

Reconceptualizing Human Trafficking: Revelings of the Experience of Ethiopian Migrant Returnees

Authors : Waganesh Zeleke, Abebaw Minaye

Abstract : This study examined the act, means, and purpose of human trafficking in the case of Ethiopian migrant returnees from the Middle East and South Africa. Using a questionnaire survey data was gathered from 1078 returnees. Twelve focus group discussions were used to solicit detailed experience of returnee about the process of their 'unsafe' immigration. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis results revealed that against the mainstream thinking of human trafficking means such as forcing, coercing, abducting or threatening, traffickers used 'victims' free will' means by providing false promises to and capitalizing on the vulnerability of migrants. The migrants' living condition including unemployment, ambitious view to change their life, and low level of risk perception were found to be risk factors which made them vulnerable and target of the brokers and smugglers who served as a catalyst in the process of their 'unsafe' migration. Equal to the traffickers/brokers/agency, the migrants' family, friends and Ethiopian embassies contributed to the deplorable situation of migrant workers. 64.4% of the returnees reported that their migration is self-initiated, and 20% reported peer pressure and 13.8 percent reported family pressure, and it is only 1.8% who reported having been pushed by brokers. The findings revealed that 69.5% of the returnees do not know about the lifestyle and culture of the host community before their leave. In a similar vein, 50.9% of the returnees reported that they do not know about the nature of the work they are to do and their responsibilities. Further, 81% of the returnees indicated that the pre-migration training they received was not enough in equipping them with the required skill. Despite the returnees experiences of various forms of abuse and exploitation in the journey and at the destination they still have a positive attitude for migration ($t=9.7$ mean of 18.85 with a test value of 15). The returnees evaluated the support provided by sending agencies and Ethiopian embassies in the destination to be poor. 51.8% of the migrants do not know the details of the contract they signed during migration. Close to 70% of the returnees expressed that they had not got any legal support from stakeholders when they faced problems. What is more is that despite all these 27.9% of the returnees indicated re-immigrating as their plan. Based on these findings on the context and experience of Ethiopian migrant returnees, implications for training, policy, research, and intervention are discussed.

Keywords : trafficking, migrant, returnee, Ethiopia, experience, reconceptualizing

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020