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# Migration and the Challenges of Manpower Development in Nigeria

By

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**Abstract**

*Migration is as old as the time man became conscious of his immediate environment and the need to better his living conditions. It is a global concern in recent times because of the number of people involved and its attendant implications for manpower development in developing countries and Nigeria in particular. The main objective of this paper is to examine how migration has posed a serious challenge to manpower development in Nigeria. For various reasons ranging from poverty, unemployment, conflict, to greed and lack of contentment, a lot of Nigerians have migrated to other countries in search of greener pastures. Since the study is exploratory in nature, the research methodology adopted is the documentary method. The work was anchored on institutional theory. The study found out that migration issues between Nigeria and some other countries had resulted to loss of skilled and unskilled manpower to other countries, especially in the sphere of education and health. The paper concluded that international migration would continue to take place for as long as humans have needs that have to be met. The paper recommended that Nigeria as a developing country should promote sound economic development policy which would in turn discourage outflow of its citizens.*

**Keywords:** Migration, Manpower, Country, Development.

## Introduction

Migration is as old as the time man felt the need to better his living conditions, based on being conscious of his environment. Initially, what was prominent was internal migration. This was in the pre-industrial era, when environmental factors like floods and droughts influenced significantly movement of humans. The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century had accentuated migration, as industries across the globe demanded more and more skilled and unskilled manpower.

People have thus moved from their home countries for various reasons. Some of these reasons are 'pull' factors while others are 'push' factors. International migration has not only been on the increase, it has fostered marriages among the different nationals (Embrace, 2018). Consequent upon this, over 80 million people in the world have claimed to have Irish blood, with 36.5 million U.S refugees claiming to have Irish ancestry (Embrace, 2018). With regards to international migration, there has been increase in the number of migrants. For instance, as at 2013, the number of international migrants was estimated at about 230 million. It is imperative to state that a large number of these migrants are illegal migrants, in search of greener pastures. The European Union (EU) countries have witnessed influx of migrants from Africa and the Middle East (Urban, 2016).

It is imperative to mention at this juncture, that both legal and illegal migrants from Nigeria have impacted significantly on manpower development in the area. For instance, it has deprived the country of the much needed manpower in the education and health sector.

The general objective of the study is to examine how migration related issues have impacted on manpower development in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: (i) conceptualise migration and manpower development; (ii) examine the causes of movement from Nigeria to other countries; (iii) examine how migration from Nigeria has adversely affected manpower development in the country.

**Conceptual Clarification**

The two concepts that have to be clarified in the study are migration and manpower development.

**Migration:** Human migration has been perceived in different ways by scholars. They have been influenced by their area of specialisation. Human migration can be seen as "the movement of people from one place in the world to another" (National Geographic Society, 2018). In the same vein, Brock and Webb (1968) opined that migration can be compared with the issue of flow or phenomenon of flow. "It goes from a source to a destination, and follows a route which may be of long or short distance. It also has a duration and speed with which it operates. Migrations are of various types. These are internal migration, external migration, emigration, immigration, return migration and seasonal migration (National Geographic Society, 2018).

Human movement from one place to another can be attributed to pull and push factors. These factors are being influenced by a number of forces and counter forces. The country of emigration often exert pressure or push while the area of immigration attracts or pulls (Brock and Webb, 1968). The push factors can be among others, movement by young people in order to secure better jobs, internal conflict and war, persecution and gross violation of human rights. The pull factors on the other hand can be industrialisation or developed infrastructures, availability of job opportunities (Embrace, 2018).

Migration in a nutshell implies the movement of people from one part of the country to another or from one country to another. The type of migration that has been attracting attention in recent years is internal migration. International migration has become a major global issue because of its huge impact on both donor and receiving nations (Guinness & Nagle, 2006). Political factors in the form of strict immigration laws have served as impediments on people's desire to move to other countries (Guinness & Nagle, 2006). Amidst fear of espionage, terrorist attacks, prostitution, drug peddling, most developed countries of the world have restricted movement to their countries.

**Manpower Development:** This can be seen as an on-going process that analyses, forecasts and projects an organisation's future manpower requirement (Srinivasan, 2018). That is, manpower development helps to improve on the quality of human resources available in an organisation. This can be done through training, enhancement in staff welfare with a view to retaining them. As opined by Sharma *et al* (2013), There is no much difference between Human Resource Development (HRD) and human resource management as both are two sides of the same coin". Human resources management enhances manpower or human resource development. The term resources refer to the individuals within a given organization, while development implies the nurturing of the resources (Sharma *et al*, 2013). In demonstrating an holistic approach to the conceptualisation of manpower development or human resource development, Goel, in Sharma *et al* (2013), perceived Human Resource Development as the process of the enhancement of employees, through training, performance, appraisals, communication skills that may encourage such things like openness and risk taking in an organisation with a view to making the organization benefit in terms of better image, higher productivity and better utilization of resources.

Manpower development is a process that aids an organisation in optimising the usage of its human resources. It enhances the growth of the individual in an organisation. It also promotes organisational effectiveness (Srinivasan, 2018). The methods and tools needed for effective manpower development as opined by Omodia (2009) are orientation, which is usually done at the point of entering an organisation; on the job method of manpower development like coaching, in-house training and job rotation.If the manpower in an organisation is not well managed there can be high labour turn over in the organisation. Some of the skilled and unskilled labour may decide to relocate to other countries in search of greener pastures. This is the case with some professionals in Nigeria, like doctors, nurses and academics.

The management of human resources in an establishment focuses on six major interrelated policy areas. These are (i) management of change; (ii) organisation job design; (iii) recruitment; (iv) appraisal, training and development; (v) reward system; (vi) communication (Olowu & Adamolekun, 2005: 86).

**Theoretical Framework**

Since this paper is concerned with manpower development, the theory that is considered suitable for the paper is institutional theory. The institutional approach can be traced to the writings of eminent scholars like H. J. Laski; Maurice Duverger, and Giovanni Sartori (Johari, 2013). With institutional theory, there is emphasis on formal structures of a political organization. Such formal structures are the legislature, executive and judiciary (Johari, 2013). As Johari (2013) further asserted, this scope has been widened by scholars to include numerous interest groups within the political system. Interest groups like political parties and pressure groups can thus qualify as institutions. Private bodies are not also left out. The institutional theory as an approach in the field of public administration holds that, for an in-depth study of public administration to be achieved, institutions like the executive and the legislature and their functions must be properly understood (Eneaya, 2014). It has also been asserted that these various institutions have set goals and visions that they seek to achieve. Institutional theory thus focus attention on various formal and informal institutions of the state, recognizes their importance and their contributions to the field of public administration.

It has also been asserted that organisations are influenced by normative pressures that can be externally induced like the pressure that comes from the state (Zucker, 1987). As enunciated by Peters (2000), the normative approach serves as the first major approach to institutional analysis. The normative approach as he explained further was advocated by March and Oisen, who argued that the best way to understand political behaviour that is individual and collective in nature is "logic of appropriateness" that individual acquire through their membership in institutions. March and Oisen further asserted that people "functioning within institutions behave as they do because of normative standards rather than because of their desire to maximise individual utilities (Peters, 2000). This is an indication that people's behavior takes place mainly within institutions which may be formal or informal and would be dictated by the institutions they are serving.

The institutional theory has been criticised on the basis of being too narrow in terms of its scope. The theory neglects the role of the individual within both formal and informal institutions (Johari, 2013). Without the individuals playing their roles in an organisation, the organisation cannot succeed. The theory has also been seen as static, that is, it is not dynamic in its explanations (Peters, 2000). Institutions must be dynamic in order to be continuously relevant. The relevance of this theory to the study can be seen in the fact that manpower

development takes place in institutions. Some of these institutions are private while others are public, some are complex and others are simple. The onus therefore lies on individuals to explore available opportunities provided by these institutions to enhance their development.

**Causes of Migration: Interrogating the Drivers of Migration in Nigeria**

A lot of factors are responsible for the movement of people (Nigerians) to other countries of the world particularly Europe. In the first place, there is the search for greener pastures. A substantial number of those that travel out of the country believe that they would enjoy better living conditions abroad. This belief is often reinforced with the arrival on holidays or visits by close relatives who seem to have had improved living conditions compared to their living condition before exiting the country.

The unemployment situation in Nigeria and in most African countries also encourages migration. It can be seen as a 'push factor' in migration. The unemployment rate in Nigeria as at 2013 was 23.9% (Onuoha, 2014). The unemployment rate increased to 33.10 % in the third quarter of 2017 from 29.50 % in the second quarter of 2017. This implies that thousands of graduates are being released on yearly basis into the labour market. The situation has been compounded by swindlers, who are always ready to take advantage of the plight of the unemployed by posing as recruiters of employees. They offer the job seekers attractive positions in order for the job seekers to pay any amount required for. The swindlers operate in the streets, on the internet and the mobile phones (Onuoha, 2014). As the unemployed is subjected to harrowing experiences, he or she decides to travel out of the country to secure envisaged job.

**Poverty**: The high level of poverty is also a factor responsible for migration in Nigeria. As Kpakol (2007:446) asserted, "between 1980 and 1992, the average poverty indices in Nigeria increased from 0.28 to 0.43 respectively". He further opined by 1996, the situation had worsened to an average of 0.66; the implication of this is that, 66 out of every 100 Nigerian were living below the poverty line, in spite of the various efforts of the government aimed at alleviating poverty. In recent years, it has been discovered that the level of poverty is still on the high side. With the population of Nigeria at 198 million, based on National Population Commission estimation, 158 million Nigerians are living below N720/day or $2/day. This figure is about 80% of the population (Mpamugoh, 2018). This no doubt makes movement out of the country attractive to Nigerians. The poverty situation has been compounded by the debt overhang, incurred by both the federal and state governments in the country. The debt figures as provided by the Debt Management Office (DMO) in *The Nation* of 2nd July, 2018, are as follows:

**Nigeria Public Debt Stock as at March 31, 2018 (In millions)**

| | Debt Category | Amount Outstanding ($) | Amount Outstanding in naira |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. | External debt (FGN+State & FCT only) | 22,071.91 | 6,746,279.29 |
| B. | Domestic Debt (FGN Only) | 41,147.58 | 12,576,758.18 |
| C. | Domestic Debt (States + FCT) | 11,059.37 | 3,384,166.32 |
| D. | Sub-Total – Domestic Debt (FGN + States & FCT) | 52,206.95 | 15,960,924.50 |
| E. | Total (A + D) | 74,278.86 | - N22,707,203.79 |

**Source:** *The Nation* (2018).

The DMO has stated that the combined debt of both the federal and state governments stood at about₦6.75 trillion. This no doubt is on the high side, while the federal government targets $2.8 billion loan abroad to aid the financing of the 2018 budget.

**Insecurity:** The challenge of insecurity in Nigeria became prominent right from the period of military rule in Nigeria; especially in 1990 with the activities of the Niger Delta militants and their agitation for resource control. "Since the dawn of the Fourth Republic, militants of the Niger Delta and secessionist movement of the south-eastern part of the country have not rested in years (Adurotoye, 2016, p. 12). Incidentally, Boko Haram insurgency also has inflicted more injuries in form of destruction of property. Fulani herdsmen/farmer's clashes are also on the increase while the activities of cattle rustlers in a state like Zamfara are unabated. There are also numerous cases of ethno-religious conflicts, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, rape and assassination (Nwolize, 2007). All these internal security challenges, more often than not, make migration attractive to the citizens.

**Diversity Visa Lottery:** Nigerians in the 1990s had the opportunity of participating in the United States of America's Diversity Visa (DV) programme. The programme was established based on the Immigration Act of 1990, by which 55,000 immigrant visas would be available in an annual lottery, starting in fiscal year 1995 (Diversity Visa/U.S Embassy .., 2018). The Diversity Visa enables members to be selected from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States the previous five years. Though previously, Nigerians cannot take part in this lottery exercise, many Nigerians benefited in the past and are still residing in the United States till date.

**The Need to Seek Asylum:** Eminent Nigerians have migrated to other countries like Britain and America in order to seek asylum. This was done mainly in the 1990s by some heroes and martyrs of the struggle to actualise June 12. They realised their lives were in danger because of their confrontation with the military government of Babangida and Abacha (Oladesu, 2018). Among those that sought protection abroad were NADECO Chieftains and their supporters like late Chief Anthony Enahoro, General Alani Akinrinade, Senator Tinubu, Professors Akinyemi, Gbadegesin, and Ade Banjo. These people continued the struggle outside the shores of Nigeria.

**Greed and Lack of Contentment:** These had also caused migration from the country over the years. This factor relates to those who were gainfully employed and enjoying a fairly good standard of living but still decided to leave the country.

**Illegal Migration:** This situation is very common among the semi-skilled workers. They function as artisans in their country (Nigeria) such as owning a barber shop, hair dressing outfit and welding business. There is also the issue of laziness with the desire to make quick money on the part of migrants from Nigeria, making it difficult to blame the government all the time (Ogundare, 2017). The demand for professionals especially Medics, in the United Kingdom as a result of 'Brexit' that is, British exit from the European Union (EU) has allowed skilled migrants from Nigeria and some other Commonwealth countries to take up employment in the United Kingdom (*The Pointer,* 2018). They are filling vacant positions left by the EU citizens who have relocated to their countries of origin. The number of British indigenous medics is far lower than what is required to manage the health sector in that country, necessitating the need to secure ready-made manpower from Nigeria.

**Human Trafficking**: Human traffickers have also contributed immensely to cases of illegal migration from Nigeria to other countries. Their victims are usually oblivious of what they would be subjected to in their host countries. A lot of the young ladies and women are transported to countries like Italy to end up as sex slaves possibly for many years. These

people end up having emotional and psychological trauma following their horrifying experience (Ogundare, 2017).

**Migration and Manpower Development in Nigeria**

The movement of humans from Nigeria has led to the loss of skilled manpower and semi-skilled manpower to other countries mainly in Europe. "The Brain drain issue is a critical issue affecting the human resource development index of the Nigeria nation as more Nigerian professionals in diverse fields, especially in health and education sectors of the nation's economy, are almost on a daily basis leaving the shores of the country for Europe, America and Canada among other developed countries in the world in search of greener pastures" (*The Pointer,* 2018 ). Due to poor living conditions and poor conditions of service at home, a lot of professionals have left the shores of Nigeria in order to enjoy better living standard outside.

There is the report that, "no fewer than 5,406 Nigerian-trained doctors and nurses are currently working with the British National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom (UK)" (The Pointer, 2016 ). The British Government had reported that, Nigeria medics constitute 3.9 per cent of the 137,000 foreign staff working alongside British doctors and nurses (*The Pointer*, 2016). The Nigerian Medical Association had also corroborated the brain drain in the medical profession by reiterating that, out of the 75,000 registered medical doctors, 40,000 are practising abroad (Gbadamosi, 2017).The universities in Nigeria have also suffered from the brain drain syndrome as many academics have taken up opportunities outside the country. This had affected manpower development in the area of teaching and research, since manpower development is concerned with enhancement of human resource of an organisation or a country.

Migration has brought about loss of lives of many Nigerian migrants in the process of being transported to Europe and Italy via the trans-Saharan route. Recently, it was reported that 26 Nigerian women in their teens were murdered while trying to cross the Mediterranean, as there was the feeling that they must have been sexually molested before being killed (*Sunday Tribune,* 2018). Earlier in the year (2017), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) made it known that about 521 Africans, comprising Nigerians, Ivorian's, Guineans, Senegalese and Gambians had drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. There was thus an increase of 50 persons when compared with the number that died in 2016 *(Sunday Tribune,* 2017). These deaths and even successful escapades are indications of loss of manpower to Nigeria. Able bodied men and women, skilled and semi-skilled labour being lost to migration to Europe on daily basis due to government's ineptitude. The loss of manpower to deaths definitely impact negatively on manpower development.

Another effect of migration on manpower development is the loss of funds on training. That is those who are trained by the government through scholarship eventually found their ways to Europe in search of greener pastures. This is especially true of professionals like Engineers, Medical Doctors, Pharmacists and Nurses. It is therefore difficult for the trained to assist in training other people. This is especially in the area of skilled manpower which cannot be enhanced to the required standard or even in line with international best practices. Migration had also imparted on quality service delivery in the different sections of the country. For instance, in the health sector where there is dearth of infrastructures and shortage of medical personnel, there is poor health service delivery. It was realised that Nigeria registered about a quarter of the medical doctors with its needs but has only about ten per cent of the doctors its population size requires practising in the country. This is also what is being experienced in the education sector. Eminent scholars find their

ways out of the country on daily basis due to poor conditions of service and infrastructures meant to teach.

There is also the negative impact of migration on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. Even though the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been on the increase in recent years, the fact that migration of skilled and semi-skilled persons impede on the GDP cannot be overemphasized. Based on rebase, the Nigeria GDP showed an increase of 69.1 per cent from N40.5 trillion to N71.1 trillion in 2012. While in 2013, it was reversed from N42.3 trillion to N80.3 trillion, an increase of 89.22 per cent (Niyi-Akinmade, 2014). In 2017, the GDP increased by 0.82 per cent as against the drop to 1.58 percent which was recorded in 2016 when there was economic recession as observed the National Bureau of Statistics (Onuba, 2018). If both skilled and semi-skilled labours had been judiciously used to the maximal level, without migration, the GDP would have been more than what it was. This definitely would have brought about increase in the number of manpower employed in the public service.

Migration had also promoted mediocrity in the public service, thus affecting manpower development. By the time the qualified manpower leaves the country for greener pastures, those that are left in employment or that are likely to be employed are mediocre. This is one of the major challenges to efficiency and effectiveness in the public service. This in other words means that with migration it would be difficult to promote meritocracy in recruitment and promotion which is the hallmark of well performing public administration system (Olowu & Adamolekun, 2005). It is also important to note that meritocracy is costly both in monetary and non-monetary terms. With respect to the non-monetary terms, it requires sophisticated organisational and professional skills, which entails the core values of objectivity, anonymity and real commitment to public service and public accountability (Olowu & Adamolekun, 2005).

**Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it would be seen that migration is as old as the time man became conscious of his immediate environment, realise his limitations and the need to improve his living conditions. It would also be seen that a lot of factors like insecurity, poverty, unemployment and poor infrastructures are responsible for human migration in Nigeria. These numerous migration issues have impeded effective manpower development. This has its attendant implications for technological and socio-political development.

**Recommendations**

It is hereby recommended that government should provide an enabling environment for professionals to function, either in the private or public sector. Public servants should be well remunerated in order for them to perform their duties diligently. The equipment needed by them should also be provided. This would help to solve the problem of brain drain that is affecting manpower development in Nigeria.

Social infrastructures should also be provided for the citizenry. When the necessary infrastructures like electricity, pipe-borne water and good roads are in place, the 'pull' factor would be resolved to a large extent, and there will be decrease in the number of migrants.

Efforts should be made by the government to tackle the security challenges in Nigeria. Ethno-religious conflicts, Boko Haram insurgency, herdsmen attacks, rape, armed robbery and separatist agitations should be dealt with by the government. When these issues are resolved, this would go a long way in restoring peace into the country. This no doubt would help minimise the desire to migrate to other countries that are considered to be relatively peaceful.

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