

Managing rural-urban migration and brain drain for sustainable economic recovery in Nigeria: Constraints and options

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Accepted 24th July, 2013

Abstract. The study focused on the need to regulate internal and external migration which is conceived to be relevant in the development of Nigeria. The authors have the conviction that adequate control measures of migration within and outside the country will play great role in changing the imbalanced development of the country. It was an expository approach which noted that, because the rural areas in Nigeria are devoid of essentials of living such as pipe born water, well equipped health centres, electricity, industries and so on, the inhabitants seek solace in the urban areas. Besides, the study also showed that the country has really lost a large proportion of her brightest of minds due to unfavourable environmental situation, poor conditions of service, poor remuneration, lack of infrastructure, insecurity of lives and property, among others. On this note, among the suggestions made as a way out are as follows: the law makers should enact laws that will regulate the external migration of professionals whose roles are highly needed in the country; suitable industries for various rural areas in Nigeria are needed at this moment, that is, agro-industries and integrated agriculture are needed in our rural areas so as to fully engage rural dwellers; social amenities/infrastructure such as good road network, electricity, pipe borne water, equipped health centres, recreation facilities, among others should be urgently addressed.

Keywords: Migration, rural-urban, migration, brain drain, sustainable, economic, recovery, constraints and options.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is one of the most populous country in Africa with a population of about 162 million (The World Bank, 2012). It has 36 states and 774 local government areas. Over the years, there has been persistent movement of people from the rural to the urban centres. Migration in Nigeria has been very rampant. Lee (1966) broadly defines migration as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between

external and internal migration. In Nigeria today, both internal and external migration are regular. Todaro (1997) and Olowa and Awoyemi (2012) note that Lagos, a former capital of Nigeria, which was not known in recent past among the largest cities in the world, was rated the fifteenth largest city in 1995 and is predicted to take the third position in 2015 with over 24 million dwellers.

In Nigeria, the rate of migration is alarming, especially, rural-urban movement. The aspiration to settle in the cities can be attributed to lack of health centres, training

centres, infrastructure, industries and recreational facilities required for decent living. Besides, rural poverty in Nigeria is relatively high.

Castles and Miller (2000) point out that, from the sixteenth to nineteenth century, much migration was directly or indirectly related to colonialism. In some cases, the prevailing economic situation, natural disaster, wars and political crises do compel people to migrate. Over the years, in Nigeria, political and religious crises have played a great role in urban-rural and rural-urban migration, but the latter is relatively more regular.

Actually, this situation has created a lot of imbalance in the sense that the available economic activities supposed to be engaged by the vibrant rural inhabitants have now been left to the very few elderly men and women. Hence, there is overcrowding of people in the cities. Besides, the available facilities in the urban places are being overstretched. Consequently, different problems emanating from crowding in cities include: housing deficiency, leading to slums here and there; waste management difficulties due to the rise in urban waste, which does not match with the available waste management facilities; crimes and social vices are on the increase as the unemployed migrants resort to robbery, kidnapping, financial fraud, among others, as means of survival. Ogunleye- Adetona (2000) posits that the urban economic opportunities encourage migration of people (both male and female) from rural to urban centres. This implies that there is frequent movement of people at different periods of time in consideration of the prevailing situation at the place of resident.

In addition, the level of brain drain in Nigeria over the years has left the country in a state of inadequate and inappropriate manpower for development. Brain drain is a form of migration which Nigerians have been witnessed for a long time now, but which has intensified due to low living standard, poor remuneration, unemployment and insecurity. The Presidential Committee on Brain Drain, which was set up in 1988 by the Babangida administration, estimates that between 1986 and 1990, Nigeria lost over 10,000 academics from tertiary educational institutions alone. Total estimates, including those who left public, industrial and private organizations, are over 30,000. Sixty-four percent of Nigerians in the United States aged 25 and above have at least a bachelor's degree.

The 1993 UNDP Human Development Report indicated that more than 21,000 Nigerian doctors were practicing in the United States alone while Nigeria suffers from a shortage of doctors. If we are to add the number of Nigerian doctors in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, Europe, Australia and those in other African countries, the figure would be close to 30,000. Poor conditions of service, insufficient funding of educational institutions cum research and development compel many Nigeria to leave the country. The contributions of these professionals to national recovery are lost, thereby

creating manpower deficiency in many professional fields like medicine, engineering, academics and industries. This leads to enthronement of mediocrity as the system is left with second or third-bests recruits and rookies.

Look at the health sector, for instance, Nigeria has very low access to health care because of lack of medical personnel largely due to brain drain which has seen a large number of Nigerian medical doctors scatter all over the world. In search for better opportunities and decent environment, many Nigerian professionals have left this home country to other places. Emigration of skilled African to industrialized countries [based on international Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) estimates] showed that in 1960 to 1974, 27,000 people travelled out; 1975 to 1984, it was 40,000, and 1985 to 1989 the total number was 60,000. The rate has been on the increase in Africa. IOM (2013) points that the number of Nigerian migrants living abroad has increased from 1.9 million in 2004 to 3.4 million in 2012. Dr. Lalla Ben Barka, the Deputy Executive-Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa notes that the emigration of African professionals to the West is one of the greatest obstacles to Africa's development and that African governments have a great responsibility to ensure that brains remain in the continent; otherwise, in 25 years' time, Africa will be empty of brains (Sivia, 2007; Thalasa, 2010).

The harsh Nigerian economy compelled many Nigerians to leave and sought for asylum in other countries of the world even when there was no crisis. The number of migrants in this category has been on the increase over the years. Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom and Italy are countries many Nigerians have aspired for asylum. One can deduce that the level of unemployment, insecurity and poor living standard, among others are the main factors pushing Nigerians to seek for asylum in other countries. Table 1 depicts asylum-seekers in different countries.

One thing worthy of mentioning is that when a person leaves a place, he goes with his skills and capital. Most times, it is difficult to have a counterbalancing effect to reposition the economic cumulative causation associated with the vacuum created. In other words, there is a negative multiplier effect associated with skilled people leaving an area.

Hughes and Kroeckler (2008) note that migration is a product of two factors: the push and the pull factors. The push factors do encourage people to leave their habitat to other places while the pull factors attract people to a new place. Many people before relocating from their place of origin usually compare the relative opportunities offered by the present and the anticipated habitats. If the push factor favours migration, the constraints to move are often government action, immigration quotas, lack of financial resources, or some other compelling barriers. In Nigeria, one of the reasons for domestic migration is the

Table 1. Outflow of asylum-seekers from Nigeria by nationality, 2000-2008.

Country	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Australia	390	1.047	1.432	1.849	1.828	880	421	394	535
Canada	800	790	828	637	589	591	685	760	765
France	463	571	884	1.252	1.572	976	434	446	462
Germany	420	526	987	1.051	1.130	608	481	503	561
Greece	14	33	184	444	325	406	391	390	746
Ireland	3.405	3.351	4.050	3.110	1.776	1.278	1.038	1.028	1.009
Italy	47	388	594	722	930	536	0	1.336	5.673
South Africa	114	223	3.244	4.550	1.058	775	712	904	16
Spain	843	1.350	1.440	1.688	1.029	726	632	680	808
Switzerland	226	289	1.062	480	418	219	209	310	988
United Kingdom	835	870	1.125	1.110	1.210	1.230	940	905	970
United States	58	50	73	99	82	59	162	165	177
Others	1.207	1.638	2.249	2.415	2.326	2.180	2.189	2.327	2.312
Total	8.832	11.236	18.152	19.407	14.273	10.464	8.294	10.148	15.022

Source: UNHCR (2009).

search for jobs and the desire to be a beneficiary of urban facilities lacking in the rural areas. There is always an outcome, whatever reason that motivates one to leave a place of origin to another place. The result is often negative in the sense that productivity emanating from the individual is denied the society, and it is positive to the new location in that the individual goes with his resources which is usefully employed in the new place.

Given this scenario, in this paper, it is our intention to articulate how the control of rural-urban migration and brain drain are among the prerequisites for revamping the Nigerian economy. This study adopts expository method, which is the basis for suggestions on ways to change the unregulated migration in Nigeria. The paper is presented in this order: the review of related literature, the effects of rural-urban migration and brain drain on development, the remedial steps of controlling migration, and then the conclusion.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Myrdal (1957) notes that in an underdeveloped economy, a process of circulation causation is sure to commence. The resulting effect of migration will be similar to the vicious circle of poverty idea. This adverse effect is referred to as backwash effect. Backwash effect is usually generated by factors like migration, capital and trade. These factors are favourable for growing regions but unfavorable for other regions. Economic expansion in a locality requires skill and efficient labourers who are brought from outside. The workers are helpful for that growing society where they work but unfavourable where they came from. In a poor country like Nigeria, fertility is higher and the diversion of population will lead to unfavorable age distribution. The situation in such

localities may be worse when the relation between total population and resources would be unfavourable in the long run. Hence, Silvia (2007) notes that there is continuous brain drain which takes developing countries in sub-Saharan region of their skilled human capital at costs consisting of their lost value and productivity in their home country but also of their training and education costs.

In addition, capital movements will also increase regional inequalities. Capital will be shifted from a poor region to a prospering region where the rate of returns is high and capital is more secure. The demand for capital is higher in a progressive region because of the better opportunities for investment. The human and physical capital belonging to a developing country is withdrawn from migration. Hence, the poor regions will have increased inequality. Scholars such as Callaway (1967), Caldwell (1969), Adepouju (1974), Greenwood (1975) and others have noted that rural-urban migration, to a great extent, depends on several factors and indicators such as level of income, sex, age, education, among others. Besides, the psychological analysis of the advantages realizable on getting to the destination of migration vis-a-vis the initial settlement plays a role. The controversy regarding this is that the protagonists of benefit factors as a motivator to migrate, assert that there is more cash and income existing in urban areas and the possibility of earning more income and remittances to rural areas helps in the establishment of social overheads, infrastructure, support of family members and other provisions capable of enhancing development which in a way counterbalances the deficiency emanating from migration. The opposing view sees migration as robbing the society of both physical and human capital and other vices emanating from movement of factors of production. The argument also on negative effect of migration is that

the rate of outflow of emigrants is calculated to be colossal losses of critical human capital, which a country has invested resources through education and specialised training and it is not compensated by the recipient economy. On this basis, brain drain is viewed as international transfer of resources in the form of human capital which is not accounted for in the balance of payments statistics. The cost can be seen on the estimate of UNCTAD that a highly trained African migrant between 25 and 35 years, the age group of Africans who usually travel abroad represents a monetary value of US \$184,000 at 1997 prices (Kartz, 2000; Rena, 2008). The equivalent of this contribution to receiving countries cannot be remitted back home and aggregate costs sacrificed and subsidized in training the emigrated members cannot be recovered. It also presupposes that expenditure on education in developing countries is to an extent more beneficial to the Western countries that enjoy the best and brightest brain of poor countries and continue to be richer at the expense of the poor nations.

Oladeji and Udoh (2012) studied rural-urban migration: migrants' perceptions of problems and benefits in Oyo state of Nigeria and among their findings are that several 'push' and 'pull' factors encourage the migration of single youths who are ill equipped in terms of education and skills acquisition to combat the difficulties associated with moving into a new location. It also shows that newly migrated youths are more focused on the immediate personal benefits in terms of regular cash income generated without considering the problems it might pose to the society or the agricultural sector. Older and longer established migrants however see the problems created in the society rather than the benefits. Among the problems created are decline in production and manpower reduction.

In their study of causes and effects of rural-urban migration in Borno state: a case of Maiduguri metropolis, Gimba and Kumshe (2012) revealed that the major causes of rural urban migration are search for better education, employment, and business opportunities; others include: poverty, unemployment, famine, and inadequate social amenities in the rural areas. While some of the effects of rural-urban migration are; rural-urban migration brings pressure on urban housing and the environment, high rate of population growth in the urban centres also lessens the quality of life, overpopulation encourages crime rate in the society and rural-urban migration slows down the pace of development of the rural areas. This implies that if tangible development has to take place, it is imperative something is done to migration.

The push factors that usually compel educated people and others to leave their home country are: low wages, lack of satisfactory working conditions, social unrest, political conflicts and sometimes wars while the pull factors include intellectual freedom and substantial funds for research. Brain drain has its negative effect on the

home countries' economic prospects and competitiveness. The highly skilled, dynamic and creative individuals who are capable of contributing significantly to the country's development are drastically reduced. Besides, more entrepreneurs who prefer investments abroad deny the home country of wealth creation, unemployment reduction, tax revenue generation and underutilization of resources (Urve, 2012).

Brain drain is also referred to as 'capital flight' and usually all developing countries including India are suffering from brain drain and developed countries like USA are having brain gain from this phenomenon (Heena, 2010). Nigeria has experienced brain drain due to poor policies.

Rena (2008) in his study notes that there are two divergent schools of thought who see migration as having negative and positive effects. The harmful aspect concerns loss of brightest minds from developing economies with associated debility on the advancement of a developing economy. On the other hand, he points the beneficial results of migration for both receiving and sending countries and that out of 200 million potential immigrants in the world; ten million are Africans in the Diaspora engaged in economic activity. The aggregate migrants' remittances to their home countries amount to \$264 billion in 2006. Rena further referenced Aljazeera English TV channel, which announced that in 2006, Asia, the biggest continent got \$115 billion as remittance, Africa and Latin America received 40 and 70 billion dollars respectively in that year. In his study of brain drain and inequality across nations, Docquier (2006) reveals that brain drain is a major source of concern for origin countries as it induces positive effects through various channels such as remittances, return migration, diaspora externalities, quality of governance and increasing return to education. He also showed that a limited but positive skilled emigration rate, between 5 and 10% can be good for development. This implies that external migration is advantageous if few people who migrate are able to support their home countries considerably.

Ozden (2005), in his study of brain drain in Latin America, reveals, that the large number of migrants from smaller and poorer countries is losing a large chunk of their highly educated citizens; in wealthier and larger countries, a smaller number of educated people migrate; a large chunk of the college educated citizens of Latin America migrate mainly to complete their education and large number of migrants who finished their education at home fail to get jobs that is equivalent with their education levels which is due to low quality of education.

EFFECTS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION AND BRAIN DRAIN ON DEVELOPMENT

From the various literature reviewed, it can be stated that the effects of migration are two sided, positive and

negative. A look at the positive point of view, external migration or brain drain encourages foreign resources inflow to the sending country in the following ways: cash remittance, technology transfer, advancement of education, new skill acquisition and so on. The World Bank (2004) notes that remittance from Nigerians living in different parts of the world was \$2.8 billion, ranking only number two to foreign exchange earnings from the oil sector. Internal migration on the other hand, raises the income of people who, in turn, play a significant role in the development of the rural areas. It has also given job opportunities to many unemployed youths who were wasting away in the rural areas. But the existence of industries in rural areas would have done same, if not more by creating employment and increasing aggregate production, thereby increasing exports. This implies that the reason for the imbalance in the development of the Nigerian economy is solvable if the right actions are taken to control migration.

Suffice it to note that the unregulated internal migration in Nigeria has restructured development. Besides, the insufficient availability of the essentials of living in the rural areas has not helped matters. Also, the high degree of migration has created imbalance in terms of urban-rural development. This is because many rural dwellers are now settled in urban places and outside the country with their skills, ingenuity, entrepreneurial ability and capital. The transformation which these scarce resources would have impacted on the rural areas has been shifted for increased development of the urban areas. Besides, the movement of people away from rural areas retards the number of people in agricultural production which has resulted in low output and increase in food importation in Nigeria. Ehirim et al. (2012) note that migration has taken away scarce productive resources from the village which impedes household in the optimal utilisation of productive resources such as land and capital. Labour scarcity is the result, raising the cost of production which is shifted to output prices often beyond the affordability of the poor households. Rural movement has brought shortage of farm labour, food production decline, decrease in income and rise in poverty, thereby leading to vicious cycle of poverty in our rural areas. It is really possible to change the trend if and only if practical efforts are made to restructure the urban areas to ensure decent and civilized environment for inhabitants to put in their best in production.

Manpower training is affected adversely when the brightest of minds in a country have gone to where they are more appreciated than their home country; it reverses a positive trend in manpower training. This situation has created the dearth of talented teachers and researchers in Nigeria, giving room for gap filling by those not really called in that line of activity and who are not very creative to efficiently sustain the activities of those left. Brain drain in academics has contributed considerably to the falling standard of education in Nigeria. Just as Docquier (2006)

points that, by depriving the sending country of one of its scarcest resources (that is, human capital), skilled migration is seen as impoverishing sending countries whereas receiving countries make handsome profits.

The ratio of medical personnel to the population is very low, thereby affecting access to medi-care in Nigeria. This is because many Nigerian's physicians and medical officers are scattered all over the world while we need them at home. This is an aspect that has played a role in encouraging access for medication outside the country, whereas the manpower requirement in this sector is insufficient at home but sufficiently available in developed countries. The foreign earnings spent in treatment abroad could have been used in other developmental programmes. This group of professionals can be attracted back to the country if the leaders are practically willing. It is a matter of change of attitude of the government in terms of conditions of service and improvement of infrastructure and necessary health facilities. Their remittances to the country are far below their contributions to the development of the country.

SUGGESTIONS ON EFFECTIVE CONTROL

Just like every padlock has a suitable key, so also does every problem has its solution. It is a matter of its application to achieve desired goal. An attempt to solve a particular problem requires interest and perceived benefit if solved. There are essential actions required to reduce rural-urban migration and brain drain in Nigeria if the interest and perceived benefits are given adequate consideration and implementation strictly pursued:

- (i) Okolocha (2012) opined that promotion and proper coordination of education, industry and work environment will help revive Nigeria economy. Actually, suitable industries for various rural areas in Nigeria are needed at this moment. Specifically, agro-industries and integrated agriculture is a must so as to fully engage rural dwellers, as this will play a significant role to increase aggregate economic activity with the resultant positive multiplier effects.
- (ii) Social amenities/infrastructure such as good road network, electricity, pipe borne water, equipped health centres, recreation facilities, among others need be urgently addressed, especially in the rural areas and critical sectors.
- (iii) Micro-finance banks and commercial banks should be made available to the rural areas and the Central Bank of Nigeria should be mandated to willingly provide loans devoid of severe collaterals so as to empower local entrepreneurs and school leavers to delve into productive ventures. This will help reduce the number of unemployed youths migrating to the cities.
- (iv) Schools, training centres, skill acquisition centres and workshops should be extended to rural areas. This will go

a long way to reducing overcrowding of people in the urban areas who are searching for knowledge and skill acquisition. This is supported by the view of Romer (1990) and Topel (1998) who state that countries whose populations have high levels of education are fertile soil for information based technology and also that increase in a country's overall level of educational attainment have caused corresponding increases in their overall rate of economic growth.

(v) The Federal, State and Local governments should establish some form of manpower development credit schemes repayable after training so as to promote education and encourage brain to remain in the country. In other words, the government should contribute sufficiently to the training of her citizens within and outside the country so as to be able to influence enough control.

(vi) It is necessary to regulate the number of people going to settle in each urban area to avoid crowding, pressure on available facilities, crime and poor waste management. By that same token, facilities in virtually all urban areas in the country need expansion in order to cope with the increasing pressure. There is even greater need to train and retrain our administrators in all tiers of modern urban management and control so that they do not rely on the same old ways of doing things.

(vii) Decent conditions of service, proper remuneration, funding for research and development, training and retraining of workers, security of life and property must be properly addressed so that the urge and desire to leave the country is drastically minimised. This will help tackle the issue pointed by Jones-Esan (2009) that most of the human resources that were trained in the best universities in the UK and the USA in the 1960 and 1970 through government scholarships, were forced to relocate to the western world where their talents are better appreciated and rewarded.

(viii) It is necessary for the law makers to enact laws that will regulate the exodus of certain professionals whose roles are highly needed in the country.

(ix) Efforts are needed to ensure the strict compliance to the rule of law and sanity. There need to avoid nepotism, corruption and many other vices already imbibed by the leaders and citizens.

(x) Nigeria should borrow a leaf from the rural-urban development initiative of the Peoples Republic of China tagged "back to the villages," And the rural development is supposed to be an elastic and dynamic concept. This will promote more redistribution of resources and balancing of incomes in Nigeria (Obilor, 2012).

(xi) The idea of ad hocism that characterize most rural development policies in Nigeria starting with Operation Feed the Nation to the most recent, National Economic Empowerment Strategy (NEEDS) should be done away with. Just as Imevbore (2002) points that it will be necessary therefore for the Federal Ministry of Industries to begin to play an advocacy role at the community level

to address the issues that would provide motivation and opportunity for significantly improving industrial development.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have examined the developmental bottleneck associated with internal and external migration and the negative effects of rural-urban migration. It is obvious that the situation of uncontrolled migration in Nigeria has given rise to clustering of population in the cities; many skilled Nigerians are running away due to poor remuneration and poor infrastructure, thereby retarding efficiency and effective use of available resources. For all intents and purposes, it is clear that low living standard, non-existence of industries to employ the teeming population have continued to play a significant role in compelling people to look for 'greener pasture' outside their place of residence. Migration has created a lot of disequilibrium in the country, resulting in lack of professionals that are required in the development of Nigeria, and concentration of the unemployed in the urban centres giving rise to crime rate in the cities and reduction of food production in the hinterlands. It is believed that these problems can be put to an end or drastically reduced if our recommendations are implemented.

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