

**APPRAISAL OF THE IMPACTS OF MIGRATION TO DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

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**Abstract**

*On a sober reflection on African development and the promises of globalization to the technological and economic advancements of Africa, one must have seen that the issue of migration has done more harm than good to the continent. Using the analytic method of inquiry and indeed critique, one finds out eminently that migration {emigration especially} in its international and intercontinental dimension is a negative continuation of globalization which in truth is a Trojan gift to Africa. Again, while the search for (personal, family, and African) well being (happiness, fulfillment or establishment) is the ultimate reason why migrants embark on their journey, in the course of this ultimate search, they are exposed to so many dangers like human trafficking, racial discrimination, exploitation, sexual abuses, brain drain, loss of identity, and the likes. Also, apart from urbanization and de-urbanization caused by migration, the researcher, constructively suggested, that African leaders should know that migration is now a serious existential reality of our time, find out ways to discourage incessant migration and where inevitable back up migrants with enabling empowerment and positive supervision. This is such that in whatever country they travel to, they would learn useful skills (skillful migration) and trade which will be useful to developing their individual countries when finally they come back home. Finally, African leaders should make good migration policies that should favor their own countries and not leaving migration policy formation to Western and European leaders alone. The trend should be a “win-win” relationship between Africa and the Host countries where these migrants go to.*

**Keywords:** Migration, Development and Africa.

**Introduction**

Migration has been defined as “a movement of population within or between countries”.<sup>1</sup> By implication, migration has two main dimensions. While ‘migration’ within a country can be seen in the influx of people from the rural and less attractive areas to the urban centers with its variety of attraction; international migration (emigration) spells out movement from one country to

another and could be “a response to other factors, such as threats against minority groups or warfare”.<sup>2</sup>

In Africa, migration both within and between countries have their specific causes. But generally reasons range from desires and passion to attain greener pasture by the migrant, or due to forceful ejection from homelands due to wars, conflicts and natural disasters such as flood, storms, etc.

In the context of this write up, no matter the reasons for migrations, the concern is an appraisal of the impact migration has on the host countries or places these migrants come from. This concern is basically due to the significance of migration to developmental process in Africa and to the development of Africa. Again, according to the United Nations study; “the relationship between migration and development is no longer as subject of disagreement amongst development practitioners”.<sup>3</sup>

Analysis on the concept of development will expand this work to broader perceptions than was originally intended. However, in line with the context of the paper, one takes a leaf from the perspective cited by Lasbrey Ahunya. On citing Dudley, Lasbrey re-iterates that the questions to ask about a country’s development are: what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality?”<sup>4</sup>

Lasbrey goes further to hold that if the above mentioned problems, poverty, unemployment and inequality have been growing worse in a country, then “it would be strange to call the result ‘development’ even if the per capital income had soared”.<sup>5</sup>

If we go by the above argument, then, one would wonder the yardstick for qualifying African’s development in the wake of the incessant migrations and emigrations that occur in great numbers annually. Yes, with the numbers of African migrants in the Diaspora doing “very well”; and with the consistent drain of man power from the rural areas, with the influx of the vibrant young people trooping into urban centres within the countries, how far have African countries contented with the problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality today?

Discussions on the causes or reasons for migration in its different dimensions revolved mainly around economic and educational reasons. However, the impact or the effect of migration especially on the home countries of the migrants

indicate impacts that cut across a variety of factors. These range from social political and cultural integrity of the home countries of migrants to economic, educational, and technological and other significant developmental objectives of these countries.

It is against this backdrop, that this paper brings philosophical reflection and critical examination to bear on the nature of these claimed “impacts” in one sense, and how they affect the African continent in reasonable terms. So the thrust of this study is to seek justification for the contending claims to positive and negative insights to the trend of migration in Africa, and so make appropriate critique where necessary, and point out to those issues that need to be looked into more critically.

### **Conceptual Clarification Of Terms**

#### **Migration/Emigration/Immigration**

These terminologies are already clarified above and we defined migration as movement of people from one place in the world to another. This is human migration. And we have types of human migration: Internal migration (movement within a state, country or continent). External migration (movement to a different state, country or continent) Emigration (leaving one’s country to move to another) Immigration (moving into a new country) Return Migration (moving back to where one comes from) Seasonal migration (moving with each season or in response to labour climate conditions).<sup>6</sup> Migrants are people who move from one place to another in search of work or shelter.

As we have dwelt more on the term migration in our introduction, we now briefly define Africa/ African nations and development.

#### **Africa/African Nations**

Africa is the world’s second largest and second most populous continent after Asia. At about 30.3 million Km<sup>2</sup> including adjacent islands. It covers 6% of earth’s total surface area and 20% of its land area. With 1.3 billion people as of 2018, it accounts for about 16% of the world’s human population. Despite the wide range of natural resources, the continent is the least wealthy per capital in large part due to the legacies of European colonization in Africa. Despite this low concentration of wealth, recent economic expansion and the large and young population make Africa an important economic market in the border global context.

When we talk of African nations we are talking of 54 countries in Africa : Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, DR Congo, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Algeria, Sudan, Morocco, Angola, Mozambique, Ghana, Madagascar, Cameroon, Cote D'voire, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Malawi, Zambia, Senegal, Chad, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Guinea, Rwanda, Benin, Burundi, Tunisia, South Sudan, Togo, Sierra Leone, Libya, Congo, Liberia, Central African Republic, Mauritania, Entrea, Namibia, Gambia, Botswana, Gabon, Lesotho Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Eswatini, Djibouti, Comoros, Cape Verde, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles. Included are four dependent territories: Reunion, Western Sahara, Mayotte and Saint Helena.

### **Development**

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines development as the process of gradually becoming bigger, stronger or more advanced<sup>7</sup>.

For Walter Rodney, it is *"an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to deal with his natural environment"*<sup>8</sup>. He thus sees development from an economic point of view. Development is a process that is on-going. In order words, it is dynamic rather than being static. According to Pantaleon Iroegbu, development means: *"the progressive unfolding of inner potentialities of a given realities. It is to de-envelope, that is to bring out to light existential, functional and epistemic, what was enveloped, folded or hidden"*<sup>9</sup>.

Development is the unwrapping of potentials. In the same vein, Lebrét holds that development has to do with growth and creativity of all human potentials achieved at the lowest possible cost in human suffering and in sacrificed value.<sup>10</sup> Human development in contrast to "envelopment" implies advancement, evolution, expansion, improvement, increase, progress, addition, boost, buildup, enlargement, flowering, maturation, maturity, progression, reinforcement, ripening unfolding, elaborating etc. Development means a progression from a simple or lower to a more advanced, matured or complex form or stage. It is also defined as a gradual advancement or growth through a series of progressive changes. Development is a process not a level. It is a path to achieve certain goals, a striving towards perfection.

In line with the above, Chuba Okadigbo holds that "development is a movement from bad or good to better, from better to best, from primitive to civilization, from stone age to machine age, from slavery to freedom, feudalism to capitalism, from illiteracy to literacy, from ignorance to wisdom, from abject poverty to

relative richness, from colonialism to political independence, from political independence to economic development, from tribalism to nationalism, from nationalism to pan-Africanism". Truly, development is many-sided process. It involves material, social, spiritual and moral dimensions. A genuine development is one that is accessed in terms of the welfare of human beings who at the same time serve as agents and shapers of the developmental process. This implies that the human person is indispensable, for he/she is the determinant of development.

### **Africa and Development**

Without much emphasis on some theories of development like, modernization, globalization, dependency and world system theory, one sees immediately that African countries are under developed and is characterized by poverty. All over towns and villages are faces of malnourished people, squalid living conditions, diseased with scanty medical facilities, roadside beggars, street children, etc. Thus the fathers of African Synod write that:

One common situation without any doubt is that Africa is full of problems. In all the nations, there is abject, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation. The result stare us in the face: misery, wars, despair. In the world controlled by rich and powerful nations, Africa has practically become an irrelevant appendix, often forgotten and neglected.<sup>11</sup>

Corruption is the major factor militating African development. Gorge Ehusani writing on Nigeria writes that:

Nigeria has been stripped naked by corrupt, greedy and callous elites. They have been humiliated, pauperized and reduced to a state of destitute by the combined forces of military dictatorship, political subterfuge, economic profligacy and moral degeneracy.<sup>12</sup>

Nigeria state is corrupt and has been managed and even presently been manage by corrupt leaders who have made the state an instrument of capital accumulation rather than using it for the interest or for the development of the citizenry. Africans may have a good plan for development, but as is supervised by corrupt leaders, they can hardly do a thorough job as corruption and development are antithetical. As we proceed with migration and development, we have to see that migration reduces poverty in Africa and contributes to African developmental goals.

### **Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is the development that meets the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs<sup>13</sup>. It is a way of organizing society so that it can exist in the long term, taking into account both the imperatives present and those of the future, such as the preservation of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equity.

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

We have in the past, environmental protection, economic viability and socio-political equity, but nowadays, we talk of sustainable developmental goals which are the blue print to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Sustainable development goals is a global goals or a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all<sup>14</sup> (by 2030). The 17 SDGs were adapted by all United Nations member states in 2015 general assembly, with 169 targets to reach or to be achieved by 2030. The goals and targets are universal, meaning they apply to all countries around the world, not just poor countries. Here are the 17 sustainable development goals to transform our world: 1. No poverty; 2. Zero Hunger; 3. Good Health and well being; 4. Quality Education; 5. Gender equality; 6. Clean Water and Sanitation; 7. Affordable and clean energy; 8. Decent work and Economic Growth; 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; 10. Reduced Inequality; 11. Sustainable city and communities; 12. Responsible consumption and production; 13. Climate action; 14. Life below water; 15. Life on land; 16. Peace and justice, strong institution; 17. Partnership to achieve the goal<sup>15</sup>

### **Effects of Migration on National Development (Positive and Negative)**

There are obvious significant impacts of migration on the migrants, their homes, countries and the international community. Thus, Gumisai writes:

The benefits of migration go not only to developing countries, which now receive more than \$165bn annually in remittances, money sent home by

workers abroad."Remittances reduce poverty because they generate direct income transfers to the house holds".<sup>16</sup>

Going further to corroborate the claims above David Khondour cited a recent conference on migration in Addis Ababa, in which positive contributions of migration to development is emphasized. In his reports; the positive contributions to attaining sustainable development goals (SDGs) are a fact. But there is need to announce specifically the migration- related targets. Beyond this requirement, "The SDGs recognize the need to protect the rights of immigrant workers, especially women migrants, adopt well managed migration policies and reduce remittance fees".<sup>17</sup>

According to the article;

Emigration can have a position impact on development. Remittances sent by migrants to developing countries - US. 436 billion dollars in 2014, represent more than three times the global flows of official development assistance. This stable source of financing can help reduce poverty, spur consumption, foster entrepreneurship, and increase households' investment in education and health. Diasporas can also send collective remittances to finance local development projects or help rebuild countries after natural disasters... When they travel home or communicate with their families in their countries of origin, migrants often transfer the values and behaviors observed in host countries.<sup>18</sup>

In another online cited article on the impact of migration of mother countries, positive as well as negative effects of migration are mentioned. The **Positive impacts of migration** include: Reduction of unemployment (as people get better job opportunities); Improvement on the quality of life of people; Improvement of social life of people as they learn new culture, customs and languages needed for peaceful coexistence. Migration of skilled workers also leads to a greater economic growth of the region. Migration ensures that children get better opportunities for higher education while the population density is reduced and birth rate decreases.<sup>19</sup>

**Negative impacts of migration** are: Reduction of persons from rural areas which has impact on the productivity and development of rural areas; the influx of workers in urban areas increases competition for jobs, homes, school facilities, etc; very large population in these urban centres put too much pressure on natural resources, amenities and services; and the uneven population

distribution even among cities and places within the same country. Again, a lot of migrants are completely illiterate and uneducated and therefore are not just unfit for most jobs, but also lack basic knowledge and life skills. Migration enhances population increase in the slum areas in cities which lead to increase in problems such as unhygienic conditions and crime, etc. Sometimes these migrants are exploited; and migration tends to increased nuclear families' gap with their wider family circle.<sup>20</sup>

In summary one can reasonably argue that while migration is a trend that has come to have relevance in international and local economy, its impact on the development of home countries remain an issue for debate. While some protagonists stress the positive effects more, some others see more of negative implications for home countries of the migrants. And so, while, "migrant countries are more concerned about the brain drain effect and the loss of their talented and young workforce", studies on the economic impact on sending countries "have shown that increasing emigration may be used to develop diasporas, thus giving the countries of origin *inter alia* the opportunity to foster economic development through difference channels".<sup>21</sup>

### **Africa and Migration Saga**

Michael Ngila Muendane's book titled "I Am An African; Embrace Your Identity, Escape Victimization" goes a long way to emphasize the strong yearning of the African identity in our contemporary world. Despite the positive ties and promises to globalization today, the African identity and its affirmation in all aspect of development; education, culture, technological advancement, economic advancements, political stability begs relevance in theory and in realization. The problem really does not lie in the concept of migration *per se*, but in the trend of migration in Africa within and beyond African borders, in the reason for the high rate of migration, the real causes, and the effects they have on contemporary Africa.

If we go down historically paths, the issue of migration of African especially to non African continents had recorded more of force ejection from the Africa soil in terms of slavery and human trafficking for need for cheap labour on western soil in exchange for material gains like guns, mirrors and jewelries (what a shameful paradox). These Africans have longed stamped their identities in other worlds other than Africa. You can imagine the resultant effect on the present fate of Africa.



However, there are reports on migration in pre-colonial Africa for various other reasons. These range from: the search by communities for new habitats and opportunities; community response to droughts, floods, environmental degradation and similar disasters; to internecine wars, civil strife, and general hostilities."<sup>22</sup>

Today, the story is even more pathetic and smacks of genuine concerns as to how desperate most people are at leaving their homelands for other places for diverse reasons. These efforts at migration get desperate, as the impact on the migrants themselves in particular, and on the state of Africa development calls for genuine but conscious questions as to what next, and the journey so far. In his reports on the degree of desperateness exhibited by most migrants, Gumsai Mutume notes that;

Sometimes, for months on end, young African men and women risk everything, including their lives, to take on the perilous trip across dozens of borders and treacherous waves of the Mediterranean sea in search of a better life in the North. Some die along the way, some are turned back and some who finish the journey realize that life may not be easier across the frontier. But with few jobs and din prospects at home, millions of youths and young adults in Africa still choose to migrate, often clandestinely.<sup>23</sup>

One big question one has to raise is what viable results have this spate of migrations for the migrants and mother Africa as well. For Gwendolyn Skinner, 'whether as displaced people or labor migrants; millions of African migrants who have to the work in search of livelihood often face rejection and victimization "within new nations struggling with declining economies and population pressure".<sup>24</sup>

But beyond some individual misfortune that befall these migrants, on a general note the trend has not been a very nice one for Africa. And as Gwendolyn Skinner goes further to analyze.

African migrant and immigrant workers, like European "guest workers" and illegal migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States are now part of a global movement of poor people attempting to improve their lives. These are the most recent victims in the long history of forced or induced labor movement of millions of persons. Most of these people have been "pushed out" as a result of internal, usually ethnic, conflict exacerbated by international alliances or capitalist development.

For the most part, African economies have remained underdeveloped and dependent on western capitalism<sup>25</sup>

### **Philosophical concern for the Trend of Migration in Contemporary Africa**

The role of philosophy towards subjects of its interest has not fallen short of its 'Socratic gadfly's' duty stinging out justification for claims held to. Because migration just like globalization is a sensitive issue; migration concerns or affects individuals as human persons whose overall existence is supposed to be considered in checking its gains. This should be a crucial starting point. On the other hand because Africa integrity as people is at stake issues pertaining African development should go beyond economic concerns to check the overall aspects to evaluating true development. Beginning from the impact on the migrant himself or herself, Mondin maintains that;

The modern and contemporary philosophers have obtained a whole new series of images of man, images which have often sparked great interest. For example: anguished man (Kierkegaard) economic man (Marx), erotic man (Freud), existence man (Heidegger), symbolic man (Cassirer), utopic man (Block), problematic man (Marcel), Cultural man (Gehlen), fallible man (Ricoeur).<sup>26</sup>

When the migrant is viewed from this holistic vision of man, analysis of the impact of migration on the migrants would stand out. Similarly, if development is viewed as an all-round concept which takes the individual and social aspects of men in the developmental process, what seemingly looks like benefits, positive effects or even negative trends to development will be made clear. Why one does not deny apparent gains that come with migration in economic terms, individually; and to the home countries and families of these migrants, an appraisal is must consider other vital effects that migration carries along with it. This is in line with Ogugua's argument, that "some measures such as beauty, progress, efficiency and power, which some people have used to measure both culture and development, are weak<sup>27</sup> When a holistic vision of man, capable of bringing about a total vision is sought, such exercise, "will generate a valid reality both in essence and purpose".<sup>28</sup>

Based on the above insights therefore, such questions beg for justifications: How have the remittances from abroad actually helped to reduce poverty in Africa, and contribute to development? How has the teaming exit of African's young labour force to other countries enhanced development back home, while they are

still in Diaspora, and the villages are empty of energetic vibrant youths? Has migration improved the images of these migrants, given them the desired respect as entities and placed them on par with their European and America counterparts? Can we really say of those migrants who were allowed entry only on grounds that their work skills as Laborers are needed for strictly economic reasons, that they are being treated as ends in themselves; or as means as against the Kantian moral code? In Marxist terms, is the job employment agenda to boost the economy of developed countries and provide labour in those areas where their citizens feel too elated to work not a corroboration of Marxist accusation of alienation? Are Africans in Diaspora doing what they enjoy doing if given the opportunity; or are their present jobs driven mostly by the economic benefits that accrue to them? What kind of job satisfaction are we talking about here? Why has the gap between the rich and the poor countries and continent continue to deepen if migration essentially contributes to development of sending countries? How honest are the international policies on migration? Are they not replicas of international advanced capitalism, false notion of globalization, and shrewd politics of the developed continents in the continued scheme to impoverish Africa; and retain the neo-colonial and imperialists dominion over Africa?

### **COVID 19 and Migration**

Corona virus pandemic, with the code name, COVID 19 was the greatest menace encountered by man in the last days of the year 2019 and in the year 2020, and this paralyzed so many sectors in the worlds' economy. Migration was one of the sectors affected badly as not only where there was total lockdown in aviation sector creating no room for local or international flights, there was also interstate lockdown preventing interstate travels. And with the restriction of movement and total lockdown within the states, migration was not possible. Again, apart from the woes of COVID 19 pandemic which is stated daily in our media, the pandemic has really prevented our youths from unnecessary migration and from dangers of human trafficking, racial discrimination, exploitation, dehumanization and the likes.

### **Critical Evaluation**

Having dwelt much on migration, we have to note that migration, whether voluntary or forced, regular or ill regular, refugees and the likes have really some advantages as well as disadvantages to both African and European countries. Migration is necessarily good as migrant labour is desirable and necessary to sustain economic growth and helps the country in question to rise from

economic recession towards economic prosperity. Migration is of paramount significance as far as transfer of man power and skills are concerned and it as well provides the needed knowledge and innovation for global growth and development goals. Migrants themselves, we know get better places and through interactions /acculturation learn new ways of living or new and better culture as well. Indeed, we have to affirm that the most attractive part when one really xray the actual gain of migration to African continent is the remittance of foreign currencies in form of Dollars, Euros, pounds and the likes to the home countries by the migrants.

However, the pertinent question here is: How have the remittances from abroad reduced enough to build sustainable but steady developmental projects without necessarily exporting her man power and human resources. Bad leadership and corruption have been and is still the problem of African leaders/development. Thus, I. C. Uzundu emphasizing the need of value system re-orientation and ethical sanitization by Africans and her leaders writes:

Most Africans are self-centered and corrupt. Lack of self-discipline both as individuals and as a society is a major setback to the continent. Others includes corruption which is the decline in moral or ethical values, thereby getting into moral anarchy, modernization of values, much recognition and esteem to riches and intellects and conceptual debasement of leadership itself. Owing to the above evils, there is an urgent need for ethical sanitization and re-orientation of our value system.<sup>29</sup>

In the sphere of education, a pertinent question is, why must many youths and the likes travel abroad for studies where there are so many universities and tertiary institutions in Africa and Nigeria? Addressing this one sees that African system of education; Nigeria for example does not serve its proper objectives of promoting intellectual and personal development. Thus I. C. Uzundu comments:

We Africans are still hovering under the shackles of ignorance, colonialism and primitivity. We are not yet with authentic education and political system, African leaders formulate educational policies without philosophical involvement, and our political and ideological re-orientation of the society is poor<sup>30</sup>

Africans need to imbibe authentic education which in its fundamentality forms, informs and reforms both individuals and African society at large, through change of mentality (mental education) and re-orientation and ethical

sanitization. Thus, I.C Uzundu acknowledging education as a vehicle for change and transformation writes that:

Education plays an important role as far as holistic development of man is concerned. First, premium is placed on the development of human mind or cultivation of mind and this is seen to be fundamental of all development.<sup>31</sup>

On the side of work, Africans and her leaders should not only create job opportunities for the youths, also, they need to hold esteem, the value of hardworking, and inculcate it to the youths for as Frank-Fanon said: work, over and above everything else defines the essence of man and likewise defines the existence of man.

Philosophically, other agitating questions that call for sober reflections as far as the actual gain of migration to the African continent are as follows: Has emigration to the Western world reduced poverty in Africa and contributed to development goal so far? What impact does migration on/in the sense of granting immigrants access to do those jobs (menial/medical) and otherwise given the need to employ labour to satisfy the desire of the host countries] have on the mindset of young African? What image of the 'worker' does migration create on the minds of youngsters? Is migration an apologist or defeatist principle? Does it justify the dignity of the human person, or does it go against the Kantian principle of not taking human being as means to some ends? Are the Marxist and the Kantian principles and agenda of these western countries not alienist in theory? What sort of job satisfaction are we talking about here? Is this a new form of imperialism? Why has the gap between the West and Africa continued to deepen? How honest are the interactional Laws on migration? Are they meant to be wolves in sheep clothing (employed to keep Africa in a backward position)?

Basing on African/Nigeria leadership, one can ask: Are resources on ground not enough to build a sustainable but steady developmental project, without necessarily exporting her power and human resources? Why can't the education system in Nigeria serve its proper objectives to promoting intellectual and personnel development? Why must people always travel out for further studies when there are so many tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

## Conclusion

Migration has been and is still a major issue or challenge facing African nations. It has been on the increase as majority of the African youths migrate to Europe, Asia, America and the likes in search of greener pasture. This is owing to increasing rate of poverty in African continent, which is caused by bad leadership, corruption and the likes. And this paper contends that migration (emigration especially) in its international and intercontinental dimension is a continuation of the globalization Trojan gift to Africa. There is therefore the need to look more closely into the issue of migration and specify clearly its true motives and objectives. This is because, beyond its apparent benefits are trends that are capable of destroying the Africa identity and integrity; but also of retarding the developmental pace in Africa.

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