

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

IDIO, EMMANUEL EDDY,
Clement Isong Center for Development Studies
University of Uyo

&

Rogers Wilcox (Ph.D)
riwilcox@yahoo.com
Clement Isong Center for Development Studies
University of Uyo

&

Anthony Patrick Akadi (Ph.D)
Eket, Akwa Ibom State.

Abstract

Nigeria, since the post colonial era had experienced missed opportunities, low development and frustrated hope. The failure of governance is seen in poor socio-economic performance, causing suffering and unfulfilled expectations leading to political instability, conflict, insurgency etc. These conditions have lead to massive migration of trained professional like doctors, nurses, engineers and academics to developed countries. This study seeks to look at the impact of international migration in socio-economic development of Nigeria. International Migration is an ever-growing phenomenon that has important development implications which leads to increased income and poverty reduction, improved health care services, raised educational standards and promotes economic development. Yet those gains might come at substantial social costs to the migrant and their families, since, many developing countries are also large recipients of international migrant. In conclusion, the study looks at few policy recommendations calling for better integration of migration in the country's development policies, improving data collection on migration, improving access to finance of recipient household, improving recruitment mechanisms and facilitating international labour through safe and legal channels.

Keywords: *Migration, International Migration, Socio- Economic Development, Nigeria.*

Introduction

This study seeks to look at impact international migration has brought to the development of Nigeria. The focus of this study has been on the movement of people from developing countries to a more developed economy. The number of migrant moving between developing countries is estimated to be as large as the number of migrants moving from developed to developing countries. Thus, the development implications of migration are as relevant to the developed country as they are to the developing country. Although violent conflict, political persecution and economic reasons are important causes of international mobility, more than nine out of ten international migrants move for economic reasons. However, migration has positive economic impacts on the migrant household, sending country as well as the receiving countries.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the impact of international migration on socio-economic development of Nigeria with the following objectives:

1. To find out the cause of international migration.
2. To examine the benefit of international migration on socio-economic development of Nigeria.
2. To examine the problems and implications of international migration.
3. To examine some selected emerging migration issues and policies.
4. To recommend ways of enhancing the impact of migration on economic and social development of the country.

Causes of International Migration

(Nkiru 2008) highlighted four (4) major causes of international migration. These include:

1. **Economic and Ecological Factors:** Universally, economic imbalance exists among nations and individual. It can result from absence of natural resources, lack of industrial development, lack of suitable job opportunities and inequitable distribution of income. It is obvious that the attractions for better economic condition motivate international migration.

Brain-Drain also leads to occupational mobility from Nigeria where experts in various fields migrated to other parts of Africa, Asia, Europe, and America in search of greener pastures.

Agriculture has been seen as another propelling force of migration where fishermen, for instance move from place to place in search of water for fishing in line with their occupation.

Also, nomads or cattle rearers during dry season move in search of water and grazing land for their cattle and land for the cultivation of food crops. During dry season the Sahara region becomes dry forcing the cattle rearers to head south, towards coastal countries in search of water and grazing lands. Through this process, the international boundaries are crossed with little or no regards.

2. **Establishment of ECOWAS:** The gesture provided by the protocol on free movement of persons of members states and the protocol on the right of residence and right of establishment attracted large number of immigrant into each member state to accelerate economic and social development which will improve the living standard of their people.
3. **Socio-Political Factor:** During Colonial era, international boundaries were drawn without consulting the local people, ignoring socio-cultural realities or suppressing them. E.g. Egum Ethnic Group (Yoruba) part of them in Nigeria and part in Benin Republic, Kanuri/Shuwa people, part in Nigeria, others in Chad, Cameroon and Niger Republic. Market, Funerals, Marriage Ceremonies attracted these cultural groups to move across international borders.
4. **Political Instability:** Civil wars experienced in some countries made some of their citizens to migrate to the neighbouring counties. For instance the current insurgency in the North Eastern part of Nigeria by Boko Haram has seen a lot of Borno State resident migrated to Cameroon to avoid being killed or attacked.

Socio-Economic Impact of International Migration in Nigeria

Migration is a decision that impacts the welfare of the household, the home community and in the end the whole economy in various ways. The welfare implications of migration on the origin country are most often, though not always, sizeable and positive. The main channels through which migration alleviates poverty are increased incomes from remittances, ability to smooth consumption, access to finance for starting a new business, as well as tapping on to the knowledge and resources provided by the international community of the migrant diaspora. Besides pure monetary gains, migration and remittances allow for higher investment in health care and education.

Foreign aids and diaspora remittances are key relief to poor Africans. While foreign aides have stagnated in recent years, remittances become the financial lifeline which unlike the former, places money directly in the hands of those in need.

In 2012, Africans received \$32 billion from their sons and daughters abroad. The 17 million officially documented Nigerians in the diaspora funneled a whopping sum of \$21 billion to the country (the fifth world's largest beneficiary of such funds following India, China, Philippines and Mexico) as against the \$23 billion they sent in 2011. With growing diaspora communities in Europe, America and Asia, the figure is growing tremendously (Guardian Newspaper 7th Oct; 2014).

Concerned by the continuous drop in revenue generation for the country due to shortfall in crude oil production, the coordinating Minister for the Economy and Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonju-Iweala

has renewed initiatives to attract non oil revenue from remittances from diaspora Nigerians and non-oil tax payers in the country.

The Minister has commenced a sensitization tour of major cities in the world with high concentration of Nigerians to convince them on increased remittances. The Federal Government has concluded plans to float a diaspora bond for Nigerians living abroad through which medium the Minister believes that Nigerians over there can meaningfully contribute to the economic development of the country by investing in critical infrastructure development with high yielding returns potentials. The appetite to pursue diaspora investment has been buoyed following the realization of a huge inflow of income from remittances. According to the Finance Minister, a whopping \$20.7 billion was harvested in 2013 while in the first half of this year, more than \$10.40 billion has equally been recorded.

This account was contained in the statement by the Minister's Special Adviser on communication, Paul Nwabiukwu on the Minister's trip traversing the world in hot chase for remittance, the statement explained that the mission was in response to the long standing desire of the Nigerian diaspora to support economic development in the country. A high level executive legislative team is currently holding a series of interactive sessions with Nigerians in Europe and the United States. The sessions are organized by the Debt Management Officer, led by the Director General, Dr. Abraham Nwankwo. It will be recalled that Nigerians in the Diaspora have been seeking ways and means to contribute more to the country's development. This interest is backed by substantial capacity. The value of remittances from Nigerians abroad in 2013 was \$20.77 billions and for the first half of 2014 it is \$10.40 billion. This includes contributions through remittances to their families, friends, and communities, medical missions and provisions of scholarships (Guardian Newspaper, 7th Oct; 2014). Indeed, the experience of countries such as Israel and India shows that the diaspora are a force to be reckoned with the growth and development of the country through the funding of critical development projects among other means. This current effort is directed at providing the Nigerian Diaspora similar opportunities.

Remittances have been found to have an income stabilizing effect at both the macroeconomic level (World Bank 2006) and at the household level. Historically, remittances have attended to rise in times of economic downturns, financial crises, and natural disasters because migrants living abroad send more money to help their families back home.

Also, migrant remittances increase domestic savings as well as improve financial intermediation, which can improve growth prospects. Evidence from Philippines, Mexico, Nigeria and other countries suggest that remittances promote self-employment and also increase small business investment in migrant-sending country. (Adams R. H. 2013). The diaspora equally serves as a link between the sending and receiving communities, expanding the opportunities to access international financing, and facilitates networking. The diaspora also contributes through philanthropic remittances and the development project such as schools, health facilities and community infrastructure. Access to information through the diaspora and skills learned by returning migrants can improve technology, management and institutions in the sending country (Carling 2013). Emigrants may also be an important supply of foreign investment as their knowledge of their country institutions (and perhaps a greater ability to maneuver within the home country regulatory framework) may mean that they incur lower investment cost and/or higher returns, compared to other international investors.

However, African leaders at various levels have started making arrangement to maximize the gains of international migration. One of these strategies is the Diaspora option. Through this initiative, African leaders have taken it upon themselves to encourage the skilled personnel outside the continent to take part in the process of nation building.

Although the various diaspora organizations are the initiatives of the professionals, the fact that the government of their countries of origin now see them as partners in development is a welcome development. This is an improvement over the previous adversarial postures of most leaders to the informed contributions of the Diaspora organization. These organizations or people are now involved in assisting to generate foreign direct investment, boosting knowledge exchange among higher institutions of learning as well as making useful contributions to reform agenda.

Some are even returning to their respective countries of origin to take up political appointment. Examples in Nigeria are the Minister of Finance Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Ambassador Olu Adenji who were working as technocrats and international civil servants, when they were appointed to work as Ministers by Obasanjo and Jonathan Administration.

In the current Goodluck Jonathan Administration, some of the cabinet ministers are also Nigerian who have made their mark while working as professionals in the advance countries. Examples include Dr. Olusegun Aganga, formerly of Goldman Sachs in the UK and currently Minister of Trade and Investment and Mr. Adesina who has worked for various agencies of the United Nations, and is now the Minister of Agriculture.

There is also the option of virtual linkages, which are independent, non-political and non-profit network that facilitate skills transfer and capacity building using information technology. These networks mobilize skilled diaspora member's expertise for the development process in their countries of origin. Some of them are the south African Network of skills abroad (SANSA) with members in 68 countries. The Nigerian in Diaspora Organization (NIDO), Association of Nigerian Physicians in the Americans (ANPD). There are also contributions through virtual networking by individuals in the Diaspora. Some such linkages beyond the virtual and migrant come back to their country of origin as visiting scholars, investors in existing and new businesses and also assisting in facilitating joint ventures between host and sending countries.

There are also many efforts in various parts of the world to encourage the exploitation of the positive gains of brain drain. For instance, in 2004, the Association of Higher Education and Development (AHEAD), in collaboration with International Development Research Centre (IDRC) organized an international stakeholders roundtable which was held in Ottawa, Canada and brought together key stakeholders, including International Organization for Migration (IOM), Canadian Government Agencies, African Missions, Non-Governmental Organization and Diaspora groups to discuss brain-drain in Africa and the potential strategies for mobilizing the Africans in diaspora as (Tebeje 2005) submits. The submit emphasized the important of sustained diaspora engagement.

This will require policy and resources committed by stakeholders, including international organizations, African government, and the host countries. There is an urgent need for the emerging diaspora movements to become more involved in Africa's development efforts. The growing political will for African leaders to recognize the Diaspora's potential contribution and the possibilities created by information technology show the impression that, brain-drain, is not after all, a total loss to the African continent. It is hoped that this momentum will be sustained over time to achieve the objectives.

Problems and Implication of International Migration on Nigeria Economy

There is an increasing concern over the effect of international migration in Nigeria and other African countries. High-skilled emigration or the so-called 'brain-drain' can imply a loss of public resources invested in their education, can reduce the sending country's productive capacity, and can worsen the business environment, especially in small economies. In the case of Nigeria, the estimates from the presidential committee on Brain-Drain set up by the Babangida Administration, showed that between 1986 and 1990, Nigeria lost over 10,000 academics from tertiary institutions alone. (Tebeje, 2005)

Ironically, while the developed countries keep attracting the best of African human capital, it is increasingly becoming a disturbing pattern to see semi-qualified personnel dubbed as "expert" taking every critical and important position in Lucrative sectors such as oil and gas as well as communication companies in most African countries. These "experts", who are usually paid in hard currencies (such as Dollars, Euros, and British Pounds), create a disincentive to the development of indigenous human capacities in African countries because they are made to occupy positions that are otherwise supposed to be occupied by Nigerians.

It is also important to state that with regards to brain-drain, remittances need to be offset against the (public) investment in education and other forms of publicly funded investment. This is because, regardless of the amount being remitted, the sending countries remain at a very strong disadvantage in other areas of potentials benefit like taxation, monitoring, leadership development, patriotism and other dimensions of contribution which the skilled personnel would have made to the economies.

Notwithstanding, the above argument, we contend that the negative effect of international migration outweighs its positive contribution to the development of the sending countries. Docquier Ropoport (2004) contends that international migration has increasingly become selective. According to them, detrimental effects of migration include international inequality, particularly if migrants are disconnected from those left behind at home. As we mentioned above, the consistent depletion of the skilled workforce of African countries is affecting the potential for the development of the continent in the negative way.

In the Health Sector for instance, the high percentage of the medical personnel that have migrated abroad could have been available to render high quality service, to the people, thereby contributing to the improvement of the health sector in Nigeria.

Also, given that most of the skilled personnel that have migrated were trained with public money, it amount to loss of investment, and at best, a negative action for people to migrate without giving back to the society which has invested in them. In the same vein, the income distribution effect that the presence of the skilled professionals that have had on the sending countries is conspicuously missing. Other negative effects of international migration on the economy of the sending country such as Nigeria are;

- Further reduction of the already low quality of skilled manpower.
- Increase in the continual dependence on foreign technical assistance.
- Gradual but steady slowdown of the transfer of technology and the widening of the gap between Africa and the industrialized countries.
- The loss of money in taxable income from the skilled manpower which would have been a potential contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

CONCLUSION

From our findings, we can conclude that, International Migration affect domestic institutions and politics. The emigration of capable people may cause loss of governance capacity in countries where institutions are already weak. Also, emigration can serve as a way to release political pressure, which diminishes the incentives of the established political elite to reform, increase corruption and reduce overall government effectiveness.

It is important to note that dependence on migration can create a “remittance-based development model” where remittances become increasingly critical for maintaining socio-economy stability in the country.

Although most remittances sent by migrants are legitimate transfers, the continued existence and use of informal channels has raised concerns of money laundering, terrorist financing and financial crimes leading to heavy regulations of providers of remittance services. The need for such alternative channels arise from the sustained high cost of remitting through formal financial institutions, cumbersome legislation related to money transfer, and mistrust of the migrants towards the financial institutions.

As the positive aspect of remittances of the Nigeria’s Diaspora population on the development of the country is being acknowledged presently, there should also be the reciprocal duty of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the host government and other international agencies on migration issues to balance the facilitation and regulation of the diverse groups of international migrants in Nigeria, thus a concerted national approach to migration management would be guaranteed.

Therefore the best way to manage international migration in Nigeria is to balance the three aspect of migration, which involves adequate consideration of the relationship between migration and development, promoting the positive aspects, while regulating the negative aspect of international migration.

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