

## **Illegal Migration Prevention Strategies: Lessons for Migration Management Professionals**



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**ABSTRACT:** Around the world illegal migration is occurring with undocumented socio-economic and political impacts and it yawns for concerted efforts at all levels to address it. Every immigrant is entitled to full protection as enshrined in several international legal instruments of universal significance. The aims of the systematic literature review were to interrogate the fundamental preventive strategies of illegal migration, share knowledge to spark and inspire processes that will usher rapid growth from all directions. A systematic review of the literatures using information collected from different sources was actuated. Google search engine and others were used to search for articles. Only peer-reviewed articles published after 2000 were selected except extracts of fundamental mileage. However, articles published by staunch international organizations working in the area for years and produced indefatigable knowledge were stealthily appraised.

The study revealed that the preventive methods are numerous and encompass: border control intensification, financial support to impoverished families, stiff laws enactment and enforcement, youths empowerment, human trafficking criminalization, illegal immigrants employment criminalization, asylum system and granting refugee status procedures review, policy formulation and coordination; and promotion of research and development. In conclusion, the preventive strategies can be pooled and catalogued into social, economic, political; and legal strategies.

**KEY WORDS:** illegal, migration, causes, migrant

### **INTRODUCTION**

Like birth and death, the free movement of people from nation to another, have been one of the fundamental qualities of human societies throughout history especially in a world where freedom of movement is deeply enshrined in a fleet of international legal instruments(YA, 2016). In essence, people movement has always been part of human history for numerous reasons such as for economic, political; and social satisfaction(Kuhnt, 2019). Of recent, the desire to migrate especially from low economic countries to developed nations by any mean including illegal migration has become more compelling particularly for the youths due to many factors including resources scarcity, bleak future, strict immigration policies; and laws(YA, 2016). Illegal migration can be attributed to series of factors including restrictive policies and laws limiting the legal movement of people(Casarico, Facchini, & Testa, 2016).

Irregular immigration in spite of being an international problem, it does not have any globally accepted definition and solid theoretical base making it extremely hard to accurately capture the number around the globe and furthermore, formulate strategic plans to eliminate it(Garha, 2020). However, in the modest term it can be defined as the act of migrating from one country to another against the legal provisions of entry and/or residence in the receiving nation(Casarico et al., 2016).

In recent years, it appears that there are more people on the move than it used to be some decades back attributable to many factors namely search for better living conditions and employment opportunities, growing inequalities, discrimination, human right violations, poverty, environmental degradation, conflict and violence, etc. and unfortunately the number is soaring as 15 to 20 percent of the global migrants are illegal ones (CAP Immigration Team, 2014). Pictures on the international media of dramatic arrivals and rescue operation on the high seas have resulted to moral panic vis-à-vis invasion likewise humanitarian pleads to act on the phenomenon(Conrad Suso, 2019). Irregular migrants especially from West Africa to Europe experience multitude of life threatening problems such as abduction for ransoms, slavery, torture, among other inhuman treatments particularly in Libyan(Bah, 2019). Most importantly, because it does not only consist of the most youthful population from the source countries, to get to the advanced world, they depend on human traffickers risking their lives(Conrad Suso, 2019).

Thus, with the uncontrollable increment in the phenomenon and associated human disasters it has occupied a central stage in global and state security as in some nations it is perceived to be a threat because the number of migrants are in millions(Tallmeister, 2013). Though in reality, the correct statistics on irregular migration are notoriously hard to obtain,

## **Illegal Migration Prevention Strategies: Lessons for Migration Management Professionals**

nevertheless data at certain European borders manifest a four-fold soaring (Cummings, Pacitto, Lauro, & Foresti, 2015). The unprecedented increase in spite of the mounting efforts both at the international and national level to eliminate it has made the phenomenon more a global concern (Aleshkovski, 2013). In most nations especially in the developed world, the phenomenon is high on the public debate agenda with differing perspectives (Speciale, 2010). The Gambia, regardless of being one of the smallest countries on the globe, it is one of the largest contributors to illegal migration in terms of the number of people who make the journey across the Mediterranean (Conrad Suso, 2019).

In spite of all the disasters and inhumane treatments meted on the migrants the movement of the human population has been of benefit to both source countries and destinations in many ways for example, it decreases the unemployment pressures, boost up remittance, self-esteem and economic independence especially for the migrants and their families (Ukwatta, 2010). Apparently, though human movement including irregular migration is not anything new, the proper comprehension of the causes, effects; and prevention methods are not well established scientifically and understood (Kuhnt, 2019).

### **METHODOLOGY**

A systematic review of the literatures using information collected from different sources was actuated. Google search engine, google scholar, web of science; and scopus databases were used to search for these articles. During the search numeration combinations of words and phrases were used to ensure articles reflect the most recent knowledge and scholarly works. The systematic searches beget varied and voluminous articles which had to be sieved not only to meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria but to ensure the fundamental objectives of the study are wrangled.

Therefore, only peer-reviewed scholarly publications published after 2000 were selected except extracts perceived to be of basal mileage to the study. However, articles published by staunch international organizations known to have been working in illegal migration for years and has produced indefatigable knowledge in the area were stealthily appraised.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Procedures**

The underneath procedures were followed in articles inclusion. That is, only:

1. Peer-reviewed scholarly articles on illegal migration.
2. Peer-reviewed scholarly articles published from 2000 to 2021.
3. Articles on international or regional perspectives on illegal migration.
4. Articles on illegal migration published by international organizations with years of meritorious experiences in migration management and illegal migration.

To exclude some articles from the review, the below captioned criteria were applied. That is:

1. Non-peer reviewed articles.
2. Articles published before 2000 unless critical and impactful.
3. Media generated articles including newspapers.
4. Articles not published in English language.

In spite of the fact that 207 articles both qualitative and quantitative were trawled, only 90 articles were qualified for reviewed which is largely due to a dearth of data. In essence, only peer-reviewed articles and publications by international organizations considered being trustworthy because they occasioned standard, ethical; and robust studies were reviewed.

### **DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Illegal Immigration Prevention Methods**

##### **Border control intensification**

Over the years, the inflows of illegal immigrants has been on the increase despite all efforts to curb it causing some untold hardships to both the source, transit; and destination countries (Joly, 2000). The blame for these inflows is levied on many shortcomings at national and international level including relaxed border control. Thus, rational and stringent border control system, is a must to turn the tide complying with: in addition to controlling the borders, host countries are obliged to apply different strategies to control illegal immigration such as limited access to decent employment opportunities, severe penalties; and strict internal regulations but so far none of these measures is completely successful despite being major motivating elements in the voting pattern of most citizens (College, Bixler, & Bixler, 2020). Illegal immigration can be reduced if not prevented through border control intensification, suppression of criminal organizations activities, imposition of tough sanctions against smugglers and transporters, levying tough punishments on illegal immigrants at the point of entry into the receiving countries, criminalization of the employment of illegal immigrants, intensification of cooperation between sending, receiving; and transit countries (Aleshkovski, 2013).

##### **Financial support to impoverished families**

To provide for a family especially the extended one has always been a challenge for most people particularly those in the third world countries (Cain, 1982). Of recent, this has become unbearable in view of the skyrocketing cost of living, unprecedented

## **Illegal Migration Prevention Strategies: Lessons for Migration Management Professionals**

increase in natural and manmade disasters, climate change, crop failure, conflicts; and wars(Gaziulusoy, 2020). To survive the heat, household heads and youths have exploited different opportunities even the illegal ones including illegal migration. To curb the phenomenon, governments and development partners are required to financially and technically support the impoverished families as substantiated: to fight against women migrating illegally, it is critical that governments and development partners provide regular financial support to families to assist them meet the basic needs, facilitate loans at no interest or at low interest rate, provide child care support, banned illegal migration agencies, strengthen public awareness on the negative impacts of illegal immigration; and enhance people accessing visa to travel with dignity(Ukwatta, 2010).

### **Stiff laws enactment and enforcement**

The laws for years have managed to keep society together and furthermore ensure some socio-economic and political development for all(Seidman, 1972). The law while it accords rights, it places some obligations on people to ensure peace, stability; and progress. With the full enforcement of the law, business of any sort and people of all characters can strive together as behaviors are controlled and coached to avert crimes, criminal activities; and infringing on each other's rights particularly the disadvantaged communities(Tiwari, 2020). Therefore, formulating and implementing the laws without fear and favor don't only provide redress but prevent social problems including crimes, lending support to: in preventing illegal immigration and its associated problems, India has adopted different strategies such as the enactment of different laws like Illegal Migrant Act, Foreigners Act, Passport Act; etc. in addition to promulgating strict and enviable policies for deportation, bilateral; and multilateral cooperation(Mayilvaganan, 2019).

### **Youths empowerment**

To live a decent life, in these trying moments, it is critical that one has a permanent source of income either in the public or private sector. Thus, in the absence of employment opportunities, one is at the highest risk of committing crimes to survive especially the young ones(Adekoya, 2020). To create jobs with the ultimate objective of preventing youthful population from engaging in crimes and criminal activities, it is fundamental that the state and development partners support and venture into youth empowerment schemes attesting to: to prevent and end illegal immigration, the source countries must invest in training the youths to acquire the needed skills for decent jobs, continuously conduct public education vis-à-vis the dangers in irregular immigration, enforce tough laws to abolish human smuggling, criminalized corruption in immigration; and furthermore, enter into legal agreements with receiving countries that enhance the immigration of unskilled workers to meet the labor demand of the receiving nations(Garha, 2020).

### **Human trafficking criminalization**

The globe has witnessed sharp increment in trafficking of persons for different purposes especially from the developing nations to developed world. In addition to the inhumane treated meted on trafficked persons such as being packed like sardines in cargo containers, wrecked boats, trucks, debt bondage, servitude, etc. it is an outright human rights violation as regardless of their predicaments they are human beings and deserved to be treated with respect and dignity(United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014) and (Obokata, 2005). Thus, its criminalization will go a long way in preventing illegal immigration as substantiated: to arrest irregular immigration, the host countries must inflict tough punishments on the smugglers and associates, impose economic sanctions on employers which include the cost of regularizing the status of the immigrants, creation of legitimate means so that industries requiring cheap labor are supplied with the needed one; and renewal of residential permits is made easy and affordable especially for legal immigrants(Garha, 2020).

### **Illegal immigrants' employment criminalization**

With the unprecedented increase in economic meltdowns many nations especially in the third world are struggling hard to provide employment opportunities for their youthful population. In view of the soaring cost of living which is not likely to be nabbed soon, youths are doing all within their purview and those beyond, to get something for survival. Therefore, any employment opportunity outside their communities whether in the conventional or shadow economy can be a strong motivating factor for them to leave regardless of the mode of travel(Anser et al., 2020). Thus, to eliminate or minimize illegal immigration, it is critical that the employment of undocumented immigrants whether in the conventional or shadow economy is criminalized with hefty punishments concurring with: to eliminate irregular immigration, host countries must recognize the need for unskillful workers and adjust their policies and legislations as illegal immigrants respond to demands in the market(Dadush, 2014).

### **Asylum system and granting refugee status procedures review**

To comfort and support people in desperate need has always been a critical element in all cultures. However, with the unprecedented increase in the number of people in need especially the refugees and even the internally displaced people, it is fundamental that their request for support is not only treated expeditiously but humanely so that they quickly know their fate and commence looking for alternates if needed. With the unnecessary prolonging of asylum seeking procedures, it has encouraged others to embark on illegal immigration with the erroneous belief that staying too long in asylum or refugee centers is a decisive factor for subsequent legal settlement(Kosyakova & Brenzel, 2020). Thus, to eliminate irregular immigration, asylum seeking

## **Illegal Migration Prevention Strategies: Lessons for Migration Management Professionals**

processes must be expeditiously executed concurring with: to prevent illegal immigration, it requires the host nations to strengthen and improve their protection capacities and welfare services, review the domestic asylum systems to ensure timely and effective refugees handling policies; and humane entry measures(Koser, 2005).

### **Policy formulation and coordination**

To expedite development, it is fundamental that policies are formulated, implemented; and highly coordinated without delay. So too it is, in the fight against any menace being social or economical in nature. With proper and timely coordination, all partners are expected to remain focus, accountable, developmentally highly stimulated; and put on course; in addition to avoiding the occurrence of duplication of efforts and services, and must critically the wastage of scarce resources(Benes, Kumhof, Laxton, Muir, & Mursula, 2013). Thus, to curb illegal immigration, it requires the formulation of well-thought policies and coordination as substantiated: national policies towards the elimination of irregular immigration universally are reactive, piecemeal; and conservative in nature and approach. Hence illegal immigration cannot be reduced to zero, the best options is for governments to adopt complementary policies and programmes that would discourage it while supporting those already in the host countries(Chappell, Glennie, Latorre, & Mulley, 2011). In preventing illegal immigration policy, enforcement, and coordination is critical while financial support to sending and transit countries deserve greater consideration(Casarico et al., 2016).

### **Promotion of research and development**

To address issues in the communities and also initiate and accelerate uninterrupted development, research and development (R &D) is a must. With research, not only data is generated but knowledge as well. With data, well-thought policies and laws are formulated in addition to national strategies and blueprints to keep communities and nations on focus and in control of development initiatives. Seemingly, without data no development is feasible. Thus, it is indispensable in all development endeavors regardless of the level or complexity(Qureshi, 2020). In the same vein, to effectively and efficiently address social problems like irregular immigration, research is highly required to generate the required data and knowledge as substantiated: border control and stay-at-home programmes have failed to prevent undocumented immigration due to poor planning, erroneous assumption of the volume, historicity, nature; and causes of the phenomenon(de Haas, 2008).

## **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

I declare that there is no conflict of interest with respect to the study, authorship and/or publication of the article.

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## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In light of the above revelations, numerous preventive strategies can be applied to address undocumented migration: border control intensification, financial support to impoverished families, stiff legislations enactment and enforcement, youths empowerment, human trafficking criminalization, illegal immigrants employment criminalization, asylum system and granting refugee status procedures review, policy formulation and coordination; and promotion of research and development. In conclusion, the preventive strategies can be pooled and catalogued into social, economic, political; and legal strategies.

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## **ETHICS APPROVAL**

Ethics approval was not necessary for a study of this nature and scope.

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