

Analysis of Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Rural-Urban Labour Migration in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

Odey, Stephen Adi

Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, PO box 1115, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted with the major objective of determining socio-economic factors influencing rural-urban labour migration in Calabar, Cross River state, Nigeria. Specifically the objectives were to: determine socio-economic and demographic characteristics of rural-urban labour migrants in Calabar, Cross River state, identify areas that are common sources of rural-urban labour migration in the study area and investigate socio-economic factors influencing rural-urban labour migration in Calabar, Cross River state. The study adopted survey design while simple random sampling was used to select samples. Questionnaires were used to collect data while percentages were used for analysis. The study discovered that socio-demographically, rural-urban labour migrants in Calabar were predominantly in age range of 26-35, male and single who were mostly educated at the bachelor's degree or HND level. Furthermore, majority of the migrants operated small scale businesses as some had no jobs. Majority of the migrants moved from southern part of Cross River such as Akamkpa, Bakassi, Odukpani, Biase, Akabuyo. This was followed by migrants who moved from central areas of the state such as Abi, Ikom, Boki, Obubra. Migrants from northern Cross River areas like Bekwarra and Yala had least migration numbers. The rural-urban migrants' socio-economic motives migration in Cross River predominantly included search for employment and quest for involvement in economic activity to earn money. Other factors included schooling, training in craftwork, search for menial jobs, assisting relatives in business, and desire to set up business. These factors are in tandem with Marxists theory which centers on economic determinism as driver of rural-urban migration bearing in mind that rural areas serve to provide cities with cheap labour. The study therefore recommends establishment and extension of some formal institutions like tertiary institutions and government offices in rural areas, locations of major industries in rural areas where raw materials are produced and holistic rural development to control rural-urban labour migration in the study area.

Keywords: Nigeria, Labour migration, Rural-urban, Economic activity, menial jobs, economic activity, rural development, Calabar.

1. Introduction

Labor migration is a phenomenon that is as old as society itself. It is a social process that occurs in all societies at all times (Bilger & Kraler 2005). There is no society in which phenomenon of labour migration does not exist (Todaro 1984). One of the primary motivations for movement of people from one place to another is to improve their economic condition. This movement could involve the process in which a person or group of persons shift their residence temporarily, semi permanently or permanently from one location to another within a society or across societies so as to better their chances of earning a living (Eboh 2002). The duration of stay at the destination may be short-term, medium-term and permanent or long-term residence (Ogbuanya 2000).

In developing countries such as Nigeria, labour migration is a vital economic and social feature. In these countries, rural-urban labour migration appears to be of greater proportion compared to developed countries (Waugh 1995). This may be attributed to impoverished and complex nature of these societies which seem to always precipitate people's desire to change locations on search of greener pastures and for survival reasons. Thus people who tend to move from one place to another are the productive segment that represent the working population of the rural areas. Motivation for rural-urban labour migration appears to be fundamentally for economic reasons such as employment or engage in economic activities while some social forces such as communal conflicts and fear of witchcraft could also influence movement of labour (Adewale 2005). It is seen as one of the major driver of population change in most developing societies. Whether at the international or local, developed or developing levels, it appears to be a deliberate decision or attempt by the migrant to reap social or economic benefits associated with changing locations (Bilger & Kraler 2005).

Rural-urban labour migration has socio-economic and developmental implications on both rural and urban areas. It ensures the mobility of labor and its associated human capital between rural and urban areas with concomitant socio-economic consequences between regions. Thus, socio-economic development is associated with rural-urban labour migration (Todaro 1977; Byerlee 1972). For the rural areas, there is the tendency for the trend to dissipate working population and deprive the areas of the manpower and labour needed to drive socio-economic activities such as agriculture, leading to underdevelopment of the rural areas. In the urban locations, it seems to increase the labour power available which is harnessed by industries and entrepreneurs in the cities (Regmi & Tisdell; Aworemi *et al.* 2011). Thus, labour migration appear to have more of the negative

consequences for rural areas while its positive impact, especially to socio-economic development is felt more in urban destinations. According to United Nations Report (2013), significant proportions of migrants are youth who originate from the rural areas in search of greener pastures, leading to shortage of labour in rural centers (Aworemi *et al.* 2011). Labour migration therefore tends to under-develop rural areas while developing the urban centers.

In Nigeria, rural-urban labour migration is a complex and dynamic phenomenon (Adepoju 1990), which is subject to plethora of investigations from researchers (Okpara 1983; Isah 2000; Gbemiga 2005; Adewale 2005; Somik *et al.* 2006; Aworemi 2011; Bello *et al.* 2015). These studies portray steady occurrence of labour migration from rural to urban areas and fail to analyze labour migration from point of view of economic determinism and rural areas being an extension of capitalist mode of production. The studies further concentrate on other urban areas and states, ignoring Calabar as one of the biggest cities, which seem to have high prevalence of rural-urban labour migration in Nigeria. There is need to investigate the phenomenon of rural-urban labour migration in Calabar, Cross River in order to take advantage of benefits of labour migration in urban centers while minimizing its adverse effects on industrialization and development in rural areas in the state. Consequently, the major objective of the study is to investigate socio-economic factors influencing rural-urban labour in Cross River state. Specific objectives are:

- a. To determine socio-demographic characteristics of labour migrants of moving to urban centers in Cross River state.
- b. To identify source areas where rural-urban labour migration is most common in Cross state.
- c. Investigate socio-economic factors influencing rural-urban labour migration in Cross River state.

2.Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Migration

There is no universal agreement on the definition of the concept. According to Adewale (2005), migration refers to 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. To Todaro (1984) migration could be defined as the process whereby people move from one place to another in search for greener pastures.

According to the United Nations (1980), migration refers to people moving for various reasons to countries other than their usual residence, for a period of at least twelve months so that the country of destination effectively becomes the new country of usual residence. The UN (1980) noted that migration is generally consensual, although it includes movement prompted by a force of socio-economic or political circumstance. The International Organization on Migration (2011) defined migration as the movement of person or group of persons, either across international border or within a state. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition or causes. Migration differs on the basis of duration, distance and organization and this makes classification into mutually exclusive categories rather difficult. This however, has made many writers to simply classify migration as either internal or external.

2.2 The Concept of Labour Migration

The concept of labour migration has plethora of definitions. Igbolo and Adaka (2017) noted that, this is due to confusion that arises in relation to the term “economic migrant” and “labour migrant”. The term “labour migrant” seem to be more narrow and applied only to people changing their place of residence for the purpose of employment, while “economic migrant” can be applied to both narrow and broad sense. In the narrow sense, it applies to movement for the purpose of employment, while in the broad sense refers to people moving to other destinations for other types of economic activities such as investment or business (Igbolo & Adaka 2017; Abbas 1993). Labour migration is usually classified based on the duration of activities and regulations specifying conditions of admission and stay. Persons entering a country for training or educational purposes are included in some labour migration classifications since they are employment based with labour market consequences but excluded from others. According to International Organization for Migration (2011), Labour migration is generally defined as a cross-border movement for purposes of employment in a foreign country. Thus, labour migration could be defined as movement of people from one place to another on either permanent or semi-permanent basis for the purpose of employment, investment or business.

2.3 Socio-economic Factors Influencing Rural-Urban Labour Migration

Studies have shown that many socio-economic factors precipitate rural urban migration. These factors relates to the absence of desirable job opportunities in rural communities, lack of industries and companies, inadequate social amenities (Mabawonku 1973; Sabot 1972). Iyorakpo (2011) also indicated that rural-urban labour

migration reflection of the unequal opportunities existing in the rural and urban areas. De Haas (2007) observed that there is tendency for people to migrate to urban areas for rapid industrialization, increased economic activities in order to seek employment, set up business or involve in economic activities. Thus people who are pushed into migration are simultaneously motivated by the expectation of finding greener pastures elsewhere. Amselle (1976a) analysis proved that capitalism is the cause of rural-urban labour migration in African societies. To him rural areas only exist to serve the needs of urban areas and on consistent basis, people move from rural to urban areas to sale their labour for wages.

2.4 Theoretical Framework: Marxist Theory

Marxist theory originates from the ideas of Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels. The analysis of the theory views economic determinism as the chief driver of history. It sees society as composed of struggle for resources between the labourers and owners of capitals leading to exploitation of the former by the latter through expropriation of surplus. Marxists see traditional societies as consisting of two sectors: capitalist and the rural sector. In each of the sectors, structure is determined by how production and reproduction of goods and services. Thus, developing societies have dual mode of production or economies: the urban economy which is the capitalist mode of production and rural economy as extension of the capitalist mode, serving its raw materials and labour needs. The Marxists maintained that in developing societies such as Nigeria, rural sector is regulated by urban structures such that surplus generated in rural areas are expropriated to urban centers. Thus, rural people are separated from the product they produce as their labour can be bought and sold (Amselle 1976b).

Marxists view labour migration as one of the ways rural areas are incorporated into capitalist mode of production by urban capitalist mode. It separates rural people from their means of production and brings them into the capitalist mode in cities to provide cheap labour. Consequently, migrant's relationship to the relations of production is that of labourers (Amselle 1976b; Rey 1976a). Rural areas are meant to serve the needs of capitalist mode of production in cities and at all times, there is people moving from rural areas to urban centers to sale their labour for wages.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study has adopted a survey design. This is because the design has the advantages of allowing the researchers to gather information from large samples to represent all elements in the study area and is also compatible with statistical analysis.

3.2 Study Area

Calabar is capital city of Cross River state and also a port city in southern Nigeria. Its original name is *Akwa Akpa* (meaning "Great River"). The city is located on a hill adjacent to the Calabar and Great Kwa rivers and creeks of the delta inland. The city has a projected population of 479 329 (NPC estimates 2010) is seen as the tourism capital of Nigeria and administratively divided into Calabar Municipal and Calabar south Local Government Areas. Significant land marks in the city include international museum, Free Trade Zone Area and Port, International Airport and seaport and University of Calabar. The indigenous ethnic group's people of Calabar are mainly from Calabar south, Calabar Municipal, Akabuyo, Bakassi, Biasse, Odukpani and Akamkpa. Calabr people could also refer to indigenous people of Greater Calabar as well as people of the original South Eastern States of Nigeria who are present people of Akwa-Ibom and Cross River state (Odey 2018).

3.3 Population of the study

Population of the study area is 479 329 (NPC 2018 estimates). It includes all males and females from 16 years and above, who are rural-urban labour migrants in Calabar in Cross River state of Nigeria.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Procedure

Simple random sampling technique was used in selection of 150 samples for the study. In the selection process, the researchers went to Calabar Metropolis where significant proportions of rural-urban labour migrants in state are found. Through rapport with the population, the researcher was able to meet and gather people who migrated from rural communities in Cross River state. The purpose of the study was explained to them and asked for their permission to be part of the study. Afterwards, people who accepted to be part of the study went through a process of selection. The researcher wrote "Yes" and "No" on pieces of paper, folded and dropped in a bag. The population was asked to pick the folded papers. Those who picked "Yes" were selected for the study.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

Questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. The procedures for data collection involved the researcher engaging research assistants and training them on how to distribute questionnaires. After the training, researcher

and their assistants began the administration of the questionnaires by moving to the locations in person and administering them, having face to face contact with the respondents. Respondents were given a minimum of one (1) day for completion of the questionnaires. After the expiry of the time, the questions were collated for presentation and analysis.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Analysis of data involved the use of descriptive statistics and analytical tables. Thus percentages were used to determine frequency of opinion of the respondents.

4. Results and discussions

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
(a) Age (Years)		
16-25	32	21.3
26-35	61	40.7
36-45	42	28.0
46-55	13	8.7
66 and above	2	1.3
Total	150	100
(b) Sex		
Male	98	65.3
Female	52	34.7
Total	150	100
(c) Marital Status		
Single	83	53.3
Married	59	39.4
Divorced	6	4.0
Widowed	2	1.3
Total	150	100
(d) Educational status		
No Formal education	1	0.7
Primary Education	3	2.0
Secondary Education	23	15.3
Diploma/NCE	41	27.3
Degree	76	50.7
Masters Degree	6	4.0
Total	150	100
(e) Occupation		
Civil service	16	10.7
Private Business	57	38.0
Apprentice/Sales Assistant	18	12.0
No job	39	26.0
Student	20	13.3
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 1 presents socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in the study. In connection to age distribution, the Table showed that 61 (40.7%) of the respondents were in the age range of 26-35 and constituted the majority of the respondents while those from the ages of 66 and above were 2 (1.3%) with the least percentage. Also, Respondents between age range of 36-45 were 42 (28.0%) had second highest percentage, those aged between 16-25 years came third with 32 (21.3%) while in the fourth position were respondents between ages of 46-55 with 13 (8.7%). The dominance of migrants from ages of 26 to 45 years seems to agree with the fact that most people who graduate from university are eager for greener pastures in terms of employment. At latter age close to 45 years, it is expected that an individual who is educated should get a job or be self-employed. Few migrants in the ages of 66 and above imply that people have tendency to return to their villages when they are retired or old rather than old people moving to cities for jobs. This finding partly corroborates with UN (2003) report which indicates that rural-urban labour migration is common with young people.

For sex distribution, the Table indicated that 98 (65.3%) of the respondents were male and constituted the

majority of respondents in the study while 52 (34.7%) of them were females, representing minority in the study. The fact that male migrants dominate this study shows that males are generally more prone to migration in search for employment than females. In Nigeria, most men move to cities to improve their socio-economic condition by leaving their families in rural areas. Parts of the monies they make are sent back to their families in the rural areas to cater for their food, Education, health needs. Women, especially married ones, may not be permitted by their spouse to travel to cities to seek employment and provide for their families as men are supposed to take responsibility of bread winning for the family. These findings agree with Bello *et al.* (2015) who also found that males are more prone to migration than females.

In relation to marital status, it was revealed that 83 (53.3%) of the respondents were single representing the majority of the respondents while 2 (1.3%) of them were widowed, with least percentage. Furthermore, 59 (39.4%) of the respondents were married representing second highest percentage while 6 (4.0%) respondents were widows, occupying the fourth position. The data reveal singles with highest percentage of migrants. This may not be a coincidence. Unmarried people have the tendency to move around a lot compared to married people. Married people will have to consider their families in their decision to migrate. Often movement could be economically beneficial but need to be closer to one's family for social and emotional reasons could affect the decision of married people to migrate. Singles however do not pass through these difficulties and are likely to migrate for greener pastures than married people. This finding is consistent with Bello *et al.* (2015) and Ango *et al.* (2014) who found that single people among the members of the society migrated more than the married migrants. The study however disagrees with Adewale (2005) who found that most rural urban migrants were married in Oyo state, Nigeria.

In regards to the educational status, it was found that 76 (50.7%) of the respondents had bachelors degree or Higher National Diploma (HND) and constituted majority of the respondents while those with no formal education were the least with 1 (0.7%). In the second position were respondents with Diploma or National Certificate of Education (NCE) with 41 (27.3%). Respondents who acquired secondary education were 23 (15.3%), in the third position, 6 (4.0%) of the respondents had masters degree occupying fourth position while those with primary education were 3 (2.0%) in the fifth. Data reveals that most migrants were educated at the level of degree or HND, Diploma or NCE and secondary education. This implies that rural-urban migrants constitute mostly people who have attained some level of education and are looking for employment to better their living condition. In Nigeria, it appears that once an individual acquires a certificate, the next move is to find a job and cities are the only places these jobs can be found. In fact significant proportions of people who acquire higher educational certificate are likely to migrate to urban centers. This finding agrees with Pradhan (2013) and Bello *et al.* (2015). Pradhan (2013) study in India reported that majority of rural-urban migrants are educated. Bello *et al.* (2015) also found that literate migrants dominating proportion of rural-urban labour migrants in Wukari, Nigeria.

In relation to occupation, majority, 57 (38.0%) of the respondents were operating private businesses. This was followed by 39 (26.0%) respondents who were jobless in the second position, 20 (12.0%) of migrants who were students in third position and 18 (12.0%) respondents who were apprentice or sales assistants in fourth while 16 (10.7%) migrants who were civil servants came fifth. The dominance of private business owners in the study area is an indication of the fact most people migrating to the area is for other economic activities rather than for government jobs. Also, significant proportion of migrants in the area had no jobs. This indicates one of the obvious problems with rural-urban migration which is increased unemployment as the trend put tremendous pressure on available jobs. This finding corroborates with Bello *et al.* (2015) who found that migrants in urban centers engaged in one form of business or the other to earn money, which part of it are remitted to their homes in rural areas.

Table 2. Source Areas of Rural-Urban Labour migration to Calabar in Cross River state

Areas	Frequency	Percentage
Bakassi	14	9.3
Akamkpa	20	13.3
Akpabuyo	13	8.7
Biase	16	10.7
Odukpani	17	11.3
Yakurr	12	8.0
Obubra	7	4.7
Abi	5	3.3
Ikom	11	7.3
Boki	10	6.7
Etung	4	2.7
Obudu	8	5.3
Bekwarra	7	4.7
Yala	6	4.0
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 2 identifies rural areas with number of labour migrants in Calabar. The Table has shown that majority, 20 (13.3%) of the migrants were from Akamkpa Local Government Area while the least number of migrants were from Etung Local Government with 4 (2.7%). This was followed by 17 (11.3%) migrants who were from Odukpani with second highest percentage and 16 (10.7%) migrants from Biase in third. Bakassi had 14 (9.3%) with fourth highest percentage, Akabuyo had 13 (8.7%) rural-urban labour migrants, ranking fifth while Ikom had 11 (7.3%) migrants in the sixth rank while Boki had 10 (6.7%) rural-urban labour migrants in the seventh rank. Furthermore, Obubra and Bekwarra had 7 (4.7%) migrants each in the eight ranks while Yala had 6 (4.0%) rural-urban labour migrants in the ninth position.

This data indicate a pattern of rural-urban labour migration in the study area. It appears areas in the Southern Cross River with closer proximity to Calabar have more incidences of rural-urban labour migrants than areas that are farther from the state capital. More numbers of migrants seem to be coming from Southern Cross River Local Government Areas such as Akankpa, Bakassi, Akabuyo, Biase and Odukpai. The percentage seems to be decreasing steadily from local governments in the Central region such as Obubra, Abi, Ikom and Boki to the Northern parts of the state such as Bekwarra and Yala.

This shows the tendency for people to migrate more to urban areas nearest to them. This is probably due to socio-economic advantages associated with migrating to areas with shorter distances such economic cost of migrating to long distance areas and proximity to family or home. This finding is consistent with Njoku *et al.* (2017) which showed a pattern of migration in Cross River state where people showed tendency to migrate more to places nearest to them.

Table 3. Socio-economic Factors Influencing Rural-Urban Labour migration in Calabar, Cross River state

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Search for white collar job	36	24.0
Learn craftwork/Trade	24	16.0
Look for blue collar job	13	8.7
Set up Business	9	6.0
Schooling	25	16.7
Do anything to earn money	29	19.3
Assist in trading	14	9.3
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 3 presents socio-economic factors influencing rural-urban labour migration in Calabar, Cross River state. The Table shows that majority of the migrants were motivated by search for white collar job with 36 (24.05%) while migrants who were influenced by the desire to set up business were the least with 9 (6.0%). Migrants who went to Calabar to do anything they could find to earn money were 29 (19.3%), the second highest percentage and those who moved to Calabar for schooling reasons had 25 (16.7%). Labour migrants with the motive of getting trained in craftwork were 24 (16.0%) with fourth highest frequency whilst those who moved to assist their relatives in business were 14 (9.3%) in fifth ratio. Migrants who moved for purpose of acquiring a manual or blue collar job were 13 (8.6%). It should be noted that findings on the factors precipitating rural-urban migration in Calabar seem to center around getting employment, acquiring skills or knowledge and carrying out

an economic activity indicating movement of labour from rural areas to the city.

The above finding agrees with the study by Igbolo and Adaka (2017) who found that one of the major motivations for labour Migration in Gwagwalada area in Abuja was search for employment while engagement in other economic activities was also identified as one of the reasons for labour migration in the area. This implies that capitalism is the main driver of labour migration from rural to urban areas. The demand for labour by entrepreneurs and need for people to sale their labour for wages in order to survive appears to be in line with assumptions of Marxist theory which places economic determinism at the core of labour migration. People migrate from rural communities to cities because they are consciously or unconsciously linked to capitalism and must serve the needs of capitalists in urban centers by providing the sufficient labour needed to drive production.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings the study concludes that socio-demographically, rural-urban labour migrants in Calabar are predominantly characterized by persons with age range of 26-35, male and single migrants who were educated at the bachelor's degree or HND holders level. Also, most of the migrants operated small scale businesses while some had no jobs. Furthermore, most of the migrants originated from southern parts of Cross River state such as Akamkpa, Odukpani, Biase, Akabuyo, followed by migrants from central area of the state such as Abi, Ikom, Boki, Obubra and northern Cross River areas like Bekwarra and Yala. The rural-urban migrants' socio-economic motives of migration in Calabar mostly included search for employment and quest for involvement in economic activities to earn money. Other factors included schooling, training in craftwork, search for manual jobs, assisting relatives in business migrants and desire to set up businesses. These seem to agree with Marxist theory that rural areas are only extension of capitalist mode of production in urban areas. It can be concluded rightly that migration principally as it relates to this study is to enhance the economic status of people based on the facilities available in the urban area (Odey 2018).

6. Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations have been made:

- a. There should be conscious efforts to extend formal sector to rural areas through concentration of educational institutions, industries and government agencies or offices in rural areas so as to control number of people moving to cities for employment reasons.
- b. Government should show conscious efforts in formulating and implementing rural development policies that would ensure holistic rural transformation and avoid situation where rural areas become just an extension of capitalism that serve labour needs of urban entrepreneurs in cities.
- c. Industries using agricultural produce as raw materials should be located in rural areas where such raw materials are produced. This could allow rural areas to take full advantage of their labour and raw materials they produce.

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Author's Biography

Odey, Stephen Adi, is a member of Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Associate Member, Chartered Institute of Personnel Management and Administration, a Fellow of the Centre for African American Research Studies (CAARS) and a Fellow of the Institute of Corporate Administration. He holds a Bachelor Degree in Education (B.Ed) Hons, Master's Degree in Industrial Sociology (M.Sc), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D in Industrial Sociology), Bachelor of Law (LL.B Hons.) and is currently undergoing Masters in Law (LL.M). He is a Lecturer at the Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria and a Legal Practitioner. His educational background in the Social Sciences and law has given him a broad base to approach many topics, which has led him to research/publish widely, with over 25 articles in learned journals across the globe, including America, Sweden, Germany and Asia. He is currently an Editor for the International Journal of Industrial Relations as well as, African Journal of Arbitration and Conflict Resolution, both annual Journals of the Centre for African American Research Studies (CAARS).