

POVERTY AND THE ESCAPIST ROUTE OF MIGRATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

Ejikemeuwa J.O. Ndubisi PhD¹

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Vincent Gerald Onwudinjo²

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies,

Tansian University, Umunya

¹+234 806 291 2017; ejikon4u@gmail.com

²+2348100663655; vincentgerald58@gmail.com

Abstract

Poverty as a term can be somewhat complicated. In many respects, it indicates being indigent, being poor, lacking and in need. However, in religious context, especially in Christianity, the New Testament recorded that the sermon on the mountain, indicated that blessed are the 'poor' in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The complication becomes the literal understanding or interpretation accorded to the text. The exegesis on the biblical concept of being poor has a lot of existential stronghold especially for religious people. This present study examines Poverty in relation to Migration. Migration implies an itinerant change from one place to another. What is debatable as the study exposes is the fact of why people move from one place to another especially in search of greener pasture? Is poverty the cause? Are there causal relations between poverty and migration? Employing the methods of phenomenology and analysis, the study seeks to explore how poverty causes people to migrate with a view to tackling the problems of home countries in relation to citizens' welfare, growth, development and general wellbeing, using Nigeria as an indicting example. The study raises the factual observation that there is a link between poverty and migration. The study concludes that to nip such emigrational tendencies in the bud, there is need to fix the problems of home countries with structural and developmental strategies that utilize the best of human and natural resources in creating an enabling and conducive ambience where society is "de-povertized" and where people can actualize their potentials without hindrance or denial.

Key words: Poverty; Migration; Nigeria; Emigration; Indigent

Introduction

In a country such as Nigeria, there is a serious link between poverty and migration. Experience has shown that when an environment is not conducive for people, there is always the tendency to move to a better environment. Nigeria is one country in Africa that is ravaged by poverty. Only recently, it was

christened the poverty capital of the world. It is not something to be proud of. However, it is an irony that this is also a country of billionaires. Few years back, according to Forbes, Africa's richest man was the person of Aliko Dangote who is a Nigerian. There is a widening gap between the rich and poor in Nigeria. For while the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer and no one is making practical effort to reduce the gap. Neither government nor stakeholders are doing much to salvage the poverty-stricken condition of majority of Nigerian citizens.

Poverty is a state of being extremely poor, lacking in materials necessary to meet up personal needs. It is a state of being indigent, inferior in quality and insufficient in amount. The one who is poor cannot provide for himself or herself and cruise through life in existential crises. Poverty does not just end in the individual, it has the tendency to open up canals of problems in the society. Most problems of a country such as Nigeria are informed by poverty. Many Nigerians wont take to crime given their religious and domestic cultural upbringing if things are the way they supposed to be. However, because of the desire to escape this poverty at all cost, desperation and shortcuts set in. The desire to leave Nigeria in search of greener pasture becomes an overriding motivation to the emigration factor.

Migration is the moving away from one place to another. However, most migrations especially in a country like Nigeria are not informed by adventure, tourism and the fact of not escaping a fun life, people's and cultures but by poverty and the desire to escape the mess at home. In this paper, we shall be looking at the link between poverty and migration, the term poverty in a discursive sense and the causes and effects of poverty. We shall take a look at Migration and the problems therein, including what it represents for a country such as Nigeria, in relation to national development. The paper concludes by proffering solutions and recommendations to tackle this menace head-on.

What is Poverty?

Poverty is not having enough material possessions or income for a person's needs. Poverty is a multifaceted concept, which may include social, economic, and political elements. Extreme poverty, abject poverty, absolute poverty, destitution, or penury, was defined by the United Nations (UN) in its 1995 report of the World Summit for Social Development as "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe

drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services." (United Nations, 1995). Historically, other definitions have been proposed within the United Nations. In July 1993, Leandro Despouy, the then UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights made use of a definition he adapted from a 1987 report to the French Economic and Social Council by Fr. Joseph Wresinski, founder of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, distinguishing "lack of basic security" (poverty) and "chronic poverty" (extreme poverty), linking the eradication of extreme poverty by allowing people currently experiencing it a real opportunity to exercise all their human rights:

The lack of basic security connotes the absence of one or more factors enabling individuals and families to assume basic responsibilities and to enjoy fundamental rights. The situation may become widespread and result in more serious and permanent consequences. The lack of basic security leads to chronic poverty when it simultaneously affects several aspects of people's lives, when it is prolonged and when it severely compromises people's chances of regaining their rights and of reassuming their responsibilities in the foreseeable future. (Despouy, 1993).

Absolute poverty is the complete lack of the means necessary to meet basic personal needs, such as food, clothing and shelter (UNESCO, 2015, para. 2). The threshold at which absolute poverty is defined is always about the same, independent of the person's permanent location or era. On the other hand, Ricardo (2008) noted that relative poverty occurs when a person cannot meet a minimum level of living standards, compared to others in the same time and place. Therefore, the threshold at which relative poverty is defined varies from one country to another, or from one society to another. For example, a person who cannot afford housing better than a small tent in an open field would be said to live in relative poverty if almost everyone else in that area lives in modern brick homes, but not if everyone else also lives in small tents in open fields (for example, in a nomadic tribe (Pp. 5-6).

Shah (2014) observed that governments and non-governmental organizations try to reduce poverty. Providing basic needs to people who are unable to earn a sufficient income can be hampered by constraints on government's ability to deliver services, such as corruption, tax avoidance, debt and loan conditionalities and by the brain drain of health care and educational professionals. Strategies of increasing income to make basic needs more

affordable typically include welfare, economic freedom and providing financial services. Poverty reduction is still a major issue (or a target) for many international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, Oxfam, CARE, World Vision International, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Red Cross among a plethora of others. United Nations noted that fundamentally, poverty is the inability of having choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (Gordon 2005, paras.1-4). According to World Bank, Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life. Poverty is usually measured as either absolute or relative (the latter being actually an index of income inequality).

Poverty in Nigeria

It is quite an irony that Nigeria is a very rich country in both human and natural resources yet have very poor citizens, who struggle daily to meet their social and existential needs. However, the big puzzle is: Why should such a country be an arena of grave needs? Ranging from bad leadership to docile and indifferent followership, not helped by tribalism, religious fanaticism and poor quality of Education including high level of Illiteracy and total misplacement of national priorities including a treacherous political system, Nigeria seems destined to fail at every point. Nigeria has one of the world's highest economic growth rates, averaging 7.4% according to the Nigeria economic report released in July 2014 by the World Bank. Poverty still remains significant at 33.1% in Africa's biggest economy. For a country with massive wealth and a huge population to support commerce, a well-developed economy, and plenty of natural resources such as oil. According to World Bank (2016), Nigeria has the largest population in Sub-Saharan Africa with 110 million people in 1995. It has a complex social and

political history that has, for the most part, impacted adversely on the population and has worsened income distribution. The exploitation of the nation's oil resources, and the management of oil windfalls, have dominated the progress and decline of Nigeria's economy over the past two decades, and have significantly influenced evolution and perception of poverty. (para. 1). The economy is currently characterized by a large rural, mostly agricultural based, traditional sector, which comprises about two-thirds of the poor, and by a smaller urban capital intensive sector, which has benefited most from the exploitation of the country's resources and from the provision of services that successive governments have provided (World Bank 2016, para.2). A poverty line of 395 naira (1985 prices) per annum per capita was selected as the poverty line that could consume minimum FAO recommended calories per person per day and a minimal basket of non-food items. This line resulted in 43 percent of poor in 1985 and 34 percent in 1992, showing a decline of 9 percentage points in headcount over a seven-year period. However, due to high population growth rates this resulted only in one million less poor people. (World Bank 2016, para. 4).

There were significantly different trends in rural and urban areas; the number of poor in rural areas sharply fell from 26.3 million to 22.8 million, while urban poverty rose from 9.7 million to 11.9 million. Extreme poverty increased nationally from 10 million to 14 million, with a tripling of headcount in urban areas (World Bank 2016, para. 5). There were significantly different trends in rural and urban areas; the number of poor in rural areas sharply fell from 26.3 million to 22.8 million, while urban poverty rose from 9.7 million to 11.9 million. Extreme poverty increased nationally from 10 million to 14 million, with a tripling of headcount in urban areas (World Bank 2016, para. 6). Income distribution also worsened. If not for worsening income distribution national poverty would have declined by 13.6 percent rather than 8.9 percent. Growth was not equally shared by different parts of the country; growth was fastest in southern and middle agroclimatic zones, with much slower growth in northern states. This resulted in the largest number of poor people in northern regions (World Bank 2016, para.7). Apart from regional characteristics, poverty is strongly influenced by education, age and nature of employment. 79 percent of extreme urban poor and 95 percent of rural poor had only primary schooling or less. Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) indicates that poor children increasingly do not attend school as they consider quality of education weak and consider education increasing employment prospects minimal. Of all

households, polygamous households experience the greatest depth of poverty, with majority of them in northern and middle zones. Majority of the poor in Nigeria are concentrated in poor communities rather than scattered around (World Bank 2016, para. 8).

By 2018, Nigeria from available data, is said to have overtaken India as the poverty capital of the world. A very inevitable record. According to Brookings Institute, before now, India used to hold the position with a population of 1.324 billion people as against Nigeria's 200 million people. According to the report, the number of Nigerians in extreme poverty increases by six people every minute. The report reads: According to our projections, Nigeria has already overtaken India as the country with the largest number of extremely poor in early 2018, and the Democratic Republic of Congo could soon take over the number 2 spot. At the end of May 2018, our trajectories suggest that Nigeria had about 87 million people in extreme poverty, compared with India's 73 million. What is more, extreme poverty in Nigeria is growing by six people every minute, while India continues to reduce her poverty lines. In fact, by the end of 2018 in Africa as a whole, there will probably be about 3.2 million more people living in extreme poverty than there is today. "Africans account for about two-thirds of the world's extreme poor and that if current trends persist, Africa will account for nine-tenths by 2030. Fourteen out of 18 countries in the world – where the number of extreme poor is rising – are in Africa." In March, 2018, the International Monetary Fund had said Nigerians are getting poorer saying there is a need for coherent and comprehensive economic reforms (Vanguard 2018, paras. 2-4).

The British Broadcasting Corporation (2012) reported thus:

Poverty has risen in Nigeria, with almost 100 million people living on less than a \$1 (£0.63) a day, despite economic growth, statistics have shown. The National Bureau of Statistics said 60.9% of Nigerians in 2010 were living in "absolute poverty" - this figure had risen from 54.7% in 2004. The bureau predicted this rising trend was likely to continue. Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil producer but the sector has been tainted by accusations of corruption. According to the report, absolute poverty is measured by the number of people who can afford only the bare essentials of shelter, food and clothing (para. 1).

Despite this alarming report, nothing changed or really improved significantly. As already indicated, in 2018, Nigeria was adjudged the 'poverty capital of the World,' and by this year, 2019, more index for the poverty situation emerged. According to Sahara Reporters (2019):

World Poverty Clock has revealed that 91,885,874 people in Nigeria now live in extreme poverty. According to the World Bank, a person can be said to be living in extreme poverty if they live below the poverty line of \$1.90, which translates to N693.5 per day. The new numbers seen by Sahara Reporters this morning, June 5, 2019, make up 46.5 percent of Nigeria's population which is approximated at 197,686,877, sometimes rounded up to 200, 000,000. This means that more than half of Nigeria's population live on less than a dollar (N360) a day (paras. 1-3).

The latest numbers indicate that since June 2018, four million Nigerians have joined the poverty club occasioned by factors such as unemployment, insecurity, among others. The President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration had rejected the June 2018 statistics which solidified Nigeria's position as the world poverty capital of the world despite world leaders such as Theresa May quoting the statistics to talk about poverty in Nigeria. (Sahara Reporters 2019, paras. 6-7). Having highlighted on poverty and the Nigerian experience, let us look at Migration with particular reference to Nigeria.

Migration and the Nigerian Experience

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. Migration can be international (movement between different countries) or internal (movement within a country, often from rural to urban areas). According to Iheanacho and Ughaerumba (2015, as cited in Okeoghene, 2017), Migration can be traced to the existence of the first set of humans on earth. Migration has taken various patterns such as slave trade, colonization, urbanization, industrialization and globalization. Movement of persons (migrants) from one place to another has been a trend adopted by various individuals (p. 15). Migration in Nigeria can be traced from the pre-colonial era (precisely slave trade era) to colonial era. Although the nation-state was not recognized as Nigeria as at then as it had a kingdom and empire structures. This made it difficult to be described as internal or international structure. The most important is to note that migration in Africa (Nigeria) can be traced to this era. During these eras migration was both forced and voluntary. In Nigeria, during the 1960s, International Migration became the new trend and was at its increase as Nigerians and other Africans left their

respective states for Europe while the South-South pathways of migration also existed, as Africans migrated to various parts of West African neighbouring states mostly for trade purposes (regional integration) (Iheanacho and Ughaerumba 2015, as cited in Okeoghene 2017,p. 15). According to Fayomi (2013, as cited in Okeoghene 2017), International Migration is mostly influenced by economic reasons which can be for employment, trade purposes, high favourable standard of living and fair weather conditions for agriculture among other reasons. More people are migrating today than at any other point in human history. Migrants travel in many different ways and for many different reasons. People move in order to improve their standard of living, to give their children better opportunities, or to escape from poverty, conflict and famine. Today, with modern transportation and communications, more people are motivated and able to move (Pp. 15-16).

Migration in a country such as Nigeria mostly has to imply moving outside the country. It is not really the rural-urban migration within the country; say from Nnewi to Abuja or from Sapele to Lagos. We have before now talked about poverty and how it affects Nigeria. It is actually the instigator or catalyst that informs the recurrent Migration of Nigerians to other parts of the World without any hope of it ceasing soon. Four million Nigerians are said to have joined the poverty club just within a year. Because the unchanging economic situation of the country, people are eager to leave in thousands for those who can afford it. Those who cannot still resort to doing so illegally. There have been bizarre tales of Nigerians who travelled through the desert to Europe and died in the process without cross over through the Maghreb. At every opportunistic turn, the average Nigerian want to change the Nigerian environment in search of greener pastures. Under the incumbent President Muhamadu Buhari's regime thus far, the country went into recession and only recently recovering [with potentials for another grave one if proper economic policies are not put in place in the next four years]; and the Naira fell further in an unprecedented manner to foreign exchange currencies like Pound, Euro, Dollar, Chinese Yuan among others. The rate of unemployment increased and many companies left the country for lack of proper and business-friendly policies that could create more jobs and turn the economy around. Mortality rate increased and the issue of insurgency and the new insecurity trend of Fulani-Herdsman further combined to displace more people from their homes especially in northern Nigeria and thereby painting a general gory picture of political instability in the country. This led to the mass cry of not wanting to continue with the present government during the last

election alleged to have been rigged; for their inability to deal with the economy and the fact that the country has sunk into poverty in a way that it is now the mockery of the World with the tag of 'Poverty Capital of the World.'

However, when we look at Migration on a larger scale and via a psychological pedestal, we discover that it is in the nature of man to explore. It is in the nature of man to discover what it is like at the other side. It is often said that we travel, not that we may escape life but such that life will not escape us. In other words, migrating sometimes is a step toward globalization at the personal level and understanding socio-cultural levels of the world. Apart from the need for better opportunities and for a general workable environment, people also migrate in order to feel a sense of world citizenship. Africans in particular have this instinctual capacity for mobility and seeing other parts of the World more than any other global continent. Akanji (2012) shares some similarity in thought when he noted that:

The history of the human race is that of migration and conflicts. Man, by nature, is designed to be mobile. He moves, as the need arises, from one location to another in search of a variety of things. In the same vein, conflict is inherent in human relationship. Whether at the interpersonal or organizational/societal or national or international level, human interactions are laced with issues for conflicts. In Africa, like other continents of the world, migration and conflicts have contributed to the making and shaping of the histories of the people. This is because at different points in the political and social histories of the African people, records revealed a large scale of in and out-migration as well as different kinds of conflicts. The historic contacts with Europeans, the Arabs, the Chinese and others at different times are all products of migration. Similarly, the various inter-ethnic civil wars, state wars of expansion, religious conflicts, trade and commercial crises are all indices of the prevalence of conflicts on the continent. In recent time, Africa has witnessed many protracted and gruesome conflicts, that have sparked off a wave of demographic movement of people both within and outside of the continent (pp. 1-2).

The Construal of Akanji's thought points to the fact that continental conflicts such as war, poverty and bad leadership contribute in one or the other to people leaving in droves. In Nigeria, the issue of *Boko Haram* and the Herdsmen

recurrent attacks create political tension and the problem of insecurity from time to time, as government is yet to really prosecute anyone or group in these terror mayhem. Thus, many Nigerians are fleeing northern Nigeria as asylum seekers. Dockery (2018) corroborating this point observed:

Nigerians make up the fourth largest group of asylum seekers in the European Union, tens of thousands risk the perilous journey across the Mediterranean every year. What are the main reasons for leaving their country? When thinking of terrorism, the media often focuses on groups based primarily in the Middle East such as the so-called "Islamic State" and "Al-Qaeda." These days, the group Boko Haram receives little mention, aside from the #BringbackourGirls campaign after the organization kidnapped hundreds of female students in 2014. Yet, for Nigerians, the group remains one of the top reasons for leaving the country. The radical Islamist group, whose official name is "Group of the People of Sunnah for Preaching and Jihad," pledged allegiance to the "Islamic State" in 2015. They control a region in northeastern Nigeria, where the Nigerian government has been carrying out a counter insurgency operation against them (para.1).

However, looking at the Migration issue, moving outside Nigeria for instance, has not solved much problems. Migration also come with fresh challenges of adaptation and fitting into the culture of the host environment. It is not out of place that many Nigeria migrate illegally and take up unbecoming jobs just to survive in these countries and are always in oblivion and cover from law enforcement agents because of the implications of deportation. Again, Dockery (2018) captured this when he noted that:

Often, refugees head for surrounding countries like Chad or stay close to the border in camps, such as the Dar es Salaam camp. According to the UNHCR, 110,000 Nigerians have also left for neighboring Cameroon. But life still isn't easy there: The Cameroonian government has allegedly deported tens of thousands of migrants from the country, and the UNHCR says that over 90,000 returns have been documented between January 2015 and May 2017. A pattern behind this is that the Cameroonian government links Nigerians in the country with extremists, as Human Rights Watch pointed out. With the lack of security both at home and in the neighboring countries, the Nigerians then may try their luck in Europe. Eurostat reported that in 2017, there were 39,090 first time

Nigerian asylum applicants in the European Union. They often go northward through Niger and then to Libya in hopes of reaching arriving to Italy. When in Italy, they too are again a target of public sentiment against them. Earlier this year, the former right wing Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi demanded on Italian television 600,000 migrants to be deported from Italy after a Nigerian man killed an Italian woman in the province of Macerata (paras. 3-4).

The Nigerian government attempts to discourage its citizens from going to Europe referring to declining asylum acceptance rates. This past June, a senior special assistant to the Nigerian President, Dabiri Erewa, warned Nigerian citizens that between 25,000 and 35,000 Nigerian asylum seekers are to be deported from Germany. She claimed that the Nigerian government is working closely with the German government to facilitate the returns. In an interview with DW in May, the Nigerian foreign minister Geoffrey Onyeama said that the German authorities believe there are 30,000 Nigerian migrants staying illegally in Germany who have been through the court process. According to the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, there were 96,664 first time asylum applications from January to July 2018, with 6,648 or 6.9 percent of those coming from Nigeria. In Europe, human traffickers often push Nigerian women into prostitution. On March 7 the Associated Press reported that there are 10,000 to 30,000 Nigerian prostitutes in Italy, who want to pay off the debt they incurred to reach Europe. The Human Rights Organization, SOLWODI, (Solidarity with Women in Distress) also claims that there are many prostitutes from Nigeria in Germany, DW reported in April 2018 (Dockery 2018, paras. 5-6).

From the foregoing, we can see that migrating most times is also not totally the solution because it has some consequences on the socio-political development of Nigeria and even personal implications for the individual, especially when it has to do with trafficking, and not too favourable discoveries upon migrating. At the level of development, migration especially to other countries of the world, may spell doom for Nigeria in long term calculations. Although, economically, it is often argued that remittance from Nigerians in diaspora also aid the countries wealth inflow and GDP but that is nothing compared assuming for instance, one million Americans or people of other countries say in Europe are coming to Nigeria in search of greener pasture or coming to add value to our economy in form of skilled workers as we do over there. The issue of brain drain and even we add "skill drain" is at the heart of developmental issues. When talented

people leave Nigeria because they could not find an enabling environment for their all-round development and contribution, how do we grow as a nation? France football national team won the 2018 World Cup hosted by Russia with practically 70% of players in the team originating from Africa. Same happened in 1998 where key players like Zinedine Zidane, Patrick Vieira among others who won the World Cup for France hosted by France were of African descent.

The problem of Migration has a long and direct link with poverty and development. Nigeria like African countries are suffering from leadership problems. Visionary leadership is grossly absent from their political landscapes. And this causes people who cannot cope to seek for better life elsewhere. The effect is always negatively resounding. Often times, we hear of Nigerians achieving one exploit or the other abroad. Breaking records upon records in their host nations. However, such may not have happened in their home country due to either the incentive not being there or lack of an enabling environment to become their best. Most often the case Nigerians who travel abroad to acquire either first degree or postgraduate education rarely return back home except the terms of stay condition indicates that they return home and still many find their way back after few months of return. According to Idio *et al* (2015, as cited in Okeoghene 2017) Nigeria lost over 10,000 academics that would have developed the Nigerian educational system to its maximum. This event was traced to the Babaginda administration between 1986 and 1990. Studies reveal that this administration brought about the drastic emigration of skilled individuals out of the nation state due to the obvious and perceived push factors of International Migration at that time (p. 46). Idio *et al* (2015, as cited in Okeoghene 2017) reveals that while the developed industrial countries see the benefits of strengthening her labour force through immigration of qualified individuals from the developing nation-states (known as source nation-states) in which Nigerians are not excluded the developing countries suffer drastic shortage of qualified skilled individuals in the work force as a result of this there is low turnout of productivity. Nigeria as earlier described as a source nation state in this situation is not left out. Most of the Nigerian public funds and resources used for Nigerian students in terms of scholarships are now little or no investments as these individuals find it unnecessary and a sort of punishment to return back to Nigeria as they believe they can be worth more than what Nigeria really has to offer (pp. 46-47).

Furthermore, Idio *et al* (2015, as cited by Okeoghene 2017):

The cause of migrants (emigration) out of the nation state can be traced to its numerous “push” factors which is obviously seen in the Nigerian history from the colonial era which is described as low development and frustration, lack of good governance resulting to poor socio economic performance, instability, conflicts and other political crisis. These are “push” factors or situations in the Nigeria state that are responsible for the massive International Migration (emigration) of trained professionals such as doctors, surgeons, engineers, professors and other various experts in needed fields. International Migration (immigration) can deliver socio-economic developmental implication in a nation state evidently showing massive reduction in poverty status, improved health care services and quality educational standards among others. A reasonable amount of migrants illegally or legally migrate due to economic reasons. This literature also valid the statement revealing that the mismanaged blessings of the Nigerian state made way for a drastic fall in standard of living, devaluation of the Nigerian currency, inflation among others (Fayomi,2013) .These factors have affected International Migration (emigration) thereby causing people to go out of the nation-state (p. 47).

Different scholars (Fayomi 2013; Idio *et al* 2015; Assefa 2013, as cited in Okeoghene 2017) have highlighted the dangers of Migration. They reveal that the uncontrollable emigration of Nigerians can also be traced as far back as the Babaginda’s administration, specifically the introduction of SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme). This created the “push” factors that made Nigerians see emigration as the only option due to the economic pressures in the nation-state at that time. Nigerians are in various nation states as doctors, professors, surgeons and other top strategic positions. The question is why did they leave Nigeria for these places? The answer to this question is between the lines of the pull and push factors.

Other negative effects of International Migration (emigration) on Nigeria are as follows; reduction of already low quality skilled manpower. Fayomi (2013, as cited in Okeoghene 2017) also revealed that Nigeria’s inability to develop is traced to the loss of manpower as well as the appropriate skill and expertise to develop the economy. Revealing that when a nation state’s labour force grows with the needed and quality skill there is bound to be productivity obviously

experienced in the nation state. But in a situation whereby skilled Nigerians engage in emigration from the nation-state the reverse is said to be the case. Developing countries which include Nigeria is seen as a source nation-state where the best skills are often sorted by the developed world. This means Nigeria needs potential assets and this can be gotten through immigration of highly skilled individuals as well. Haas (2007, as cited in Okeoghene 2017) reveals that the least of Nigerians living in America can be traced to more than 1 million. This literature also reveals that Nigeria is also a destination nation-state obviously, patronized by West African neighbouring states and a source-nation state for the European states and the rest of the developed world. This is also affirmed by Assefa (2013 as cited in Okeoghene 2017) though the nation state engages more of emigration (p. 47).

Concluding Reflection

In this paper, we looked at Poverty and Migration and noticed that one leads to the other. Nigeria is a society battered and badly beaten by poverty. Yet, it is actually a society of some wealthy few who rightly or wrongly seem to be the cause of the poverty stricken conditions of many. Available evidence shows that poverty has been a serious problem confronting the Nigerian state since independence in 1960. The poverty level in the country was about 15%, and by 1980 it had reached 28.1%. In 1985, the poverty level was 46.3%, but dropped to 42.7% in 1992 and rose to 43.6% in 1995. A year after, about 65% of the population was below poverty line, that is, about 67.1 million Nigerians. In 1999 and 2000, UN Development Report revealed that Nigeria had degenerated further as 87% of the population was below poverty line and rated 154 on the world's Marginal Poverty Index out of 172 countries (Eleagu 2018,p.106).

Many past governments of Nigeria have come up with different Strategies on how to combat and alleviate poverty. Eleagu (2018) states:

Generally, various post-civil war administrations in Nigeria initiated other programmes aimed at addressing poverty reduction over the years including the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1977, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE,UPE) in 1976, Green Revolution in 1980, Better Life For Rural Women, Family Support Programme (FSP), and Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Others were the Agricultural Development Programmes(ADPs), River Basin Development Authorities(RBDAs), National Directorate of Employment (NDE),Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI), Directorate of Social

Mobilization, and the National Accelerated Food Production Programme. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) completed the list (p. 110).

However, despite all these, things have not improved in Nigeria to the extent that by 2018, Nigeria was already adjudged the poverty capital of the World. With Buhari coming to power, Nigeria went into recession and the prices of essential goods and services skyrocketed and mostly above the reach and affordability of the poor. Thus, it is often a natural corollary that people would continue to migrate in search of better opportunities in more developed countries of the World.

Furthermore, we have to look at the root causes of poverty in Nigeria. Although, it is difficult to link population as a real cause of poverty, the fact that Nigeria's population is growing by the day without adequate socio-economic planning to cater for the growing population could invariably lead to poverty. However, the example of China proves that any nation can take itself out of poverty if the thinking and strategic planning cap is worn. Singapore took itself from Third World to First World, all made possible by the visionary leadership of then Lee Kuan Yew, the country's legendary and iconic leader. Nigeria seems to lack such, perhaps we have them but circumstances and the political nitty-gritty of our clime don't allow them to come to the fore and be elected.

Corruption is at the heart of Nigeria's political conundrum. Corruption has taken away many things that could have made Nigeria a safe haven for all. And there is no sign of stopping yet. Poor quality education, poor health system all combine to increase and prolong the poverty index and regime.

For the political instability of Nigeria, occasioned by poverty, insecurity, corruption and other gross national issues, Nigerians continue to move out en masse. From the Web, we got to see roughly (although, not statistically sufficient or correct) that about 299,000+ Nigerians were already in America as of 2006. That number would have tripled because over a million Africans who left African shore in the last 15 years are all in America. Some also migrated through

Scholarship opportunities in order to acquire quality education in Ivy-league institutions.

However, for Nigeria to save her future and see how the country can be built, we recommend the following:

- 1. Mental Restructuring:** Nigerians and the government elected to run the affairs of Nigeria must see Nigeria as a project. The thing with project is that it has two structural phases: construction and completion. We need to construct the Nigeria of our dreams, free from poverty and when completed can be a home for all to become their best. We need an ideal thought pattern that can become applicable and conformable to *praxis*, in order to take out Nigeria from the murky waters of underdevelopment and poverty.
- 2. Functional Institutions:** The advantage of functional institutions are that strong men are not needed. When a system works, everything moves well. People will be eager to stay and get access to better opportunities and standard of living.
- 3. Reliable Alleviation Programmes:** In the course of this research, we discovered many programmes that various governments have introduced but all of them failed because they were not reliable and aided by corruption. Each programme introduced by succeeding governments to help salvage the lives of ordinary Nigerians became an avenue for irregularities, massive fraud, unconscionable looting and gross negligence. To achieve a better result, given the demographic structure of Nigeria and the problem of population, government at the Federal level should have plans for various regions. The first step is to identify the needs of each region. The needs of a northern Nigeria ravaged by insurgency might not be the same with the west or South that enjoys some relative peace. Eastern Nigeria for instance needs a seaport. Lagos is congested. It can create massive wealth for the region. Cargo Airport is also not out of place. *Tinapa* in Calabar was a laudable idea but the Nigerian factor killed it. A visionary government can still resurrect it. The north needs massive skill-based and orientation-changing education to overcome her myriads of challenges, with insurgency and the natural corollary of displacement as a grave concern. The West needs more development blueprint, to enable it look beyond Lagos and even make Ogun state a further industrialized gateway that can service and complement Lagos in a competitive sense. It

is all about vision and the ability of government to see tomorrow from today. Singapore did it, Nigeria can!

4. Educational Restructuring and Priorities: In most developed countries of the World, each higher institution of learning serves as a particular or multiple purpose. Nigeria needs institutions that can clearly focus on solving some of the nation's needs. The University of Petroleum Resources at Ugbomro, Delta State, ought to be a world-class university that should produce petroleum engineers and personnel who can serve in our oil sector with innovative ideas. The Federal University of Agriculture at Umudike can actually bring out some ideas that could revive agriculture in the whole of South-eastern Nigeria and even the nation as a whole. It is all about restructuring our educational system at all levels. Till date, the purpose of Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary school 3 years apart educational structure has not been achieved. More so, the percentage allocated to education in the budget for each fiscal year is a child's play when compared with elitist nations of the World that give a pride of place to education. Nigerians who migrate to other countries of the World, go there to acquire the best of education and do exploits.

5. Good Leadership: Everything said here would amount to nothing, if Nigeria continues to suffer from bad leadership. It is quite an irony that 36 years after Chinua Achebe wrote the little book, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, the country continues to look the other way in relation to good leadership. Mediocrity hold sway at all levels. It is no longer news that bad leadership is holding Nigeria to ransom. Until we do away with it, moving out of poverty and entering into development will be difficult.

Finally, all the problems of poverty in Nigeria has an escapist route in Migration and looking at it from a developmental point of view is detrimental to Nigeria's long term development. The only way out is for Nigeria to be fixed, so that many will be motivated to stay at home and become the best they can be in it without being disillusioned. Disillusionment leads to resentment which can make one to move away from the source of that disillusionment.

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