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The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Migrant Workers in Europe

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Abstract

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is undoubtedly one of the biggest challenges the world has faced and still grapples with currently. The study's objective was to answer questions related to the effects of the pandemic on global migration and the development of the migrants. It looks into health, legal, social, and educational restrictions imposed on migrants. Additionally, it probes into the different forms of discrimination faced by the migrants. The social relevance of the chosen topic is that migrant workers are an essential part of the community; thus, their economic, healthcare, educational, and legal needs must be adhered to by the concerned authorities. In other words, they contribute to any society's economic, social, and cultural development and should not be side-lined. This research paper investigates the plight of the migrant population in Europe as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; the author analyzed the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the migrant workers. Analysis of the condition of the migrant population demonstrated that there is a gap in communication between the government officials and the migrants, which should be rectified to assist them in all aspects. The migrant population endured grave hardships even before the coronavirus outbreak. Yet, they have to face heightened discrimination since they are seen as the spreaders of the virus.

Keywords: *COVID-19, migration, migrant workers, globalization, sustainable development*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Definitions

1. **Migration:** Migration is the movement of people from one place to another- within a state or to a different country. The cause of migration could be, for example, for better job opportunities or to obtain better healthcare facilities, etc. (International Organization for Migration, 2019).
2. **COVID-19:** "COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus" (World Health Organization, 2020). It first emerged in December 2019. The WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. (World Health Organization, 2020). According to the data reported to the WHO, as of 17 September

2021, there have been a total of 4,666,334 deaths globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the health infrastructure, psychological well-being, socio-economic activities, mode of education and has had legal implications.

3. Globalization: “Globalization is the word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world’s economies, cultures, populations, brought about by cross-border trades in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people and information” (M. K. Kolb, 2021). Globalization is the flow of goods and commodities, people, ideas, and capital. The flow of goods and commodities refers to international trade between countries for natural resources which may not be available in one country or for finished goods. Persons provide services such as Indians working in a call center overnight to answer their customers in the United States. Sometimes, big MNCs procure raw materials from one country, the production of goods to finished product takes place in another country, and then they sell the goods in another country. They might even expand their own company by buying another small-scale company. Ideas have been exchanged between nations since the beginning of time. In the present scenario, if a significant event occurs in a country in the world, people from different countries are now able to give their opinions and suggestions and critically analyze the situation instantly. This is the result of technological advancements. Thus, technology forms an essential component of globalization. The flow of capital from one organization to another or from one person to another is crucial to globalization.

Technology has lowered resource constraints as the cost and speed of travel and communication have decreased. The migrant network has been strengthened, and transnational ties have developed. It is easier to stay in touch with friends and family, remit money, and travel from home to destination countries (cf. Faist, 2000; Vertovec, 2001, 2004). Cultural globalization impacts migration in the following manner- the values and norms of the immigrants are not a threat to the host country’s culture. Instead, migration promotes the culture of the host country. (Rapoport, Sardoschau, Silve, 2019). This may happen because when people migrate, they would want to model the culture and try to fit into the community. Sometimes, they unlearn their

own cultures and adopt the dominant culture, this is known as cultural assimilation. In other cases, they may retain their own culture and learn the culture of the host country, which results in cultural convergence; this process is called acculturation.

4. International Migration: International migration and globalization are linked. The United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights states that, "an estimated 281 million people, approximately 3.6% of the world's population, currently live outside their country of origin, many of whose migration is characterized by various degrees of compulsion." (OHCHR, n.d.) We can say a great majority of countries are affected by migration or are not immune to its effects (positive & negative). Migration has touched many people's lives tremendously, but many countries remained untouched by this global trait, whereas others have been influenced significantly. It is worthy to note that countries such as Germany, Italy, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, and most countries in the European continent have received an outpour of migrants (mainly from developing/underdeveloped countries). The emigration of people from their ancestral homelands of birth to other (host) countries has occurred throughout history. Thus, we can say it is not a new or strange phenomenon and instead has changed its form/nature in this era of globalization. Globalization has added or introduced a new twist to migration. In fact, in this globalized world, where everything is interconnected, migration has changed and will continue to change tides and forms.

In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Multilingual Summaries, Brian Keeley (2009), in his paper titled 'International Migration: The human face of globalization' discloses that, "About 190 million people around the world live outside their country of birth. These migrants bring energy, entrepreneurship, and fresh ideas to our societies". Migration touches on the subject areas of policy studies, political science, cultural diversity, demographics, national security, culture, language, and even religion. It is a constant variable of human history as people have moved to seek better opportunities at homes, and will continue to do so.

1.2 Research Questions

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of migrants to a great extent, they are faced with numerous problems because they are seen as the “carriers” of the virus. (Rashid, 2020). They are not offered an environment of inclusivity to prevent the spread of the virus, such as vaccination drives. Travel restrictions have also been imposed in many parts of the world for people arriving from the pandemic’s hotspots. This, in turn, affects the people looking for better job opportunities, health care facilities, and quality education. This has led to a downfall in global migration and people have become discouraged from migrating due to the fear of discrimination. This hinders their development because they migrate in search of better opportunities and standards of living so as to live a fulfilling life.

Through our research, we aim to answer questions like- why does migration take place? How has the pandemic affected global migration? What are the adverse effects of the pandemic on the development of migrants in Europe? What are the restrictions imposed on the migrants in Europe related to health, social, legal, and educational aspects? Do the migrants in Europe face any kind of discrimination?

1.3 Fundamental Human Right- Right to Mobility

The paper focuses on the fundamental human right- the right to mobility (United Nations, n.d.) According to Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

- i. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State;
- ii. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country.

1.4 Globalization of Migration

Migration, which entails human movement, is undoubtedly a principal and predominant aspect of globalization. A rise in globalization has resulted in an increasing trend in migration. This is one, if not the most significant and conspicuous effect of globalization. That is, the growing number of inter-state people’s movements within their respective countries and across international borders is constant. Migration can be a blessing

or a curse so to say but the advantages of the former outweigh the latter. Even though it has shades of being problematic or poses some problems, it contributes to sustainable development. The accurate figures of international migration are sometimes difficult to ascertain or quantify because “of the often-large numbers of undocumented migrants and estimates of internal migration are similarly problematic” (Cecilia T & David O, World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2001).

1.4.1 Need for Migration

First, is migration vital? Is there a need for migrants in developed countries? In the scope of our research, we are focused on understanding migration in order to obtain a better education, work opportunities, and standard of living. Even though this has downsides, the pros attached to this outweigh the cons. One of the beauties of migration is that; it ensures the interaction of people from diverse ethnicities, cultures, races, backgrounds, religions, and languages within the same domain. Advantages include sustained economic growth, host countries being enriched by cultural diversity, and vacancies being filled. Out of the four (4) factors of production, labor is key. The factors of production are what we can term the “building blocks of the economy.” This makes the manufacturing of goods and services a reality and achievable. In Economics, these factors are categorized as land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship, and they are interwoven to create economic growth. As an essential factor, labor is necessary for sustaining this economic growth. So, migration is the key for transferring “manpower and skills”. Migrant labor, being one of the essential engines of a globalized economy, has stopped moving due to the global pandemic.

1.4.2 Factors of Global Migration: Environmental, Social, Political and Economic Factors

Some causative factors or elements have led to a spike in international migration worldwide. Many factors influence migration thus, the event is difficult to predict. In order to gain a clear understanding, we will make a subdivision based on significant factors like social, political, economic, and environmental or ecological factors.

Environmental Factors: The movement of people is spurred by several factors such as economic, social, political, and environmental. As a global phenomenon, migration is pondered as a possible quick reaction people adapt to in response to climatic change (McLeman and Smith, 2006). Since time immemorial, climatic changes and natural disasters (landslides, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfire, oil spillage, tsunami, ice storms, hurricanes, etc.) have initiated mass movements across the globe. It is safe to say that calamities linked to natural habitat are the oldest factor determining the displacement of people and migration. It is estimated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that approximately 200 million people could either be temporary or permanent migrants in their countries or an overseas country. (IOM's World Migration Report, 2020). In the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution and innovation, which first began in Great Britain, soon spread to Europe and North America. As this sprung up over the years, it has become a significant economic booster and determiner in European countries' economies. However, this plays a massive role in destroying the atmosphere, ozone layer, and causing pollution to the environmental habitats (water, air, land, and soil) compared to under-developed or developing countries. These environmental pollutants induce disasters that are injurious to health and the populace. This makes migration an inevitable phenomenon.

In developing countries- for instance, Nigeria, Indonesia, Ghana, India, Gambia, Malaysia- and underdeveloped countries- like Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Niger, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, water and food security is a significant cause of concern currently and will be so in the future. Natural disasters such as floods, drought, cyclones, typhoons, and man-made activities like deforestation, overgrazing, and over-cultivation expose land (soil) to erosion. Climate changes affect and intensify migration along with three mediums referred to as land and water scarcity and natural hazards (flooding, droughts, erosion, deforestation, tsunamis). These make the area uninhabitable and initiate conflicts over resources. For example, in 1996-1997, extreme droughts caused a mass movement of people from Kenya to Somalia and Ethiopia in Africa, while in 2014, the tsunami in Indonesia displaced hundreds of people in Asia.

Climate change has forced people out of their ancestral lands, and in turn, they seek shelter elsewhere as "climate refugees." As a result of climate change, Agriculture is becoming burdensome, which has aggravated food insecurity. Based on a report released by the United Nations Climate News webpage, "the increasing temperatures and sea levels, changing precipitation patterns and more extreme weather are threatening human life, health and safety, food and water security, and socio-economic development in Africa" (UN Climate Change News, 2020). The World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General Patteri Taalas reiterates this concern in the same news report. She says: "Climate change is having a growing impact on the African continent, hitting the most vulnerable the hardest, and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement, and stress on water resources. In recent months we have seen devastating floods, an invasion of desert locusts, and now face the looming specter of drought. The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the human and economic toll".

Corroborating this fact, Smith (2007) postulates that migration on different levels, either temporarily or permanent, has and would still be one of the most fundamental strategies adopted in a natural or artificial (human-caused) disaster scenario by those confronted with it. In most underdeveloped countries, the pressure that stems from environmental issues comes with an immense influence on mobility by the recurrence of naturally caused catastrophes. Global warming, which has altered and still alters the environment/atmosphere, negatively impacts human health. In most underdeveloped and developing countries, climate change triggers droughts responsible for an increase in food prices, diseases, and consequently, an increase in health expenditure. Moreover, populations have to deal with the issue of water, the most climatic sensitive economic resource for these countries. In South Asia, for example, climate change will increase rainfall and flooding with a direct effect on agricultural production and severe consequences for a region with high population growth. In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa, an increase in sea level threatens coastal cities while higher temperatures raise risks of malnutrition, starvation, malaria, decreased river flow, and the subsequent unavailability of water. In the Nile Basin, the Middle East, and North African countries, water stress and severe droughts could cause

migration and violent conflicts. (Alassane Drabo / Linguère Mously Mbaye, 2011).

Social Factors: There are social factors that contribute to the global movement of individuals from one place to another. Factors such as ethnic, race, religion, gender, and culture have spurred this. Here, people are discriminated against based on their religious, cultural, racial, and gender affiliations. For example, the members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) communities face discrimination, persecution, death, and are punished by imprisonment and death in countries like Nigeria and Afghanistan, respectively. This is particularly due to the culture, norms and societal values which do not allow this. These discriminatory activities make such countries unsafe for these communities. For instance, a 46-year-old Nigerian gay rights activist, Bisi Alimi fled Nigeria in 2007 and was given refugee status in the UK (member of the EU before Brexit) in 2008 which translated to him becoming a British citizen in 2014. When he came out publicly on live TV in 2004, he was practically disowned by family, friends and faced death threats. In Nigeria, sexual acts between members of the same sex and same-sex marriage are illegal under the national federal law, signed in 2014 by president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. It is punishable by 14 years imprisonment and becomes deadly when the society metes out jungle justice to such individuals when discovered (they are seen as societal pollutants and less than humans). As evident these individuals have faced derogatory conditions, are persecuted based on their social-gender affiliations & beliefs, so, migrating to receptive countries in Europe is a welcome development. This ensures their safety.

In India, religious intolerance and by extension, discrimination on religious beliefs is prevalent upto a certain extent. For example, on the 19th of July 2020, the dead body of a 25-year-old known as Suman Munda was found by her family and relatives. It was said that she was harassed previously because of her Christian faith (Madoc Cairns, August 2020). In instances such as these, cited in the above contexts, fear, threats, lives and property destruction are heightened against minorities. As a reactive response, people facing such discrimination have sought and would seek refuge in Europe or the United Kingdom due to better law and order situations in those countries.

Political Factors: Under this factor, conflict/war is a significant aspect. Conflict/war is a fundamental reason that makes migrants emigrate from their countries to other places. Historically speaking, the continent has been replete with numerous cases of civil unrest that have led to the destruction of lives & properties. Most underdeveloped continents, for instance, Africa over the years, was and still is vulnerable to intra and interstate crises, conflicts, and wars over the last 4-5 decades. The history of Africa is replete with conflict (Alabi, 2006). For instance, the Somali Civil War, Rwandan Genocide, Nigerian Civil War, Eritrean-Ethiopian War. Also, the peace situation of the continent, particularly Africa, is hanging by the thread. Since the 1960's when African nation-states got their independence from colonial forces, the trend of conflicts runs through the North, South, East and West. The incessant nature of conflicts in the African continent has really become one of its main features which in turn has led to unemployment, death, loss of properties, refugee problems and internally displaced persons. Though this feature is more prevalent in Africa as illustrated, other continents like Europe, South America, Asia, have experienced this too, since no continent has a monopoly on conflict. In Asia, for instance, conflicts have sprung up in countries such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Burma. This definitely has motivated the need and willingness of people to migrate to countries with safer climes. These popular destinations include the likes of Europe and North America. These regions have experienced some forms of conflicts in one way or the other in the past however, in recent times, it has been curtailed to a great extent.

After the Cold War, democracy became the avenue used by countries in order to combat political suppression. The politicization of religion, ethnicity and culture has the tendency to bring about and create serious degrees of conflict in states (Piesse, 2014). Also, states or countries undergoing a transition politically, such as a political transition from democracy to military, like that in Guinea, Africa, run a risk of instability. An internal conflict that may escalate to war, while a political transition from democracy to Taliban rule, as in the case of Afghanistan, also runs a higher risk of instability, dictatorship, and revolt-which in many cases are fatal. Therefore, individuals in such categories do this mostly on humanitarian grounds (seeking asylum) – thereby migrating to a safe country that can assure their safety. Similarly, warfare, the threat to global peace, and terrorism is another catalyst.

Globally, there are threats to peace in regions by non-state actors (insurgent terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Jaish-E-Mohammed (JEM), Haqqani Network, militias, and rebel groups like The Lord's Resistance Army) have led to the exodus of people from the region.

Economic Factors: This is a major factor. Here, people are bound to stay back in countries with better financial/economic stability. This factor ensures employment and the overall health of its economy. If these and more are lacking, a great number of people will move to countries with robust and better economies. This can be within the state (rural-urban), between two states in the same country, as well as between countries in the same region or outside. Consequently, if low-income countries of today like Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East etc can develop and their economies experience a significant boost, migration could decrease as people would be comfortable there.

1.4.3 Sustainable Development and the Globalization of Migration

International Migration cuts across the 2030 Agenda and it is relevant to the actualization of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As stated by a report under the United Nations Environment Programme, the relation among migration, globalization, and sustainable development is that growing migration is an important factor of globalization and it contributes definitely to sustainable development. (United Nations Environment Programme, 2016). The migration-related SDG goals and their indicators include:

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being- This is so crucial as the world is still struggling with or trying to recover from the novel coronavirus. This aims to ensure good health through increased health financing, recruitment, training, and development of all health workers in underdeveloped countries (SDGs, n.d.).

Goal 4: Quality Education- This is projected to be an inclusive, educational and learning avenue promotion for everyone. Currently, the coronavirus pandemic has affected and stalled education activities particularly in developing and underdeveloped countries. So, more

education funding and scholarship funds need to be allocated to developing countries for higher education in areas like science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), vocational training, information and communication technology areas (UN SDGs, n.d.).

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth- This goal is targeted to advance sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth of economies. This also covers comprehensive, productive employment, labour rights, safe and secure working environments and decent work for all (migrants inclusive) (SDGs, n.d.).

Goal 10: Reduce Inequalities- This goal itself provides a strong nexus and highlights the link between migration and sustainable development in its entirety. Facilitating orderly, safe, responsible and regular migration through well thought out policies and implementation is key (SDGs, n.d.).

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions- This aims to promote an increased peaceful, all-in, and all-inclusive society for sustainable development, providing undeniable access to justice for everyone (SDGs, n.d.).

Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals- The final SDG goal focuses on the strengthened means to implement policies and revitalize the global partnerships for sustainable development. With least developed countries in mind, this would be achieved through capacity-building, quality support to all irrespective of “gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics” (SDGs, n.d.).

These goals and projected targets showcase that migration is an essential key in its actualization. The contribution made by migrant workers (they could be employed in a variety of jobs such as the agricultural sector, construction, or information technology) is essential to attain sustainable development.

2.0 Research Method

The **PESTELE Analysis** has been used for studying the research topic. PESTELE is an acronym for political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal and ethical aspects. This method provides a holistic overview of all the important aspects in relation to a research topic. Political aspects can include matters of governance and laws, social aspects

can include societal norms and societal deficiencies for instance, in education, technological aspects can include technological advancements or lack, environmental aspects can include climate changes or any natural disasters and ethical aspects can include the rights, freedom, and duties of persons in an organization, state or a country.

3.0 COVID-19 and Migration in Europe

Migration presents both opportunities and challenges for Europe as a continent. The World Health Organization, on the 5th of January 2020, issued the first Disease Outbreak News Report on the Covid-19 virus (WHO, 2020). Logically speaking, "a virus does not identify borders, Covid-19 has had a direct impact on border management for the European Union, not only at the external borders but also at the internal borders..." (Sommaribas & Nienaber, 2021). Initially, at the European borders, countries were not prepared with the prospects of having to deal with a serious pandemic such as coronavirus even when China's authorities imposed a lockdown on Wuhan, China on the 23rd of January 2020. The coronavirus pandemic spread like wildfire because it involved mobility (movement) and humans are connected in a globalised world. This explains why a virus originally discovered in Wuhan, China in December 2019 escalated so fast globally and claimed lots of lives (from Asia to Europe, North America, South America, Australia, Africa and Antarctica). The Italian government on January 31st, 2020 suspended flights and visas between Italy and China after the confirmation of two positive cases (Chinese tourists) for coronavirus (Schengenvisainfo News, January 2020). In the early months of 2020, some EU countries were indecisive about whether to suspend visas for Chinese business and tourism purposes to Europe. The suspension was in full gear in some countries while it was not in others (European Migration Network, 2020). However, when Europe began detecting cases of coronavirus, internal borders were shut, for instance, Austria closed its internal borders on March 17th 2020 and other countries followed suit till July 16th, 2020 (Eijken & Rijpma, 2021).

During the global pandemic era, there is a variation in the response across governments in Europe regarding health communication for migrants. Health communication should be available in the languages of the migrants as well. That is the only way information regarding the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 will be accessible to them. (Maldonado,

Collins, Blundell, & Singh, 2020). One fundamental point is that the accessibility to proper healthcare is more difficult for any undocumented migrant because he or she, in the countries they have emigrated, do not have the legal and authentic rights to residence. Thus, in a pandemic situation such as COVID-19, these categories of migrants might feel that the authorities are unapproachable hence hindering their access to proper healthcare. The information regarding the pandemic which is communicated by the authorities does not always reach them because of communication gaps (Bhopal, 2020).

4.0 PESTELE ANALYSIS

4.1 Political Impact

4.1.1 Governance and Laws

As the coronavirus spread across continents, many countries closed their borders. European, North American, Latin American, Australian, African and Asian borders were closed amidst strict measures. In the context of our research which is domiciled in Europe, countries closed their borders "leaving migrants at the gates of Europe deprived of basic protection" (Quassif, 2020). Quassif in the 2020 Policy Brief showcased the examples of a few countries. He cited the example of Hungary stating that the government closed borders, including the transit camps which is the only place where refugees could make asylum requests. In Greece, the government suspended asylum applications registration. The European giant countries such as France, Spain, Germany have all called for borders to close and the EU Schengen agreement to be temporarily suspended so as to contain the rapid spread of the disease (Quassif, 2020). The so-called fear of "outsiders" has, in past crises, created victims among refugees and migrants, for example, by restricting their mobility. In the case of refugees and migrants, this could translate into limited access to job opportunities and social protection, or simply a perception that they are unlawfully benefitting from the wealth of host countries. The latter point is interesting in the case of migrants from underdeveloped countries currently residing in Europe. For example, some of the European countries hit the most by the Covid-19 pandemic have "large populations of migrants from Africa, particularly North Africa in the cases of Italy and Spain" (Quassif, 2020).

For example, in Italy, the prime minister, Giuseppe Conte was criticised by Matteo Salvini, the League Party leader on the basis that the coronavirus spread in the country was being fostered by humanitarian ships that reached the Italian shores. At a press conference in Genoa, Italy, Salvini said "The government has underestimated the coronavirus. Allowing the Migrants to land from Africa, where the presence of the virus was confirmed, is irresponsible." (The Guardian News, 2020) At that point, no covid case was linked to African migrants in Italy and Africa had just one medically confirmed case of the novel coronavirus, in Egypt. (Guardian news, 2020)

4.2 Economic Impact

4.2.1 Poverty

The financial problems of migrants in any pandemic are heightened with restricted mobility. Migrants are at a great risk of losing their jobs (particularly low-income migrants with no social protection or insurance schemes), dehumanised or deteriorated working conditions which can include non-payment or reduction in salaries and wages. In any given global pandemic, migrants and in most cases, refugees are the most affected. With the COVID-19 pandemic scourge, there was and still are a range of socio-economic consequences. It is often said that health is wealth. A healthy human is capable of doing whatever it takes to feed and survive. The coronavirus pandemic brought strict restrictions on movement as countries (both developed and developing) shut their borders to combat the spread and transmission of the virus further. People in poor and marginalised communities have limitations to accessible health care as well as financial insecurity and insufficient food.

As a result of this, many migrants in Europe were left stranded in their host countries with no food, shelter, jobs and were deserted and at the mercy of their crowded camps in their hosts' countries. In the World Health Organisation survey titled *Apart Together Survey: Preliminary Overview of Refugees and Migrants Self-Reported Impact of COVID-19*, the World Health Organisation Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus says, "Health for all means just that: health for all, including refugees and migrants. Everyone should enjoy access to quality health services without facing financial hardship." (Apart Together Survey, 2020). Ensuring everyone, regardless of their status quo, gets access to healthcare is a key

and effective response in combating the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Barriers to health services in Europe such as language, physical, administrative and financial have to be curbed (WHO Europe, 2020). In this WHO survey, the aim was to showcase to the world how COVID-19 impacted migrants and refugees worldwide as experienced, felt and reported by them. Over the past months, especially during the peak of the pandemic, the experiences and plights of the migrants have been stated and brought to notice through the media outlets, reports, stories and posts online.

On this note, poverty was experienced by the migrants who depend on daily wages and jobs to feed and survive. With national lockdowns across Europe, the majority of migrants and the undocumented migrants lost their means of income and livelihood and this in turn, had devastating effects. The human body requires nutrients and nutrition to build immunity and fight off diseases. With covid and the forceful sit at home order, their health was affected and deteriorated as most could not afford access to health services, hospital check-ups, treatment and preventive measures (medicines and sanitising equipment). Also, among the respondents of this survey; undocumented migrants and those living in insecure shelters attested to lack of financial means as being a key reason for not seeking health care. The pandemic has already created a discriminatory belief that migrants are responsible for the quick spread of the virus. So, some attested to facing challenges such as unpaid work or being sent home with no wage or salaries. Besides, due to the effect of the COVID-19 virus and the shutdown of countries, businesses, and the global economy, the GDPs of most countries in Europe and other continents fell drastically. This further fuelled unemployment as employees could not cope. Even the few who still had their jobs had great challenges of survival as well. In poverty-induced and unhygienic circumstances such as these, migrants, especially women and children are exposed to violence, abuse, prone to communicable diseases with scarce or no access to health care and in worst cases, human trafficking.

4.2.2 Economic/Job Opportunities

The kinds of job opportunities available for migrants in Europe are, for example, being health professionals, teaching professionals, market-oriented skilled forestry workers,

cleaners and helpers, stationary plant and machine operators, etc. from the migrant population in Europe. (Fassani et al., 2020) The majority shares of immigrant workers are among the cleaners and helpers (38%), labourers in mining and construction (23%), stationary plant and machine operators (20%) and personal care workers (19%). The key workers from outside the EU are 48% more likely to be employed under temporary contracts than natives. There is a higher probability of temporary jobs and little pay for foreign key workers- especially for the migrants in comparison to the native population of the EU. (Fassani et al., 2020) Job opportunities do not come easily to immigrants. The migrant population faces hostility as the citizens of the country that they have migrated to view them as competitors in the employment sector. They fear not getting a job in their own country. Even after getting employed, migrants might face hostile work environments, getting overworked or obtaining less salary. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, they are often viewed as the spreaders of the virus and are not welcomed into the community.

“The cost of non- Europe in the area of legal migration, EPRS, March 2019- as agreed by its Member States (Article 79 TFEU), the EU seeks to build a comprehensive immigration policy in which legally residing non-EU nationals, referred to as third-country nationals (TCNs), should be treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner.” (SCHMID-DRÜNER, 2020) Even though there are policies in place to protect immigrants from discriminatory behaviour, it has not been fully implemented. In terms of lost economic and job opportunities, the migrants were the most hit in most, if not all the European countries. Most low-income jobs were unprotected and unsecured with basic integration services. As a result of this, there was no "inclusion and support" for COVID-19 income, housing provision, house rental subsidies or exemptions and the difficulty to maintain their migratory status in their host countries. This, in turn, led to increased financial, income and livelihood insecurity (Guadagno 2020).

4.2.3 Deglobalization

“Governments have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic through a variety of measures, including widespread economic shutdowns.” (Brawley, 2021). As many countries

are taking steps to not be dependent on another country for goods and commodities which can be made in their own countries, the migrant workers are faced with a vulnerable situation with regards to job security. They often have to go through unemployment and huge economic losses which brings uncertainty and instability in their lives.

The covid-19 pandemic has led to a disruption in the entire migration process, leading to deglobalization. The effects of deglobalization can be seen in the report by McAuliffe in 2020 which mentions that during the departure from countries of origin, the migrants were not able to go on their formulated journeys, for example for jobs, education or family. Persons who needed to seek asylum, as they were living in unstable countries had not been allowed to leave, which had exposed them to the risk of violence, abuse, persecution and/or death. (McAuliffe, 2020) The migrants were not allowed to enter the destination countries due to the stringent restrictions which were implemented with a view of stopping the spread of the virus. But this had acutely impacted some sectors, such as agriculture during harvest season and global food supply chains.

The migrants who were already in the destination countries were left without much access to social protection and health care. The refugees had to live in cramped and poor living conditions in camps, which had a risk of spreading the virus. There were border closure measures announced in some countries which led to fear among migrants, of being stranded without income, social protection or health care. Some nations had taken measures to send migrants back to their homes but many had not been able to do that which has left the migrants stranded in different parts of the world (McAuliffe, 2020)

4.3 Social Impact

4.3.1 Standard of Living

Since migration has been in existence since time immemorial, migrants have resorted to moving to developed continents like Europe for better opportunities (for instance, education, healthcare or job opportunities) and standard of living. People even travel to different countries for better healthcare facilities. This little background has proven that migrants were present and living residents in Europe during the global coronavirus

pandemic.

Standard of living includes the level of affluence and the availability of valuable resources. In the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Migration Research Paper Series titled *Migrants and the Covid-19 pandemic: In an Initial analysis*, Lorenzo Guadagno drafted an overview of migrants' vulnerability to Covid-19 in a few European countries such as Spain, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Germany and Netherlands. He illustrated factors that lead to vulnerability, migrants' standard of living, and the likelihood of an increase in Covid-19 infection amongst migrants.

In local and international settings, migrants may live in overcrowded environments, accommodations or camps with no adequate access to water, clean sanitation, and hygiene products. In this case, respecting social distance and other basic health prevention practices, such as self-isolating in case of communicable illnesses, and maintaining coronavirus preventive measures is extremely difficult (Guadagno, 2020). Consequently, Guadagno further adds that in the absence of systematic screening and tracing mechanisms, the risk of a quick spread of diseases is heightened in and around these residential sites. Establishing camps, shelters and site closures, relocation of residents, and border lockdowns were measures taken by member states in combating the spread of COVID-19. However, in most cases that "worsened migrants' living conditions or abruptly restricted their ability to move, including their possibilities to access food, basic services and income" (Guadagno, 2020). In the World Health Organisation survey titled 'Apart Together Survey: Preliminary Overview of Refugees and Migrants Self-Reported Impact of COVID-19', migrants living in asylum centres, shelters, the homeless or in insecure accommodation reported that their living conditions had worsened considerably more than those who lived in houses or apartments. The migrants, undoubtedly, experienced a stronger impact on their day to day living conditions by the COVID-19 pandemic than other groups, especially with regards to their access to first and foremost health care, clean water, food and nutrition, clothes, and support from organizations (Apart Together Survey, 2020). To corroborate this stark reality as documented in the cited survey is a story of Yonas from Eritrea, Africa who lives in a refugee camp of an unknown European country. According to Yonas, "living in the camp is stressful."

In addition, his worries and fears of the COVID-19 infection and violence are justified as he says: "In here, the situation is not good. overcrowded camp. no physical distance among refugees. We use the same toilet and shower. Food line about 20,000 refugees" (Apart Together Survey, 2020).

Another cited experience is the story of Sam, a migrant living in the streets in Greece. Being a homeless person, Sam's living condition is difficult, rough, and to make things worse, the coronavirus pandemic brought additional hardships- discriminatory stigmatisation faced by him. Sam exemplifies this difficulty as he struggles greatly to access toilets (lavatories) and washing facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. He says: "Corona has been a nightmare for the homeless as essential services shut down, and I was not able to access toilets anywhere. I ended up with a urinary tract infection and was at the hospital due to extreme pain. Overall, many people were kind and gave me food or money when they saw me alone on the street; others were very hostile when I wanted to access their toilet in cafes" (Apart Together Survey, 2020). These cited self-reported experiences of migrants domiciled in Europe showcase how the pandemic affected their general and overall well-being, particularly their health and higher risks of coronavirus infections.

4.3.2 Hostility faced by migrants

The pandemic heightened hate speeches, narratives, abuse, harassment and stigmatisation and in extreme cases, the violence of the migrants in Europe. This had dire consequences on the overall health of the migrants, thereby breeding a likelihood for more spread of the coronavirus. This led to a stigma and decline in the willingness of migrants to "come forward for screening, testing and health care." (Guadagno, 2020). As highlighted by the World Health Organization, the fear of stigma can compel a person or people to hide the illness in order to avoid discrimination, prevents such people from seeking and accessing health care and in extreme cases, serves as a discouragement in adopting healthy measures (WHO, 2020). Generally, COVID-19 was used as an excuse to propagate anti-migrant narratives, reduce migrants rights, and increase immigration control. (Guadagno, 2020) However, this anti-migration narrative was not Europe or country-specific. In the 'Apart Together Survey', African migrants in some African countries experienced the same. This

was the self-reported experience of Machona, a male teacher and refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo living in Uganda. In his report, Machona gave an account of how refugees (who have sought refuge protection) are often blamed for spreading COVID-19. Machona says: "Discrimination was prevalent before COVID, but it has worsened. Let me give you an example from a settlement that holds almost one hundred and twenty-seven thousand refugees. There are twenty cases confirmed positive. So, when people hear that you are a refugee, they think 'so these are the people that are bringing COVID-19 in the host communities. We are facing such challenges" (Apart Together Survey, 2020).

4.3.3 Discrimination and its Mental Health Effects

Discrimination and its untold effects on the mental health of migrants were at their peak during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though there is evidence of discrimination meted out on migrants before COVID-19, in most cases, it increased greatly during the coronavirus pandemic phase in Europe and globally.

Through the 2020 Apart Together surveys, collated experiences of migrants globally, evidence of migrants in Europe, and self-reported experiences were cited as well. They reported:

"... Perceived worsening of mental health status due to COVID-19. They indicated they were feeling more depressed, worried, anxious, lonely, angry, stressed, irritated, hopeless, having more sleep-related problems and used more drugs and alcohol. Refugees and migrants living in asylum centres or on the streets were the most ones that reported." (Apart Together Survey, 2020).

For instance, the shared experience of Layla, a single parent with children from Kenya, Africa living in an asylum centre for migrants in Ireland reports: "Coronavirus has affected everyone's way of life. For me, as a single parent seeking asylum, it's very scary because there's the extra added worry of who would look after my kids should I fall sick. The fear can be paralysing. I worry more and stress more." (Apart Together Survey, 2020). For Lili, a migrant from Vietnam and a resident in Denmark, the biggest consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic for her is the feeling of loneliness. Lili, who has been staying in Denmark for two

years, stayed back after the completion of her master's degree in order to search for job opportunities. However, her loneliness is not based on her absence from family and friends in Vietnam. She says, "I feel like there is no one I can rely on now. I don't have a safety net, financially." Lili's frustrations and loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic is more severe due to her unemployed state and temporary residence status in Denmark. She further adds, "I always feel like a third-class citizen here as a non-EU-citizen. I get no support from the system here or my country, I can't contact them so far," Lili explains (Apart Together Survey, 2020). The stigma and discrimination fuelled by the coronavirus pandemic caused a great increase in mental health issues for the migrants. Being accused of contributing to the widespread of the disease did not help the overall health and well-being of migrants. Again, in any scenario, when a person is not mentally stable, they can never be productive in anything he sets out to do. Thus, migrant families back home, that is, in their origin countries were impacted too because a lot depends on financial support from their loved ones in the diaspora. So, these monetary remittances experienced a significant backdrop and this, in turn, could have affected food security, education, basic services (health care and education).

4.4 Technological Impact

4.4.1 Technological Advancements

Technological changes impact the movement of people. Migrants have been fundamental to innovation, sustainable and technological processes in origin and destination process. In the 2018 briefing/policy paper titled "Technology, Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", Stephen Gelb and Aarti Krishnan summarized their important messages as follows: They affirm that migrants that are well skilled contribute massively to technology, research, innovation, and development in host or destination countries. To further support the first point, they attest that these immigrants and all groups in the diaspora are an essential medium for technological transfers from countries of destination to their ancestral or countries of origin. These can occur and are achieved by-way-of knowledge imparted precisely, investments made in origin countries, and importantly, support for research and development institutions.

Humans live in a digitally connected world. So, digital connections provided by mobile phones change undoubtedly every migratory aspect. All information prior to migration and after migration helps migrants stay abreast of the latest information as well as connect with their families back home. So, it's safe to also proclaim that technological advancements are one of the engine's that fosters the success of the migration.

The last and fourth points stated by Gelb and Krishnan corroborate the point that any Government's successful management of migration is dependent on technology. This covers both aspects of restricting the influx of people and processing the documentation of migrants after arrival (Stephen Gelb & Aarti Krishnan, 2018).

Seasonal migrant labourers who come to Europe play a major role in production in the agricultural sector. Due to the rise in the covid-19 cases, there were restrictions in the movement of people to Europe. Therefore, the experienced seasonal migrant labourers could not come to do their jobs. This became a reason for great agony for farmers in Europe. They are reconsidering their methods of production. The first solution was to increase the work done by native workers as it would eliminate the fear of the spread of pathogens by migrants who are coming from outside Europe. Among the solutions to replace seasonal migrant workers was the use of robots for harvesting as it seems the most promising within the next five to ten years to them. This problem of “lack of foreign arms” could put the advancements of technologies for agricultural work on a fast track. (Mitaritonna & Ragot, 2020). This had led to the increase in demand of native labourers of Europe, in sectors which earlier had a major share of migrant labourers. Technology and Migration are woven. In this 21st century, technology is crucial in the actualization of migration. To add, there are actually some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their projected targets which are linked to technological advancement. We will be stating a few to back up this point. They include:

Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth. This seeks to increase more economic productivity. This means high-skilled emigrants' participation in research and innovation in their destination countries is laudable while in turn, returnee migrants inculcate or support improved technology into their countries of origin (SDGs, n.d.). This is a win-win situation.

Goal 9: Industrial Innovation and Infrastructure. This aims to enhance world-class scientific research and upgrade the technological competencies of all countries. This means, supporting technological development, research, innovation and increased access to information & communication (ICT) will benefit both host and countries of origin (SDGs, n.d.).

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities. This goal would ensure a well ordered, safe, regular, and responsible movement of people through a carefully implemented plan and effectively directed migration policies. Here, digital applications, mobile technologies help accelerate pre and post-migration journeys, integration and settlement. These technologies help the government in tracking migration, its policies, and management. Even border closures need technology (SDGs, n.d.).

Goal 17: Global partnerships for the goals. Here, enhancing mechanisms in place for capacity building and information, communication and technology (ICT) will help enhance global technological collaborations for the Sustainable Development Goals in its entirety (SDGs n.d.).

Moreover, research investigation and studies show an immense input of expert and skilful emigrants (workers) in Europe. This contribution ranges from innovations, remarkable positive effects on knowledge production and its application in the form of measures by patent applications and journal articles. In the same vein, research shows diversity in and of cultures, improved productivity, and capacity as a result of the involvement between immigrants and the locals in the respective host communities. (Bosetti et al, 2015) Similarly, though the internet is important and it helped people worldwide stay abreast of key information about the Covid-19 virus. For instance, websites ensuring prevention and safety measures, whereby the government presented data, checks and tips to curtail the spread, research and information about the virus. However, there's a digital divide line "which falls along the lines of socioeconomic inequality - those who are poorer and live in less affluent areas pay more for less reliable services. (The Conversation, 2020) This proved a huge disadvantage for financially challenged migrants who unfortunately could not have access to these Internet facilities during the pandemic in Europe. With such situations, it becomes a problem for society at large in combating the coronavirus menace.

Simultaneously, these digital technologies posed some difficulties pertaining to the migrants' global human rights. Were the digital rights of the migrants secured or safeguarded? Did regional, federal, and state governments act in a crystal-clear means and way when they resorted to digital technology/means to combat and face the crisis head on? In order to safeguard the European borders (which has seen the influx of regular and irregular migrants over the years), member states used technology to help trace movements of people across the borders.

In order to mitigate the fast spread of the coronavirus, "governments looked towards technology to trace patterns and movements of people through contact apps and big data, these methods are controversial and may infringe on rights to privacy. " (United Cities and Local Government Briefing & Learning Notes, 2020). These technologies in some ways interfered with the fundamental rights of people (migrants inclusive). The screening process for entry visas became pretty daunting, surveillance systems were more in place in order to combat any unauthorized movements in the European states and there was differential treatment in accessibility as the citizens were treated first and foremost.

4.5 Environmental Impact

4.5.1 Environmental pollution due to unhygienic health practices (making living conditions uninhabitable).

What is obtainable in our environs, as human beings, has a great impact on our health. In general, if our environment is not kept clean or properly maintained, it is already a great sign and potency to breed different kinds of illnesses and infections. This situation was exemplified during the COVID-19 pandemic scourge in Europe and globally. Lack of sanitary and unhealthy practices led to a global spike and spread of the pandemic in migrant camps, refugee shelters and accommodation centres. In the congested and crammed facilities, the migrants' environmental hygiene and sanitary conditions were poor. Also, migrants, particularly women are prone to more sexual and reproductive (related to pregnancy and childbirth) health challenges.

As defined by the World Health Organisation, "COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in

small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols. "(WHO, 2020) Established through research as a respiratory system infected virus, certain risk factors and pollutants in the environment can cause infections such as respiratory (for instance, viral and bacterial) tract infections like flu/influenza circulating in the atmosphere or from other persons. Other factors can be exposure to tobacco and unventilated environment aids in the susceptibility, and spread of respiratory communicable diseases. Every individual requires clean air as oxygen to breathe and survive. So, when pollutants that are injurious to health keep circulating in the atmosphere and are ingested by migrants in their overcrowded shelters and camps, their immunity is bound to deteriorate.

Moreso, safety and prevention measures such as the washing of hands regularly with sanitised products, isolation of infected migrants, cleaning of environs, disposing of equipment (such as syringes and needles, kitchen equipment) infected by persons living with the virus, regular change of facemasks and proper disposal was highly recommended by global key players in the health sector, like WHO, in order to curb the fast spread of COVID-19. In fact, there are challenges for migrants in comprehending and understanding control and safety measures written in European languages due to the language barriers. Yonas, a migrant from Eritrea in a European country, says: "In here, the situation is not good. overcrowded camp. no physical distance among refugees. We use the same toilet and shower. Food line about 20 000 refugees" (Apart Together Survey, 2020). However, this was not the case for most migrants such as Yonas in Europe due to the congested living conditions they found themselves in during the pandemic.

4.6 Legal Impact

"Covid-19 pandemic is primarily a health crisis but in the migration context, it becomes a humanitarian and an economic crisis too, one which demonstrates the difficulties the Member States have in responding to the situation through ad-hoc legal and policy interventions." (Sommarribas & Nienaber, 2021) The Covid-19 pandemic exposed harsh realities of migrants regarding labour laws, permits, work ethics and licenses tenable in countries world-wide, Europe inclusive.

4.6.1 Licenses and Permits

In any given sovereign nation or state, foreign nationals wanting to work must meet various fundamental requirements. In the context of Europe, migrants inside the European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) must meet fundamental labour and employment laws requirements. In this case, legal migrants do not have many issues to deal with if they followed through legal means of entry into the respective countries in Europe. However, we cannot avoid the fact that there are illegal migrants who travel through different routes particularly, the Mediterranean Sea to gain access into Europe. This illegal entry comes with serious risks factors, such as death before destination due to harsh weather conditions, deportation and getting totally banned when caught, and series of discrimination in the host communities. In some cases, these undocumented migrants are trafficked and are at the mercy of inhumane conditions from host individuals shielding them from the government authorities.

Traceable to the global significance of migration, non-European citizens have different alternatives for academic studies, stay, and work in Europe. There are also rules on how family members can be brought, setting up business models and finally gaining legal permanent residence and citizenship as the case may be. Similarly, each country in Europe has its particular models of licenses and permits. There are two work permit and visa options that enable travel throughout most countries with the EU and EEA. Having these permits which guarantee the right to first work and second earn a living in developed nations motivates this flow, influx and entry of immigrants. In the European context, there is the Schengen Visa and the European Blue Card. European Union visas- along with each country's peculiar visas in Europe, the two general work permits/visa choices that permit people's (non-Europeans) entry and trip within the European Union and European Economic Area. These official permits are the Schengen visa and the European Blue Card.

Schengen Visa: As culled from the European Commission website, a Schengen visa permits immigrants the tour access in the 26 EEA countries that comprise the Schengen territory. This is a primary means for a short-term of maximum three months (90 days or less). With this visa, visitors can tour the entire European Schengen area (European Commission website,

n.d.). The European Schengen area covers 26 countries with no border restrictions between them. These countries are: Poland, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, France, Iceland, Portugal, Hungary, Norway, Finland, Czech Republic, Austria, Italy, Luxembourg, Greece, Sweden, Lithuania, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and Slovenia.

European Blue Card: With permission from the European Union, the EU Blue Card grants efficient and well qualified workers outside Europe the legal permission to stay and work, provided they are higher professionals and can prove their competencies. These qualifications include: having any degree from the university, an employment letter, contract, or a binding job offer with mostly a higher salary compared to the average (Europa, n.d.). It is worthy to note that the European Union (EU) Blue Card applies in twenty-five of the twenty-seven EU countries. It does not apply in Denmark and the Republic of Ireland.

The devastating impacts of Covid-19 are still being felt by migrants and in their accessibility to decent work. This has halted the achievement of SDG 8 which aims to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productive employment for all. Though Covid-19 is a public health inflicted crisis, measures and responses in curtailing its spread, such as intra and external border closures, lockdowns, restriction of movement has implicated employment of migrant workers in Europe and other parts of the world. In fact, border closures halted labour migration which resulted in millions of migrants being stranded with great difficulties. This has led to a more burdened socio-economic dependence on the needs of host countries.

Europe's closure of internal borders was the first step taken in order to control the spread of the pandemic. On the 17th of March 2020, Europe's external borders were closed as well. It is pertinent to note that these actions (though done to ensure safety) affected migration in Europe. From a legal perspective, Sommaribas & Nienaber in their article "Migration and mobility of third-country national labour workers to and inside Europe during the Covid-19 pandemic - a legal analysis" postulated that the external borders closure affected migrants/migration from four points of view. First, the movement of migrants on a temporal stay in European countries; second, seasonal migrants' entry to Europe; third, migrants'

means of legal entry and stay in Europe; and fourth, the status quo of migrants residing in Europe for instance, those with income/financial losses (Sommarribas & Nienaber, 2021). Notably, the unemployment factor has had a very great impact on issuance of resident permits in Europe. This factor has direct impacts on legal or illegal migrants residing in European countries. The main hitch is because most, if not all economic migrant's resident permits are conditional. That is, it is based on an underlying availability of employment or work/job contract. Therefore, "if the employment relationship disappears there is no valid reason for maintaining the residence permit and this leads to procedures for withdrawal of the residence permit." (Sheridan & Sommarribas, 2020)

During the pandemic, low skilled migrants lost their means of employment due to the downsizing and global shutdowns all over Europe, though residence permits were not withdrawn with immediate effect, due to these job losses. For instance, the time frame or duration for finding jobs were extended in countries such as Slovenia, Finland, Cyprus and Slovakia while, in countries such as Malta, Croatia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Hungary permit withdrawal commenced the moment third-country migrants loses their jobs (Sommarribas & Nienaber, 2021). However, if a new job is secured, a residence permits application can be attended to. In Portugal, due to covid, residence permits renewal was well simplified. Foreigners could send their docs via post services or online as against the in-person application. Minors were even exempted from payment of fees. These are a few ways in which the coronavirus pandemic affected licences and permits in Europe.

4.6.2 Labour Laws for Migrant Workers in Europe

Europe is a continent that is linguistically and culturally diverse. One of the hitches migrants from least developed countries face is, less information on how to navigate the system, unaware of local laws, and particularly language barriers. With a global pandemic which involved social distancing and self-health measures to be practised, communication barriers were a great challenge for migrants in their host communities. There are labour laws peculiar to every region for example, Africa, Asia, North America or countries like Canada, China or South Africa. According to Christiane Kuptsch, an International Labour

Organization (ILO) specialist, "33 Mio labour migrants are currently working in the EU. They account for 17% of the entire EU labour force. An estimated 1.6 Mio persons are free movement temporary migrants within the EU working outside their country of usual residence. This figure increased by 20% over a five-year period. Throughout the world, migrants have a higher labour force participation rate than non-migrants showing that labour migrants go where the jobs are in order to fill labour shortages. The difference is particularly high in Northern, Western, and Southern Europe- 72% for migrants vs. 55% for non-migrants (ILO, webpage, 2020).

One of the authentic and legal channels for migrants' entry into the European Union or Europe at large is through labour migration. However, their rights in Europe are status dependent. For labour migrants, at the EU level, the status for labour includes: independent workers, ICT (intercorporate transferred), salaried workers, highly qualified workers (Blue Card Holders), posted workers and seasonal workers and researchers. It is met according to directives such as the "EU Blue Card Directive (Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25th May 2009 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment". The "Directive of Seasonal Workers (Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26th February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers" in Europe (Sommarribas & Nienaber, 2021). The European Union Commission states, rights to work covers two (2) main aspects. They are: Health, safety at work, and of course Labour law. As defined by the European Commission, labour law defines your rights and obligations as workers and employers. Hence, there are efforts in place to improve migrant workers working conditions in Europe as recommended by the German Ministry of Labour to the International Labour Organization. (ILO, webpage, 2020).

4.7. Ethical Impact

4.7.1 Work Discrimination Faced by the Migrants and their Entitlement against the same

As the pandemic gripped years have shown and still show, the global health crisis has a way of revealing discriminatory realities often taken for granted by nations or authorities. In

reality, Timmerman agrees that: "Europe has been confronted with its dependency on the essential work provided by the migrants that help clean our homes, transport our goods, build our cities, pick our produce, and stock our shelves. However, the crisis has not only exposed our dependence on migrant workers, but also how these workers—and the conditions under which they labor—are all too often ignored. In many ways, Europe's migrants have become it's neglected essential workers' (Timmerman, 2020).

The Markkula Centre defined Ethics "based on well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues" (Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics-Santa Clara University, n.d.). In some European countries with high migrant populations, national laws restrain and bar migrants from joining, for instance, trade unions. In an instance such as this, these migrants cannot organize themselves to ask for better working conditions of service or even pay. Ethically when it comes to job conditions, other forms of discrimination include less pay compared to host nations counterparts in the same role or position, employment, promotion, etc. In such scenarios, the ethics of job recruitment and employment is not duly followed. It is safe to imagine if legal migrants are faced with this, the conditions of illegal and undocumented migrants is double or even tripled as they fear risk of arrest and deportation to their home countries. Hence, they accept and bear whatever inhumane condition (living & working) they find themselves in.

An organisation, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report (2019) titled "Protecting migrant workers from exploitation in the EU: worker's perspectives", presents an extensive and comprehensive manner that looks at how migrant workers experience labour exploitation and loss. It also addressed mechanisms using selected EU Member States which are Germany, Poland, Belgium, Portugal, United Kingdom, Italy, France, and the Netherlands. This report x-rayed their daily realities, living/working conditions of migrant workers based on their personal experiences. Based on this same 2019 report, "the forms of labour exploitation are: slavery and servitude". Using the 8 member states that were assessed, the geographic regions of origin of the workers are Caribbean, Central and South America, Asia and Africa. This further corroborates the unbalanced working ethics migrants are faced with in Europe and by extension, other part regions.

The lockdown that was implemented in March as a way of containing the virus resulted in a shutdown of economic activities all over Europe. Sectors such as transportation, farming, agriculture and food processing were impacted more because they depended heavily on seasonal migrants. This is because some migrants returned to their home countries to avoid being stuck in a foreign country. To mitigate this, several countries had to forcefully readapt their mobility restrictions to make available seasonal workers. This was as a result of two valid reasons which were- food crops began rotting on the farms and there were urgent steps needed to protect food security (the food supply chain) across Europe. Ruben Timmerman (2020) affirmed that in countries like Germany, thousands of seasonal migrant workers were airlifted into the country. Meanwhile in countries like Italy, in order to curb labour shortage, emergency residence permits were granted to migrants. In a normal scenario in the Netherlands, the growing demand for cheap labour is high due to its food industry & agriculture demands. He further adds that, "over the past several months, COVID-19 has had a particularly severe impact on the agri-food industry. The position of the Netherlands as the world's second-largest agricultural exporter has long been a source of national pride, and a symbol of Dutch innovation and hard work. However, often concealed is that non-Dutch migrant workers carry out the overwhelming burden of the most challenging and laborious work contributing to such achievement" (Timmerman, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to bear the realities of migrant workers' rights and health challenges in European countries. Challenges such as prolonged working hours, exposure and likelihood of contracting the virus due to long working hours, salaries and wage discrimination, substandard houses, camps and shelters, mandatory salaries/wages deductions affecting healthcare, accommodation, transport and food, unpaid wages due to the economic downturns or intimidation, etc. When the system of employment does not produce and ensure security and stability for migrant workers, the situation of subordination hinders migrants from seeking better working terms and conditions which leads to high chances of their job losses. Significantly, "COVID-19 has indeed introduced a host of new challenges and concerns, the underlying problems of unsafe work, economic insecurity, and dependency remain very much endemic to the structural economic vulnerabilities of migrant workers" (Timmerman, 2020).

5.0 Recommendations

Recognition of these systemic problems and migrants' vulnerability are beyond the crisis. They are broader economically, politically and socially in structure. Hence, there should be adequate ways of mitigating these challenges and the vulnerable conditions of migrant workers in Europe. This research paper seeks to recommend needed efforts to build a safe and inclusive environment for migrants in Europe.

5.1 Improving the Status of Health Communication in Europe

The health communication during the pandemic by the European governments have to be available in the local languages of the migrants as well, instead of being mainly available in the official languages. This will make the awareness spread by the authorities more accessible to the migrant population. The governments should direct their risk communication to the migrant community or people in refugee camps. They should also collaborate with non-governmental organizations who play an important part to meet the basic health requirements of the migrants (Maldonado et al., 2020).

5.2 Integration of Migrant Workers into the Community

Migrants play a key role in promoting the growth of a country. They should be provided with an inclusive environment instead of being side-lined or ignored. In research from Edmond (2020), "there are an estimated 272 million international migrants, 3.5% of the world's population." They should not be discriminated against and should be treated with the respect they deserve. It is necessary to protect the migrants against violation of human rights and to revise immigration policies to include solutions for the betterment of their community. (International Organization for Migration, 2020).

5.3 Supporting Migrants by Furnishing Job Opportunities for Them

The migrant population who are facing unemployment should be given a chance to display their potential and work ethics so that they can also earn a livelihood and get exposure along with opportunities to reach their true potential. They can boost the economic growth of a country. In other instances, entrepreneurial migrants are the reason for an

increase in employment opportunities. For example, they migrate to a place and then open start-ups which seek employees. Here, the migrants are providing the citizens of a country with an employment opportunity. This view contradicts the more common argument that migrants take away jobs from the natives of a state. (Gaskell, 2020)

5.4 Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

As seen from our discussion in this research paper, migration is no doubt a relevant catalyst in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. This is because international migration is a determiner which defines the characteristics and tendencies in the 21st century. Its contribution is remarkable and significant to all aspects of education, policy, economics and social development globally, and would continually be key to achieving these goals. (Marta Foresti et al, 2018). It is a contributing factor to the overall economic, cultural, and socio-political development. It is pertinent to mention that the Sustainable Development Goals namely: Goal 4- Quality Education, Goal 5- Gender Equality, Goal 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 10- Reduced Inequality, Goal 16- Peace and Justice Strong Institutions and Goal 17- Partnerships to achieve the goal recognized the huge and extensive value of migration.

To back up and in support of these facts are five key pointers culled from (Marta et al, 2018) in their study "Migration and development: How human mobility can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals". The five principal conclusions quoted from (Marta et al, 2018) study can be stated as follows:

1. Migration is a potent poverty lessening mechanism, aiding in achieving all the SDGs.
2. Migrants contribute in mass to the provision, services delivery, and sustained development in their respective destination countries.
3. The challenges, dangers, and vulnerable susceptibilities of migrants are mostly often overlooked.
4. The actual implementation of existing support programmes for migrants is often weak.
5. There are major data gaps in migrants' statistics.

Governments and Heads of State should enact policies that will be integrated in the actualization of the SDGs and better maximise its socio-economic, educational and cultural benefits.

5.5 Migrants and Asylum Seekers Protection at the Closed Borders of European Countries

The pandemic, which affected the movement of people from states to countries at large, had migrants and asylum seekers affected the most. Adequate resources should be provided for migrants stuck at external borders of European countries. This step will help curtail the further spread of the first wave or any second wave associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to curb this, Quassif (2020) in his policy report suggests that specific allocated funds should aim at providing mass detection kits, health tools and equipment to the relevant structures in the respective host communities and by extension, countries. He further added, humanitarian volunteers and workers should be permitted to continue their humane missions with migrants and refugees in "optimal conditions through providing them with necessary resources". Most migrants and asylum seekers are unsure and scared to seek help if they have the coronavirus symptoms due to the fear of stigmatization, discrimination, interception, detention or in worst scenarios, deportation back to their ancestral home countries. By way of addition, the living conditions and environs of the migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers should be hygienic.

6.0 Conclusion

As migrant workers form a crucial component of society, it is extremely important to provide them with a supportive environment, which facilitates their well-being. Throughout the study, it has been found that restrictions on the movement of migrants have been put in place by the government for the purpose of curbing the spread of Coronavirus. The migrants have had to face hostile behaviour because people have viewed them as spreaders of the virus. It even led to inaccessibility to basic necessities such as food and shelter. They did not have access to basic health care facilities. They had to live in crowded camps which exposed them to unsanitary conditions and spread of germs in the environment. The majority share of

the migrant workers in Europe are working jobs as cleaners and helpers, followed by miners and construction workers. In Europe, there have been discussions about replacing the agricultural work done by migrant workers, by machines as the skilled workers have not been able to come to work due to the restrictions. The potential of technology and innovation is effective in crisis situation response. Equally important is the prioritized use of technology but sincerely, through a human rights perspective intended for the protection of citizens, maintained, required and needed services, communication of accessible life-saving information, and fostered social and economic interaction for the benefit of everyone. These digital technologies should and must be consciously receptive to the all-embracing of everyone and close the digital divide in our societies. (United Cities and Local Government Briefing & Learning Notes (UCLG), 2020).

Migration is relevant in the actualization of the UN projected sustainable development goals. The Covid-19 pandemic has ushered in more challenges worldwide such as global inequality, economic shocks & downturns, wealth inequality, poverty, health sector deficiency, and political instability. This is a result of the inability of governments in the third world to manage the grave effects of the crisis. Particularly in under-developed and developing nations, these effects are felt the most. The COVID-19 pandemic, in turn, has contributed immensely to the pressure and movement (legally and illegally) into Europe out of their host countries. Globally, even as most countries are trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is the movement of people into Europe regardless.

This research has revealed that the decisions that spur migrants to migrate are not only based on personal reasons. It also enunciates the factors that influence these decisions which include: social, economic, political, and ecological. This paper attempted to analyse the challenges and impacts of the pandemic on all categories of migrants in Europe. Even in an era of globalization, communication is very essential. These barriers exist probably because there is a bridge in communication which is mostly due to the language barriers and inaccessibility of information by the migrants in Europe.

Migration fosters innovation, and development of skill sets. It is an "effective poverty reduction tool". To wrap up, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals motto states

"leave no one behind" (SDGs, n.d.). This means for sustainable development to be achieved in its entirety, globally, all hands must be on deck to achieve this. Everyone, migrants inclusive, has a fundamental part and function to play in achieving this.

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