

THE EFFECT OF BRAIN DRAIN AND MIGRATION ON NIGERIAN'S DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The future of any nation depends largely on the educated and skilled individuals, they are responsible for the development of the nation and are the greatest resources the nation can ever boast about, not oil, agriculture, gross domestic profit etc. It is the people that develop the nation and not just the availability of natural resources, Nigeria is a typical example because in spite of the available human and natural resources the nation still remains in a quagmire due to corruption and looting of public funds. This problem is further complicated by the scourge of the migration of Nigerians to developed nations, which has led to brain drain in many aspects of our life as a nation. The magnitude of the migration of experts and talented citizens threaten to constitute a clog in the overall development of Nigeria. This study therefore intends to reveal that national growth and development cannot be realized when there is a high level of migration of experts from Nigeria. The paper shall further expose the causes of this endemic movement of Nigerians on the basis of corruption which has led to an increase in unemployment and cruel economic state. It further will reveal the effect of migration on different aspects of the nation. The paper shall conclude that national development cannot be achieved if this growing trend of migration of competent Nigerians overseas is not curtailed. It shall attempt to identify all that must be put in place to ensure the provision of suitable platform and basic opportunity for individuals to explore their ingenuities in the life of the nation.

Key Words: Brain Drain, Migration, Nigeria, Development, Educated, Skilled labour.

Introduction

In those days, our fore-fathers were carted away by compulsion to foreign lands, where they knew not, in millions they were forced out of their homes, able bodied men, remaining a few males, women and children, our land were left bare, development was stale, the act was called the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The slave trade is seen by so many scholars of African mind-sets as that which hindered the development of the rich endowed continent, from human to natural resources as viewed by Walter Rodney in his Publication *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972). After over 200 years, this migration has resurfaced in another form, as against the former in which they were

carted away unwilling, the latter is a deliberate means of search for route out of Nigeria, this happens in two ways, on the one hand, those who are educated in search for means to practice their expertise due to unfavourable platform in the Country known as Brain Drain, and on the other hand, the movement of those who are in search for greener pasture even when they have nothing to offer to the country of their destination which is known as migration.

Furthermore, no doubt that the creativities of many Nigerians and the lack of opportunity for them to explore their proficiency has made her have a huge number of her citizen across Europe and America. The irritation of these issues of movement is that the country has failed to provide the enablement for her citizens to manifest their abilities and thus brain drain and migration have added to the anti-development problems faced by Nigeria. While, our universities have become empty due to poor government policies, going to school abroad has become a thing of pride, even in neighbouring countries like Ghana and Benin Republic. In the area of Medical practice it has been observed that a good number of Nigerian Doctors and Nurses practice their trade in the United Kingdom, while our politicians who are unable to fix the Medical sector at home go to the UK for medical attention.

Hence, the movement of Nigerians has also a double sided effect to the nation, firstly, those who are trained in Nigeria, having attain the required skills leave and become resourceful to the host nations, secondly, Nigerians have been made to go through inhumane treatments in their bid to attain greener pasture, such as the indiscriminate xenophobic attacks on Nigerians who are in South Africa and brutal treatment of Nigerians as a result of illegitimate means of migration to Europe through Libya. Through Migration today, many young girls are engaged in prostitution in Europe, some boys are involved in drug dealing, some are of the opinion that they would rather die than to return home.

This burden of migration has heavily been laid on the issue of corruption, but Nigerians migrating want and desire a 'better life' and nothing wrong in that, but what has led to such movement and how they can be corrected is what this paper seek to expose. Although several studies have been conducted on the consequences of brain drain and migration on the developing nations. nevertheless, this paper tend to provide the reader with an in-depth analysis of the Brain Drain and migration phenomenon and its implications to the development of Nigeria, it further propels a clarion call to all well meaning Nigerians as stakeholders to the issue on ground and be effective in bringing

to bare-less minimum the scourge of brain drain which hampers the development of Nigeria.

An Expose of Brain Drain and Migration

The Cambridge Dictionary (2016) defined Brain Drain as “the situation in which large numbers of educated and very skilled people leave their own country to live and work in another country where pay and conditions are better.” Furthermore, Nadja, explains that “Brain Drain is the preponderance of the migration of highly skilled and educated persons from poor, developing and less industrialized countries to richer, more developed ones” (2008-2009, p.14). Brain drain can also be said to be the situation whereby a country loses those who are highly educated and talented workers in specific fields to other nations. Brain drain is largely seen as a problem, for the reason that competent persons leave their country and exercise their expertise to boost the economy of other nations. Their home country is left to suffer, because most of those who remain don’t have the ability to make a difference or because their contributions are insignificant. Meanwhile, migration is the movement of people from one place to another. Migration can be international or local. The former means the movement from one country to another while the latter implies the movement within a country from one city to another. The following reasons are considered as the causes of migration, economic, social, political or environmental.

More so, Brain drain “involves the problem of the outflow of trained or skilled personnel from developing to developed countries” (Grubel and Scott, 1977: p. 64). It is in the above views that Nadja Johnson (2008) express that, the developed (receiving) country gains extra skills and resources from the migration as it continues to become wealthier. On the other hand, the developing (source) country loses highly skilled manpower and human capital and inevitably becomes poorer (p. 1). Furthermore, Akusoba (2014) states that the examples of uncomfortable situations in one place while other areas with advanced technology and well developed economy with a high standard of living are big attractions. Therefore, People opt for migration and leave their homelands because of the dynamic process involve in the migration (p. 4). More so, Grubel and Scott (1977), states that there are three main reasons people leave their home country namely: to receive higher incomes, to capitalize on better career developmental opportunities and to gain a greater degree of freedom.

Causes of Bran Drain and Migration

There are various causes of brain drain and migration of people from their own lands to foreign countries. Ernst Georg Ravenstein, in his work, *Law of Migration* (1885), explained that there are two laws that guide migration principles, namely, the principle of push factor and the pull factor. Push factors are variables which motivate migrants out of their home countries, they are characteristics in the countries which produce migration. The push factors are negative features of the home country that form the drive for intelligent people migrating from developing nations. Aside unemployment and political instability, some other push factors are the absence of research facilities, employment discrimination, economic underdevelopment, lack of freedom, and poor working conditions.

Meanwhile, pull factors are positive variables which attract and induce foreigners to the receiving country, they are the positive characteristics of the developed country from which the migrant would benefit. These are the incentives in the receiving countries that encourage persons to seek employment opportunities thereby leaving their homes. These features include higher remuneration and a better standard of living, superior economic outlook, the prestige of foreign training, relatively stable political environment, a modernized educational system to allow for superior training, intellectual freedom, and rich cultures.

The Causes of Brain Drain and Migration of Nigerians

Since the start of the new millennium, there has been a significant increase in the migration of highly educated and talented Nigerians to Europe, the Americas and Asia. It is significant and detrimental because while Nigeria lags in development the receiving end which is a developed nation enjoys more of the fruits of our labours. Nigeria has had her citizens in many parts of the world and they are doing so many amazing things in different fields of human endeavors. The consequences of migration is brain drain whereby those who are endowed academically and gifted to bring about development in the nation are away. Migration has become a bane to the development of Nigeria, a lot of her young citizens are excelling in various fields overseas.

The proportion at which Nigerians who are professional in their fields leave their fatherland to practice their expertise in foreign lands in the last two decades has worsened the brain drain issue. The migration of specialists out of the Nigeria to other countries of the world where economic certainty and good standard of living is guaranteed is a pest to the development of Nigeria while host nations enjoy the fruits of the nations that have trained the individual without paying the cost of educating them, Nigeria languish in

development. Adeyemi et al., (2018), states that “this development is being seen as a problem, due to the fact that the most competent and highly skilled labor travelled out of their countries to contribute their quota to the development of other nations while leaving their countries underdeveloped” (p. 67).

The migration of skilled and highly trained individual ought to be from nations that are developed and to be beneficial to developing nations in which the migrant now reside, but in the case of Nigeria, a nation which lingers in under-development, the case is the other way round. Adeyemi et al., (2018), expresses that between 1980 and 1990, Nigerian universities faced the most disturbing effect of the brain drain scourge. It all began in the late 70s and early 80s when medical doctors migrated to the Middle East especially Saudi Arabia for greener pastures (p. 69). Just recently, the Nigerian Minister of labour, Chris Ngige discussing about the issue of Brain Drain in the medical field states that Nigeria have surplus Doctors. Thus “If you have surplus, you export... Who said we don’t have enough doctors? We have more than enough. You can quote me. There is nothing wrong in them travelling out. When they go abroad, they earn money and send them back home here. Yes, we have foreign exchange earnings from them and not just oil.”

How can we have surplus when our hospitals are without doctors, adequate drugs and equipment? How can we have surplus when the World Health Organization recommends one doctor to 600 people but the ratio of the physician-patient in Nigeria is from 1:4,000 to 1:5,000? But our Physicians migrate to UK to practice, a country whose physician-patient ratio in the U.K. is 1:300. At this point, it is pertinent to look into some causes of brain drain and migration in Nigeria.

High Level of Unemployment: Unemployment is one of the main reasons why Nigerians depart overseas for greener pastures, getting most jobs in Nigeria is not based on merit but they depend on how connected the person seeking the job is to those in top positions. To get a job one has to know someone who knows someone, and those who have no connection find it difficult to be employed regardless of their quality of education and grades. Also most employers believe that Nigerian graduates are unemployable because of the state of the educational institutions, particularly public schools. Education is constantly promoted and encouraged, but then there is limited opportunity for employment.

Also, Akusoba, (2014) states the obvious truth is that “many Nigerian graduates are unemployable because of the deplorable state of Nigeria universities. Most employers prefer to employ graduates with foreign certificates in place of those with local certificates because they think that Nigeria education lacks quality” (p. 19). Many of our graduates are uneducated flaunting certificates which they cannot defend. Another factor responsible for lack of jobs in Nigeria is the rapid growth in population and an inadequate supply of jobs, there is massive shortage of employment opportunities, funds meant for building industries are syphoned into private pockets, this also creates unemployment. Furthermore, the advent of oil has been a bane and led to low level of diversification of the economy, the absence of white collar jobs and less level of creativity, many Nigerians are only concerned about graduating from the University and getting a white collar job.

Hence, many university graduates are without work, some have spent months and years in search of jobs, and failure to secure one force them to migrate to foreign nations in search of work, meanwhile, so many are forced to school outside and return home for work having earned a foreign certificate or some go having earned the certificate get a better job package.

Poor Educational Sector: So many of our public educational institutions lack the basic infrastructure and facilities which has led to the migration of some our undergraduates to foreign universities for studies and who do not come back to help in the rebuilding of the nation, they become accustomed to their newfound society and this spells doom for Nigeria. Also, the constant strikes organised by the Academic Staff Union of Universities has affected the duration students are supposed to spend in tertiary institutions, it is common to find some undergraduates spending up to six or more years for a course duration that is supposed to last for four years. These strikes are not in any way beneficial to the students or for the infrastructural development of the institution, rather, they are sometimes driven towards a selfish motif of the lecturers. Also, our educational sector has been affected by corruption, to the level that most examinations conduction are not free of malpractices, malpractice to some extent has even become a regular practice. Therefore, these irregularities in our universities often prompt some of our young ones to migrate to other countries to study.

Economic Reason: The fluctuating nature of the Nigerian economy has led to many migrating overseas in search for greener pasture. Poverty is no doubt on the increase in Nigeria, many Nigerians live below a dollar daily, and making

ends meet becomes difficult for an average Nigerian and leads to the migration of many youths across the Mediterranean borders in search of greener pastures where some have met their untimely death. Also the poor economic condition in Nigeria has resulted to Brain Drain, whereby a skilled worker leaves Nigeria for another country in search for better economic conditions in order to secure a better job, increase standard of living, get a better salary package etc.,

Corruption: Chinua Achebe stated that “Nigerians are corrupt because the system they live under today makes corruption easy and profitable” (2012: p. 249). Little wonder the former British Prime Minister stated that Nigerians are fantastically corrupt. The dominance of corruption in Nigeria has persistently call for serious worry and attention. “A corrupt free environment gives room for investment and efforts to increase the pie other than merely fighting over its distribution and thus promote growth. To this end, good governance and low level of corruption accelerate the process of development.” (Adeyemi, 2018; p. 69)

Insecurity: Taft and Haken (2015), states that Nigeria’s Fourth Republic, which began in 1999 with the election of Olusegun Obasanjo has been fraught with security challenges, including spikes in communal and sectarian violence in the Middle Belt, militancy and criminality in the Niger Delta, and insurgency in the Northeast (p. 1). Coupled with the threats and widespread of the Fulani Herdsmen in various nook and cranny of the country as well as the poor level of our security forces has also contributed to the growth of these violence and insecurity. Most importantly, unresponsive attitude of the government to bring to an end the recurrent issues of violence has forced many Nigerians to flee the nation in search of security in other countries.

Effects of Brain Drain and Migration in Nigeria

It has now become a thing of joy for many Nigerians to leave the country in search of greener pasture due to the deplorable state of the country. Ademeyi et al, (2018), states that “brain drain affects development and its effect becomes unambiguously negative when the emigration rate is high” (p. 73). One of the main effects of Brain Drain and Migration of Nigerians to other parts of the world is that the output of these Nigerians is less felt or not felt at all in their home Country, rather, it benefits the host nations. Consequently, Alabi (2015), asserted that Nigeria have lost large amounts of revenue from tax as a result of a brain drain of competent and educated people, while Nigeria is seriously in search of qualified and skilled workers to develop their country, but unfortunately, most of these skilled individuals are boosting the GDP of developed nations and they are mainly from developing nations

particularly Nigeria (pp. 121-130). In recent times Nigerians have excelled in various fields, but these acknowledgement are accorded to either America or Britain where the individuals reside. Example includes computer scientist Philip Emeagwali, renowned for his giant stride in the production of the fastest computer system. The Times Magazine named him as 'the Unsung Hero behind the Internet.

Also, in the area of Sports, Anthony Joshua until his defeat to Andy Ruiz on 1st June, 2019 was a unified world heavyweight champion, holding three of the four major championships in boxing, he has also represented Great Britain at the 2012 Olympics, winning gold. Also, Christine Ijeoma Ohuruogu, Nigeria born has won a gold medal, silver medal and two bronze medals for Great Britain in three Olympics and Nigeria as a nation has not recorded a single Gold medal since the Athens 2008 Olympic games. In the Entertainment Industry, Sade Adu and Seal (Olusegun Olumide Adeola Samuel), who are Nigerians by origin have won the most prized Grammy award four times each, an award which no Nigeria has won while at home.

In addition to these, the health sector has witnessed the ingenuity of Nigerians in America and United Kingdom, aside the many medical specialists that have migrated to these countries, notable among them is Benneth Omalu, a forensic pathologist, and neuropathologist who was the first to discover and publish findings of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) in American football players while working at the Allegheny County coroner's office in Pittsburgh. He later became the chief medical examiner for San Joaquin County, California, and is a professor at the University of California, Davis, department of medical pathology and laboratory medicine (Laskas, 2015). Because of his exploit, a movie titled Concussion (2016) was done, with Will Smith Playing the major character.

Furthermore, brain drain and migration has caused a high level of shortage of important, skilled workers across different sectors in Nigeria. This also results to a reduction in the quality of service due to the absence of skilled personnel in Nigeria. The issues of bad leadership, corruption, poor infrastructure and lack of visionary plan can be tied back to brain drain and migration, in the sense that those who are supposed to govern or hold various offices are far from the shores of Nigeria. The mass exploration of Nigerians has also increase drastically our level of dependence on foreign aid by Nigerian government, (Osinowo, 2005), explains that it costs Nigeria billions of naira (huge foreign exchange) to replace Nigerians with expatriates from the West;

it brings about separation of family members and leads to less adequate family cohesion thereby promoting delinquency (p. 244).

While Brain Drain and Migration are linked together, Emeghara, (2013), introduces a third concept to this problem of mass exploration of Nigerians overseas, he calls it brain waste, which he explains that “it is a situation whereby foreign nationals or workers are often hired to do jobs for which they are over qualified. For instance, there are many Nigerian doctors and European scientists working as taxi drivers in some large United States of American cities like New York, Chicago, Texas, Michigan, Washington, etc., (p. 112).

The Way Forward and Conclusion

The issue of mass exploration of Nigerians is an issue which must be address with immediate effect. The migration of Nigerians who are highly educated and gifted with different talents to developed nations will continue as long as the poverty level remains. Najda, (2008) explains that “The smaller and less developed the country is, the more difficult it will be for it to compete globally and retain a skilled workforce” (p. 15). How then can this movement be curtailed? It is in this sense that Adeyemi et al., (2018), offers five ways in which Nigeria can solve the problem of brain drain and migration.

Firstly, he explains that the policymakers need to put in place sufficient incentives and mechanisms for migrants and their families to invest remittances in capital-accumulation projects that benefit the whole Nigerian economy. Secondly, he views that there is a need for the government to create programmes that can enable youths to realize their potentials, particularly in areas of Information Technology innovation hubs, encourage local contents and also provide opportunities for her citizens to study specialized programmes. Thirdly, he suggest that there should be an increase in the number of lucrative jobs in the Nigeria and a reduction in the number of educational visas that allow young Nigerians to study abroad. Fourth, a sound macroeconomic policy should be put in place. Finally, the government should eradicate corruption and nepotism at all levels of government (pp. 73-74).

In as much as there is no place like home, home has to be made safe, home has to provide the enabling environment for her citizens to develop, home has to provide the platform. No person would sojourn abroad if the condition of service as well as the general outlook of the economy is relatively okay. Government should, therefore, address those issues highlighted above which

compels Nigerian professionals to travel abroad. Although, this paper expounds that Brain drain and migration are some of the factors which negates the development of Nigeria, however, some benefits that can be derived from the phenomena, which implies that having acquired expertise and skills in developed countries, it will be of benefits if these Nigerians return home to develop their Fatherland. Also, the remittances; the migrants send home is used to develop the economy. But in general the problem is that the Nigeria society does not offer the enabling conditions and environment for them to practice, whereas going abroad enable them to acquire more expertise and outshine their colleagues who are based in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the obvious implication of this scenario is that Nigeria is being deprived of the valuable contributions of this highly skilled manpower who are migrants in other countries. In as much as brain drain has crippled the development of Nigeria it has also not placed the nation in the place it deserved through the achievements of her citizen who reside in other nations. This mass exploration is one of the reasons Nigeria has developed poorly in the areas of science and technology, because the nation does not create the platform for those talented in the field to practice their expertise which would consequently lead to their migration.

Thus, the educational system needs to be reformed in order to produce skilled graduates, innovators, and entrepreneurs, also, practice and research should be a priority, not just theoretical learning. Furthermore, the government needs to create schools, good amenities, infrastructure and job opportunities in rural areas. This will cut the level of migration to cities, thus reducing high population and unemployment in the cities. The Nigerian government must implement new policies and diversify the economy to ensure that there are available employment opportunities for the labour force.

In conclusion, unless concerted efforts by all well meaning Nigerians especially those in government in a tackling the problems of Brain Drain and migration. we shall remain the giant or Lion of Africa that cannot roar and blossom into rapid development that will propel us into belonging to the comity of developed nations.

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