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Determinants of Irregular Labour Migration

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Determinants of Irregular Labour Migration

The ready availability of employment in the informal economy, where no documents are required, promotes unauthorized, irregular migration.

- Thus, irregular labour migration is essentially a labour market issue.
- Informal economy:
All income-earning activities that are not regulated by the State in social environments where similar activities are regulated.
- Informality affects:
 - (i) Registry of employment relationships
 - (ii) Conduct of economic activity

Determinants of Irregular Labour Migration

Labour market determinants: Essential determinants of irregular labour migration.

- Other determinants:

They interact with the labour market determinants:

- Geographic determinants
- Immigration conditions: entry and residence
- Cultural/ historical ties
- Social networks

Labour Market Determinants

Demand for irregular migration is determined by:

- Low-productivity, low-technology, low-wage activities: but higher wages for workers relative to wages in countries of origin
- Reducing labour cost and sustaining competitiveness
- Tendency towards increased flexibility of labour
- Higher Labour Force Participation rates (LFPRs) for women
- Labour market control

Branches of Economic Activity where these Determinants Apply and Irregular Migration is Widespread

The relative importance of these branches varies between countries.

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Domestic work
- Care for the elderly
- Small enterprises
- Hotels, Restaurants, Catering
- Low-skill services

Other Determinants

- **Geographic determinants:** Contiguity, long coastal lines
- **Immigration conditions:** Visa requirements, residence permit conditions
- **Cultural/Historical ties:** Colonial ties, linguistic affinity, existence of migration system
- **Social networks:** Existence of social networks in country of destination, extent of validity of this determinant
- **Criminal activity:** Trafficking, smuggling

Policy Measures to Face Up to Irregular Labour Migration

Labour market measures:

- Expanding avenues for regular labour migration, taking into account labour market needs and demographic trends.
- An orderly labour migration process in both countries of origin and destination should be promoted.
- Raise the productivity and technological level of economic activities employing irregular migrant workers.
- Reinforcing effectiveness of labour inspection.
- Enforcing equality of rights and non-discrimination: For the protection of both national and migrant workers.

Policy Measures to Face Up to Irregular Labour Migration

Other policy measures:

- Effective border control respecting human and labour rights.
- Introducing visa systems and residence schemes that promote regular and discourage irregular labour migration.
- Combating criminal activities [trafficking and smuggling].