

Rural-Urban Migration in South Western Nigeria: A menace to National Development

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Abstract

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another which could either be permanent or temporal. The study investigated the resultant effects of rural-urban migration to national development with a particular focus on the South western part of Nigeria. It analyzed the causes of rural-urban migration, past efforts of the government in reducing the rate of rural-urban migration in these areas and the socio-economic factors influencing rural-urban migration. The study also reviewed existing literatures on rural-urban migration. Data were collected from the respondents through a structured questionnaire which was administered on Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, Osun and Ekiti states; all in the southwestern part of Nigeria. The study identified lack of social infrastructure, neglect of the rural community, modernization and others as some of the factors responsible for rural-urban migration. The paper therefore proposes that for all round national development, the rural communities has to be developed to meet the standard of the urban centres in order to reduce the rate of rural-urban migration.

Keywords: rural, urban, migration, menace, national development.

1. Introduction

The movement of people from rural to urban areas is a common occurrence in Nigeria especially from villages to the cities. The movement poses some problems in the rural as well as in the urban center even though; there are benefits derivable from it. In most rural areas, the impact of rural-urban migration was a rapid deterioration of the rural economy leading to chronic poverty and food insecurity (Mini, 2000). United Nations (2004) reported that half of the global population lives in cities and estimated that this will rise to sixty percent by 2030. In Nigeria and other developing countries, population in cities and conurbations is projected to increase from 1.9 billion in 2000 to 3.9 billion in 2030. This is principally due to rural to urban migration which is consequent upon the dichotomous planning and development which many developing countries adopted especially after independence. This subsequently results in the rural deprived and the urban endowed that translates into improved amenities and economic opportunities in these urban centres than the rural areas (Abdullahi et al, 2009).

The migration far outstrips services and infrastructural deployment resulting in deepening crisis in basic municipal services, a situation which was later further worsened by the Structural Adjustment Programme of the 1980s to which Nigeria has hardly recovered from. Also in Nigeria, the rural populace moves out in large numbers temporarily or permanently to towns and cities to seek out new opportunities, improved livelihoods and better standard of living. Subsequently, however, they end up in city slums scratching out a living with limited capacity to adapt to socioeconomic changes in the new environments they find themselves (Abdullahi, et al, 2009). Movements from rural villages to large cities are often undertaken with the hopes of improved opportunities for economic or social advancement. Less salient perhaps to both researchers and migrants are the potential effects of such moves on the development of the nation. These effects have constituted a menace to the development of Nigeria and shall be vividly discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

2. Migration

Migration is considered as the movement of people from one geographical region to another, which may be on temporary or permanent basis. People migrate based on the prevailing conditions and the reasons for it vary from one person to another depending on the situation that brought about the decision. Migration is a selective process affecting individuals or families with certain economic, social, educational and demographic characteristics (Adewale, 2005).

Migration occurs as a response to economic development as well as social, cultural, environmental and political factors and effects on areas of origin as well as destination. People tend to move away from a place due to need to escape violence, political instability, drought, congestion in various dimensions and suspected or real persecution. Also, adverse physical conditions such as flood, landslide (erosion and earthquake), insects and

pests, soil infertility contribute largely to the reasons why people leave one environment for another (Adewale, 2005).

For some individuals, especially young boys and men, out-migration into cities is a necessary approach to overcoming poverty and attendant powerlessness in rural areas notwithstanding the implications of such migration for individuals, families and groups in destination locations. In some instances, the recipients are hardly aware of the impending human additions; yet most strive to accommodate the in-migrants in line with the African extended family tradition and hospitality, at times at severe costs (Nwokocha, 2007).

2.1 *Rural-Urban Migration in Nigeria*

Nigeria is one of the countries in the world with very high rural-urban dichotomy. Although the nation is generally characterized by poor social amenities, both in quality and quantity, rural communities are disproportionately more disadvantaged than urban centres due to governmental neglect. Consequently, the number of rural inhabitants that migrate to cities with high hopes of overcoming powerlessness consistent with rural life is unprecedented (Nwokocha, 2007).

In Nigeria as in most developing countries of the world, internal migration has become a major issue influencing government policies and program efforts. Crucial among these issues are problems of unplanned urbanization, growing urban crimes, rural poverty, neglect of agriculture and unbalanced population concentration. These suggest the effect of the dominant pattern of rural-urban migration and its effect on national life (Akinyemi et al, 2005). According to Braunvan, (2004) people tend to be pulled to the areas of prosperity and pushed from areas of decline. Migrants are usually concerned with the benefits they hope to gain by moving and usually give less thought to the problems that may be generated as a result of the process which includes; pressure on fragile urban infrastructure and possible environmental degradation, for most migrants are relatively poor and live together. Rural-urban migration in Nigeria is therefore inevitable and sometimes a desirable resultant effect of industrialization.

Interestingly, Nigeria is practicing a non-regulatory system which allows for uncontrolled internal migration. Hence, the decision to out-migrate to urban centers is not usually agonizing as a result of the perceived advantages of so doing. Perhaps, this very easy mental process, more than unavailability of infrastructures, explains mass movement of rural dwellers to cities. If the latter were the reason, the out-migrant later discovers that infrastructures in most urban centers in Nigeria are mere camouflages, hardly able to improve human conditions. We now examine the recurring effects of rural-urban migration in a non-regulatory system such as Nigeria (Nwokocha, 2007).

2.2 *Past Efforts of the Government*

The government at various levels in conjunction with both local and international corporate organisations such as UNDP, UNFPA etc. provided supports to the rural communities with the aim of making life much better which will in turn reduce the rate of migration to urban centres. Listed below are some of the efforts of the government and corporate organisations.

2.2.1 *Better Life Programme (BLP)*

This programme was established to enhance the status of women in the rural areas. It was carried out by the National Commission for Women now Federal Ministry for Women's Affairs and Social Development. The aim and objectives of this Programme are the following:

- a. Stimulating and motivating rural women towards achieving better living standards and sensitizing the rest of the Nigerian population to the problems of women;
- b. Educating rural women on simple hygiene, family planning, the importance of child-care and increased literacy rates;
- c. Mobilizing women collectively in order to improve their general lot and ability to seek and achieve leadership roles in all spheres of society;
- d. Raising consciousness about the rights of women, the availability of opportunities and facilities, their social, political and economic responsibilities;
- e. Encouraging recreation and enriched family life; and inculcating the spirit of self-development, particularly in the fields of education, business, the arts, crafts and agriculture.

2.2.2 *Women in Agriculture (WIA)*

In 1991, WIA was established in the Federal Agricultural Coordinating Unit, under the Department of Agriculture of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. Its aim was to integrate women into agricultural development through the alleviation of production constraints facing women especially in the rural

- areas of the country. WIA has disseminated information on modern production, processing and utilization technologies which could reduce women's workload. It has also tried to link women with sources of credit and better agricultural inputs, such as improved seeds and fertilizers. WIA women's groups have been organized around innovative agro-based activities and new technologies have been used and disseminated to women farmers. This has resulted in an increased output, hence more surplus and income for the family.
- 2.2.3 Rural Export Craft Scheme
The Federal government set up the National Directorate of Employment to cater for unemployed school leavers. Under this Directorate, several schemes have been developed, notably is the Rural Export Craft Scheme. It was introduced to support Nigerians, interested in producing local crafts for export trade. This was essentially in the textile trade.
- 2.2.4 Family Support Programme (FSP)
- 2.2.5 National Fadama Development Project (NFDP)
- 2.2.6 Family Economic and Advancement Programme (FEAP)
- 2.2.7 Establishment of The People's Bank, aimed at extending small credits to people in the informal sector of the economy with the aim of strengthening informal economic activities in cities, towns and villages.
- 2.2.8 Establishment of the National Economic Recovery Fund (NERFUND) which provides easy access to credit by small and medium scale enterprises.
- 2.2.9 Establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), a self-employment promotion programme which has largely promoted waste to wealth employment activities.
- 2.2.10 Primary Health Care (PHC) programme; The purpose is to bring health care, particularly preventive health care to the rural communities in the country.
- 2.2.11 Establishment of the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP)
- 2.2.12 Establishment of the River Basin Development Authorities and the provision of rural access roads.
- 2.2.13 Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Investment Scheme (SMEEIS)'s programme by Banks
- 2.2.14 Establishment of Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), aimed at integrating rural development in terms of Food production, Road construction and Rural Infrastructure.
- 2.2.15 River Basin Development Authority, aimed at the direct production of food crops by irrigation agriculture at the grass root.
- 2.2.16 Establishment of the National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) aimed at promoting integrated rural development.

3. Study Area

The south western part of Nigeria comprises of Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti states. The Yoruba people are the major ethnic group in this region and they live both in rural and urban areas. The important towns in this region include Ikeja, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Osogbo, Akure, Ado-Ekiti etc. The region experiences two climates which are the sub-equatorial climate with high rainfall (1000 – 1500mm) for 5-7 months with an average temperature of 27°C and the tropical continental climate with low rainfall (500 – 1000mm) which give rise to savanna type of vegetation. The economic activities in this region are farming, mining, livestock rearing, local craft industries and industrial activities.

3.1 Methodology

This paper presents findings collected from the field. The research report is thus based on primary data from the questionnaires administered on the residents of Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun and Ondo State. Twenty (20) questionnaires were administered on each state. A total of one hundred (100) were therefore administered during the survey. The survey covered Ikeja (Lagos), Abeokuta (Ogun), Ibadan (Oyo), Osogbo (Osun) and Akure (Ondo).

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Analysis of data indicates that 87 percent of the respondents are male while the remaining 13 percent are female. The marital statuses of respondents as shown in Table 1 indicate that, those that are married form the majority with 64 percent. 29 percent of the respondents are single; 5 percent are widow/widower while just 2 percent of the respondents are divorced.

Table 1. Marital Status of Respondents

S/N	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Married	64	64
2.	Single	29	29
3.	Widow/Widower	5	5
4.	Divorce	2	2
	Total	100	100

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011

4.2 Age of Respondents

Table 2 shows the age distribution of the respondents. It shows that 39 percent of the respondents fall between 15-30 years of age; 46 percent are between 31-45 years; 12 percent are between 46-60 years while just 3 percent of the respondents are above 61 years of age.

Table 2. Age of Respondents

S/N	Age group (years)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	15 – 30	39	39
2.	31 – 45	46	46
3.	46 – 60	12	12
4.	61 and above	3	3
	Total	100	100

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011

4.3 Place of Birth of Respondents

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents were born outside the State they are currently living in. It shows that 74 percent were born outside their present State of residence while 26 percent were born in the State.

Table 3: Place of Birth of Respondents

S/N	Place of Birth	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Outside the present state	74	74
2.	Inside the state (Indigene)	26	26
	Total	100	100

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011

4.4 Number of Years Spent in Present State of Residence

The number of years which the respondents have spent in their present state of residence varies as shown in Table 4. It could be seen from the table that, those that have spent between 11-20 years in their present state of residence form the majority. 24 percent of the respondents have spent between 21-30 years in their present state; 18 percent have spent between 1-10 years; 11 percent have spent between 31-40 years; 7 percent have spent between 41-50 years; 6 percent have spent between 51-60 years while just 3 percent of the respondents have spent above 61 years in their present State of residence.

Table 4. Number of years spent in present state of residents

S/N	Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage
1.	1 – 10 years	18	18
2.	11 – 20 years	31	31
3.	21 – 30 years	24	24
4.	31 – 40 years	11	11
5.	41 – 50 years	7	7
6.	51 – 60 years	6	6
7.	61 and above	3	3
	Total	100	100

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011

4.5 Occupation of Respondents

The main occupations of the respondents as contained in Table 5 are farming with 6 percent, Craftsmanship/Self-employment with 11 percent; Civil service with 23 percent and Trading with 37 percent which forms the majority. Others include: Company worker with 8 percent; Medical personnel with 2 percent; Unemployed with 9 percent and Students with 4 percent.

Table 5. Occupation of the respondents

S/N	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Farming	6	6
2.	Craftsmanship/Self-employment	11	11
3.	Civil Service	23	23
4.	Trading	37	37
5.	Company worker	8	8
6.	Medical Personnel	2	2
7.	Unemployed	9	9
8.	Student	4	4
	Total	100	100

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011

4.6 Reasons for Migrating

The reasons for migrating according to the respondents vary and are presented in Table 6 below. The data gathered shows that 10 percent migrated for advancement in education; 7 percent migrated for the purpose of apprenticeship in various vocations which could not be found in the rural area where they live. 28 percent of the respondents migrated due to unemployment in the rural sector; 21 percent migrated due to modernization which they feel it is a necessity and also due to the news or reports of the city sent by migrants to them. 15 percent migrated as a result of inadequate provision of social infrastructure/amenities by the government. 12 percent migrated due to the boredom of the practice of Agriculture which is the main occupation in most rural areas. 4 percent of the respondents also migrated due to the neglect of the rural community by the government while only 3 percent migrated due to family or social problems.

Table 6. Reasons for migrating

S/N	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Advancing in Education	10	10
2.	Apprenticeship in various vocations	7	7
3.	Unemployment	28	28
4.	Modernization	21	21
5.	Inadequate Social Infrastructure	15	15
6.	Family/Social Problems	3	3
7.	Boredom of Agriculture	12	12
8.	Neglect of Rural Community	4	4
	Total	100	100

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011

4.7 Effects of Rural – Urban Migration

Findings from Table 7 indicate that rural urban migration has caused economic problems which are as a result of unplanned population increases. This has led to infrastructural decay, housing challenge both at micro family and macro society levels. The government spends much more on the rehabilitation and maintenance of the decayed infrastructure and also on the provision of new ones to meet up with change in population size. 27 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that rural urban migration poses an economic problem to the nation. 17 percent of the respondents are of the view that it poses Agricultural problem which is as a result of loss of man power necessary for agricultural activities and production. 21 percent of the respondent indicates that it causes Environmental problems as the increase in population is synonymous to vehicular congestion which in turn causes environmental pollution. Poor sanitary condition as practiced in the rural areas and the increased number of waste dump sites are evidence of environmental pollution. Also, there is rapid loss of biodiversity and other forms of environmental degradation due to rural urban migration.

15 percent of the respondents were of the view that rural urban migration causes societal problems which brings about high crime rate and area boys/girls. It also facilitates urban market which causes increase in transportation cost for agriculture produce. 11 percent of the respondents said it has caused cultural problem as some of the migrants find it difficult to go back for festivals, Royal rights, village ceremonies etc. 9 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that rural urban migration has brought about personal problems as they find it difficult to cope with situations in their new state of residence and they do not wish to go back.

Table 7. Effects of Rural Urban Migration

S/N	Effects	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Economic Problems	27	27
2.	Agricultural Problems	17	17
3.	Individual/Personal Problems	9	9
4.	Cultural Problems	11	11
5.	Societal Problems	15	15
6.	Environmental Problems	6	6
	Total	100	100

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011

5.0 Conclusion

This study has deliberated on rural-urban migration issues in Nigeria, the factors responsible for migration and the past efforts of the government on reducing rural-urban migration. The study has shown that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that, rural-urban migration is a threat to the development of the nation as its resultant effect is more on the economy of the nation than personal or individual effects. The study also identified agricultural problems, cultural problems and societal problems as some of the effects of rural-urban migration. This issue is not only evident in Nigeria but in most developing countries of the world. It has become an issue that requires urgent attention as it has become uncontrollable in most urban centres in Nigeria. Therefore, there is need for the government to wake up to the task of providing essential social amenities and infrastructure in rural areas so as to discourage rural-urban migration which is common among the youths.

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