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Immigration: Both a Blessing and a Challenge

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Abstract: The influx rise of immigrants to Europe has become most divisive issue of our time. We discuss the positive and negative side of the immigration. Moreover, we go deeper by asking the question why do we consider immigration a blessing as well as a Challenge? we examine the policies that supports as well as policy that restricts immigration. Modern debates based on immigration whether to assimilate immigrants or restrict their entry. The vast contributions made by the immigrants to the host countries in the field of industries, as well as the traumatic experience of immigrants during the pandemic and the call of Holy Father to the universal brotherhood and eventually the policies that help the host countries to integrate as well as restrict them.

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In a sense, immigration is not a strange factor to this world since, we are all immigrants. We may be bewildered to hear that we are all immigrants. Actually speaking, the first place that we took shelter is the womb of the mother, from there we migrated to this world. And this world is also not our permanent home, there is a day, fast approaching for us to immigrate from this world. But before that we need to live our life well.

We live in a world of conflicts and chaos; people are leaving their home countries due to civil wars and ethnic persecutions. One of the serious crises which has risen in recent history is immigration. In recent years, immigration has tremendously increased. There is no guarantee for the lives of the immigrants. Countries have closed their borders. People are homeless, crying out for attention, crying out for a messiah, who will come. The facts in the present situation are well known. It has become most divisive issue of our time, without a critical analyzation, an intelligent understanding of the problem, no sound remedy can be given. If I ask you my readers, what you would like to have at this moment? At least many of you or some of you would answer with one word ‘vaccine’ for the Covid-19, but if I ask the same question to the immigrants, what would be their answer? Perhaps, the search for that answer is all about this article and considering why is immigration a blessing as well as challenge? Immigration is an asset to the host country as well as it is a challenge to them as it adulterates in many ways the host country. May be, if we swim deep in to the article, one may be better enlightened of why immigration is a blessing and a challenge. Let me begin by explaining who we are!

We are Descendants of Immigration

From the world history, we understand that the human beings originated in Africa and migrated to different parts of the world, thus we are all called immigrants or descended from immigrants. People immigrate for variety of reasons, people move to colonize, and improve the wealth of the country. Of course, one need to understand the challenges of immigration, Usually the poor cannot migrate to the rich countries except to the neighbouring countries, on the other hand most of the economic migration takes place due to the rapid industrialization.

Current nation states are the result of successive waves of immigration, most of which took place before the twentieth century.

Today migrants are currently vilified and subjected to unprecedented levels of restriction, to deny part of the social nature of human beings. In recent times the rate of migration

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is greater than it has been in the past. Since, the beginning of the industrial revolution and the imperialist expansion of Europe, the main migratory movements have resulted from the requirements of the capitalist industry. When a migrant moves, it's not out of idle fancy or because they hate their homeland, or to plunder the countries they come to or even to strike it rich. (Hayter, 2018: 8). The history and most of the researches tell that immigration takes place because of the accumulated burdens of history have rendered their homelands less and less habitable. Just, consider the subcontinent five thousand years ago, we have been one people, ruled undivided from the borders of Persia to china by emperors from Ashoka to Akbar, dissolved and merged. In fact, migration from one country to another

country involves profound losses, leaving behind familiar food, known people, places, customs, beliefs, languages and cultural practices. (Hayter, 2018: 9). However, it is more thrilling and exciting to see, how we got hooked up with immigration.

Indeed, it is interesting to look at how we hooked on immigration. Science had proved that human beings were first seen in Africa, from there they have immigrated to all over the world, thus immigration is not new to this modern world. Immigration had been practiced from our great, great grandfather's era. But what is interesting to note that the remarkable increase of immigration after the second world war to the European countries. The main reason for the sudden increase of immigration to the western countries were the loss of lives during the world war, the labor market in Europe was left without sufficient labors. Therefore, After the second world war each country had allowed and encouraged workers to come on to their countries. During the 1950s and 1960s West Germany, Sweden, Holland and Belgium among other countries, all instituted a 'guest-workers' scheme to fill gaps in their labor supply. In Germany the influx of workers came largely from turkey, seeing a huge swell in numbers after the German-Turkish labor agreement of 1961. The labor shortages especially in the low skilled areas of the industrial sector is the result of decolonization. (Murray, 2017: 22).

Across the continent it seemed to come as a surprise to government that the most of these workers would put down roots in the country they had entered. And they would seek to bring in their families, that their families would need assistance, and that their children would need to go to school. The standard of living was stable. These workers were able to enjoy in the west meant far more people stayed than returned to their country of origin. (Murray, 2017: 22).

Although Europe had opened up its borders at a time of need, the continent seemed to have no idea how attractive, it was too much of the world, even in its diminished state. In the course of time people who began their life as guest workers became part of the countries, they were in. some gained citizenship, some others gained dual citizenship, with in five decades, the census of the country showed that four million people in Germany of Turkish origin. Due to immigration many countries saw remarkable increase in population Growth.

There is a saying “larger population is better than smaller ones” (Coleman: 2004). and that population growth is therefore, welcomed, it boosts national security in many ways both military and civil. In so far as immigration contributes to population growth and averts population decline, it should be encouraged. And the population increase, in turn will surely help the expansion of the domestic market, facilitates labor force and economies of scale, thus averting labor shortages and wage inflation and promotion productivity. (Coleman, 2004: 6).

From the broader perspective it averts population aging because given the lower fertility and longer survival most European countries face the end of population growth within few decades. And thus, it becomes challenge. however, “In some countries such as Italy and Germany, deaths are already exceeding births, at least among the native population. Population decline also goes hand in hand with population aging and its problems.” (Coleman, 2004: 7). So, it is argued that immigration can erase the problem of supporting and caring for the relatively larger elderly population that is a consequence of population ageing. And the immune system of the immigrants seems to be strong and they fill undesirable jobs of the natives. In a well-developed country finding labour for undesirable jobs is expected to become particularly difficult. “Large- scale immigration specifically from poor countries with low wages and low expectations concerning conditions of work will be

needed to fill the so called ‘menial’ jobs that are difficult to mechanize and that the domestic labor force will not undertake as its expectations rise.” (Coleman, 2004: 7). A permanent stream of first-generation immigrants will be needed to fill the bottom layer of this ‘dual labor market.’ And thus, contributing to the economy of the host country. However, if immigration is not legal it leads to many illegal problems and so it is very suiting to look at some of the immigration laws that facilitates the entry of immigrants.

Immigration Laws

Immigration policy has become very salient in many countries. The issue of allowing in and absorbing existing immigrants is very contentious. The growing immigration pressure has driven some countries to adopt substantial reforms of their immigration laws, aiming at controlling immigration flows. On the other hand, the need for the labour provided by some of these immigrants has pushed governments to create specific favoured-entry categories or to be lenient ex-post with those who entered illegally, by passing amnesties. Among economists there has been a growing interest on the study of the determinants of immigration policy. It remains unclear to what extent entry restrictions are able to control immigration flows. (Ortega, 2013: 4).

In the controlling effectiveness of immigration restriction policy makers plays a crucial role, it is unclear whether the same is true in the current context because in the past immigration restriction was easy since there was lack of transportation and communication costs and stronger economic incentives to migrate between poor and rich countries. (Ortega, 2013: 5). Now everything is entirely changed, instant communication, fast travelling and easy

communication have made immigration easier and globally comfortable.

Globalization

Today, most of us think of international immigration as a problem, in need of a solution, a crisis crying out for attention. In proportion to world population, the number of global immigrants and the people living outside their country are equal to three percent of world population. (Kaushal, 2019: 1). The increase in immigration globally over the past quarter century is largely in line with the growth in world population. Thus, immigration has become one of the most divisive issues of our times.

Added to that globalization has greatly reduced cultural differences around the globe. It has brought the world closer and within our reach. (Harari, 2018: 119). However, due to tensions, conflicts and persecutions great number of people abandon their native and cross borders in search of better life. “nowhere are the problems more poignant than Europe.” (Harari, 2018: 119). The European union was built to transcend the cultural differences between French, Germans, Spanish and Greeks. Perhaps, it might collapse because of its inability to contain the cultural differences. The increase of refugees and immigrants produce mixed reactions between Europeans. Some Europeans say that Europe must shut their gates, and thus they betray Europe’s multicultural and tolerant ideals or are they just taking sensible steps to prevent disaster? Others call for opening the gates wider; are they faithful to the core European values? To deal with this problem of Europe Harari keeps three basic forms and terms and these three give rise to three forms of debates. (Harari, 2018: 119).

Debate 1: The first clause of the immigration deal says simply that the host country allows immigrants in; there are arguments for and against for this statement. On the one hand pro-

immigrationists would argue that the countries have moral duty to accept not just immigrants, but people from poverty-stricken areas who come in search of better livelihood. We are not people of primitive group who lived in same place, but we live in a globalized world. Each of us are responsible for the other. We should extend our solidarity to the needy. However, many pro-immigrationists stress that it is impossible to stop immigration, and no matter how many walls and fence we build desperate people will find a way through. So, it is better to legalize immigration and deal with it openly, than to create a conflict among ourselves (Harari, 2018: 120).

On the other hand, anti-immigrations vehemently defend the host country against invasion in the form migrants. They stress that if you use sufficient force, you can completely stop immigration. Since somebody suffers brutal persecution, you are not obliged to open your door. As for the migrants who seek the jobs and welfare, it is totally up to the host country whether it wants in or not, and under what conditions. The swedes have worked very hard and made numerous sacrifices in order to build a prosperous liberal democracy, and if the Syrians have failed to do the same, this is not the swedes fault. It is their right to refuse them entry. And if they do accept some immigrant, it should be absolutely clear that this is a favor Sweden extends rather than an obligation it fulfills. Moreover, what complicates the matter is that numerous countries turn a blind eye to illegal immigration, or even accept foreign workers on a temporary basis, because they want to benefit from foreigner's energy, talents and cheap labor (Harari, 2018: 120).

However, the countries refuse to legalize the status of these people saying that they don't want immigration. In the long run, it could create a hierarchical society, in which an upper-class citizen exploits an underclass of powerless foreigners, as happens today in Qatar and several other countries.as

long as this debate is not settled, it is extremely difficult to answer all the following questions about immigration. since, pro-immigrationists think that people have a right to immigrate to another country if they wish, and host countries have right to observe them. Anti-immigrationists see immigration as a privilege and absorption as a favor why to accuse of being racist or fascists, just because they refuse entry into their own country. (Harari,2018: 120).

Debate 2: The second clause of the immigration deal says that if they are allowed in, the immigrants have an obligation to assimilate into the local culture. (Harari, 2018: 122). But the question is how far should assimilation go? Should this assimilation mean that they should abandon their values and practices? Pro-immigrationists say that Europe itself is diverse and they have broad understanding of values and habits. Why should immigrants force to adhere some mythical identity that very few Europeans live up to? If Europe has any real core value, then these liberal values of tolerance and freedom, which imply that Europeans should show tolerance towards the immigrants, and allow them as much freedom as possible to follow their traditions, provided these do not harm the freedoms and rights of other people (Harari,2018: 122).

On the other hand, anti-immigrationists agree that tolerance and freedom are the most important European values and accuse of immigrants as people of intolerant and homophobia. If Europe allows in too many immigrants from the middle east, it will end up looking like the Middle East. Other anti-immigrationists go much further and pinpoint that a national community is far more than a collection of people who tolerate each other. Therefore, it is not enough that immigrants adhere to European standards of tolerance. They must also adapt the unique characteristics of the culture. (Harari, 2018: 122). By allowing the immigrants into the local culture is taking a great risk, if they neglect to

assimilate to the values of culture the host country may lose its identity.

Debate 3: Third clause of the immigration deal says that if immigrants indeed, make sincere effort to assimilate and in particular to adapt the value of tolerance, the host country is bound to treat them as first-class citizens. But exactly how much time it takes to pass before the immigrants become full members of the society. Pro-immigrationists tend to demand, a speedy acceptance, whereas anti-immigrationists want a much longer probation period. For the pro-immigrationists the third-generation immigrants must be treated as citizens whereas anti-immigrationists say that they must be patient. If your grandparents arrived here just forty years ago, and you now riot in the streets because you think you are not treated as a native, then you have failed the test. (Harari, 2018: 123).

The root issue of this debate concerns the gap between personal timescale and collective time scale. From the view point of human collectives, forty years is a short time because in past, it took centuries to assimilate foreigners and to make them equal citizens. From a personal view point, forty years can be an eternity who knows whether one live to see them get assimilated as citizens. After all these argument Harari gives a fourth debate as the culmination of all these arguments. (Harari, 2018: 123).

Debate 4: After all these disagreements regarding the exact definition of the immigration deal, the ultimate question is whether the deal is actually working. Are both sides living up to their obligations? Anti-immigrationists argue that the immigrants are not making a sincere effort to assimilate, and too many of them stick to intolerant and bigoted world views. But the pro-immigrationists reply that it is the host country that fails to fulfill its side, despite the honest efforts

made by the majority of the immigrants to assimilate. And worse still, these immigrants who successfully assimilate are still treated as second class citizens even in the second and third generations. It is of course possible that both sides are not living up to their commitments. (Harari,208: 124). And the fourth debate cannot be resolved before clarifying the exact definition of the three terms. As long as we do not know that absorption is a duty or a favor. And what level of assimilation is required from the immigrants. We cannot judge the two sides are fulfilling their conditions. When evaluating the immigration deal, both sides give far more weight to violations than to compliance. If a million immigrant are law-abiding citizens, but one hundred joins terrorists' groups and attack the host country, does it mean that on the whole the immigrants are complying with the terms of the deal or violating it? Yet underneath all these lurks a far more fundamental question, which concerns our understanding of human culture. Do we enter the immigration debate with the assumption that all cultures are inherently equal, or do we think that some cultures might well be superior to others? (Harari, 2018: 124). If so, how could the weak culture can have access by way of immigration. How can the superior culture can do justice to the inferior culture? Amid these immigration crises between countries, the crises of the immigrants and their state of life has been more alarming due to covid-19, we shall be kept updated by dealing with immigrants under covid-19.

Immigrants Under Covid-19

The covid-19 pandemic comes at a crucial time of international migration. Just prior to the crisis, record-high flows were recorded in a number of countries and populations of immigrants and native born children of immigrants have grown virtually everywhere.it is well known fact that people with socio-economic disadvantages are easily get affected with chronic-disease which can increase the risk of these people more exposed to the COVID-19 in present context. On 24th

March, the government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a nationwide lockdown, limiting movement of the entire 1.3 billion population of India as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic in India. It was ordered a 14 hours of voluntary public restriction on 22nd March, and followed by that the enforcement of series of regulations in the country's COVID-19 affected regions made a huge impact on the lives of the poor and the labours. This nationwide lockdown and sudden suspension of all transport has left millions of migrants stranded in many parts of the country and even starvation and death. The helplessness from the part of the government has gripped the most vulnerable members of our society. The migrant workers were deprived of their livelihood and left with no alternative, they were forced to start a long march back home, often being forced to walk for hundreds of kilometers, with little children and their belongings. The history repeats; the brutal action of the police and other government officials in banning the interstate travel left the people in utter helplessness and in crisis.

Looking at immigrants from globally especially the study undertaken by OCED shows that 30 percentage immigrants live in relative poverty, compared with 20 percentage of natives. The immigrants most likely live in overcrowded place and poor housing conditions which likely to increase the infection of corona. (OCED: 2020). And more specially given that immigrants are more likely to live in extended cohabiting families. Alongside poor housing conditions, immigrants are also more likely to live in higher density buildings and neighbourhoods, which makes the respect of social distancing more difficult, perhaps, the only remedy we have for covid-19. In most of the countries immigrants are the ones who do the essential occupations that cannot be

undertaken from home, not only immigrants have to go to work, in some specific sectors. They also have to deal with difficult and unsafe working conditions with respect to the covid-19 transmission. We have for example; “In Germany, for instance, a coronavirus outbreak in a slaughterhouse spread to more than 1500 employees, the vast majority of whom were EU migrants, which triggered a local lockdown. Immigrants who vacated their country due to poverty and those are in unstable situation have higher risks of covid-19 transmission.” (OCED, 2020). given the situation, government must involve and bring relief to these brothers and sisters of ours by integrating them. Having seen trauma of immigrants, it is very apt to look at the role played by church in the lives of immigrants.

Church and Immigrants

The catholic church always maintains the history in welcoming and assisting migrants and refugees. The catholic church pays an attention on the matter of the pastoral care of migrants through various documents issued from the universal magisterial service, that is our holy father’s message, apostolic letters and constitutions issued through the decades by what is now known as the pontifical council for the Pastoral care of migrants through the diocesan offices and religious orders and various Church organizations. The pastoral care of migrants is, therefore, a responsibility of the church. Perhaps that is what our Holy Father is trying to execute, From the moment he took up the charge, he has been more vibrant, and has become the voice of the excluded and marginalized. “He seriously denounces ‘Globalization of indifference’ and says a painful truth is that our world is becoming more and more elitist, crueller towards the excluded.” (O’ Connell: 2019). As Christians, we need to open wide our arms, welcoming and supporting the misery of the so many innocent people. “we cannot be indifferent to the tragedy of old and new forms of poverty” (Francis: 2019). one of the greatest commandment of Jesus is to love our neighbour

as ourselves, this means being firmly committed to building a more just world, in which everyone has access to the goods of the earth, in which all can develop as individuals and families, and in which fundamental rights and dignity are guaranteed to all. It also means being empathetic and sympathetic towards them. (O'Connell: 2019). Moreover, drawing close to them, touching their sores, and thus expressing the love of God through our acts of charity. The painful truth is, "today world is increasingly becoming more elitist and crueler towards the immigrants, the excluded of the society." (pope Francis: 2019). Developing countries continue to be drained of their best natural and human resources for the benefit of few privileged markets. War only affect some regions of the world, yet weapons of war are produced and sold in other regions which are then to take in the refugees generated by these conflicts. Those who pay the price are always the little ones, the poor, the most vulnerable, who are prevented from sitting at the table and left with the crumbs of the banquet. (O'Connell: 2019).

Today the culture of the comfort, makes us to think only for ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of the poor and excluded, which results in indifference to others, indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. (O'Connell:2019). To combat this indifference, the Holy Father has been preaching to the humanity with the theme 'Brotherhood'. While speaking about the migrants, he often puts forward this question, "where is your brother?" Referencing the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis. I think the question continues as it is addressed to each one of us, because our migrant brothers and sisters sought 'a better place' for their families. But they sought to death. Though, the Holy Father often highlights the connections between issues like migration, Poverty, development and global power structures in *Evangelii Gaudium*, he writes;

Today, when the network and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a ‘mystique’ of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into his flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of Fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimages. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone. If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled. To go out of ourselves and to join others is healthy for us. To be self-enclosed is to taste the bitter poison of immanence and humanity will be worse for every selfish choice we make. (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013: 87).

The Holy Father has also discussed solidarity in the context of multiculturalism. And encourages the church to take on new commitment of solidarity, migration movements, in fact, call us to deepen and strengthen the values needed to guarantee peaceful coexistence between persons and cultures. (Kerwin: 2019). Thus, building a healthy society where everyone experiences God’s love and mercy by our attitudes. Having looked at migration from the perspective of the church, let us see what are the few laws or policies that facilitates the migrants.

Migration and Global Justice

Contemporary conceptions of morality and justice in political philosophy are generally underpinned by the conviction that all human beings have equal moral dignity and worth. If human beings are morally equal then it seems reasonable to maintain their basic interests, which include sustenance and other human development needs. (Valadez, 2012: 2). As human beings, we need to go beyond ourselves and support the homeless and needy. The best way to do justice to the migrants is to implement a migration policy that accounts for the basic interests. It is

important to recognize the migration is an issue of global justice, for it involves the regulated movement of people across national boundaries. And the policy which integrates the immigrants as well as does no harm to the vision of host countries. “And the governments have roughly four policy options to address this anxiety; increase restrictions on immigrant entry; reduce emigration pressure by intervening in the sending countries through development aid and other means; accommodate immigrants and work toward their integration; and address the core causes other than immigration that are triggering the anxieties.” (Kaushal, 2019: 229). Eventually, in the words of Harari, it is impossible, to completely stop immigration, no matter how many walls and fences you build, desperate people will always find a way. It is better to legalize and deal with it openly than to create a vast underworld of human trafficking. (Harari, 2018: 120).

Having studied one of the serious crises of our time, it is very much necessary for the immigrant to abide by the law. This article briefly ran through the origin of immigration is an asset to the host country and at the same time a challenge to the local people as the natives are deprived of their opportunity. Moreover, how some of the countries made use immigration to accumulate wealth and prosperity. In recent history the influx increases of immigration to European countries has threatened the natives of their origin and culture. And the modern debates whether to integrate or to close the borders. Especially, “America under Donald Trump is leading the global opposition to immigration. perhaps, the united states have the best immigration system in the world. Even as some of the countries are trying to close their doors on immigration, others are adopting American immigration policy to attract immigrants.” (Neeraj, 2019: 228) This should give pause to those who

consider immigration to be the cause of all ills and encourage them to investigate the real causes of public anxiety and then determine whether their country would benefit or be hurt by restricting immigration.

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