

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN AFRICA: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

International migrations have become a crucial driver of growth and development among states in Africa. With the advent of globalization, international migration has presented great benefits, opportunities and implications around the globe. This study therefore sets out to interrogate the phenomenon of international migration and socio-economic development in Nigeria. To this end, the study raised research question, such as; has international migration of Nigerian Nationals led to an increased growth in diaspora? The study adopted longitudinal design and the content analysis. The push-pull theory was used to explain the factors that affect migration and economic growth. The Findings of the study reveal that international migration has led increase in diaspora remittances to Nigeria. It has also contributed to the improvement in standard of living of among Nigerians. In all, the study concludes that international migration has become an inevitable reality among nations and Nigeria should maximize its gains. Therefore, the study recommends that since diaspora remittances constitutes a sizeable chunk of Nigeria's source of foreign exchange earnings, there is need for the Federal Government and the Central Bank of Nigeria to harmonize the activities of International Money Transfer Organizations and other informal channels of remittances in order the track the volume of remittances inflows into the country.

Keywords: International migration, Migration, Economic Growth, Diaspora Remittances

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of migration has remained part and parcel of the existence of mankind since the dawn of history as humans have always involved themselves in movement activities. Migration, both internal and international, is a common feature of both developing and developed countries. Internal migration in this context refers to the movement of people within their country of origin (in-migration and out-migration), which could be due to various social, economic and political factors. International migration is the movement of people outside their country of origin (emigration) into another country (immigration) (Nwajiuba, 2005).

Essentially, internal migration explains the movement of individuals within same geographical territory which in this case can be from rural to urban such as from Lagos to Abuja. International migration has to do with the crossing of borders or international boundaries such as Cameroon to Nigeria described as South-South Migration, or Nigeria to the United States of America described also as South-North Migration. Migration is an inevitable part of human existence, with a long history. However, its pattern has changed considerably over time, from the search for space, especially in the middle ages, to that of congestion in large cities (rural-urban migration) in the modern age. This is especially so in the last millennium. By 2030 three-fifths of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas (Stephens, 2000).

In relation to Africa and Nigeria in particular, some scholars notably Ake (1981); Zegeye&Ishemo (1989) as well as Gopalkrishna&Oloruntoba, (2012) have attempted to explain the root causes of migration in Africa as traceable to forced migration as a result of the pre-capitalist formations response to the penetration of European merchant capital. Hence, they posit that the colonial administration in most African countries introduced taxation which made it imperative for able-bodied men to migrate to the cities to work in order to earn money to pay taxes. This pattern of migration caused major disruption in the indigenous production process because able-bodied men left the rural areas for the cities. Similarly, Mberu (2010) noted for instance that the history of labour migration in Nigeria dates back to four eras of slave trade between 1400 and 1900, when over 12 million slaves were exported from west, west-central and eastern African countries (Nigeria inclusive) to European Colonies in the Americas in the

15th century. Nigeria during this period of slavery lost about 2 million forced labour migrants' (Dunn, 2008). The arrival of the British in the mid-19th century provided the framework for large scale intraregional labour migration. They ushered into the country export oriented political economic policies, which completely changed the face of migration and intraregional labour migration in particular in Nigeria. New resource-rich areas in north (groundnuts and tin) and southern (cocoa, kola nuts, rubber and coal) of Nigeria were opened up to sustain the colonial policy. The need for labour to sustain the production of these resources led to rural-rural migration of people to work as either, migrant tenant workers, farm labourers, miners or migrant traders. Migrant labourers were also attracted from different West African countries, such as, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Mali, Guinea, Cape Verde, and Togo (Udo, 1975). Colonial political economic policies, led to inequity in the provision of socio-economic services and infrastructure, which was skewed towards areas in the eye of the political economic interest of the Colonial masters. The rural areas were consequently neglected and virtually abandoned.

Although the concept of forced migration is predominantly used to describe the movement of refugees, asylees and internally-displaced persons (Castles, 2003), this trend best qualifies the diasporization of Nigerians due to economic constraints as an instance of forced migration. From the foregoing, Obom-Egbulem (2010) notes that that there are more than five thousand (5000) Nigerian Medical Doctors practicing in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. While in Nigeria with a population estimate of over one hundred and sixty million people (currently estimated at 200 million); we have thirty-nine thousand, two hundred and ten (39,210) medical doctors. And we continue to chant the popular phrase 'Health is Wealth'. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Africa has continued to lose its skilled professionals. In this connection, the IOM statistics provide that since 1990, an estimated population of 20,000 (twenty thousand) professionals (medical doctors, university lecturers, engineers, and others) leave the shores of the continent annually so that as at 2007 there were over 300,000 highly qualified Africans in the diaspora (Okeke 2008). The Nigeria content in this aggregate is decipherable from the remittances in this connection, the World Bank notes that Nigeria tops the chart in Africa (World Bank 2012).

Conversely, the Nigerian State has had its own peculiar experiences of the influx of international immigrants. Thus, the relatively stable and prosperous economy of Nigeria after independence and the early 1970's attracted large numbers of intraregional labour migrants within and as well as labour migrants from other ECOWAS countries, such as, Togo, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali. These labour migrants were attracted to the known clusters of mining and cash crop production, regional administrative cities of Enugu, Kaduna, Ibadan, and major commercial centres and sea ports of Lagos, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Warri among others, which offered a range of employment opportunities. Internal migration as reported by Afolayan et al. (2008) also surged in the third and final quarter of the 20th century. Thus, the post-independence era witnessed heightened labour migration from several parts of the country to the main administrative and economic centres of the country and to more varied destinations than ever before. Relatively large scale of immigration into the country was interrupted by flight and or expulsion.

Moreover, the cause of human mobility had not always been economic; civil war and ethnic conflicts had spurred the dislocation of minorities from their destination back to their home region. The Biafra War of 1967-1970 recorded the largest dislocation and dislodgment of many ethnic groups from the northern part to the south-eastern and south-western parts of the country. In addition, for some of the people dislodged during and after the Biafra war, the option was the flight out of the country, to the Republic of Benin and to the outlying islands of Sao Tome and Principe. It is imperative to note that International Migration (Emigration and Immigration) can be of great benefits to a nation state through agreements and partnerships with others (states) in the international system. Many studies on international migration have confirmed that economic factors play a very dominant role in people's decision to migrate across borders (ILO, 2010). Similarly, ILO (2004) reported that migration has absorbed a considerable number of young people entering labour markets of the advanced countries, while also generating remittances to the sending countries. As observed from literatures, developing countries engage more in International Migration than the developed countries (International Organization Migration, 2014). About one billion migrants are around the world presently not residing in their nation state of origins (International Federal Red Cross and Red Crescent, 2012) as these migrants

around the globe can make up a 6th nation state after the order of China, Indian, United States of America (USA), Indonesia and Brazil (Martin and Widgren, 2002:3) as people tend to move from a particular place to another for various reasons best known to them also being an essential part of man's nature (Adeola and Fayomi, 2012:1). Migration, economic growth and development are interwoven in various ways. Migration has contributed to poverty reduction, national security, political stability and a reduction in unemployment in many sending countries like Nigeria (GCIM, 2005). Cross-border migration generates significant economic gains for the migrants in the first place, and then for both the sending and receiving countries (World Bank, 2006). In 2012, India recorded highest with \$69.35 billion, and then followed by China (\$60.25 billion), Philippines (\$24.45 billion) Mexico (\$23.22 billion) and Nigeria (\$20.57 billion) (UNCTAD 2013). Most remittances are used at micro levels for investment in businesses and human capital, family contributions, weddings, donations to charitable organizations, tithes in churches and festive celebrations. On the other hand, migrant remittances have drastically increased in recent years from \$1 billion in 2003 to \$20.6 billion in 2012 (OECD, 2012). Migrants' remittances have continued to surpass both inflows of FDI and net Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Nigeria (Darkwah&Nahanga, 2014).

The severe economic difficulties, such as increased poverty and political instability which have plagued many African countries in the last two decades have resulted in the large-scale migration of Africans to Europe and the United States. (Takoungang 2004), there is concern that emigration deprives African nations of their best human resources, represents a transfer of educational investment from poor to rich countries and leads to abuses or exploitation of their workers. The attempt to establish a nexus between international migration and socio-economic development has ignited heated debate among scholars and polarised them along two opposing schools of thought. While some argued that migration has contributed to development in Africa, others are of the view migration has robbed Africa of their best hands and brains hence underdevelopment. It is against this backdrop that this study therefore raises the following research questions; has international migration of Nigerian Nationals led to growth and increased Diaspora remittances?

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Migration

The concept of migration has acquired large volume of explanations from scholars. Accordingly, (Ikwuyatum, 2016) categorically opined that migration as a process involves the relocation of people from current place of residence (origin) and/or to a destination. The duration of stay in the destination/new place of residence often define whether it is a migration process or not. Essentially, migration can be in several forms such as internal or international, voluntary or involuntary as the case maybe.

Depending on the goal and reason for relocation, people who migrate can be divided into three categories: migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Each category is defined broadly as the mixed circumstances might occur and motivate a person to change their location.

As such, migrants are traditionally described as persons who change the country of their residence for general reasons and purposes. These purposes may include the search for better job opportunities or healthcare needs. This term is the most generally defined one as anyone changing their geographic location permanently can be considered migrants.

Contrastly, refugees are not narrowly defined and are described as persons who do not relocate willingly. The reasons for the refugees' migration usually involve war actions within the country or other forms of oppression, coming either from the government or non-governmental sources. Refugees are usually associated with people who must unwillingly relocate as fast as possible; hence, such migrants will likely relocate undocumented. Asylum seekers are associated with persons who also leave their country unwillingly, yet, who also do not do so under oppressing

circumstances such as war or death threats. The motivation to leave the country for asylum seekers might involve an unstable economic or political situation in the country or high rates of crime. Thus, asylum seekers relocate predominantly in order to escape the degradation of the quality of their lives.

Nomadic movements are normally not regarded as migrations, as the movement is generally seasonal, there is no intention to settle in the new place, and only a few people have retained this form of lifestyle in modern times. Temporary movement for the purpose of travel, tourism, pilgrimages, or the commute is also not regarded as migration, in the absence of an intention to live and settle in the visited places. The impacts of human migration on the world economy has been largely positive. In 2015, migrants, who constituted 3.3% of the world population, contributed 9.4% of global GDP.

According to the Centre for Global Development, opening all borders could add \$78 trillion to the world GDP. Remittances (funds transferred by migrant workers to their home country) form a substantial part of the economy of some countries.

International Migration

International migration is the movement of people outside their country of origin (emigration) into another country (immigration). According to the International Organization for Migration (2010) higher demand for labour in the developed economies and availability of labour in underdeveloped economies has set global labour migration in motion. The huge global labour market has offered employers the chance to hire migrant workers as part of their cost minimization strategies. Moreover, globalization with its associated forces has increased

themobility of labour across borders. It has already reinforced the movement of skilled workers. Multinational corporations favour the movement of labour, especially highly skilled labour. International migration is triggered by structural, objective conditions which act as push and pull factors for migration. In the case of economic migration, pull factors would typically include economic conditions such as unemployment, low salaries or low per capita income relative to the country of destination. Pull factors would include migration legislation and the labour market situation in receiving countries. Involuntary displacement would be explained through factors such as state repression or fear of generalized violence or civil war. Furthermore, international migration is also connected by complex system of links between states such as group of countries linked by economic, political and cultural ties as well as by migration flows (Boswell, 2002). Other reasons for international migration especially from developing countries include humanitarian crisis such as forced displacement as a result of civil wars, natural disasters and ethnic conflicts. Some of the people also emigrate due to political persecution by their home governments. General unattractiveness of farming, lack of basic amenities (roads, electricity, water, and health care facilities) which prevent industrial ventures has made international migration inevitable.

Theoretical foundation

The study is anchored on the Push-Pull model. The push-pull model is associated with the works of scholars such as Udo, (1993); Afolayan, (1998) and Awaritefe, 2000. The basic assumption of the push-pull model is hinged on the fact that there exist push factors or repulsive forces, such as poverty, unemployment, dearth of basic socio-economic infrastructure, and generally lack of economic opportunities which trigger migration of people to another place or destination of

higher opportunities. Several scholars among which are Udo (1975) and Afolayan (1972) in particular averred that the decision to migrate decision is based on an evaluation of the exogenous factors. The decision to move out of rural areas is often based on the socio-economic inadequacies that exists in the source region; this sets up a trajectory or pattern of movement from places with 'push' endogenous factors (unemployment, dearth of socioeconomic, poverty etc.) to destinations with attractive exogenous factors (pull) of employment opportunities, accessibility and availability of socio-economic facilities, and better life generally (Castles, 2012). Thus, migration may be associated with development, urbanization or the forced movement of people fleeing from violent conflict or national disaster. In the case of economic migration, pull factors would typically include economic conditions such as unemployment, low salaries or low per capita income relative to the country of destination. Pull factors would include migration legislation and the labour market situation in receiving countries. Involuntary displacement would be explained through factors such as state repression or fear of generalized violence or civil war.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted longitudinal design. A longitudinal study refers to an investigation where participant outcomes and possibly actions or exposures are collected at multiple follow-up times. The study adopted documentary method of data collection. Subsequently, the content Analysis was adopted in this research work because the study is a non-experimental research and thus will provide a detailed explanation and indebt knowledge to this study.

However, data generated were analysed using qualitative descriptive analysis. It very germen to adopt this method because the study is exploratory and descriptive.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Migration Policies in Nigeria

For several decades, Nigeria lacked a national strategic framework on migration to drive the debate on migration within and outside the country. The Principal Working Document that guides migration in Nigeria is the National Migration Policy (NMP) that was adopted in 2015. The National Migration Policy (NMP) is guided by number of principles, which include but are not limited to the following: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, and the Palermo Protocol, for the protection of migrants' rights against exploitative labour, human trafficking and smuggling, discrimination, and other malpractices that could arise from migration.

In particular, a major priority of the Policy is the free movement of nationals, as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, which states in section 15(3), Chapter II, that the State shall “provide adequate facilities for and encourage free mobility of people, goods and services throughout the Federation. The policy also acknowledges the framework of the revised Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Treaty, especially Article 59, as well as the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment (Protocol A/P.1/5/79 of 1979) and subsequent Supplementary Protocols of 1985, 1986, 1989 and 1990. The ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration, 2008, also guides the formulation of this policy, especially in terms of the promotion of intraregional mobility, supporting immigration and emigration with appropriate institutions at departure and receiving areas within the region; optimizing regular migration to countries outside the ECOWAS region, seeking effective ways of managing migration and controlling irregular migration, as well as protecting the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers at destination countries; and the inclusion of the gender dimension in migration policies (ECOWAS Commission). The framework for the development of this policy was additionally

guided by the AU Strategic Framework on Migration and Development and the AU Common Position on Migration and Development, 2006, covering a number of areas, including human resources, irregular migration, brain drain, remittances, trade etc.

Nigeria has also ratified a series of pertinent conventions and treaties, including the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Inhuman, Cruel, Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified on 28 June 2001); the 1981 African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Right (22 June 1983); the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (23 July 2001); the 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (28 June 2001); the 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (27 September 2001); the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1 November 1989). The 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, was ratified on 28 June 2001. In addition Nigeria has ratified all eight core conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), especially noting the Convention 97 on Migration for Employment.

Similarly, Nigeria is an active member of ECOWAS. Freedom of movement is enshrined in the ECOWAS Protocol, of 29 May 1979, on the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment. This protocol allows ECOWAS citizens: (a) to enter any ECOWAS state without a visa; (b) to reside in any ECOWAS member state for up to 90 days without a visa; and (c) to apply, after 90 days, for a permanent residence permit which allows them to start businesses, seek employment and invest. An ECOWAS passport was established in 2000. So far, only the first phase – abolishing visa requirements if the stay does not exceed 90 days – has been achieved. The right of residence, the aim of the second phase, and the right of establishment foreseen under the third and last phase have not yet been implemented. Partly as a result of these developments, the past decade has also recorded an increased tempo in the formulation of national migration and sectoral policies in African countries, to provide an operational framework and coordinating mechanism for migration management. In spite of these developments, Nigeria does not yet have a national strategic framework on migration to drive the debate on migration within and outside the country. This policy on migration is therefore timely,

comprehensive and addresses the key issues of migrants' rights and their contribution to development, based on existing national legal and policy frameworks in the country. The Federal Government of Nigeria vests responsibility for the coordination of the national policy on migration in the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), in collaboration with all the MDAs involved in migration and development programmes in Nigeria, in the implementation of this Policy. The inter-ministerial steering committee or TWG will play an active role in implementing this policy to address specific thematic issues in migration (see attached Action Plan Attached). At the four-day national training on "Migration Policy Development and Management in Nigeria" for officials of MDAs held in Abuja on 12–15 November 2012, participants presented their suggestions on issues surrounding the status of the draft national policy on migration. The resulting key recommendations relate to the following: the need for a greater visibility and autonomy of NCFRMI, for instance through direct reporting to the Office of the President or Vice President; the appointment of a chief executive officer for NCFRMI who is an authority on migration matters; and strengthening NCFRMI as an institution and increasing the capacity of its officials. Other Existing legal and policy frameworks in Nigeria related to migration include:

a. Immigration laws

The law regulating immigration issues in Nigeria is the Immigration Act of 1963. Other subsidiary legislations are the Immigration Regulations of 1963; the Immigration (Control of Aliens) Regulations of 1963, and the Passport (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1990.

b. Protection of migrants

Nigeria has ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, which came into force in 2003. The adoption of national legislation in this field is one of the recommendations expressed in the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration and in the AU's meetings.

c. Laws against trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol) has been incorporated into Nigerian national legislation through

the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law, Enforcement and Administration Act of 14 July 2003. Amendments to the Act, promulgated on 7 December 2005, extended the powers of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) to cover internal trafficking and exploitative child domestic labour, and provided for the forfeiture of the assets and proceeds of crime of convicted traffickers. A Victims Trust Fund was also created, through which forfeited assets are collected for the rehabilitation and restitution of victims.

d. Child labour law/child rights/child trafficking

The Child Rights Act of 2003 is a comprehensive document of 278 sections, providing in particular for the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour, child marriage, the exploitation of children for begging, their recruitment into the Armed Forces, and child trafficking. Section 274 states that the provisions of the Act supersede all other laws. However, the Child Rights Act has not come into force in all states – with northern states reportedly having difficulties domesticating it – thus making the provisions of the Act not applicable in all Nigerian courts.

e. The Labour Act of 1974/ 2004

The Labour Act of 1974, now Labour Act CAP L1, LFN, 2004, prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15 in commerce and industry, and restricts labour performed by children to home-based agricultural or domestic work. The Act prohibits forced labour and stipulates that children may not be employed in agricultural or domestic work for more than eight hours per day and that children under age 12 cannot be required to lift carry loads that are likely to harm their physical development. The act regulates the recruitment of persons within and outside Nigeria, and the movement of persons for employment within and outside Nigeria. It also provides for the protection of all persons in employment.

International Migration and Remittances Contribution to Nigeria's Growth.

Nevin&Omosomi (2019) conducted a study titled “Strength from Abroad: The Economic Power of Nigeria's Diaspora. The study was anchored on a survey design and data were generated and analyzed based on statistics from the World Bank, Pew Research Centre and the CBN. It is observed that remittances represent household income from economies arising mainly from the temporary or permanent movement of people to those economies. In this regard, remittances

include cash and non-cash items that flow through formal channels such as electronic wire, or through informal channels, such as money or goods carried across borders. Essentially, the study reported that Egypt and Nigeria account for the largest inflows of remittance into Africa. It is discovered that in 2018, Migrant remittances to Nigeria equalled US\$25 billion, representing 6.1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The 2018 migrant remittances translate to 83% of the Federal Government budget in 2018 and 11 times the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows in the same period. Among other things, the study further discovered that Nigeria's remittance from diaspora migrants 7.4 times larger than the net official development assistance (foreign aid) received in 2017 which stood at US\$3.4 billion. From the foregoing, official records indicate that there are 1.24 million migrants from Nigeria in the diaspora (UN, 2017; Nevin & Omosomi, 2019) and consequently, the country accounts for over a third of migrant remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa and this could grow from US\$25.5 billion in 2018, US\$29.8 billion in 2019 to US\$34.8 billion in 2021 and 2023.

However, it is also reiterated that the growth in remittances is subject to global economic forces, which could spur or hinder growth of remittance flows such as growth in emigration rate, economic conditions of the resident countries and the economic fundamentals of the Nigerian economy. The fundamental recommendations of the study include that there is need to create and sustain platforms that increase accessibility of crucial information for Nigerians in diaspora. Hence, they are in need of credible opportunities of investment with assured returns on their savings and earnings. It is also imperative to minimize the cost of remittances and technology accessibility. This is because Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most expensive place to send money, where the average cost sending \$200 is 7.1% (about 25% higher than the rest of the world).

Knomad (2019) and UN-DESA (2017) did a study titled "Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook". The study employed both quantitative research method through survey and qualitative data. The study discovers among other things that migrant remittances to Nigeria from the United States amounted to US\$6.19 billion in 2017 alone and accounted for 9% of the total remittance outflow from the country in the same period. Moreover, the United States accounts for 22.6% of the emigrants from Nigeria in diaspora. The study further that at a time

when foreign aid and foreign direct investment are declining, remittances have evolved as an important source of foreign exchange, when migrant workers remit a portion of their income to satisfy prior family commitments.

Taylor (2000), carried out a study titled “Migration: New dimensions and characteristics, Causes, Consequences and implications for rural poverty”. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research method. It principally argued that typically, although individuals migrate, they do not sever ties with their source households. Source households may pay migration costs and support migrants until they become established at their destinations. Findings of the study revealed that family members who remain behind (often parents and siblings) may reorganize both their consumption and production activities in response to the migrant’s departure, and migrants (often children) typically share part of their earnings with their household of origin through remittances. Furthermore, continuing interactions between migrants and rural households suggest that a household model would be more appropriate than an individual-level model of migration decisions. The vast majority of the world’s migrations originate in rural areas, where most of the world’s poverty is also concentrated. How migration out of rural areas affects those left behind is not only important from a social welfare point of view. In light of the increasing integration of markets, it also may have ramifications for economic growth outside rural areas (e.g. by affecting food production, agricultural exports, the rural demand for manufactured goods and future economic surplus in agriculture available for investment elsewhere in the economy).

It concludes that migrants are influenced by a number of considerations in the choice of destinations. The perception of an economically buoyant Europe and North America fuels the desire to migrate to those countries. In addition, social factors, including similarity in education and language, also impact on a migrant’s choice of destination – for example, the English-speaking United Kingdom and United States. Thus, overwhelming evidence shows that economic factors are the major reasons for international migration from Nigeria.

Conclusion

Suffice it to state that international migration is an old practice among Nigerians; thus before Nigeria's independence in 1960, Nigerians travelled to the United Kingdom, USA, France etc. to obtain higher education. In that era, the tendency was to return to Nigeria immediately after completing studies. The turning point seems to be the collapse of the petroleum boom in the early 1980s, and the attendant economic hardship faced by Nigerians. Subsequently, Nigerians started seeking employment opportunities in other countries, while many who did not necessarily study outside the country began to leave. This is the phenomenon of brain drain. According to Takoungang (2004), the severe economic difficulties, increased poverty and political instability that have plagued many African countries in the last two decades have resulted in the large-scale migration of Africans to Europe and the United States. Unlike their counterparts in the 1960s and 70s, who were anxious to return home after acquiring an American education in order to contribute in the task of nation building, an overwhelming majority of recent immigrants are more interested in establishing permanent residency in the United States. In contemporary time, international migration has become a major source of foreign exchange earning to low and middle income countries like Nigeria. Essentially, the study reported that Egypt and Nigeria account for the largest inflows of remittance into Africa. It is discovered that in 2018, Migrant remittances to Nigeria equalled US\$25 billion, representing 6.1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The 2018 migrant remittances translate to 83% of the Federal Government budget in 2018 and 11 times the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows in the same period. Among other things, the study further discovered that Nigeria's remittance from diaspora migrants 7.4 times larger than the net official development assistance (foreign aid) received in 2017 which stood at US\$3.4 billion.

Recommendations

The study therefore makes the following recommendations:

Since diaspora remittances constitutes a sizeable chunk of Nigeria's source of foreign exchange earnings, there is need for the Federal Government and the Central Bank of Nigeria to harmonize the activities of International Money Transfer Organizations (Western Union, MoneyGram, Ria

Money Transfer) and other informal channels of remittances in order to track the volume of remittances inflows into the country. Secondly, there is need to create functional and reliable platforms that increase accessibility of crucial information for Nigerians in the Diaspora. The Nigerian diaspora constitutes mainly semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled professionals. They are in need of credible opportunities of investment with assured returns on their savings and earnings. A platform where information on opportunities can be shared will help to reduce information distortions when it comes to investment opportunities.

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