim Yi Seon (2016), "Settlement situation of Vietnamese immigrants and notes related to Korean-Vietnamese women's cooperation", *Proceedings of the Conference on Korean Women's Policy Research Institute Quoc*, p53~68
4. Pham Van Quyet (2015), "Social integration: Some perspectives and implementation of research and measurement", *Journal of Psychology*, No. 10 (199), October 2015, p.71- 81
5. Pham Van Quyet (2016), Social networks and social integration of poor immigrant workers in Vietnamese urban areas, *Electronic Journal of Political Theory*, [http://lyluanchinhtri.vn/home/index.php/thuc-tien/item/1788-bring-luoi-hoi-and-hoa-nhap-xa-hoi-cua-lao-dong-nhap-cu-heo-at-cac-do-thi-viet-nam.html?fbclid=IwAR0ynz11BKjya0ZGGblt2GmwFA\\_L7g72pK2LSy\\_\\_pPB1nA5DZ7zk4BUgVEI](http://lyluanchinhtri.vn/home/index.php/thuc-tien/item/1788-bring-luoi-hoi-and-hoa-nhap-xa-hoi-cua-lao-dong-nhap-cu-heo-at-cac-do-thi-viet-nam.html?fbclid=IwAR0ynz11BKjya0ZGGblt2GmwFA_L7g72pK2LSy__pPB1nA5DZ7zk4BUgVEI), accessed July 3, 2023
6. National Assembly Standing Committee (2003), "Ordinance of the National Assembly Trade Committee No. 06/2003/PL-UBTVQH11 dated November 9, 2003 on population", 2003
7. Tran Thi Hong Minh (2021), "Research on gender issues in internal migration and economic restructuring in Vietnam", Australian Program to Support Vietnam's Economic Reform 2002

### *Korean documents*

1. Korea Ministry of Women and Gender Equality (2009), "Research on improving the human rights protection regime of married immigrant women"
2. Korea Ministry of Women and Gender Equality (2017), "Law on supporting multicultural families" revised
3. Korea Ministry of Women and Gender Equality (2018), "2017 Gender Equality Policy Report"
4. Korea Ministry of Women and Gender Equality (2018), "Statistics related to multicultural families"

5. Korea General Statistics Office: <https://kosis.kr/index/index.do>; Accessed at 11:30AM on May 11, 2023
6. 박소라 (2009), "이주민의 사회적 적응, 초국가적 정체성과 유연한 시민권에 대한 연구", 학제간융합연구사업
7. 이성순 (2023), "한국사회의 다문화현상 이해", 양서원 출판사 2023
8. 이재열 (2014), "사회통합: 개념과 측정, 국제비교", *한국사회정책*, Vol.21, no.2, pp. 113-149
9. 이희연 (2006), "저개발국가로부터 여성결혼이주의 성장과 정주패턴 분석", 기초연구지원인문사회(특화주제연구)
10. 정태영 (2009), "다문화 이주민의 사회 적응에 대한 통합적 접근: 이주민, 한국인, 자원봉사자를 중심으로", (2009)년 선정 기초연구지원인문사회(단독연구)
11. 김영미 (2012), "결혼이주여성의 사회통합을 위한 여가 활성화 정책 방안", 2012년 선정 일반공동연구지원사업