



**Perilous Journeys Across the Sea in Search of Prosperity: Causes of
Illegal Migration from Sri Lanka and Present Trends (A Case Study of
Illegal Immigration to Australia)**

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ABSTRACT

Illegal migration is a vexing contemporary issue for the countries from which these illegal travelers originate as well as the destination countries where they hope to settle. Therefore, countries now struggle to curb illegal migration across the world. After the end of the civil war in 2009, the favorite destination of Sri Lankans planning to migrate illegally has turned out to be Australia. Attempts by people from Sri Lanka to travel to Australia illegally have turned out to be a veritable phenomenon in recent years. This is mainly attributed to certain causes and trends that have prompted people to make attempts to reach Australia illegally. The research problem of this study is to figure out why people try to migrate to Australia by illegal means. The main objective of this study is to propose a feasible solution to mitigate the negative impacts of illegal migration to Australia. To answer these questions, this study has used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In addition to the secondary data collected from written sources, 10 case studies were undertaken, in which in-depth interviews were carried out using open-ended and unstructured questions. Discourse analysis and phenomenological data analysis tools were used to analyze the data. Findings of the research showed that a variety of causes, such as poor economic prospects, social problems, and political marginalization, were responsible for the increasing trend towards illegal migration to other countries. This study also found a paradigm shift in the illegal migration of Sri Lankans from Australia to New Zealand.

1. Introduction

Migration is a topic that is widely discussed by the international community as of today. Human migration used to take place even during the earliest periods of human civilization in the world. However, there is no universally accepted definition of the word "migration." Nevertheless, several institutions define it as the physical movement of people from one place to another to seek either permanent or temporary residence (World Migration Report, 2000, p. 01). Before the Second World War, there was no legal mechanism to protect migrants who were scattered around the world. After the emergence of the United Nations, the global community that was concerned about migrants took the necessary measures to ensure the rights of everyone who moved from one country to another. The current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 percent of the global population (IOM, UN Migration, 2021).

Migration has contributed to the development and diversification of societies around the world. Migration can be triggered by various factors such as "invasion, civil strife, political crisis, economic crisis, natural disaster, man-made disaster, colonial settlement, and even slavery, while most recently globalization, industrialization, and urbanization have further helped to increase migration" (International Migration Report, 2002). In fact, the number of migrants has increased over a period of three decades, from 82 million to 200 million (World Migration Report, 2000, p. 02). International migrants presently comprise 3% of the world population, and by 2050, the number of international migrants could add up to 405 million worldwide (Betts, 2011). There are many types of migration, of which permanent migration, labor migration, irregular migration, refugee migration, student

migration, and diaspora migration are the most common in the world (Betts, 2011).

Migration can be categorized as internal or external. External migration between countries involves both emigration and immigration. Furthermore, immigration can be regular or irregular (legal or illegal), voluntary or involuntary, so that people can enter a country both by legal and illegal means. An illegal immigrant is defined as a non-national who attempts to enter or has entered a country unlawfully (Illegal Immigration Trafficking Act, 2000). Immigration has been a longstanding phenomenon in world history that has affected different countries differently. Thus, immigration and emigration practices and procedures might have to be re-evaluated by both sending and receiving countries due to persistent attempts by people to cross international borders by illegal means.

Illegal immigration has become a common issue that affects both developing and developed countries around the world. Therefore, the community of nations has to closely monitor the movement of people across national borders to prevent the illegal entrance of foreign citizens into their territory. It clearly calls for immense effort to curb the attempts of people to immigrate illegally to other countries by circumventing the prescribed procedures. Displaced people make up a sizable proportion of the global population at times. According to UNHCR, one percent of the global population is forcibly displaced. This institution stated that during 2019, an estimated 11 million people were displaced due to internal conflict. Thus, 8.6 million have been newly displaced within their countries. According to migration data, the internal migration rate is higher than the international migration rate because more people are able to move around domestically than emigrate to other countries. In 2010, the total number of international migrants in the world was estimated at 214 million, a marked increase from the 191 million recorded in

2005 (International Migration Report 2002, p. 23). As of today, the number of global migrants recorded is estimated at about 272 million in 2019, an increased by 50 million as compared with 2010. International migrants account for 3.5% of the global population (United Nations, 2020).

The global community keeps a sharp eye on international migration because any steep increase in the number of migrants may have a bad effect on the host countries, as their economies may not be able to absorb them. Roughly, one in seven of the world's total population is made up of migrants (World Migration Report, 2011, p. 73). Migration is a complex phenomenon with broad implications. Uncontrolled migration can result in conflicts between local citizens and immigrants. International organizations such as the IMF, ILO, and UN have warned that if appropriate action is not taken to limit the new arrivals, it could create an issue that can affect the whole world. "If the migrant population continues to increase at the same pace as it has over the last 20 years, the

number of international migrants worldwide by 2050 could rise as high as 405 million" (Betts, 2011, p. 01). Migrants are dynamic, and they have shifted from their homeland to destinations in different ways. Europe became the largest host with around 82 million people, followed by North America with 59 million and Northern Africa and Western Asia with 49 million. (United Nations,2020). According to the International Migration Report, 2002, roughly half of migrants are motivated to stay in just 20 countries. The United States of America became a leading country, with approximately 51 million migrants. Germany, with a population of 13 million, has become Europe's most welcoming country for migrants. In the Middle East, Saudi Arabia hosts regional migrants who lost their homelands because of war. Australia has emerged as a top destination for both legal and illegal migrants, with an estimated 8 million arriving by 2020. Italy, with approximately 6 million migrants, has also become a refugee destination. (World Migration Report, 2020).

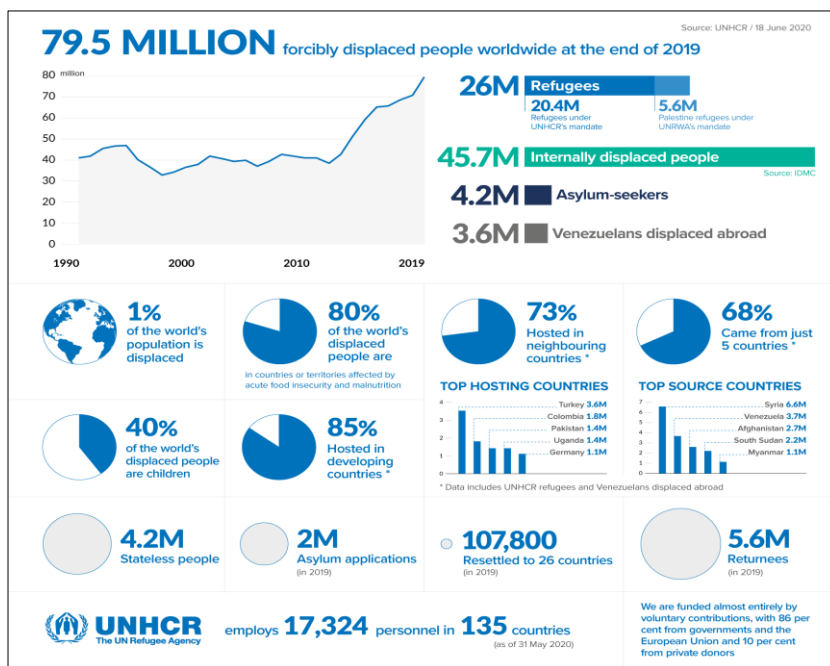


Figure 1. Number of Displaced Migrants (UNHCR, 2020)

Sri Lanka is notorious for the large number of its citizens who have migrated to other countries, both legally and illegally. In terms of the global outlook, it was reported at the end of 2019 that the Syrian population remained by far the largest forcibly displaced population, with 13.2 million people. Drawing attention in South Asia, Afghanistan and South Sudan recorded 3.0 and 2.2 million, respectively (UNHRC, 2019).

Over the past decade, several major crises at the global level have increased, and those have also caused migration to expand around the world.

- The outbreak of the Syrian conflict
- South Sudan's displacement crisis
- The arrival of refugees and migrants to Europe from everywhere in the world
- The massive flow of stateless refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh
- renewed conflict and security concerns in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Somalia
- The reemergence of fighting and violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- The largest humanitarian crisis and displacement in Yemen (UNHRC, 2019).

According to the 2019 International Migration Report, 1.25 million Sri Lanka-born persons were living outside of their country. This number is equivalent to 5.9 percent of the current Sri Lankan resident population. Illegal migration is a common Sri Lankan phenomenon that has given rise to certain distinct patterns of emigration.

One such pattern can be discerned among those who aspire to reach Australia and do so illegally. Using robust data, this study seeks to find out more about the compulsions that drive people to sail illegally to Australia from Sri Lanka and the current trend in this hazardous practice.

1.1 Research Problem

Why do people migrate to Australia by illegal means and at great personal risk despite the existence of very restrictive immigration policies in that country and the possibility of being subject to heavy legal penalties?

1.2 Research Objectives

The key objective of this research is to find out the causes and trends behind illegal migration and provide solutions to put a stop to it.

2. Materials and Methods

This study is based on a mixed-methods approach and draws from qualitative and quantitative data. The research was carried out in three districts where illegal immigrants usually gather to decide on their trip and then board the rickety vessels. Thus, the sample for the research was taken from Jaffna, Negombo, and Hambantota by a purposive sampling method. The data presented in this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data were collected from myriad documents that contained written information on legal and illegal migration at the international and national levels.

The main data for this study were obtained from ten case studies of illegal immigrants to Australia. Respondent information regarding their experiences were gathered using unstructured and open-ended interviews, denoted as (R), to elucidate their personal experiences as illegal migrants. Both descriptive analysis and phenomenological data analysis tools were used to analyze the research data.

This section explores some of the literature that deals with migration issues.

The literature review mainly focused on three matters of relevance to this research, which are,

- Conceptual Framework
- Theoretical Framework
- Review of Previous Studies

2.1 Conceptual Framework

This part highlights some of the key concepts associated with the research topic, including legal migration and illegal migration.

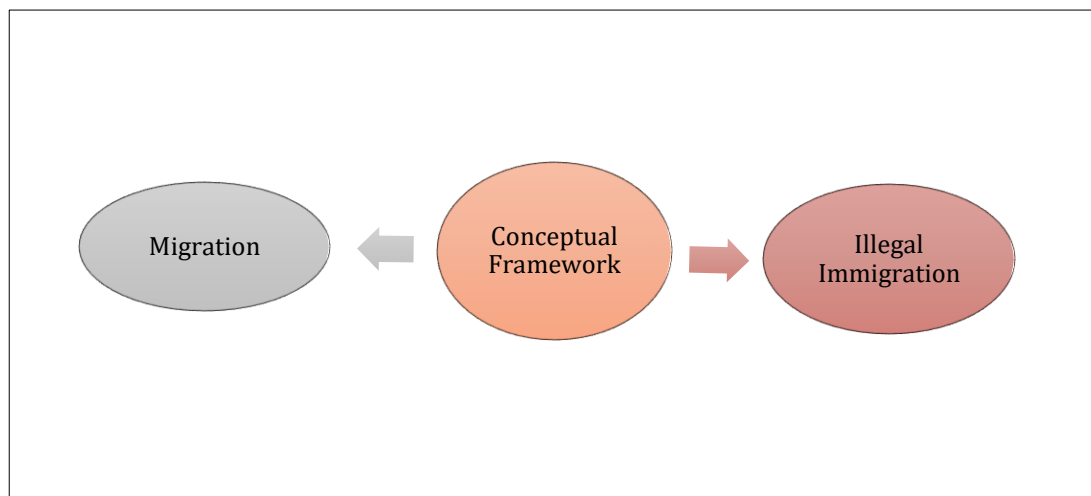


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework (Source: Formulated by the author, 2020)

2.1.1 Migration

Migration is a universal process that has played a big role in shaping the world into what it is today. It is generally accepted that "human migration is not a new phenomenon in the world" (World Migration Report, 2000, p. 01). Illegal immigration is considered a serious problem in most developed countries today. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the term "migration" is derived from the Latin term "migratio," which means the movement of people. According to this organization, "it is the physical movement of people from one place to another to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence across a political boundary." As a supplement to this definition, they have given another analogous definition of migration by stating it as a fundamental characteristic of people (World Migration Report, 2000, p. 12). After the Second World War, there arose a great need for formulating and adopting a universal framework for

migration. Thus, the right to move freely was not recognized by countries until the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This declaration covers the rights of migrants. Article 13 of the Declaration states that "everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state, and everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and return to his country" (UN Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

The history of migration can be traced to the beginning of human civilization. Even in earlier eras, humans had a fondness for exploration and discovery. As a result of the movement into uncharted territories, they frequently faced challenging situations that arose due to unexpected attacks of nature or even other tribes. People exposed themselves to risk when they migrated from one place to another. This was one of the major issues faced by our ancestors. Accounts of previous migration events reveal that many

impediments to free movement were placed in their path. Making use of the experience of earlier migrants, people have now reached a situation where they are now able to travel to other places more easily and safely. At the present time, more people are interested in migrating. According to the census information, this has already been proven. "Today, out of the large numbers of people residing outside of their country of birth, the vast majority of them are making a meaningful contribution to their host country" (World Migration Report, 2000, p. 01). At the global level, this appears to be correct in every aspect. Migration is the process of crossing either a political or administrative boundary and remaining there for a certain minimum period.

Migration can refer to the movement to either a local or international destination. Local migration will involve only internal travel, and the migrants will usually be refugees or displaced people. Internal migrants seek free movement only within their own country. But international migrants aspire to travel to other countries. International migrants leave their own countries and arrive in host countries in a never-ending stream. According to an official document, "An international migrant is a person who has taken up residence in a foreign country" (World Migration Report, 2000, p. 4). "Generally, people have migrated in search of greater economic opportunities and to enjoy better living conditions, which are not available to them in their own country; some people also migrate to join their family or friends abroad" (World Migration Report, 2013, p. 31).

Migration cannot be attributed to just one reason because it occurs due to several causes. Usually, the causes are man-made or natural. Man-made causes of migration can commonly be attributed to political, economic, sociocultural, and psychological causes. Internal migration generally occurs as a result of landslides, floods, or other natural

calamities. When such internal disruptions occur, people tend to move to the closest destination where they can be safe from danger.

2.1.2 Illegal Immigration

The issue of illegal immigration has frequently been raised in public and policy discourse at the global level. Illegal migration is being treated as an important topic in world politics as a result of its impact on the social and economic life of the host countries. To some extent, "this has not always been a problem in the past." It has gained prominence only in recent decades. Therefore, illegal migration must be considered a "rather new phenomenon" (Betts, 2011, p. 79). Illegal immigration is defined by many institutions involved with migration matters, but they have given it different meanings. Generally, an illegal migrant may be any person who does not, or no longer does, fulfill the conditions required for entry into or residence within the territories of the Member States (European Commission, 2004). This means any non-national who enters, seeks to enter, or has entered the country unlawfully is regarded as an illegal immigrant (Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Act, Section 1(1)). But these definitions are a little different in the American context. All non-nationals found in the country without the requisite permission are unlawfully present, except in the case of asylum seekers, convention refugees and their families, and programmed refugees (The Immigration Act of 2004, Section 5).

2.1.3 Types of Migration

Migration can occur at various scales and levels. "International migration refers to the movement of persons who leave their country of origin or country of habitual residence for the purpose of establishing themselves, either permanently or temporarily, in another country" (International Organization for Migration,

2008). International migration patterns are quite different from internal migration patterns.

Internal migration is the act of moving to a new location within a state or country. One of the most significant migration patterns is rural-to-urban migration. This refers to a movement of people from the countryside to cities in search of new opportunities.

External migration that involves moving to a new place in a different country or continent could be regular or irregular (i.e., legal or illegal). Emigration is the act of leaving one country in order to move to another. Immigration means moving into a new country with the intention of living there permanently. Voluntary migration usually happens legally. People may also want to move as travelers, pilgrims, or international students, in which case they too are included in the voluntary category.

Involuntary migration or forced migration occurs when a government forcibly removes a large number of people from a region, typically for reasons of ethnicity or religion. This is also known as illegal migration because the people are forced to move against their will. While taking such measures, the government may violate human rights and engage in violence against its own citizens. This can lead to a large number of refugees seeking asylum in neighboring countries.

There is another kind of migration in which people are not forced out of their country by the government. They leave because of unfavorable conditions such as war, civil strife, political problems, or religious persecution that prevail in the country. Ethnic cleansing has also occasionally given rise to the mass exodus of people from a country (World Migration Report, 2000, p. 005).

International migration is divided into various policy categories such as low-skilled labor migration, high-skilled labor migration, irregular migration, environmental migration, international travel, lifestyle migration, human trafficking and smuggling, asylum seeking, refugee protection, internal displacement, and so on (Betts, 2011, p. 01).

2.1.4 Illegal migration from Sri Lanka

Illegal immigration into countries has become a growing issue globally today. At the moment, countries receiving a flood of illegal immigrants are struggling to limit such foreign arrivals. Western nations have made immense investments to secure their borders in order to discourage the illegal influx of immigrants from around the world. However, due to various reasons, not all countries have been able to successfully protect their borders from such intrusions. Currently, Australia is the top destination for illegal immigrants. Thus, it has become one of the most famous destinations for boat people who constantly make attempts to enter Australia illegally. No universal definition has yet been introduced by scholars for illegal migration. According to the International Organization for Migration, "*it is a movement that takes place outside the regular norms of sending, transiting, and receiving countries*" (Migration Profile Sri Lanka, 2013).

Sri Lanka has experienced both the inbound and outbound movement of people over a long period of its history. In recent years, Sri Lanka has been noted by the global community as a country that has encouraged migrants to move to destinations around the world illegally. When investigating the causes that prompt people to migrate in that manner, it came to light that there were several political, economic, and sociocultural pressures that escalated the growth of outbound migration from Sri Lanka. The protracted war and its aftermath turned out to be the fundamental cause that encouraged

both legal and illegal migrants to move abroad from Sri Lanka. Thus, the civil war affected every citizen in Sri Lanka indiscriminately. As a result of the worsening situation, especially in the war-affected areas, a large number of people opted to go abroad by illegal means. The violent conflict that raged between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam since 1983 was the primary reason that most people were forced to flee to other countries (Orjuela, 2010, p. 13). During the war period, a large number of people had to flee their homes in search of safety, and many of these displaced people were forced to migrate within and outside Sri Lanka. "An estimated 1.3 million persons out of the total population of around 19 million were displaced within and outside Sri Lanka" (Dickwella, 2013, p. 02). Presently, the Sri Lankan government and the Australian government have jointly taken several measures to discourage the illegal migration of Sri Lankans who attempt to seek asylum in Australia.

2.1.5 An Overview of The Theories of Migration

- Dual Labor Theory: Migration is caused by the so-called pull factors in the more developed countries. This theory assumes that such economies are comprised of two sectors, namely the primary and secondary sectors. The primary segment requires highly skilled labor, while the secondary segment is labor-intensive, requiring only low-skilled labor. Workers who migrate illegally generally expect to fill only the lowest rungs in the job market.
- The theory of push and pull factors: It is said that push and pull factors can induce individuals to migrate. This is known as Lee's law. Push factors arise from a lack of enough jobs, limited opportunities, primitive conditions, desertification, famine, or drought, political threat or persecution, slavery or forced labor, poor medical care, loss

of wealth, natural disasters, and a lack of political and/or religious freedom. Pull factors include plentiful job opportunities, good living conditions, political and religious freedom, a free society, good educational facilities, better medical care, and physical security.

- Micro-Social Psychological Models: Psychological models start with the premise that potential migrants are rational individuals. However, they assume that the individual decision-maker possesses limited capacity to formulate and solve problems and to acquire and retain information. To cope with these problems, the individual uses a simplified model of the situation at hand and acts rationally concerning that personal model. A subset of the alternatives is perceived, and payoffs are evaluated only as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
- The stress threshold model: according to this, a potential migrant assigns a utility value to their current place of residence, reflecting the social, economic, psychological, and other costs and benefits relating to that location. Then he evaluates it by comparing it to a different location. Hence, geographical mobility is divided into two stages; moving to a different location will then be dependent on that cost-benefit analysis.
- World Systems Theory: World Systems Theory looks at migration from a global perspective. It explains that interaction between different societies can be an important factor in bringing about social change within societies. Trade with one country that causes an economic decline in another may create an incentive to migrate to a country with a more vibrant economy. It can be argued that even after decolonization, countries continue to be economically dependent on the former colonizing countries.

- Migration Systems Approach This assumes that migration systems provide the context in which movement occurs and that these systems influence decisions on whether to stay or to move. A migration system includes two or more places connected by flows and counter flows of people. Movement here is not a one-time thing but rather a dynamic process consisting of a sequence of events across time. It leaves the linear push-pull methods out and looks at migration as a circular-linear thing. Lately, social theorists have looked upon migration as a network consisting of a set of individuals or collective actors.

2.2 Review of Previous Studies

A study by Munck, (2008), has found a new trend that is explained in his book titled "Globalization and Migration." This book attempts to discuss the relationship between migration and globalization. Hence, it also discusses the economic and political perspectives that influence migration. To some extent, the book attempts to analyze and classify the different types of migration. According to this book, demand for professionals and skilled workers has been recognized as a big reason for migration, resulting in a "brain drain." This study has also attempted to draw attention to matters based on gender and their implications for society and the state. According to this study, globalization has played a key role in legal migration, but it has not paid much attention to illegal immigration, especially in the Australian context.

Mavroundi and Nagel (2016) published a book titled "Global Migration Patterns, Processes, and Politics" based on their study. This presents facts in a clear, concise, and well-organized manner on patterns and contemporary trends of migration. Furthermore, this book includes a history of

migration, presenting several facts about the increasing rate of migration and other factors that are associated with migration. This study has attempted to provide a theoretical explanation of the causes that lead to migration. This book also illustrates how the migration of labor has affected the world economy. A shortcoming of this study, though, is that it omits to describe the root economic causes that are responsible for triggering the illegal immigration of people out of the country. Further, the study discusses refugee matters, immigration controls, border politics, and peace-making practices. Yet this study pays minimal attention to addressing the world's illegal immigration issues. In particular, it has not touched at all on the illegal immigration phenomenon confronting Australia.

Smith,(1994). A review of the age of migration of international population movement in the modern world. This study was mainly focused on migration and the way the large-scale movement of the people changed society. But even this study did not pay much attention to illegal immigration issues. Its aim was to descriptively discuss migration over the years and how it had been rapidly gathering momentum since 1945. It is important to mention that this study made a comparison between Australia and Germany. Moreover, this study explained the relationship between minorities and labor migration. Thus, this study did much to highlight certain features of immigration politics.

3. Results and Discussion

During the past few years, particularly since the end of the civil war in 2009, a large number of people from the war-affected areas as well as other places have been attempting to migrate to Australia illegally through unauthorized channels. Sri Lankan illegal migrants have chosen Australia as the most desirable and easiest destination to approach. "Boat migrants' stories suggest

that complex political and economic factors motivated them to take all risks and embark on their journey" (Howie, 2013, p. 97). In the Sri Lankan context, the factors that have motivated the citizens to undertake such a hazardous journey have differed largely from one individual to another. There would be several factors influencing the migrants, forcing them to make the critical choice of whether to stay in their mother country or to leave for another country. In the global context, various pull factors attract people from around the world to migrate to their favorite destination, where they would be most happy to stay. Usually, pull factors include the relatively attractive conditions that the destination country offers compared to the migrant's home country. Push factors are those unwelcome occurrences like war and natural disasters that motivate people to leave their home country and flee to a foreign land to save their lives. While Sri Lanka is still recognized as a developing nation, Australia is considered a developed country.

Generally, Sri Lanka has not been able to fulfill the needs of its citizens whereas Australia has. Moreover, as a country, we enjoy a lower standard of living compared to Australia. Hence, Sri Lankans with high expectations to live in better circumstances feel encouraged to leave their home country and seek to settle down in Australia. Sri Lanka was earlier noted as a country whose citizens had legally migrated to other parts of the world. But soon after the war ended in 2009, Sri Lanka became well known as a country whose citizens migrated illegally to all parts of the world. In this study, I will present and analyze the stories of several people who attempted to illegally enter Australia.

To get an overall picture of illegal migration, the researcher sought to meet and interview a number of people who had attempted to migrate illegally to Australia. Several people that we managed to meet during the research told us that they were intercepted by the Navy or police in Sri Lanka while setting off to

Australia. Traveling illegally and without a valid visa, Sri Lankan migrants had made a huge effort and taken big risks to enter Australia. A field study of the research was conducted in the Southern Province, Western Province, and Northern Province, as it was off the coast of these places where most of the illegal migrants were arrested by the authorities.

There are several modes of travel available for migrants who wish to move from one country to another. People have resorted to both legal and illegal channels for the purpose of migrating. In the global context, almost all countries have their own immigration policies in place for foreigners wishing to enter their territory. Legal migration is generally permitted, but illegal migration is not accepted at all by any country. Australia, in fact, has a very strict immigration policy that takes a serious view of illicit immigrants who attempt to come from other countries in a sly manner.

According to the Australian Immigration and Emigration Department (AIED), most of the illegal arrivals used boats to travel to Australia. Sri Lankan migrants have mostly traveled by boat to reach Australia illegally. According to Australian Refugee Council (ARC) reports, between 85% and 90% of the people who arrive by boat have been found to be refugees, compared to around 40% of those who arrive by plane with a valid visa. Between July 30 of 2008 and June 30 of 2009, assessments were conducted on Christmas Island on 217 refugees who had arrived by boat illegally. According to a Sri Lanka Navy report, over the past five years, they have arrested several boats that were traveling to Australia illegally. The Navy had successfully intercepted and arrested approximately 93 boats that were carrying 4487 illegal migrants.

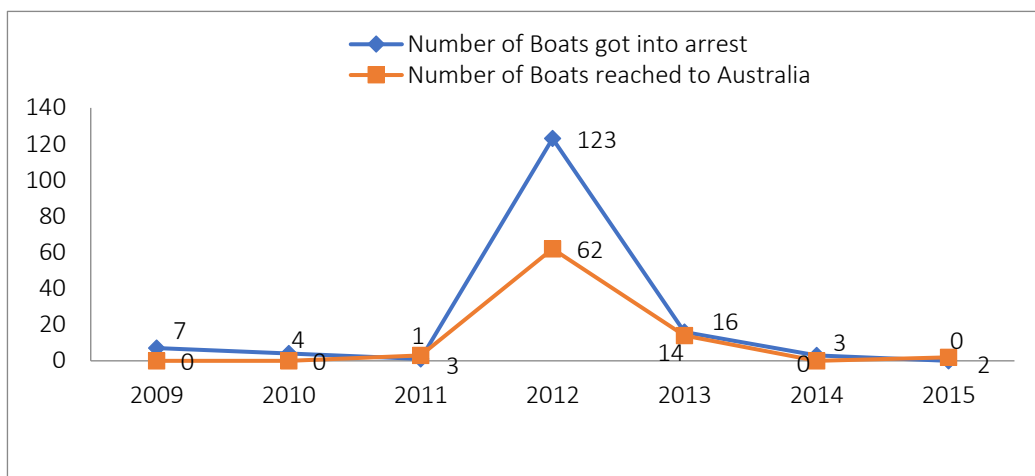


Figure 3. Number of Boats (Sri Lanka Navy Report, 2015).

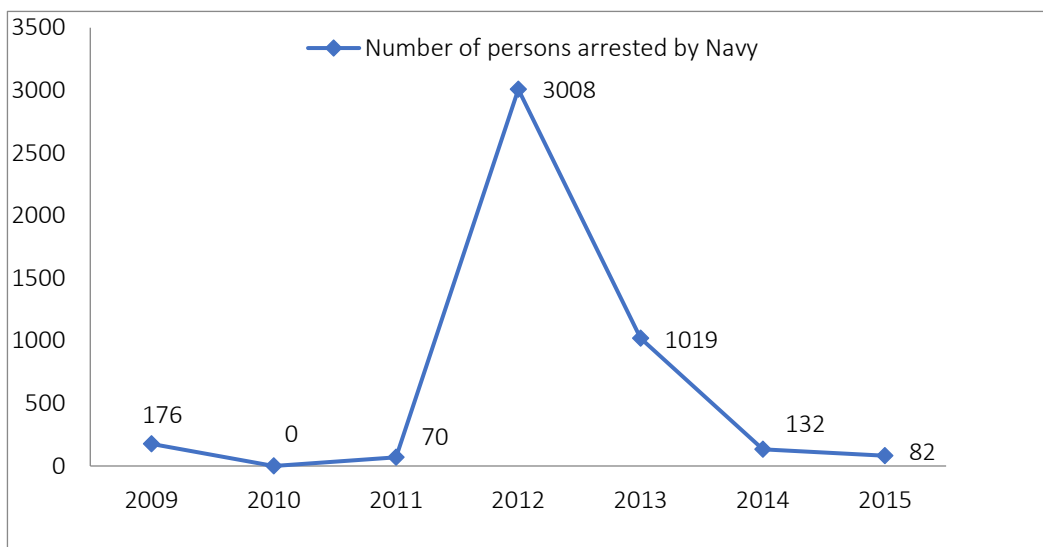


Figure 4. Number of persons arrested by the Sri Lanka Navy (Sri Lanka Navy Report, 2015).

In the past few years, most of the Sri Lankan migrants who set out for Australia illegally actually managed to reach it. They used boats for their journey. According to the present research, all of them used boats to reach Australia. Unscheduled boat arrivals are considered illegal immigrants because they do not have any legal immigration documents to enter Australia. Further, most of these illegal immigrants have chosen some kind of fishing boat or trawler for their journey. These boats were not designed for passenger

transport, and many of them were not seaworthy enough to undertake such a voyage, but the vessel owners had organized the journey and collected large sums of money from the passengers for the passage. "My boat was a kind of fishing boat with very few facilities" (R 06). The boat journey proved very risky for migrants because the vessels were not at all suitable for undertaking such a long journey. Nevertheless, illegal migrants had no choice, so they traveled in these fishing boats to reach Australia illegally.

These boats belong to human smugglers or agents who organize and conduct this business. During the interview, many immigrants related their experiences of the journey to Australia. This research has established that human smugglers are behind this illegal activity. One illegal immigrant stated that, *"This trip was organized by a human smuggler who had appointed several coordinators around Sri Lanka; one of his friends contacted me, through whom I arranged to join this sea voyage to Australia"* (R-10). Human smugglers are the kingpins behind this business of illegal migration. They play an instrumental role in recruiting people through their agents for the illegal journey. Human smugglers are powerful individuals who have political connections and wield economic power in society.

Human smugglers do not move freely in society or maintain direct contact with their "clients," instead, they conduct all transactions through their agents. The current research found how a human smuggler's influence can affect and encourage a would-be illegal immigrant to embark on a hazardous journey. One illegal immigrant reported that, *"This journey was organized by a smuggler, a rich man who was noted for running this illicit business throughout my area"* (R-9). According to the research, it is clear that illegal migration is something that people cannot engage in by themselves but can only do so with the assistance of certain "entrepreneurs" who organize and run such operations. Sometimes, the latter even cheat vulnerable individuals who lose their money after making the arrangements for the journey.

Human smugglers have several agents who engage in these types of illegal activities. The main organizer never deals directly with the client; only his agents play the key role on behalf of him. The kingpins usually live either abroad or in the capital of that country. One illegal immigrant stated that *"this was*

organized by a rich man who possesses citizenship in both New Zealand and Australia" (R-4). His agents would recruit people who were interested in migrating on this boat. Moreover, this study revealed that *"this journey was organized by a human smuggler who lived in the same village"* (R-7). If the organizer was known to the people, they would tend to drop out of this business without any hesitation. Sometimes, the smuggler might turn out to be a friend of a migrant, in which case he could easily connect with other people who are also willing to migrate by boat. During a field visit, one woman said, *"My journey was organized by my husband's friend, who was well known to us." He did not ask for any deposit from my family for the journey* (R-8).

This research found that human smugglers had provided a lot of misleading information about Australia to the prospective illegal migrants. A crooked human smuggler misled all the migrants in the boat by saying, *"I promise that nobody is going to catch you till your journey ends"* (R-4). This turned out to be untrue. Furthermore, this human smuggler had provided incorrect information about the mode of transportation. This research revealed the different ways in which migrants are cheated by smugglers. For example, one of them said, *"The organizer told us we were going to New Zealand by ship, not by boat." "But actually, this journey turned out to be a risky boat trip to Australia"* (R-7). Therefore, illegal immigration is encouraged by human smugglers, who paint a rosy picture of what awaits the migrants. Innumerable groups of people have followed the same route to get into Australia. Sri Lankans who migrate illegally frequently use the famous sea route for their journey. Despite the considerable distance between Sri Lanka and Australia, the local migrants commonly travel in fishing boats to reach Australia. To complete this uncertain journey successfully, there has to be good cooperation between the organizer and the passengers of those boats.

According to the findings, all of these boats had been crewed by fishermen when they were intercepted by the Navy. In addition, there might be a trend in fishermen attempting to migrate to Australia illegally. It has been confirmed that the majority of arrested illegal migrants were fishermen. One illegal immigrant said that *"Before migrating to Australia, he had been engaged in fishing as a permanent job"* (R-7). During field visits, it was found that these fishermen were the pioneers of this illegal migration racket, and as such, they have been given special consideration by the present-day organizers. One of the illegal migrants declared that *"fishermen are very familiar with the sea routes and have a better knowledge of how to sail to Australia than others"* (R-9).

The research clearly illustrates how risky this journey is. During the interview, we were able to find several people who could serve as eyewitnesses to this tour to Australia. During the field study, we encountered two men who were unable to reach Australia due to engine trouble and bad weather. One man who attempted to take migrants to Australia was not able to do this successfully. According to his story, *"We had planned to reach New Zealand first but had to get into Australia due to unavoidable circumstances"* (R-5). The kind of troubles that may arise during a journey can take various forms, such as running out of food and water before the journey finishes, a lack of medical treatment for sick or injured passengers during the voyage, and unfamiliarity with the sea route. Natural

disturbances like storms and rough seas may also cause serious problems during the journey. One interviewee described his experience as follows: *"We had planned to go to New Zealand first but landed in Australia because of trouble during the journey"* (R-6). Therefore, if any of these problems are encountered during the journey, things might turn out to be perilous for the migrants. Illegal migrants from Sri Lanka depend neither on ships nor on aircraft for their journey to Australia. According to the Australian federal government's annual report, many of the arrivals into Australia come under the "no visa scheme." Many Sri Lankan immigrants also fall under that particular scheme. These arrivals enter Australia in violation of its immigration laws.

However, Australia has remained a popular destination for undocumented Sri Lankan migrants. During the conflict period and later on, many of the displaced people migrated abroad. *"At the end of Sri Lanka's civil war, Australia received only 736 Sri Lankan boat migrants"* (UNHCR, 2012). These boats carried migrants from all ethnic groups, but most of them were Tamil. However, after the end of the civil war, a large number of people illegally migrated to Australia. This study proves that not only the Tamils but also the Sinhalese were involved in these illegal activities. Over the course of the past six years, the Navy has arrested a large number of illegal migrants who attempted to immigrate to Australia illegally.

Table 1. Details of Illegal Migrants Intercepted by the SL Navy

Details of Illegal Migrants									
Sinhala			Tamil			Muslim			Others
Male	Female	Children	Male	Female	Children	Male	Female	Children	
347	25	18	2900	301	395	208	09	07	07
390			3596			224			07
Total number of illegal migrants									4487

(Sri Lanka Navy Report, 2015).

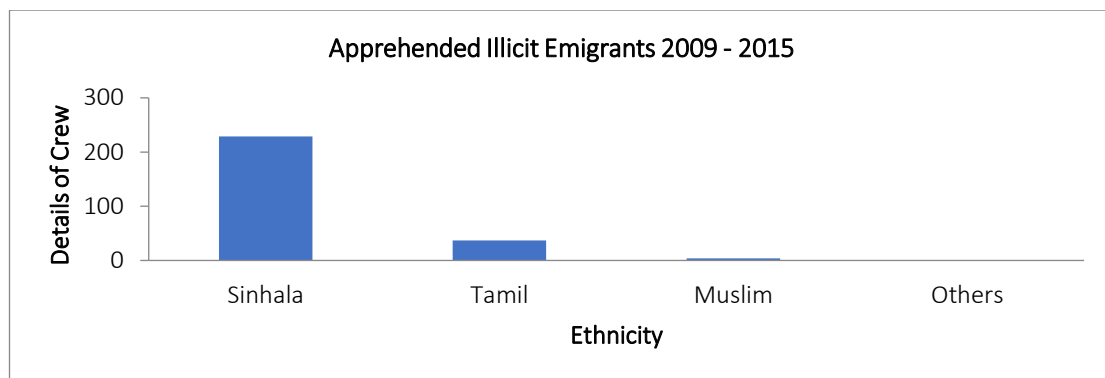


Figure 5. Apprehended Illicit Emigrants, 2009-2015.

During one of visits, a person who had attempted to migrate illegally and is now resident in Negombo stated, "We began sailing to Australia in mid-2014, and it was supposed to be an 18-day journey. "This boat had a complement of 51 passengers of all ethnicities, but most of them were Tamil" (R-5). People from certain districts appear to have a greater proclivity for embarking on this illegal migration to Australia. One interviewee reported that "I took part in this illicit business." "We sailed to Australia in a boat that carried seventy people who hailed from disparate areas such as the Northern and Southern provinces" (R-10).

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Migration is the physical movement of people from one place to another. Migration can be legal when people enter another country after obtaining a valid visa from the diplomatic mission of that country. But when people enter or attempt to enter another country without obtaining an official visa first, then it is known as illegal immigration. Sri Lanka has become a notorious country over the last few years due to the large number of its citizens who have attempted to migrate illegally to other countries, especially Australia.

This research investigates the causes and trends behind increased illegal immigration

to Australia. Currently, illegal immigration has become a critical issue for both the sending and receiving countries. This research explores why Sri Lankans wishing to leave the country have perceived Australia as their preferred destination and why they have chosen to move there through illegal channels. Further, this study examines the stratagems and tactics being followed by illegal immigrants in arranging their passage and during the journey. This study also assesses the various implications arising from illegal immigration to Australia. This study expects to contribute to the further development of this area of academic knowledge.

Sri Lanka is one of the contemporary world's major source countries for migrants moving into other nations. A large number of Sri Lankans move abroad every year for various reasons. In fact, international migration has rapidly increased everywhere, mainly because people think they can enjoy a better life by settling in a different country. Yet no single factor can be cited as the primary reason why migrants wish to move abroad, so it can only be said that "*it is a nexus of all factors such as political, economic, cultural, social, and psychological compulsions.*" Most of the illegal immigrants arrested by the Navy in Sri Lanka have famously used fishing boats to get into Australia illegally. Nearly all of them have used the same route to reach

Australia. According to the interviews, a considerable proportion of illegal immigrants had at first expected to migrate to New Zealand, but after encountering trouble, they were forced to sail towards Australia, as it happened to be closer. Following the end of the civil war in 2009, the majority of illegal migrants chose Australia as their destination. According to a Sri Lankan Navy report, over a period of five years, they had arrested several boats that were *en route* to Australia illegally. The Navy, which was directly involved in this exercise, intercepted 93 boats and arrested 4487 illegal migrants.

The rise in the number of Sri Lankan illegal immigrants has been caused by several factors. Most of these migrants were prompted by political, economic, sociocultural, and psychological factors to resort to illegal immigration to Australia. Apart from these factors, this study has identified some other factors that have motivated illegal migrants to take the risky journey from Sri Lanka to Australia. These migrants have made a lot of effort to cross the Australian border in different ways. This study has pointed out clearly that their courage was not always rewarded by success. Out of the sample, some were taken into custody by the SL Navy on their way to Australia, while many were intercepted by the Australian Coast Guard Service. Most of them have been deported back to Sri Lanka, while some were detained in Australian refugee camps for a while, after which the Australian federal government deported them to Sri Lanka. Ultimately, it turns out that none of them were able to realize their hopes of settling down in Australia, whether legally or illegally.

As this study revealed, about one thousand people have tried to migrate to Australia illegally, every year. Some of them were arrested on their way to Australia. Five out of the ten people in the sample who attempted to reach Australia by boat failed due to being intercepted by the Sri Lankan Navy. Two out

of the ten in the sample who had managed to come very close to Australia by boat had been arrested by the Australian Coast Guard and deported back to Sri Lanka. Three out of the ten in this sample pointed out that they had spent a few days under the custody of the Australian Government. The Sri Lankan and Australian governments have jointly implemented various programs to prevent the illegal movement of people to Australia. According to unofficial data, Sri Lankan authorities have arrested over 8,000 Sri Lankans who attempted to migrate illegally over the past three years.

According to official data released by the navy, after the end of the civil war in 2009, 176 people attempted to migrate illegally. No arrests were recorded in 2010, but the illegal migration started again in 2012. The Navy pointed out that the highest migration during the period 2008-2014 occurred in 2008. In 2013, it was 1019, but this number dropped to 132 in 2014, while 82 people were arrested in 2015 (Sri Lanka Navy Annual Report, 2015). It is now clear that due to the strict measures taken by the authorities in both countries, illegal immigration is gradually declining.

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