

Psychological Factors Affecting Irregular Migrants

Irregular migration has numerous detrimental impacts on mental health and psychological wellbeing of individuals who choose this path to go abroad. Irregular migrants may experience:



Fear of Law Enforcement Agencies

This includes fear of arrest or detention by the law enforcement authorities or border security forces resulting in deportation or persecution in the country of destination or during the journey.



Feeling Helpless and Vulnerable

Feelings of being stranded and helplessness prevails as the individuals are not able to exercise the basic human rights of a registered citizen. This also includes inability to report to authorities against any crimes, scams, theft, assault, exploitation and discrimination.



Identity Theft and Statelessness

Irregular migrants, on their journey, are often subjected to identity theft. Human traffickers steal identities of irregular migrants and leave them stranded as a stateless individual with no documents and identity. This leads to psychological trauma and disorientation about time, place and self in this people causing severe psychological illnesses.



Guilt and Fear of Living Outside the Law

Consistent guilt which restricts movement and activities in the country of destination and living 24/7 in the fear of getting caught by the authorities or face charges.



Feelings of Isolation and Sadness

Using irregular means to migrate leads to living a hidden life in isolation while being unable to share thoughts and feelings with anyone. It also leads to not being able to seek psychological help or psychological first aid when required.



Homesickness

Irregular migrants have limited contact with their family members back in the country of origin. They often spend weeks and months without getting to know the wellbeing of their family or being able to openly share their own circumstances with them.



Culture Shock and Adjustment Issues

Irregular migrants have minimal exposure and knowledge regarding their journey, destination country and stay. They often experience severe culture shock, feel confused, disoriented and out of place when exposed to a new environment, culture, language and customs without adequate preparation.



Unresolved Trauma and Long-term Psychological Impacts

The journey of irregular migration is filled with traumatic experiences. Irregular migrants on their way to destination endure wounds to their bodies, minds and emotions. Thirst, hunger, exploitation and assault on this journey is life threatening. The survivors often develop psychological illnesses including:

- PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Bipolar disorders

Contact Migrant Resource Centre, Pakistan in case of any support

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