

**LABOUR MIGRATION AS A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
AND DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA**

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Abstract

Individual countries of Africa have had policies that has overtime worked against the objectives of the various economic organisations in Africa, particularly that of the free movement protocol. This has so far discouraged labour migration and economic cooperation of African countries. Using narrative and descriptive research methods, the study portrays how African countries have over the years out rightly worked against economic integration and sustainable development of Africa, resulting into very ugly behaviours against human mobility exhibited in the forms of migrant expulsions, xenophobic attacks, discriminations and molestations of many kinds. The study adopts David Ricardo's Comparative Advantage theory to analyse the essence of labour migration, which is an offshoot of the policy of free movement of goods and peoples in the process of economic integration and economic development of African countries. Through the use of data from secondary sources such as books, and journal articles, the study however observes that labour migrants who usually fall victim of economic failures of countries is found to be of greater benefit to the growth of host countries and as such should rather be positively utilized for economic development. Again, the continental and regional organisation policies are not binding on individual African countries, which leads to disrespect and nonchalance of countries when it comes to policy implementation; hence the incessant challenges faced by African migrants in African regions. The study concludes that economic integration of Africa cannot be realised without absolute acceptance of legal labour migrants in accordance with the free movement policy of the AU and other African Organisations; as it is one of the primary steps towards proper economic integration and economic development of nations.

Keywords: Labour, Migration, Development, Africa, Free Movement Protocol.

Introduction

Labour migration is a phenomenon that became quite significant during colonial rule with the introduction of monetary means of exchange and the establishment of urban cities. People moved out of their rural villages on a temporal base to

urban towns where wage labour was prominent. This implies that the major cause of labour migration in Africa is mostly economic driven. Labour migration in Africa is majorly intra-African migration which means the movement of people within Africa. It is estimated that up to 53% of the total number of people migrating from African countries stay within the African continent¹, the number which increased continuously from independence of various African countries.

Meanwhile, the achievement of African independence could be attributed to Pan-African movements and its' idea of African unity. This ideology was preached and propagated by early African leaders like Nkwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe but has in the present dispensation dwindled and lost its former drive. In the bid to continue the Pan African dream, steps were taken towards the establishment of various economic organisations in Africa which were more often than not regionally concentrated to encourage economic integration of Africa. However, there has existed policy contradictions between economic integrating groups and individual countries of Africa, thus undermining the total success of neither. Inasmuch as the both are relevant to the proper development and progress of Africa, they imbibed quell features such as incompetence, ineptitude, mismanagement, corruption and greed which has over the years affected immigration policies and brought disparities among African national policies and African nations. These challenges have resulted into lots of economic issues which labour migrants have taken fall for and had continued to disregard African economic integration.

Suffice it to say that labour migrants are necessarily not the cause of economic problems of nations as has been presented by many African nations. Labour migrants have from inception been a source of development to their host, because they bring with them ideas, skills and innovations which is transmitted to their host communities or countries as the case may be. During colonial rule, people migrated in their numbers to urban centres, got involved in industrial works, construction, mining and massive cash crop production. Their activities eventually attracted development to these areas more than the rural areas. Labour migration provides human resources and encourages culture dynamism among African nations.

Several efforts made by peoples and organisations towards economic integration of Africa has become relatively futile, perhaps because the policies made, especially at it concerns free movement of persons were often defied without any form of penalty or sanction by the Organisations either at the regional or

continental level. As Fagbayibo asserted, the continental organisation which is the African Union (AU) have not done well to harmonise the various regional organisations in Africa. Policies of the AU are mere suggestions to the member countries and thus not binding on them; that is to say that the AU has no specified powers over its members as well as the regional organisations². This study however identifies the relevance of free movement of persons, in other words, labour migration to the development and integration of Africa.

Theoretical Framework

From available records, it could be deduced that the field of migration has been poorly or under-theorised, perhaps because of the complexity of the phenomenon of migration. There has been clichés when it comes to theorising migration; researchers tend to repeat the stereotypical causes and determinants of migration without consideration to the complex sides of migration especially on its developmental impacts. Some of the frequently used stereotypical migration theories are the Classical economic development theory, the Push-pull model, and Neo classical migration theory, which only considers the economic determinants of migration³ but rather avoids the effects on economic development and how it aids economic integration of nation-states.

However, the study adopts David Ricardo's Comparative Advantage theory to analyse the essence of labour migration, which is an offshoot of the policy of free movement of goods and peoples in the process of economic integration and economic development of African countries. The theory of Comparative advantage was created by an economist, David Ricardo in 1817. He is of the opinion that nations would record greater economic growth when they focus on specific productions where it has less opportunity cost.

Comparative advantage is achieved when a country produces goods and services at a low opportunity cost compared to other nations. Comparative advantage supports that countries should identify certain production(s) which they have effective comparative advantage while diverting their labour resources from other less productive sectors into the more productive sectors where they have better advantage than other countries. This allows a country to produce particular product(s) in greater capacity and base its exportation on them, while importing from other countries products which they have less comparative advantage. The theory of comparative advantage agrees that nations stand to benefit from free trade through efficient production which increases output and reduces cost⁴. For instance, country "A" may have the capacity to produce cheap

cloths and country “B” can produce cheap rice. Comparative advantage theory supports that country “A” should focus on cloth production and rather import rice from country “B” and vice versa. Comparative advantage theory allows for countries specialization of production, free trade and promotes inter-relationship via trade. It avails nations opportunity to pull resources to a specific production rather than spreading limited resources across many sectors of production. This theory observes that non specialization of production would result to less output, as countries will not be able to produce enough for themselves or even for export. With specialization, resources (including Labour and capital) are channelled into few sectors to maximise production, reduce cost and make profit. Comparative advantage theory supports that countries should rather import those products of less comparative advantage from countries that have the comparative advantage of producing.

The adoption of this theory was based on its support for production specialization and trade agreement among nations, which encourages economic integration and economic development of nations. It was in fact the fundamental reason for Free Trade Agreements. Trade of course is a sure way to increase countries revenue capacity and is not restricted to goods, but services as well, which brings to fore the relevance of labour migrants - skilled and unskilled alike. This implies that collaborations among nations are encouraged, production is maximized and distributed based on policy agreements; which are the bases for economic integration and mutual development.

Literature Review

Scholars have written on labour migration issues and how it affects both the sending and the receiving countries, through reduction in human resources and transfer of fund through remittances. Developed countries have been noticed to have more inclusive immigration policies than African countries who are more restrictive in their policies perhaps with the intention of protecting and preserving available jobs for their nationals, without recourse to several efforts and policies towards African regional integration. The question now is, what are the likely reasons for adopting different approaches towards immigration policies in the developed and the developing countries of the world? It has been so far ascertained that economic related factors usually encourage labour migration; whether as a pull or push factor. Improvement in economic development leads to increase in the demand for labour while economic decline will result to surplus labour, unemployment or underemployment. Some

instances: The eighteenth century industrial revolution in Europe brought massive employment opportunities among European countries and also encouraged migration from other societies around Europe. The same goes with the oil boom in Nigeria in the 1970s, Ghana's economic expansion in the early 1960s, Chinese rapid economic growth in the 1990s when China adopted an open-door policy in their economic reforms, which increased migration from 25 million in 1990 to 170 million in 2016.⁵ Considering the rate of economic growth recorded by China during this space of time, Bob Gregory and Xin Meng stated that "it is difficult to imagine how China could have grown so quickly for so long without this massive reallocation of labour".⁶ This clearly indicates the margin in economic growth during the time when migration was prohibited in China and the time when it was approved of through the open-door policy. Migration happens naturally when there is an economic expansion. A favourable economy attracts influx of people who migrate to satisfy their economic needs as well as to fulfil the labour needs of the growing economy. The study provided a general knowledge of labour migration using Chinese experiences. It did not provide information on Africa's migration history and how it can improve the economy of Africa.

The varying rate of inflation in various African countries has influenced the total support for free movement of persons. McNamara asserted in William Jennings that "... inflation creates uncertainty over future price levels, high nominal interest rates, and falling financial asset values which all dampen business and spending activity, producing low levels of economic growth".⁷ Inflation is known to be very rampant in Africa's economy due to political and economic challenges, most times due to adoption of unfavourable and foreign influenced policies. On this OECD suggests that developing countries should adopt and implement migration framework that consults the private sector to help ascertain the proper labour market needs. Still on the issue of developing a framework, Babatunde Fagbayibo observed that lack of a continental framework has affected and created a variance in the level of formulation and implementation of mobility policies at the regional level. This is why out of eight recognised RECs in Africa; only five have frameworks on the free movement of persons- the Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS; East African Community-EAC; Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa-COMESA; Economic Community of Central African States-ECCAS; and Southern African Development Community-SADC. While only ECOWAS and EAC have made relative progress in the implementation process.⁸ He stressed that it is the

responsibility of the Regional Economic Communities - RECs to implement the mechanisms for achieving the free movement of persons, while the AU is to harmonise and coordinate the RECs standard for the eventual creation of a continental legal framework.⁹ In line with this, Lorah Chepkorir supports Babatunde's view when she x-rays the extent of immigration policies in SADC and EAC, and how necessary it is to achieve a harmonised free movement of persons to ensure smooth free movement of people within the group and help to ascertain a general policy for all African region.¹⁰ Meanwhile, G. Alemayehu and K. Haile had a slightly different opinion. To them, lack of political commitment by the government and their failure to implement the treaties they signed, is the major challenge facing economic integration of Africa.¹¹ In other words the inability to achieve a continental framework for the free movement of persons is as a result of individual government failures. Little wonder Acemoglu and Robinson concludes that countries are poor because those in power make choices that create poverty.¹² It is necessary to consider Langhammer Rolf's opinion on the Integration of Africa. He Postulates that the integration and cooperation efforts in Africa have been that of 'trial and error'.¹³ He considers African economic integration as a long term process of solving economic problems, with the argument that the features of integration is not favourable for Africa as a less developed country. He rather proposed a cooperation in place of an integration, stating that elimination of barriers to trade in free trade areas and circulation of production factors within a custom union results to discrimination of non-member states, which he considers to be of more adverse effect to Africa. Inasmuch as his view may seem controversial, African integration efforts is perhaps a history of trial and error, which may be as a result of political imbroglio, where African political leaders imbibe foreign based policies which usually does not suit the structural organisation of the people. On the other hand, his view on adopting cooperation instead of integration of Africa seems a bit unrealistic because integration is a form of cooperation. It lies on the various actors involved to determine the extent of cooperation or integration that best works for their collective good.

The above analysis has shown that labour migration can contribute to development of host countries, but the extent of migrant's contributions depend largely on the policies and institutions put in place by the government to enhance and fully utilize the extra labour force. With the state of unstable economy in Africa, and constant political misnomer, African countries however prefer to protect their indigenes from external pressures through unfavourable

immigration policies, hence the incessant clash between the migrants and natives of host countries.

Origin Of Labour Migration In Africa

In recent times, migration and development have gained the attention of African nations and policies. Labour migration is a phenomenon that began several decades ago, but has gained momentum since the era of colonial rule in Africa. Africans lived a more sedentary lifestyle which did not encourage commercial labour and massive wealth accumulation. From the 19th century, people migrated for different reasons – for work, environmental challenges, and of course trade. Colonial rule and the subsequent introduction of monetary means of exchange and taxation system made imperative the need for labour migration. It is pertinent to note that colonial rule in most African countries, encouraged the cultivation of cash crops than food crops. The British, who introduced this new means of exchange in West Africa for example, could only make currencies available to the indigenes through the purchase of cash crops from them. More value was thus attached to cash crop production and wage labour, since these were the major means of earning money to pay taxes.

Again, the features of colonial administration enabled the growth of urban cities, attracting able bodied men and women to urban towns in search of white collar jobs; jobs in industrial production, and plantation agriculture.¹⁴ As colonial rule advanced, it became much easier for people to transcend to other areas within the colonial territories where more economic opportunities were envisaged. It is thus estimated that up to one third of West African population live outside their birth locality. While some leave outside the continent, a larger percentage leave within African continent. In this contemporary time, migration is triggered by many factors which could be self-ignited or sparked up by national challenges. The post independent era saw more expansion in labour migration within Africa. This is perhaps as a result of myriads of post independent challenges faced by African nations. For instance, migration hike was experienced in parts of Africa like Ghana in the 1970s during a major economic quagmire caused by political instability. Ghana indigenes immigrated to other African countries like Cote d'Ivoire and later Nigeria¹⁵. Labour migration however became a survival strategy for African families¹⁶, where a greater percentage of the migrants are engaged in unskilled labour in their host countries. Richard Blacks et al supports this view with the assertion that migration among other things represents an important livelihood strategy for poor households seeking to diversify their

sources of income¹⁷. This is not to say that educated/skilled individuals or professional do not migrate to other destinations for better advancement. Nigerian Professionals, especially in the health sector has in this current time found their way to European and other more developed Countries for better job opportunities. More so Nigerian students prefer to study outside Nigeria for timely graduation as well as for more quality learning experience. This increase in the desire to migrate out of one's country aside from nature related problems like unfavourable climatic conditions, disaster and war challenges could be attributed to government's incapability and mismanagement of resources; which is the basic problem facing most African countries. This shows that migration proliferation from a country has so much to do with dissatisfaction of the citizens over national leadership and management. One could perhaps say that if this were not to be so, various problems faced by migrates could have been abated because migrants would contain only quality individuals who want to attain professional/skilled advancement, and would not constitute nuisance in their host countries.

Labour migration in its real sense is not detrimental to the host countries or the sending nations, except that the porous process of migration in Africa has posed huge problems for host countries which has made it difficult to keep check of migrants and their activities; thus making unpleasant the idea of labour migration, the stay of migrants, and the entirety of African economic integration.

The Concept Of Economic Integration

There is no generally accepted meaning of economic integration. It is usually defined according to the level or stage of integration nations agree to engage into as it best suits them. However, the primary meaning of integration according to Bela Balassa is the process of "bringing together of parts into a whole"¹⁸. According to Balassa in another study, the liberalist saw economic integration as "the abolition of impediments to commodity movements." He went further to state that in all, economic integration of any form or kind must result to an increase in welfare of the people involved¹⁹. On the other hand, Manone explains that economic integration could be considered from either regional economic integration which would be limited to a particular region or international economic integration, which is in the form of globalisation.²⁰

Succinctly put, economic integration could be seen as an arrangement among nations that typically includes the reduction or elimination of trade barriers and coordination of monetary and fiscal policies²¹, to enhance economic

development. The aim of economic integration is to reduce cost for the producer and the consumer as well as increase trade in the areas involved.

During colonial administration, economic integration efforts had been noticed in the administrative patterns of various colonialists. There were establishment of collective economic institutions like the West African Airways, West African Currency Board, and East African Currency Board among others. These institutions helped for better management and cooperation in the regions.

At independence, majority of these institutions were dissolved, while new ones were formed. Economic integration has been established as a process of attaining better cooperation and development in any given country²². It was on this premise that pioneer African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah after independence propagated the idea of both political and economic integration of Africa. His ideas were regarded by other African leaders at the time as unrealistic and radical, hence the acceptance of a more subtle cooperation which rather concentrated on the promotion of only economic integration of Africa which will not interfere in any nations sovereignty. Since this period, economic integration of Africa has occupied a prominent position in Africa's economic discusses, where it has been accepted as a sure means of achieving a sustainable economic development in Africa.

The achievement of continental economic integration in Africa has been designed in a way that regional economic integration would birth a continental economic integration. This idea resulted into the signing of the African Economic Community Treaty, otherwise known as Abuja Treaty in 1991 which came into force in 1994. The essence of this treaty was to achieve a continental economic integration and cooperation by establishing regional economic groupings as well as strengthening the already existing ones²³. It was believed that countries could easily integrate on regional level (Regional Economic Communities - RECs) then from the regional into continental level (African Economic Community - AEC). Owing to this, many Regional Economic Communities have been established and are pursuing integration through the development of free trade, a common market and custom union²⁴. The Regional Economic Communities in Africa include- The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU/UMA); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); East African Community (EAC); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); Southern African Development Community (SADC); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Community of Sahel -

Saharan States (CENSAD). These regional economic communities are regarded by the African Union as the building blocks for the achievement of economic integration of Africa.

The ability of achieving the dream of economic integration of Africa lies in the commitment to the creation of a transnational community through regional economic communities under absolute monitoring and coordination by the African Union²⁵. Suffice it to say that any intention of an effective economic integration, although not strictly, should go through the following important seven stages of economic integration:

- A preferential trading area: This is the first stage of economic integration, where by member countries agree to give preferential access to a given product(s) by allowing reduction but not total abolition of tariffs. This gives member states the opportunity to have access to better economic wealth and opportunities in other countries for a reduced cost of production and availability of local resources²⁶.
- A free trade area: This is seen as the most basic of the stages or forms of economic integration. This is where member countries remove all barriers to trade between them but still maintain their independence in trade dealings with other countries/non-member states²⁷.
- A customs Union: This is when countries come together in agreement to eliminate tariffs and duties among them for free movement of goods and services. They also agree on common external tariffs (CET) on imports from non-member nations. European Union is an example of a custom union²⁸.
- A common/single market: This is seen as the most important aspect of economic integration. It eliminates all barriers to movement of people, capital and resources within the area. This means that members can move around freely or work within the member states without visa.
- An economic union: This is an economic agreement between countries to eliminate all barriers to trade and adopt common economic policies. It is a combination of customs union and common market.
- An economic and monetary union: This has to do with agreement between nations which involves a common economic policies, common monetary policies and common currency. It is the combination of economic union with the addition of common monetary policies.
- A complete economic integration: This is a complete harmonization of all economic and monetary policies by member states, that is to say that it is

the combination of custom union, common market and economic and monetary union²⁹.

Economic Integration And Development

In the world of economic trade, low income countries like the developing countries of Africa and elsewhere, find it extremely difficult to penetrate the developed market because of their inferior reputations. This is perhaps why Todaro and Smith suggests that it may be better for developing countries to trade within themselves where reputation and standard are not so much appraised, which would help them work together to create better standard and upgrade their status in the global market³⁰. It has become an accepted economic fact that gradual integration of nations' economies enhances economic growth and development, and acts as a shielding block against the harsh global trade and economy. Gradual integration as was explained previously is actual and attainable because it gives room for countries to assimilate the idea and essence of integration as well as monitor the level of advantages and progress it avails them in order to take proper steps in the right direction, especially as it concerns economic policies and decisions.

Economic integration provides expanded markets which enables large scale production and also encourages the establishment of new industries. It helps to secure markets for member states and acts as a form of protection. Economic integration is encouraged among nations as it provides avenue for economic specialization and division of labour, which helps for maximum production as well as reduce cost of production and cost of living. Todaro and Smith in support of the above submits thus:

In the absence of integration, each separate country may not provide a sufficiently large domestic market to enable local industries to lower their production costs through economies of scale. In such cases, import-substituting industrialization will typically result ... in the establishment of high-cost, inefficient local industries.³¹

According to Kayizizi-Mugerwa et al, economic integration has the tendency to drive economic growth and also encourage reduction of poverty and unemployment in Africa. It builds a more competitive front for maximum

survival and growth³². Technological innovation could be motivated, improved and transmitted within member states to enhance competition in the global market.

More so, Economic integration policies in a regional economic community serve as a guideline for nations in creating national policies that can be less destructive to the economy. The economic cooperation inherent in the process of economic integration helps to improve country's deficiency. It is worthy to mention that about 15 countries in Africa are landlocked, which is a major constraint to economic development of any nation. Economic integration however would help to surmount geographical obstacles and improve economies of scale.

Inasmuch as economic union of nations is encouraged as a reliable means of economic development, it is also pertinent for countries to strive to provide conducive environment for growth through establishment of basic necessities like infrastructures – good roads and other transportation system, reliable electricity, quality schools, wellness facilities; security; and positive internal home grown policies for sustainable development. In Africa, many economic blocs have been established since independence as regional integration communities (REC) which serve as agents of economic integration in Africa and are at different levels of economic integration. Some regional groups like ECOWAS and EAC (East African Community) allow for a degree of free movement of persons but there is no distinct continental legal framework.³³

A lot of problems militate against economic integration in Africa. African countries have undermined and disregarded the protocol of free movement of persons as the key process of economic integration. The major challenge of economic integration in Africa is the fact that African Union as an umbrella of African Economic Communities (AEC) as well as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) does not have absolute authority in coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the policies and activities of regional groups. The Union more or less play advisory role to them, thereby giving room for different choices of economic policy patterns by member states. Besides this, there are no adequate mechanisms put in place to control influx of criminals into member states; the borders are too porous with massive illicit smuggling, while corrupt border officials aid these activities to the detriment of their country and the integration of Africa³⁴.

Again, coordinating and harmonising indigenous laws with the Community policies has been a herculean task and has posed problem of disparity among member states, thus there is hardly any form of uniformity in policy implementation among member states, as national policies do not conform to the provisions of the economic groups/communities. This has resulted into problematic situations in handling migrant related issues which have constantly resulted to abuse and molestation of migrants and even expulsion of migrants within member states. Similar to this is the problem of overlapping policies. Differences in policies of groups may overlap, thereby creating undue divergent problems for countries that belong to more than one group; there may be challenges in the process of choosing which group to pay allegiance to³⁵.

Lack of funding and poverty has also posed a challenge to the process of Africa's economic integration. Countries of Africa are on different stages of development. Some have wealth of resources both human and material, while others struggle to survive. There is therefore no complete support from all member states. Many countries find it difficult to meet up with their financial obligations, hence the unrealistic dream of actualizing various group projects within stipulated timeframe.

Another significant problem of Africa's economic integration process is the lack of political will and commitment. Many African countries lack commitment to the dream of economic integration of Africa; in fact they do not share in the dream. This usually occurs among smaller countries that feel overshadowed by bigger countries; countries that do not want their national policies to be infringed upon by the continental aspirations; countries that belong to more than one regional group; and in some cases colonial heritage and neo-colonialism.

Labour Migration And Economic Integration Of Africa

Labour migration is an integral part of economic integration. It is supported by the 'free movement policy' which is an important aspect in the process of economic integration. Free movement policy supports free movement of goods and persons within the member states. It entails the right to move, reside freely and work within member states. African countries have since independence, taken several efforts to ensure economic integration of Africa, especially through the establishment of African Union and the subsequent creation of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). According to Kayizzi-

Mugerwa et al, cautious harnessing of opportunities within a regional community has the potential for the establishment of massive economic growth and the ability to fight against poverty and unemployment³⁶.

Trade has been understood to be the ultimate means through which countries partner and cooperate. People from diverse origin and cultures have traded in the past and were able to cooperate and establish age long relationships which has encouraged and improved their general economic well-being. Through trade relations, nations accumulate more wealth, exchange knowledge especially in science and technology; enjoy political and other forms of cooperation, allied forces against common enemy, among other benefits. The need to boost intra-Africa trade brought about the establishment of free trade area, to promote free movement of goods and people within member states. The essence of trade in economic promotion and development cannot be over emphasized, thus in the global economies today, trade relations among countries is being promoted and propagated as the starting point of collective development. This is perhaps why there are emphatic projections of the policy of free trade movement as well as other policies that may see to the ease of trade and the free movement of goods and services.

Although there has been a clamour for economic integration of Africa over the years, but the implementation has been at different pace. While some are diligent in the pursuant of the objectives of the AEC treaty, others are yet to make substantive effort towards the realization of a total continental integration³⁷ or at least be at the same stage of integration.

There has been laudable emphasis on the policy of free movement as a sure way towards full economic integration both in Africa and elsewhere. Free Trade and Labour migration is thus an offshoot of free movement policy and as such regarded as the bedrock of full economic integration. Notwithstanding this, RECs are yet to make outstanding efforts towards full economic integration; this is perhaps why Alemayehu and Haile concludes that none of the regional groupings in Africa have successfully fulfilled the requirement of a functional common market, or even that of a customs union. This is an indication that governments engage in signing of treaties which they end up not implementing. There is no enough show of commitment to the objectives of the AEC³⁸. However, labour migration can be relevant in the realization of economic integration of Africa – it can benefit both origin and

destination countries, but would depend fully on a well-managed, tailored and monitored framework.

It should be noted that economic integration brings about expanded market, lower cost of production as well as cheaper selling cost. This can only take place if there is an improved work force occasioned by labour migrants. Labour migrants come from different works of live, - which includes both the skilled and the unskilled workers. The skilled workers help to fill in the low labour availability in the professional field, while the unskilled occupy those menial job vacancies which the indigenes would ordinarily not engage into. It however fills in the gaps created by lack of personnel and workers in a particular area. Apart from this, labour migrants make labour services cheaper than it ordinarily would due to increase in personnel and workers, which improves productivity and increase output. This however debunks the idea and believes that migration contributes to unemployment in destination countries. This only occurs in nations that are prone to consumption than production.

Labour migrants aid knowledge sharing; it gives access to international knowledge and work ethics which are most times beneficial to the host community. It gives room for international cooperation and aids the spread of knowledge from one area to another. Knowledge of science and technology could infiltrate into other areas through migrants. Intra-African labour mobility would create better chances for migrants to freely access opportunities in the regional markets³⁹. If this is well managed, the collective knowledge from member countries would enhance innovative ideas that could be harnessed to achieve economic growth and development. On the other hand, the sending countries benefit from migrants remittances, diaspora investment, knowledge, technology and skills transfer from returned migrants.

Conclusion

The current wave of globalization and social networking has increased the rate of migration within Africa. Migration has constantly increased in Africa from the era of colonial rule due to economic, political, environmental, and socio-cultural changes that emanated from colonial administration. This phenomenon has since proliferated especially the labour aspect of it. There has been controversies about the essence and contributions of labour migrants to the growth of their host communities, since migrants are usually victimized when economic crisis exist in some countries. Instances are drawn from the eventful expulsion of migrants from Ghana in 1969 and the expulsion of migrants from Nigeria in 1983.

However, it is no longer news that Africa has been on the struggle to achieve economic integration as a strategy towards a sustainable economic development. Albeit the process has been cumbersome for African countries, but the challenges are more often than not created by African leadership. Labour migration through the implementation of the free movement policies has been found to be very beneficial to the host countries, through improved workforce and increased production and better services. It also enhances cooperation and collaboration among nations especially in the field of science and technology. For economic integration of Africa to be achieved, there should be harmonization of free movement policies in African economic communities. This is to create a smooth avenue for the movement of persons and goods for proper collaboration and eventual economic development. This research has shown that a harmonised and coordinated labour migration policy is necessary for economic development as it lays the foundation for economic integration processes, which would improve Africa's economies as well as increase her global market value.

Maximizing the benefit of labour migration requires in-depth knowledge of the impacts of migration to societies. This knowledge is necessary as it would aid immigration policy makers to improve migration employability. African leaders on the other hand has a significant role to play, as the issue of policy harmonization lies in their hands. Free movement policy should be implemented in all African economic communities without delay for a better improved economic activities across Africa. Again, Africa Union as the general body should kick start the policy harmonisation process to avoid discrepancies in policies. It would be in Africa's best interest for African leaders to utilize the surplus labours made possible by labour migrants in their various countries to maximize output. Achieving total and full economic integration in Africa depends fully on the actions of African government and their willingness to cooperate and commit to the actualization of economic integration of Africa.

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OCHENDO: AN AFRICAN JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE STUDIES

ISSN: 26814-0788 (Print) 2814-077X (e). Vol. 2 No. 1. 2021

A Publication of the Association for the Promotion of African Studies

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