

DEARTH AMIDST ABUNDANCE: ELIMINATION OF POVERTY AS PANACEA TO DESPERATE MIGRATIONS IN NIGERIA

Cletus Ikechukwu Anah, PhD

Directorate Of General Studies
Federal University Of Technology, Owerri
drcletusanah@yahoo.com

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Adaugo Nwosu

Directorate Of General Studies
Federal University Of Technology, Owerri
dradaugonwosu@gmail.com

Abstract

Migration refers to a more or less permanent movement of populations made up of individuals or groups over and/or across geographical, political or symbolic boundaries into new domains. Under normal circumstances, a distinction is made between push and pull factors in the analysis of migration. The push factors are seen as inducing the conservative, circumspect individuals/groups into migration. The pull factors on the other hand, encourage the risk taking liberal individuals to migrate. However, the socio-economic and political situations in Nigeria are far from normal. In spite of her abundant endowment of human and natural resources, Nigeria remains a poor country. Nigeria was ranked third among countries having extremely poor people in a 2014 World Bank Poverty Index titled "Prosperity for All-Ending Extreme Poverty". Four years later, a report by the World Poverty Clock indicates that Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the most extreme poor people in the world. This parlous state of the Nigerian economy breeds poverty among the citizenry. About 13.4 percent of the population is unemployed, 70 percent live below poverty line and life expectancy is 54 years while GDP per capita in Nigeria is five thousand, nine hundred dollars. it is against this background that this study employs the historical materialist perspective to critically interrogate this scarcity amidst the abundance of both human and natural resources in Nigeria, leading to scandalous levels of deprivation that are manifest in desperate migrations of Nigerians to even countries whose resources cannot compare favourably with Nigeria. The study relies mainly on primary and secondary sources of data which are presented in percentages, tables and graphs as deemed necessary for elucidation. The findings of this research suggest that the elimination of poverty will stem the tide of desperate migrations in Nigeria.

Keywords: Migration, Poverty, Nigeria, Materialism.

Introduction

Assessed on the basis of her atrophied development, Nigeria represents a paradox. Endowed with an abundance of both human and natural resources, Nigeria remains one of the least developed countries of the world. This is in spite of the fact that as the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria accounts for one-fifth of sub-saharan African population. With a population of about two hundred million (2019 United Nations estimates) and a growth rate of about three percent per annum, Nigeria is said to “suffer” from population explosion. The population is expected to double in about thirty years with all the associated problems such as youth bulge, increased crime rate, ethnic tension, religious intolerance and high rate of emigration. This mainstream view of population growth as apocalyptic reflects the propaganda of the Industrialised North orchestrated by the World Bank and other international financial/development agencies who dump obsolete ideas and technology on the underdeveloped South as part of their capitalist agenda to perpetuate their hegemony, and imperialist strangle hold on the South. This view derives from Robert Malthus’s 1798 “An Essay on Population” which predicted inevitable poverty and hunger resulting from increase in population. These apocalyptic predictions

Never talk about the economic benefits of more hands to work and more minds to think creatively..... they ignore the long term capital returns from a 15 year or 20 year capital investment in morality and education. (Gary North 2011:4)

Here lies the strength of the Nigerian population. According to the 2012 revision of the World Population Prospects, the proportion of children below the age of 15 in 2010 was 44 percent, 53.2 percent was between 15 and 65 years while only 2.7 percent was 65 and older. This clearly indicates a youthful, productive and mobile population in Nigeria. It is in this vein that Anah (2009) opines that rapid population growth does not invariably lead to poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation as the mainstream view of population growth propagates. Rather, population growth in Nigeria and Africa in general should be harnessed to increase production against the backdrop of Nigeria’s non-industrialised economy where machines are yet to replace human labour in production.

In addition to her productive population, Nigeria is endowed with such natural resources as crude oil, coal in commercial quantity, limestone deposits, gold and iron ore. Of her 910,770 square kilometres land area, 86 percent is classified as agricultural land. Though agriculture in Nigeria has been hampered by droughts, excess rain, flooding,, pests and diseases as well as traditional lands ownership patterns that impede mechanisation.

Poverty is caused when the known or established and sustained pattern or method of livelihood among the people is truncated or distorted to such an extent that the people, group or country are no longer capable of surviving either by adapting to the new system or changing to novel ways of providing for themselves. (Onibokun and Kumuyi 1996). In Nigeria, this distortion is traceable to the peripheral capitalism introduced through colonisation. Whereas in pre-colonial Africa, the urban centres were places for industry and creation of wealth as obtains in the developed capitalist countries, peripheral capitalism has turned the post colonial or independent African urban centres into mere consumption hubs for the distribution of goods and services from the international capitalist metropolitan places of production (Perchonok 1994). According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO 2019)..... "agriculture still remains the largest sector of the Nigerian economy and employs two-thirds of the entire labour force". The FAO bemoans such challenges as low level irrigation, limited adoption of technological and research findings, poor access to credit which has led to an estimated loss of about USD 10 billion in annual export opportunity from groundnut, palm oil, cocoa and cotton, due to a long period of decline in the production of these commodities that sustained the economy of colonial Nigeria.

Extreme poverty in Nigeria can therefore be understood against the backdrop of the country's incorporation into global capitalism through colonisation. The colonial environment prepared Nigeria for pillage during and after colonisation by the colonialist and subsequently by such agencies/instruments of neo-colonialism and imperialism as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Paris club, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In addition to institutionalizing unequal exchange between the Nigerian economy and the North through diplomatic, socio-economic and political means the colonialist and the above mentioned agents disarticulated the Nigerian economy. This is manifest at the economic and socio-political levels of the Nigerian economy. Economically, there is no interface between the various sectors of the Nigerian economy. Thus neither the rubber

plantations in Nigeria are able to sustain a viable tyre manufacturing industry in Nigeria for instance nor has the steel industry in Nigeria been able to fabricate parts for use in the foreign oriented automobile industry in Nigeria. At the socio-political level, the various regions of Nigeria lack synergy in productive relationships. The production of three major cash crops introduced by the colonialists in the North, East and Western regions of Nigeria, groundnuts, palm produce and cocoa respectively has dwindled as noted earlier but did not engender synergy among these regions. The disarticulation of the economy is implicated in the non-sustainability of industrial production leading to mass unemployment and extreme poverty in Nigeria. The exploitative activities of the multinational corporations which repatriate profit at the detriment of development projects and investment in manufacture in Nigeria breeds poverty. The devaluation of the Nigerian currency as part of the Structural Adjustment program by the World Bank and the IMF has bred extreme poverty in Nigeria.

This study therefore explores the relationship between extreme poverty in Nigeria and desperate internal and external migrations by Nigerians.

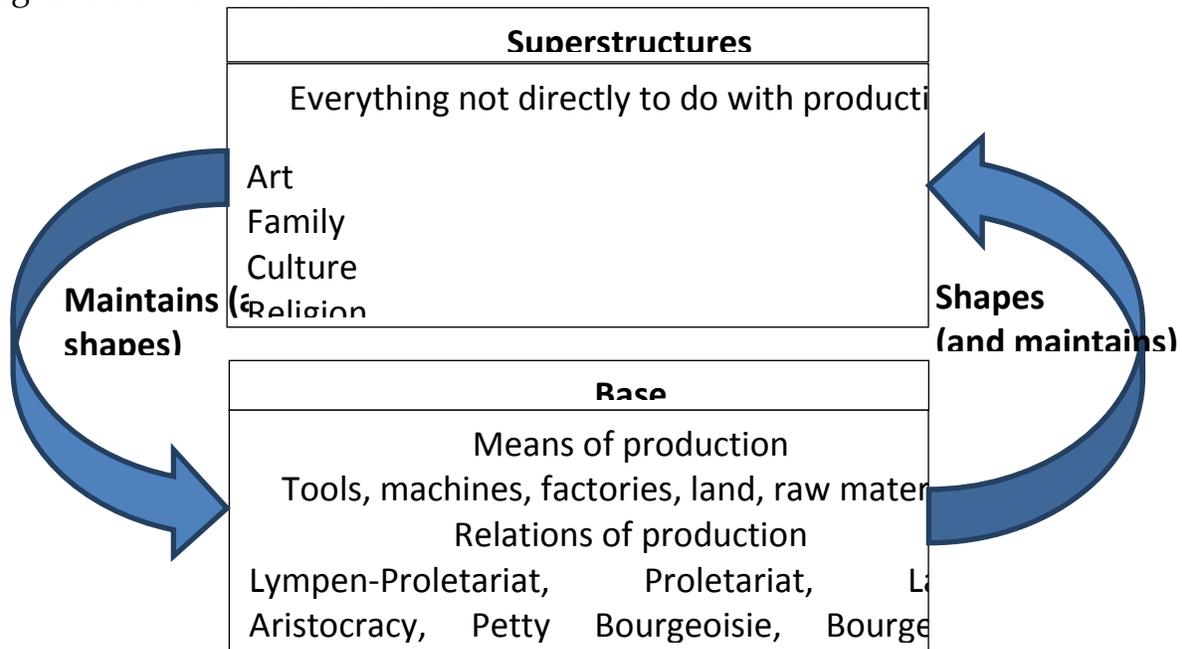
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used as the basis for analysis in this study is known as “historical materialism”. It is also referred to as the “materialist conception of history”. It is a Marxist analytic methodology which applies the principles of dialectics to the study of social production in human society. Central to the materialist conception of history paradigm is the belief that in order to survive, mankind must produce the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing. In doing this, they are invariably drawn into the social relations of production, which are property relations. Put differently, mankind must first of all eat, have shelter and clothing before the pursuit of politics, science, religion or art. Thus, the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and by extension, the level of economic development attained or attainable by any given society form the foundation upon which the legal, social, political institutions, art, ideas, religion and even the state itself can be understood and explicated. As Marx put it: “The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general”. (Marx 1859)

Historical materialism embodies the concept of dialectics. Here, nature is understood to be in a constant state of flux; as a result of the inherent contradictions in its being, nature is in an unending struggle to resolve the

contradiction, thus remaining in a state of becoming. This concept is applied to human societies in historical materialism which posits that change and development in social life occur as a result of the struggle to resolve this contradiction. It is therefore the internal contradiction in the system of material production and how this contradiction is resolved that reflect in the superstructure of society.

Fig. 1: Dialectical materialism



Source: www.patheos.com

The historical materialist perspective as an analytic tool enables the student of society to appreciate and follow the “regularities in the dialectical interconnection of material forces and relations of production”. (Anikpo 2017:24)

Extreme Poverty: The Origin And Nature Of Scarcity Amidst Abundance In Nigeria

Extreme Poverty

Extreme poverty is also known as abject poverty, destitution, penury or absolute poverty. In the 1995 report of the World Summit for Social Development, the

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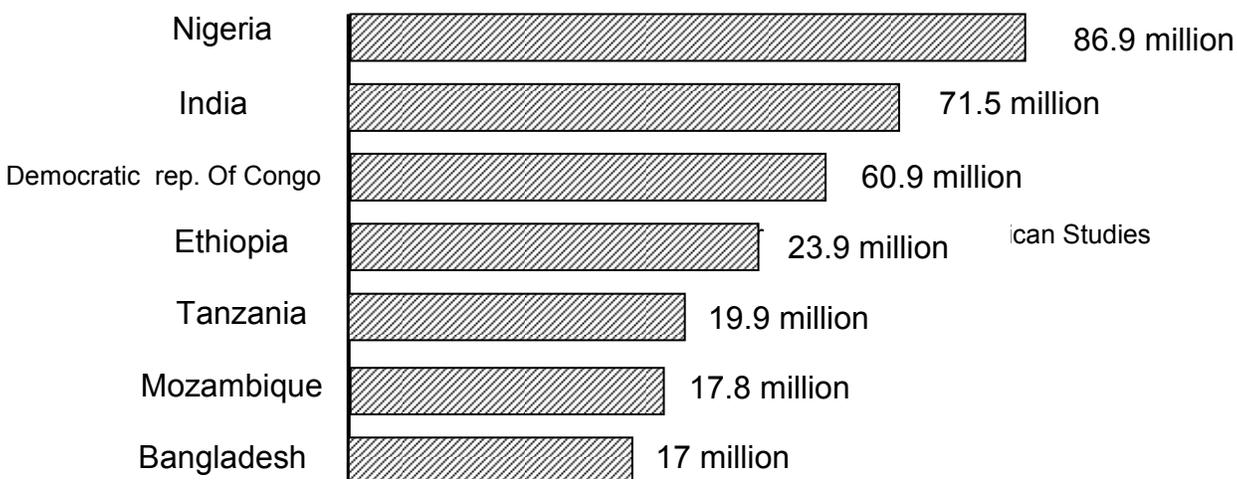
United Nations defined extreme poverty as: “a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs including food, safe drinking water sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information services. (www.en.m.wikipedia.org)

It is also possible to identify people living in extreme poverty by recourse to the international poverty line. According to Anah (2006:238): “To operationalize absolute or subsistence poverty, realistic prices are attached to the basic necessities of life, it is in terms of these prices that the poverty line is drawn”.

The poverty line is also referred to as the “poverty limit” or “poverty threshold”. It is the minimum level of income considered adequate for sustenance in a particular country. On the basis of United States of America prices, the World bank set the poverty line at \$1.00 a day in 1996. Thus the popular expression “living on less than one dollar a day”. In 2008, this figure was revised to reflect the inflationary trend. The World Bank arrived at \$1.25 a day at 2005 purchasing power parity (PPP). This was also updated by the World Bank in 2015 to \$1.90 a day at 2011 purchasing power parity. It is pertinent to note that the basic necessities of life of which prices are attached to arrive at the poverty line vary between and within countries. In this vein, the general view of the poverty line is higher in developed counties than in the underdeveloped countries. (www.en.m.wikipedia.com)

Nigeria was ranked third among countries having extremely poor people in a 2014 World bank Poverty Index paper titled “Prosperity for All-Ending Extreme Poverty”. The paper has it that Nigeria and four other countries are home to nearly 760 million of the world’s extreme poor. The World Bank delineated these countries in terms of the numbers of poor people within each country thus: India (33 percent of the world’s extreme poor), China (13 percent), Nigeria (7 percent), Bangladesh (6 percent) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (5 percent). (www.worldbank.org>news). Four years later, a report by the World poverty clock indicates that Nigeria has exceeded India as the country with the highest number of people stricken by extreme poverty. (See figure 2)

Fig. 2: People living in Extreme poverty



Source: World Poverty Clock

Nigeria operates a mono-product economy that is largely dependent on the export of crude oil. This makes the economy unstable. This instability is as a result of fluctuations in the international oil market. That the manufacturing sector of the Nigerian economy contributed only 9.20 percent of the real GDP in 2018 (National Bureau of Statistics) indicates that the country is not industrialized. About 13.4 percent of the population is unemployed, 70 percent live below the poverty line and life expectancy is 54 years.

The Origin And Nature Of Extreme Poverty Amidst Abundant Resources In Nigeria

In any attempt to locate the source of extreme poverty in a country that has such rich potentials as Nigeria some pertinent questions need to be answered; Has Nigeria always been this poor? Is poverty divinely ordained? Can poverty be eradicated? As a result of the Eurocentric teleologism of Western scholarship, Western oriented scholars explain the underdevelopment of Third World countries and attendant poverty by drawing attention to disparities between social institutions, behavioural patterns and social network of relationships in the Industrial West and those in the Third World countries. (Ake 1979). It is in this vein that the modernisation theory which was seen as an appropriate tool to rethink and redirect the European economies ravaged by the second world war is applied to development and poverty in third world countries, supposedly to bring these third world countries to the Western standard. Leading modernization theorists like Walt Rostow, Samuel Huntington and Talcott Parson contributed to the predominance of the modernization school of thought. Modernization theory holds that all societies progress through similar stages of development therefore explains the underdevelopment of the underdeveloped countries of the third world in terms of the presence or absence of institutions, attitudinal variables or values similar to those whose presence supposedly enhanced development in the industrial countries of Europe and America. However, this approach is ahistorical since it does not take into consideration, the peculiar experiences of these hitherto colonised countries of the third world. Rodney (1972) is of the view that contact with Europe and America which led to colonisation, underdeveloped Africa. Nnoli (1978) illustrates the processes of colonial plunder and underdevelopment of Nigeria by drawing attention to the fact that European colonialists mounted three pronged attack on African resistance to the material reorganisation and political domination of their

societies occasioned by colonisation. In addition to military conquest, these attacks were also at the material and ideological levels. Materially, the colonial contact situation compelled Nigerians to participate in the colonial capitalist economic activities propelled essentially by the profit motive through forced labour, by exacting taxes which must be paid in the newly introduced currency of the colonialist, payment of low wages, low prices for cash crops and the creation of artificial scarcity to maximise profit. All these measures unleashed poverty on the colonised Nigerians. This deprivation did not stop at the material realm, at the level of ideology the colonialist condemned. Nigerian values, belief systems and cultural practices through the introduction of Christian religion. Since Christian religious societies were the harbinger of formal education, Nigerians embraced the religion in order to acquire formal education preparatory to assailing available employment opportunities in the colonial trading companies, the administrative bureaucracy at the colonialists as well as the burgeoning Christian missionaries. These novel ideological orientations deprived Nigerians of their cultural identity and personality thus alienating and impoverishing them further.

The essence of the above narrative is to concretise the fact that British colonisation of Nigeria was essentially a capitalist venture aimed at maximising profit. Rodney (1972) also chronicled the achievements made by Africans before contact with Europe. These include well organised and wealthy ancient kingdoms in Benin known for her classical bronze works, Mali empire known for her wealth in gold and Egypt recognised as the cradle of civilization with her pioneer status in writing and scientific knowledge which produced the great pyramids and the preservation of the bodies of dead leaders for hundreds of years. In 2002, Michael Palin, a British Broadcasting Corporation programme maker returned from Timbuktu to report that the Great mosque of Timbuktu has a collection of books published in Africa centuries before any European books arrived. The books indicate that "In the 15th century in Timbuktu, the Mathematicians knew about the rotation of the planets, details of the eclipse, things which we (Europeans) had to wait for almost 200 years to know in Europe" (New African 2006). For a better elucidation of how this capitalist venture impoverished Nigeria and Africa writ large while enriching the colonialist, the dependency theory is instructive. With its starting point as the Prebisch-Singer Thesis, dependency theory situates poverty and underdevelopment in third world countries in the unfavourable terms of trade between the developed countries of the world (core or metropolitan countries)

and the underdeveloped countries (periphery countries). Through this unfavourable terms of trade, resources (both human and natural) are expatriated from the periphery countries to the core countries. This process enriches the latter while impoverishing the former. The ex-colonies of the Western industrialized countries like Nigeria are poor and underdeveloped because of their dependence on these industrialized countries in the areas of ideas (political, scientific and ideological) trade and investment. One of the ways that resources from the periphery are expatriated to the core is through unequal exchange. Most of the periphery countries are not industrialized. However, their economies are commodity based. The core countries therefore take advantage of their influence and control over such international, financial and diplomatic institution as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the IMF and The World Bank to institute trade laws and/or financial control measures that enhance their access to the commodities from the periphery at prices largely determined by the core countries. Also, the prices of manufactured goods from the core countries to the periphery are determined by the core countries. This unequal exchange expatriate resources from the periphery countries to the core thereby impoverishing the periphery while enriching the core. Thus, colonisation did not only impoverish the colonised in Nigeria, it stifled the development of local industries and technology as the Nigerian economy, industries and technology responded “to changes in the architecture of the global economic and political system” (Puntigliano and Appelqvist 2011:11) by being the source of raw materials for industries in Europe and America and dumping ground for their finished products, obsolete technology and ideas. It is therefore no accident that the railway line in Nigeria, constructed by the British colonial government linked only areas of commodity production to seaports for expatriation to the industries in Europe and America. From the North, groundnuts were moved by rail, to seaports at Lagos, Port Harcourt and Calabar. Cocoa and palm produce were moved from Western and Eastern Nigeria respectively to these sea ports. However, since crude oil took over from these commodities as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, the railways are comatose, unable to employ the teeming population of skilled manpower in Nigeria.

The end of the colonial era in Nigeria did not end colonial exploitation. Such structures as Multinational corporations (MNCs) put in place by the colonialists continued the exploitation of Nigerian resources. In addition to these MCNs, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations have in one way or the other depicted the influences of these colonialists on them.

Explaining the relationship between these international financial and/or diplomatic organisations and the developed countries Puntigliano and Appelqvist (2011:13) express the view that, Organisations are not neutral. They adopt legitimated norms and values transmitted through the institutional environments to which they conform in order to receive support and legitimacy.

It is from this background that one can understand the role of the IMF in the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) implemented in Nigeria by President Ibrahim Babangida in 1986. SAP is a World Bank/IMF program purportedly aimed at addressing balance of payments problems faced by many Third World Countries in the 1980s. SAP was implemented with five major policy thrusts that caused extreme poverty in Nigeria as can be gleaned from the analysis below:

- a. **Devaluation of Currency:** The impact of the devaluation of the Naira on Nigerians can only be understood as its relationship to the individual's purchasing power. As the currency is devalued, incomes depreciate and the individual's purchasing power diminished. For instance, before SAP newspapers sold for 50kobo and petrol was 39kobo per litre. Today, newspaper are priced out of the reach of the poor at ₦100, a litre of petrol is ₦143. The devaluation of the Naira also has implications for the World Banks measurement of extreme poverty. Before the implementation of SAP in 1986, one dollar exchanged for 77K. The original one dollar per day poverty line was based on 1985 purchasing power parity estimates. This means that more Nigerians lived above the poverty line. However, with the present exchange rate of ₦360 to \$1 and the upward adjustment of the poverty line to \$1.90 per day more Nigerians fall into extreme poor category.
- b. **Privatisation:** Privatisation in an economy where the currency has been devaluated allows international capitalists and their comprador bourgeoisie to purchase state enterprises and parastatals at low prices. Soon after the purchase, the comprador bourgeoisie management lay off staff purporting a bloated workforce in the quest to maximise profit. Those thrown out of their jobs slide into extreme poverty.
- c. **Deregulation of the economy:** Deregulation of the economy leads to very high interest rates and the attendant inflationary trends. The working class and peasants are unable to access investment capital from the banks. It is as a result of this situation in Nigeria that the working class are unable to buy new cars. Rather they forage the dustbin of the industrial countries as a result of this poverty by buying used (Tokunbo) cars, televisions, refrigerators, etc.

- d. Tax reforms under SAP place greater tax burden on the working class while foreign capitalists receive generous tax holidays as incentive to invest in Nigeria. In Nigeria, members of the bourgeois class evade tax with impunity with the result that the poor working class get poorer.
- e. Free movement of foreign exchange imposed by SAP allows foreign companies to expatriate their profit, without investing same on increased production or infrastructural facilities in Nigeria. It also encourages the laundering of ill-gotten wealth in offshore accounts with ease. (Anah C., Nwosu A. And Ezeji N. 2017).

In sum, the Structural Adjustment Program implemented in Nigeria in 1986 aided the plunder of the Nigerian economy by a collaboration of international bourgeoisie and the comprador bourgeois class in Nigeria. In this process, more Nigerians were subject to extreme poverty from which the country writ large and the extreme poor are yet to recover.

Desperate Migrations In Nigeria

Migration is the movement of people in space, often involving a change in the usual place of residence (Oucho and Gould 1993:258). This study defines desperate migration as that (migration) which over reacts to observable push or pull factors thereby magnifying or exaggerating same beyond perceptible reality. In line with this definition, two streams or periods of desperate migrations are discernible in Nigeria. These are the rural-urban migration which has its roots in the dichotomous location of social infrastructural facilities, administrative paraphernalia and educational institutions by the colonialists. The second period or stream of desperate migrations in Nigeria refer to external migrations from Nigeria, into Europe, America and even the newly independent Eastern European countries occasioned by the poverty inflicted on Nigerians by SAP. The specificity of these migrations are discussed here emphasizing the exaggerated pull and push factors especially the difference between the pull factors and the reality on ground.

The two streams identified above exclude pre-colonial migrations within Nigeria that were in response to wars, environmental disaster, quest for new home lands and intermittent labour movements. It also excludes the massive movement of Nigerians of Eastern Nigeria extraction from other parts of the country to their homes in Eastern Nigeria as a result of the Nigeria civil war.

Rural-Urban Migration In Nigeria

Perhaps the most researched aspect of migration in Nigeria is rural-urban migration. This is as a result of its overwhelming influence on the economy and politics in Nigeria. As stated earlier, rural-urban migration has its roots in the colonial contact situation in Nigeria. The inability of subsequent governments after independence to reverse the disparity between the rural and urban areas has made rural-urban migration in Nigeria an apparently intractable socio-economic and political problem. The colonial contact situation led to the convergence of people from different parts of the country at places where the colonialists concentrated their activities. The concentration of the colonial administrative paraphernalia, Christian religious activities which included formal education and the mercantile paraphernalia of European trading companies transformed these contact areas into urban centres. This transformation was enhanced by the introduction of such basic infrastructural facilities as pipe-borne water, electricity and macadamised roads. This disparity became the often exaggerated pull factor that lured people from the rural area to the urban centres. Though there were inter-urban migrations, these were only relay points in the rural-urban sequence or relocations based on the realisation that the envisaged pull factors were actually exaggerated and relocation to other urban centres in search of greener pastures presents itself as a stronger pull factor. In which case, the inability to actualise the goal of initial migration from the rural source becomes an added push factor. In line with the above analysis, Nnoli (1978:65) identifies "three core areas of urbanisation and high increase of population". These areas correspond to the designated colonial regional headquarters of Northern Nigeria, Western Nigeria and Eastern Nigeria. The three core areas shared such characteristics as Port city, Industrial Complex, Commercial and transport Hub of the region. In the South West, there was Lagos which served as the capital of Nigeria and Ibadan, an administrative and commercial centre. In the North, there are the densely populated cities of Kano, Zaria, Kaduna and Jos that attracted migrants because of the level of commerce, manufacturing, administration and the extractive industry around Jos. The third is in the South East where a network of urban centres linked by rail, river, road and communication ensured the influx of rural migrants into Enugu, Port Harcourt, Aba and Onitsha as a result of the industrial, commercial and administrative pull factors in these urban centres. McCain (1972) observed that the population of Nigeria in 1963 was 55 million people at annual growth rate of 2.7 percent. However, the rate of urban growth was over 6 percent. McCain (1972:209) submits that: The main factor of urban growth was rural-urban migration which must have been of the order of 200,000 – 250,000 persons a year.

This means that every year about one-half percent of the rural population went to the towns.

It is on this note of very large numbers of people migrating out of the rural areas in search of apparently non-existent jobs in the 1970s that this study considers the migration as desperate. Where the jobs were available, the numbers of applicants overwhelm existing vacancies leading to sharp practices or recourse to ethnic sentiments to fill such positions. If the reason for migration was luxury, the squalid conditions of the urban centres with poor sanitation, overcrowded housing, insecurity, inherent ethnic and religious rivalry make the pull factor of urban infrastructural facilities over exaggerated. It must be noted that by the 1970s, the rural economy had not collapsed. It was still playing the role of underwriting urban profligacy especially in the light of an extension of the core-periphery analysis to the relationship between rural Nigeria and her urban centres. The massive rural-urban migration in Nigeria is therefore considered desperate.

The exaggeration of the pull factors are attributable to the fact that the decision to migrate by individual migrants is not taken in isolation. This decision is influenced to a large extent by factors external to the migrant. Olowa and Awoyemi (2012) opine that in rural areas where natural disaster, civil conflict or structural inequalities exacerbate poverty or limit accessibility to sustainable livelihood, poor families may appoint a family member whose human capital characteristics such as educational background, age and skill appear favourable to migrate in search of paid employment. Other possible influences on a potential migrant's decision to migrate include peer groups and feedback from those who migrated earlier. In order not to be seen as having failed in their migration, such feedback are more often than not rosy and do not reflect the reality of the migrant's destination.

The overall effect of rural-urban migration on the Nigerian economy has been the institution of rural poverty. Infact, the collapse of the rural economy in Nigeria is attributable to the migration of able bodied young men and women to the urban areas thereby abandoning agriculture, the mainstay of the rural economy to the aged rural dwellers.

External/International Migration In Nigeria

Since the 1980s, there has been increased number of Nigerians leaving the shores of the country to Europe, America, Canada and even the newly independent countries of Eastern Europe. Prior to this time, there had been external migrations by Nigerians. These earlier migrations differ significantly from the later ones in their volume i.e. number of people involved, the purpose and human capital characteristics. Whereas majority of the pre 1980 international migrations were for the purposes of acquiring higher education by young adults and a few families relocating for leisure or as a status symbol. Post 1980 migrations are considered desperate as a result of the overwhelming desire for economic gains. This is more so in consideration of the parlous economic, social and political situation in Nigeria. The base line or starting point for this latter day desperate migrations is the 1986 implementation of SAP which devalued the Naira, the Nigerian currency. SAP also led to the retrenchment of staff in both government parastatals and the private sector thus engendering unprecedented levels of unemployment in the country. The exchange rate skewed in favour of the developed countries' currencies led to the collapse of those aspects of the informal sector that were dependent on the importation of foreign goods. The push factors in this case, a parlous economy, widespread unemployment and perhaps hopeless future seems not to be selective as both the liberal and circumspect personalities have taken their chance for envisaged greener pastures outside Nigeria. While majority of the external migrants in the early 1980s were educated professionals such as doctors, pharmacists, nurses and academics in search of better remunerated jobs abroad leading to the infamous brain drain in Nigeria, same cannot be said of present day migrants. There is a drain of both brain and brawn; both educated and illiterate, skilled and unskilled, old and young, male and female Nigerians jostle for opportunities to emigrate from the country. According to the International Office for Migration (IOM), there were 1.8 million and 1.7 million Nigerian departures in 2012 and 2013 respectively. In 2005 and 2006, 1.1 million and 2,6 million Nigerians left the country. (IOM 2014:29). However, not all these departures represent migration. Some are short time visits or official assignments by government officials. This notwithstanding the high level mobility is instructive as it draws attention to the push factors enumerated. The International Organisation for Migration (2016) notes that in a study of international migration and national development carried out by Haas (2008) it was observed that migration is still viewed negatively in Nigeria. It is not seen as a constituent of socio-economic transformation. Internal migration in particular is still viewed as disruptive to social cohesion while some social ills as prostitution and forced child labour are associated with it. External migration in

recent time has attracted such negative attention as human trafficking, prostitution and outright slavery especially in North Africa where Nigerians are enslaved, forced into prostitution and money is extorted from the migrants' families. This is the reason, this study considers these migrations as desperate. Despite these negative attentions, the attitude of Nigerians to migration had changed since the 2008 study. The large number of Nigerians leaving the country to other countries for various reasons and the volume of remittances to Nigeria attest to this claim.

Elimination Of Poverty As Panacea To Desperate Migration

To suggest the elimination of poverty in a capitalist mode of production is an outright misnomer. This is because capitalism is a mode of production that thrives on the creation of poverty. Capitalism creates poverty when the bourgeois class that is not into production appropriate more than their fair share of the profit that accrues from production, thus leaving the proletariat who do the actual production impoverished. The international bourgeois owners of the means of production and their comprador bourgeoisie that hold brief on their behalf in Nigeria maximise profit through the payment of nonliving wages to the working class, the proletariat that are into production. This explains why several efforts by the Nigerian government to eradicate poverty have failed. Nwagwu (2014) has enumerated several poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria that were not able to alleviate poverty. He blames this failure on the top-down method of implementation that fail to carry the people along. However, the fact remains that poverty cannot be alleviated within a mode of production that breeds poverty. It is outright contradictory. Nwagwu (2014:20) claims that:

Successive governments have made robust attempts to alleviate poverty. Such notable programmes include 1972 National Accelerated Food Production Programme and the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank; 1976 Operation Feed the Nation aimed at teaching the rural farmers how to use modern farming tools; 1979 Green Revolution programme structured to reduce food importation and increase in local good production above subsistence farming 1986 Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); 1993 Family Support Programme and the Family Economic Advancement Programme; 2001, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) designed to boost and sustain poverty alleviation.

There are also, the family support programmes, the better life for rural women programme at the national level while the wives of the governors also initiated

programmes whose impacts failed to alleviate or eradicate poverty. To avoid the mistakes of the past, this study suggests increased political consciousness aimed at building and fostering genuine revolutionary pressure on the bourgeois class in Nigeria. Political consciousness here is equated with Marx's distinction between class in and for self. Secondly, this study recommends a return to the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), the LPA represents the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now African Union's (AU) bold challenge of the imperialistic relationship that the West have perpetuated with Africa even after independence. The second chapter of the LPA is a blueprint on industrialization aimed at promoting and accelerating the economic and social development of Africa. This chapter begins on an ambitious note thus"

Twenty years after the attainment of political independence by a majority of African countries, Africa is entering the 1980 - 90 decade in a state of underdevelopment ... an underdevelopment which has resulted from several centuries of colonial domination (OAU 1980:15)

The LPA went further to outline measures for short, medium and long term attainment of the industrialization goal. The short term goals are aimed at attaining self-reliant development, reduction of dependence on the developed countries. It posits that self-sufficiency is attainable through the establishment of basic industries that will utilize the human and natural resources in Africa. These include Food and agro-industries, metallurgical industries, forest industries and energy industries.

Nigeria is expected to leverage her abundant human and natural resources to pave the way in the implementation of the LPA. This is more so in this era of globalization and digital age. The production from the above mentioned industries will not only create massive employment, wealth will be created to stabilize the Nigerian economy and eliminate extreme poverty and resultant desperate migration in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study has located the cause of desperate migrations in Nigeria in the parlous socioeconomic and political conditions in Nigeria. This economic quagmire has drawn Nigerians of various human capital characteristics into extreme poverty. The harsh economic realities in Nigeria are worsened by widespread insecurity leading to emigration in search of greener pastures. This study has canvassed the view that those migrations are desperate in the sense that either the pull factors or the push factors are exaggerated leading to

desperation on the part of the migrants. Thus some Nigerians have actually migrated to countries that in reality do not present better opportunities than Nigeria. The LPA and increased political consciousness are recommended to reverse this trend.

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