

Review Article

Paradox of Migration in Nigeria (Rural- Urban): Issues and Challenges

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Abstract: Migration is considered as the movement of people from one geographical region to another, which may be on temporary or permanent basis. Rural – urban migration has also been identified as a survival strategy utilized by the poor, especially the rural dwellers. The assessment of migration in urban areas has remained relevant since migration acts as a catalyst in the transformation process of not only the destiny of individual migrants but also the conditions of family members left behind, local communities, and the wider sending regions. The paper explores the concept of rural – urban migration, migration theory, challenges of rural development, effects of rural – urban migration, rural development, Suggestions from the paper that the government at all levels should provide adequate and functional amenities such as pipe borne water, electricity, schools, industries, recreational facilities, Government must intensify rural development in Nigeria as expected by majority of the rural populace in the rural areas. This paper will help researchers, scholars, government, planners as well as related authorities to understand the concept of rural – urban migration, its effects and proffer ways to control and mitigate the trend of rural – urban migration.

Key words: Migration, Rural, Urban, Dweller, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the earliest times, humanity has been on the move. Some people move in search of work or economic opportunities, to join family, or to study. Others move to escape conflict, persecution, terrorism, or human rights violations. Still others move in response to the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, or other environmental factors [20].

Today, more people than ever live in a country other than the one in which they were born. In 2019, the number of migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million, 51 million more than in 2010. International migrants comprise 3.5% of the global population. Compared to 2.8 per cent in 2000

and 2.3% in 1980, the proportion of international migrants in the world population has also risen [2,3,20].

While many individuals migrate out of choice, many others migrate out of necessity. The number of globally forcibly displaced people topped 70 million for the first time in UNHCR's almost 70 year history at the end of 2018. This number includes almost 26 million refugees, 3.5 million asylum seekers, and over 41 million internally displaced persons [20].

The development of rural areas constitutes an important sector in any nation's economy and their rapid development and modernization have gained the attention of policy makers and governments globally. This is due to the fact that a majority of the population lives therein. Hence, the

Received: July-28-2020

Accepted: Aug-08-2020

Published: Sep-14-2020

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How to Cite: Oguche Christopher Joseph, Diyoke Michael Chika, Ogar Paschal Unimke and Nasir Yahaya, 2020. "Paradox of Migration in Nigeria (Rural- Urban): Issues and Challenges". *Journal of Social Science, Education and Humanities*, 2: 36-42.

prospects of most developing countries depend largely on it [10,11]. Torun *et al.*, defined rural development as the provision of physical infrastructure [30]. The logical basis of this concept is that, the provision of such socio-economic amenities like schools, hospitals, recreational facilities, good road network, electricity and pipe-borne water are capable of transforming the rural communities and eventually making them attractive for habitation [28].

Abah argued that rural area dwellers have been found to engage in primary economic activities that form the foundation for the country's economic development [1]. As it is conspicuously apparent from the foregoing, given the national economy, enhancing the development of the rural sector should be central to government and public administration. Regrettably these rural sectors of Nigeria that are vital to the socio-economic development of the nation are faced with the problem of retard development. This has been attributed to the top down approach policies of most Nigerian government in the approaches to rural development [26]. Another possible reason for the poor state of the rural areas could be attributed to not continuity of rural development policies and projects by successive government. In this regard, Ajadi noted that there is usually the absence of sustained, comprehensive and conclusive implementation of rural development policies in Nigeria [8].

Several authors such as Adejugbe, Lykke, Mc Carthy, Okoye *et al.*, Olaleye *et al.*, Elis and Harris have stated that the incessant drift of the rural populace to the urban areas has led to social, economic, environmental, physical, and other severe problems such as congestion in the urban centres with attendant consequences such as spread of communicable diseases, overstretched social amenities such as electricity, health facilities, educational, recreational facilities, motor able roads, pipe borne water, housing etc. The result of the aforementioned is high rate rural-urban migration in Nigeria with its attendant challenges [5,15,18,19,24,25].

2. MIGRATION THEORIES

2.1. Neoclassical economic theory

This theory of migration states that the main reason for labor migration is wage difference between two geographic locations. These wage differences are usually linked to geographic labor demand and supply. It can be said that areas with a shortage of labor but an excess of capital have a high relative wage while areas with a high labor supply and a dearth of capital have a low relative wage. Labor tends to flow from low-wage areas to high-wage areas. Often, with

this flow of labor comes changes in the sending as well as the receiving country. Neoclassical economic theory is best used to describe transnational migration, because it is not confined by international immigration laws and similar governmental regulations [29].

2.2. Dual labor market theory

Dual labor market theory states that migration is mainly caused by pull factors in more developed countries. This theory assumes that the labor markets in these developed countries consist of two segments: the primary market, which requires high-skilled labor, and the secondary market, which is very labor-intensive requiring low-skilled workers. This theory assumes that migration from less developed countries into more developed countries is a result of a pull created by a need for labor in the developed countries in their secondary market. Migrant workers are needed to fill the lowest rung of the labor market because the native laborers do not want to do these jobs as they present a lack of mobility. This creates a need for migrant workers. Furthermore, the initial dearth in available labor pushes wages up, making migration even more enticing.

2.3. New economics of labor migration

This theory states that migration flows and patterns can't be explained solely at the level of individual workers and their economic incentives, but that wider social entities must be considered as well. One such social entity is the household. Migration can be viewed as a result of risk aversion on the part of a household that has insufficient income [13]. The household, in this case, is in need of extra capital that can be achieved through remittances sent back by family members who participate in migrant labor abroad. These remittances can also have a broader effect on the economy of the sending country as a whole as they bring in capital. Recent research has examined a decline in U.S. interstate migration from 1991 to 2011, theorizing that the reduced interstate migration is due to a decline in the geographic specificity of occupations and an increase in workers' ability to learn about other locations before moving there, through both information technology and inexpensive travel. Other researchers find that the location-specific nature of housing is more important than moving costs in determining labor reallocation.

2.4. Relative deprivation theory

Relative deprivation theory states that awareness of the income difference between neighbors or other households in the migrant-sending community is an important factor in

migration. The incentive to migrate is a lot higher in areas that have a high level of economic inequality. In the short run, remittances may increase inequality, but in the long run, they may actually decrease it. There are two stages of migration for a worker: first, they invest in human capital formation, and then they try to capitalize on their investments. In this way, successful migrants may use their new capital to provide for better schooling for their children and better homes for their families. Successful high-skilled emigrants may serve as an example for neighbors and potential migrants who hope to achieve that level of success.

2.5. 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 social change within societies. Trade with one country, which causes economic decline in another, may create incentive to migrate to a country with a more vibrant economy. It can be argued that even after decolonization, the economic dependence of former colonies still remains on mother countries. This view of international trade is controversial, however, and some argue that free trade can actually reduce migration between developing and developed countries. It can be argued that the developed countries import labor-intensive goods, which causes an increase in employment of unskilled workers in the less developed countries, decreasing the outflow of migrant workers. The export of capital-intensive goods from rich countries to poor countries also equalizes income and employment conditions, thus also slowing migration. In either direction, this theory can be used to explain migration between countries that are geographically far apart.

2.6. Unifying theory of human migration

Old migration theories are generally embedded in geography, sociology or economics. They explain migration in specific periods and spaces. In fact, Osmosis theory explains the whole phenomenon of human migration. Based on the history of human migration, Djelti studies the evolution of its natural determinants [13]. According to Djelti, human migration is divided into two main types: the simple migration and the complicated one. The simple migration is divided, in its turn, into diffusion, stabilisation and concentration periods. During these periods, water availability, adequate climate, security and population density represent the natural determinants of human migration. For the complicated migration, it is characterised by the speedy evolution and the emergence of new sub-determinants notably earning, unemployment, networks and migration policies. Osmosis

theory explains analogically human migration by the biophysical phenomenon of osmosis [13]. In this respect, the countries are represented by animal cells, the borders by the semipermeable membranes and the humans by ions of water. As to osmosis phenomenon, according to the theory, humans migrate from countries with less migration pressure to countries with high migration pressure. In order to measure the latter, the natural determinants of human migration replace the variables of the second principle of thermodynamics used to measure the osmotic pressure.

3. CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Migration occurs as a response to economic development as well as social, cultural, environmental and political factors and effects on areas of origin as well as destination [6]. People tend to move away from a place due to need to escape violence, political instability, drought, congestion in various dimensions and suspected or real persecution. Also, adverse physical conditions such as flood, landslide (erosion and earthquake), insects and pests, soil infertility contribute largely to the reasons why people leave one environment for another [14].

3.1. Challenges of rural development

The challenges threatening rural communities especially in developing countries are numerous and cut across all spheres of life. Most often, rural development policies or programs are discontinued whenever there is a change in government leadership. Most times, a new government abandons the projects and programs of its predecessor even when such programs are appropriate [9]. In this regard, Ajadi noted that there is usually the absence of sustained, comprehensive and conclusive implementation of rural development policies [8]. A typical example is the abandonment of the Better Life for Rural Women program of former First Lady Mariam Bagangida for the Family Support Programme by the succeeding regime of General Sani Abacha. Some are not well implemented and the targeted population (rural dwellers) hardly benefit as government officials are corrupt and pocket some of the funds released for such programmes. To this end, some of the rural development initiatives are haphazardly implemented as a result of poor supervision and corruption. This is evident in many rural communities with installed water taps that lack water since installation.

Deshingkar and Leah *et al.*, summarized the challenges of rural development to include the following: High

population density, Poor infrastructure, High level of illiteracy, Extreme poverty, Rural urban migration and Low social interaction [12,17].

3.2. Rural development initiatives in Nigeria

Many governments in Nigeria over the years have made attempts at enhancing rural development through various programmes and policies. Its meaningful realization however has remained a mirage. This is clearly seen as there is an apparent lack of basic amenities and the glaring low standard of living conditions among the rural populace [31].

Nwuke explained that extreme poverty is prevalent among the rural dwellers as about 70% of the people in Nigeria living below poverty line are domiciled in the rural areas [21]. One major effect of this rural underdevelopment is rural–urban migration, which is fast reducing the active population which constitutes the workforce of the rural areas in Nigeria. In recent times, due to persistent underdevelopment, there has been a noticeably high level of rural-urban migration in search of better standards of living and bigger opportunities for meaningful economic and social activities [23]. This is dysfunctional not only to rural development but retards the overall national development. In view of the foregoing, various Nigerian governments in the past have initiated rural development programmes targeted at the rural sector [4]. They include: National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), River-Basin Development Authority (RBDA), Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), Operation Feed The Nation (OFN), The Green Revolution (GR), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), Directorate For Food, Road And Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life For Rural Dwellers, National Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC), National Directorate Of Employment (NDE), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Primary Health Care Programmes (PHCP), National Rural Roads Development Fund (NRRDF), Rural Banking Scheme (RBS), Family Support Programme (FSP), Universal Basic Education (UBE), Expanded Programme On Immunization, The Nomadic Education Programme, Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Ferry Transport Schemes (In The Riverine Areas And Lagos), Low-cost Housing Estate Schemes, Federal Environmental Protection Agency and Flood and Soil Erosion Control Programme.

Many of these programmes were mainly targeted at rural development in an attempt to better the lives of rural dwellers, stimulate and enhance economic growth, as well as get the rural sector to contribute meaningfully to the national economic and social development. These programmes have

direct or indirect influence on rural development, with some specific and others generalized. Specific programmes are targeted at agriculture, health, education, housing, transport, and infrastructure while the generalized programmes were put in place to handle general projects and other pressing issues such as unemployment, illiteracy. Such programmes include NDE, DFRRI, Better Life, Family Support Programme [14].

Many of these specific programmes had some positive effects on rural development although did not last long. Unfortunately, lack of integration of the various rural developmental efforts significantly militated against sustainable rural development. This is largely due to the inability of the rural development institutions to cooperate and ensure their respective initiatives, actions and mandates are coordinated to reinforce and support each other and that their activities are streamlined towards effective realization of government's rural development objectives.

3.3. Rural-urban migration in Nigeria

Rural-urban migration is one of the most distressing problems facing the Nigerian socio- economic development. A situation where the desire for better employment, business opportunities and education pushes both young and old out of the rural areas to the urban areas. Rural-urban migration represents a phenomenon of unprecedented movement of people from the rural countryside to the urban cities. Edith Historically, migration existed internally across city boundaries to enable excess labour to be taken slowly from the rural areas to provide workforce for industries in the urban areas and therefore aid industrialization and economic growth [14]. However, over time, the rate of rural-urban migration has rapidly outweighed the rate of job creation in developing and underdeveloped countries with overstretched available social and infrastructural facilities in the urban areas.

3.4. Causes of rural-urban migration in Nigeria

Rural-urban migration may be occasioned by voluntary forces or involuntary forces. Involuntary or forced migration is migration that takes place when the migrant has no choice on whether to move or not. Examples include ethno-religious crises, conflicts and wars, political strife, family and land disputes, conflicts with neighbours etc. Voluntary migration is movement done by choice [18]. Factors responsible for voluntary rural-urban migration include urban job opportunities, better housing conditions, rural land tenure and inheritance patterns, better education opportunities, better health services, extreme poverty etc. Oftentimes, rural

dweller see and hear success stories about people that left the community, moved to cities and are supposedly 'doing well'. This acts as incentives for out-migration especially among youths.

Various studies have been carried out on the causes and consequences of rural-urban migration. While some of these studies related the causes of rural-urban migration to discriminatory government policies in favour of urban development, response to disparities in income, employment and other socio-economic amenities available within the urban and rural areas, with the urban areas being privileged, others related it to spontaneous, emotional, structural, traditional and some other factors [14]. In a cross sectional study of causes and effects of rural-urban migration in Borno State: A case of Maiduguri metropolis, Gimba and Kumshe, found that the major causes of rural-urban migration are search for better education, employment, and business opportunities; while others include: poverty, unemployment, famine, and inadequate social amenities in the rural areas [16]. Study carried out by Adewale, revealed that various factors could predispose a certain rural population to migration, which might be due to crisis, ethno-religious conflicts and wars etc [6]. Agyemang, summarized the major causes of rural –urban migration in Nigeria [7]. He noted that different motives account for rural-urban migration amongst rural dwellers. These include the following: Socio-cultural issues where people are forced to migrate to avoid numerous social problems at their places of origin, Poor infrastructural development and lack of basic amenities, Search for better economic opportunities such as jobs, Accessibility and ease of transportation and communication has also been noted to facilitate rural-urban migration, The extension of road network from major towns to the peripheral urban and rural areas that resulted in the decrease in transportation cost and improved communication systems.

3.5. Effects of rural urban migration

Rural areas are mostly disabled at various levels by inaccessibility, seclusion, underdevelopment, extreme poverty, ignorance, depopulation, hunger and all types of incapacities. Coupled with these is that migration from rural to urban areas leads to a reduction in the number of the rural populace with a negative effect on rural agricultural output and slowed pace of development in the rural areas.

With the exit of youths and young adults from the villages and rural communities, the aged, women and children are left behind to labour on the farms which lead to reduction in agricultural output with its attendant effect on the gross domestic product of the nation, lowered funds for

development, income and standard of living of rural inhabitants, underdevelopment, and total desertion of the rural areas.

Constant reduction in rural population over the years will invariably lead to gross rural neglect by government as they tend to concentrate on developing the more obviously populated urban centres. This further reinforces the vicious cycle of gross rural neglect and underdevelopment as reflected in the lack of rural industrialization and poor physical, social and institutional infrastructures. Also, Lykke, opined that rural-urban migration makes the highly educated and most agile people migrate from rural to urban areas, leaving behind the feeble and uneducated people who are not able to combat poverty successfully [18]. This he argues consequentially increases the differences in the standards of living of the rural and urban inhabitants.

Other consequences of rural-urban migration includes urban traffic congestion, unemployment, high crime rate such as advance free fraud, political and civil unrests, armed robbery, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, hooliganism, health hazards from pollution; air, water, and noise, inadequate refuse and sewage disposal system, poor drainage system resulting in flooding. Growth of slums leading to shanty settlements, cultural changes, juvenile delinquency and an overall decline in traditional values, are all attendant effects of rural-urban migration.

3.6. Rural-Urban development

Current findings in the field of rural development have led to the conclusion that rural-urban migration could be reduced with the involvement of the rural communities and rural beneficiaries of a rural development project at all stages or phases of the project [22]. The people's contributions in form of ideas, financial and human resources will serve as a motivating factor for them to see to the complete success of the programme and since the local people know and understand their environment and conditions better than the policy formulators and decision makers who operate from outside, it is better to involve them. Again, studies from the developed world where policy makers explore all possible options and adopt inclusive practices in the rural development policies and where appropriate institutional framework are put in place to strengthened and ensure rapid realization of rural developmental goals, the trend in rural-urban migration has been stemmed [27].

It is also instructive to note that in the developed world where government is seen and viewed as continuum, rural development project are not abandonment. Since major finding note that the major causes of rural-urban migration

are search for better education, employment, and business opportunities, poverty, unemployment, famine, and inadequate social amenities in the rural areas, it follows therefore that with conscious effort towards rural development, the trend of rural –urban migration will be drastically reduced. Finding reveals that rural development is significant to combating rural-urban migration in Nigeria and indeed it is capable of changing the ways through which we manage the rural areas which will make a difference in governance practice in Nigeria.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper shows that through appropriate rural development programme by government, rural-urban migration can be curtailed. As part of the findings of this paper, the impediments to rural development is majorly the non-commitment to policies initiated by government in Nigeria, while the absence of rural development does facilitate rural-urban migration due to lack of basic social amenities and infrastructures. The findings also revealed that Government needs to do more to stem rural-urban migration. Government must intensify rural development in Nigeria as expected by majority of the rural populace. People in the rural areas have no need to migrate to the urban centers, if basic social amenities and other variables to make them comfortable are provided for in the areas.

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