Irregular Migration in Nigeria: A Curse or A Blessing?

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Abstract:

This paper examines Irregular migration as a two side coin of a blessing and of a curse. It has been a continuous discussion on whether Irregular migration has been a source of "brain drain" in Africa or a relieve of population as African countries have no economic power and social amenities that include infrastructures to provide for her citizens. It is on this account that this paper enquires by using both primary and secondary sources of literature and oral tradition that are directly talked and participated in the subject matter. Using Nigeria as a case study, one will dare to say that beggars/alumajiri and unemployed youth and their endless suffering in Nigeria is worth going through the dessert and sea to escape the torture of been abandoned by the government of the state. This paper explores the issues of irregular migration as it could make and mar Nigerian state.

Keywords:

Irregular, Migration, Infrastructure, Population, Beggars, Unemployed and Suffering

Introduction:

The history of Africa before colonialism had reflected influx migration as a result of slave trade and this migration, both regular and irregular continued and increased with unemployment, insecurity, ecological degradation, poverty/suffering, and population pressure without social amenities. It is on this background that irregular migrants broke all odds to cross to Europe, Asia and America. Over the centuries, migration had been a major common feature not only in the various regions that now make up Nigeria but generally in tropical Africa. These migrations were more often than not occasioned by the search for better means of livelihood by individuals and groups, by conflicts between expanding polities over land use, by family disputes, by any sudden development which made life intolerable in a particular place, and a host of other factors considered by the societies concerned to warrant the move.' However, labour migration as a distinctive socio-economic phenomenon and having an equally economic and socio-demographic consequence became pronounced to attract administrative attention and subsequent policies.

The paper posits that despite the drain of human capital and resources from Nigeria; the migrants to a large extent could be more of a blessing by transferring innovations and skills they acquired from overseas to their home land and integrated the idea to developing Nigeria. The paper contributed to believing that migration could be more of a blessing than a curse to Nigeria if policies are orderly and properly strategized. Idowu, W. Posited that youth unemployment, insecurity and strict and constant change of migration laws as causes of irregular Migration among Youth are the causes of irregular migration. Almost all authors are of the same view on the causes of irregular migration, Idowu, W. (1999). If these are accepted by all; it is wise to turn attention to making irregular migration a blessing by exploiting the possibilities of treating them as "victims" rather than "criminals". The idea in this paper is that unemployment, insecurity, poor governance, natural disaster and strict migration laws are almost "unbeatable" in Africa. Youths that could have used a little capital which are available to them, prefer using this money to try their luck by "crook and by chance". James Chidume one of the interviewees said:

I saved up to 1.5 million from my farming business. I could have continued with the business since I was not involved in the cultivation or any hard labour of farming. I was only giving people money to make ridges, weeding and harvest for me. I then stored the harvest and sold the products when the prices have appreciated. I preferred to leave Nigeria for overseas because there is fear of the unknown in Nigeria. The government policies are not stable, rubbers could take away all you have labored for, and the store could be burgled. Life and property are not safe in Nigeria.

The expression of James Chidume is the belief of youths in Nigeria. Many of them could have used the same money they invested in irregular migration to become established in Nigeria but the poor governance and insecurity and poverty have become a monster and fear disintegrating their hope and weakening their strength and motivation. One will dare to say that establishing themselves in Nigeria is indeed a blessing to the economy but it is also important to ask if their fear really manifested and "realized" what will be the effect?.

Conceptualizing Irregular Migration

Irregular migration in its simplest definition; is the movement of people by crossing border to another location that takes place outside the laid down immigration laws and regulations, or international agreements and policies governing the entry and exit from a county, Je'adayibe, G.D. (2008). The main causes of irregular migration are poverty, unemployment, poor governance, strict and inconsistent migration regulations among others. In-migration is the movement of people into a new area within their country to reside there permanently. Out-migration is the movement of people out of an area in their country, Je'adayibe, G.D. (2008).

Conceptualizing irregular migration is key to understanding **Irregular Migration in Nigeria: A Curse or A Blessing?** A concept is an abstract or a symbol of an object or one of its properties, or a behavioral phenomenon. In action, researcher begins the process of carrying out research by using concept as keyword for discussing the empirical world, such as 'irregular', 'social

recognition', 'migrant', 'ethnicity' and 'integration', Nwafor J.C. (2006).

The perceptions of irregular migration have changed over time, and the regulations of unwanted foreigners as "criminals" has been guided by political discourses in different nations of countries subject to changing potential or threats to communities and the nation states. The potential dangers caused by irregular migration have been influenced by socioeconomic and political issues as well as religion, social cohesion and security. Trine Lund Thomsen posits that:

The development of the 'unlawful' other is firmly associated with the 'us versus them' division, between the set up public gathering and the rookies, as far as one gathering (us) having (more) right(s) over the other (them).

He continued that: Expanded limitations may even end in travelers turning out to be further irregularised to remain stowed away from the specialists. As a rule, this, tragically, likewise incorporates secretiveness from the organizations that would shield travelers from misuse and dejection.

The single most influential consequence of this politically-induced approach is the "criminalization vs victimization" of migrants around the globe. There are several important issues in relation to human aspects of the criminalization and victimization tendency that need to be considered and discussed, such as, Deportation and Everyday Violence among Migrants; The Curse of Irregular Migration; Blessing, the other Side of the Coin. The incorporation and integration of the social level in approaching irregular migration provides a wider frame for analyzing all of the machineries involved in the migration process, Akpodiogaga, P., et al. (2009).

Internal Security Crisis and the Contending Issues

Internal security is amazingly crucial to the elements of the state. The substance of the state is that the advancement of incredible life and along these lines the making of political conditions that will upgrade the government assistance of the gathering. The state can't play out the essential basic role of the state except if upkeep of the rule of law is accomplished. Along these lines, interior security is kind of a pivotal side of public

safety/advancement. It had been for absence of safety that the Hobbesian condition of nature delivered life savage, terrible and short. The thought returns to the support of country states themselves. Armed forces for homegrown harmony keeping and keeping up public power have existed since the beginning of written history. Common and public police powers have furthermore existed for centuries. Knowledge organizations and security administrations of administration stretch back to vestige like the Roman Empire, Ottoman Empire which of the Kanem Borno though the general thoughts of keeping a country secure don't appear to be new, the exact Modern English term "inside security" it came into normal expression inside the 20th century. Strategies and techniques to accomplish and keep up the best achievable wanted condition of inner security are methodically evolved over the popular add up to the current day. In any case, the possibility of public or inner security is amazingly problematic to layout because of the establishment term, security, has stayed a restrict thought. In elective words, it's no all-around acknowledged definition on account of its many-sidedness emerging from philosophy and time span being tended to, still on the grounds that the locus of study Barron and Obama (2014).

More, thus, the issue of interior security is in this manner fundamental to countries and public pioneers that they're prepared to stake something with regards to the state, or to keep up its security. There upon conductor Lippmann learned that a country is gotten to the degree that it's not in an incredibly position to lose basic beliefs, life, property and freedom. Inside security also alludes to the need to keep up the endurance of the country state through the use of monetary, military political force and hence the activity of discretion. President Olusegun Obasanjo, though introducing his stupendous methodology, pronounced that the main goal of public safety will be to fortify the Federal Republic of Nigeria; the board wrongdoing, take out debasement, upgrade genuine turn of events, progress and development and improve the government assistance and prosperity and nature of lifetime of the gathering, Obasonjo, (2006). This obligation is regularly doled out to the safeguard power. anyway the inward side of public safety is once in a while concurred a ton of acknowledgment

nor draws in significant; African country government has no any very much expressed strategy on inner security. It is depended on adhoc measures, hearth detachment approach, and extreme utilization of power, road obstructions and influence that is once in a while venerated by anyone. What's more, this part clarifies why the inward security of the state has gotten frightfully tricky. for instance, the staggering effect if burglary on the financial advancement of African country notwithstanding, the unsettling for public meeting on inner security is in any case to be put on the plan for public talk.

At an overall level, security simply counsel independence from peril of dangers, wellbeing or the force of the state to watch and advance its treasured qualities and genuine premium and improve the prosperity of its people. Consequently, predictable with Imobighe, interior security could likewise be conceptualized in light of the fact that the independence from or the shortfall of these inclinations that may subvert inside attachment and hence the organization presence of the state and its capacity to keep up its vital foundations for the advancement of its guiding principle and socio-political and monetary targets still as meet the authentic goal of the gathering. It suggests opportunity type peril to life and property and subsequently the presence of a contributing environment for the people to reason their authentic issue at spans the general public, Imobighe (1990).

Moreover, inside security may even be laid out on the grounds that the entirety of the country's balance express that ought to be kept up to help the state execution of its duty while not overflow breaks from wherever. Inner security includes government coordination of every one of those activities that will ensure that the balance of state is persistently kept up or immediately dropped at conventional at whatever point it's helpless by any sort of common unsettling influences or interruptions from understudies, political or non-mainstream groups, Iweze (1990).

From the on top of it's perfectly clear that interior security just recommends independence from danger and along these lines the capacity of the government to make and support a climate contributing for the quest for monetary interest by the populace while not breaks from anyone. Also, once there's a danger, it incorporates the force of the government to rapidly intercede to weaken the effect on the gathering. Also, it moreover incorporates the ability of the government to make and keep up organizations and instrument, and even foundation that will ensure independence from threat. Hence, danger to life and property be it from the equipped burglars, Boko Haram assault, common aggravations, detours that weak the street clients and elective interruptions territory unit indicative absence of inward security since it turns into a solitary most legitimate issue for sporadic relocation.

As of late, the Jos emergency alone saw more than (200) people killed in a half year et al dislodged (The Punch, 2011). The profile of people murdered between Jan – Sept 2011, alone seventh Jan at least eight people were executed eighth and ninth over sixty were slaughtered in various networks 10th Jan sixty extra people were supposed slaughtered 11th Jan 31 people were murdered in four towns in Barkin Ladi, Kuru Tasha and Riyom zones. twenty 10th Jan Over six people were executed near University of Jos. fifteenth Gregorian schedule month thirty people were killed in Jos market Associate in Nursingd twenty second Gregorian schedule month eighteen people were supposedly killed in Rwang Fang town fourteenth March Six people were killed in 2 separate assaults twenty first March 3 people were killed by a blast at Nassarawa Gwong 19th April Seven people were killed in Riyom space sixteenth Gregorian schedule month Seven people were killed in Maza town twenty 10th August twenty people were killed in resuscitated assaults fifth Sept. 11 people were murdered 10th Sept fourteen people were slaughtered at Vwang Kogot, The Punch, (September eleven, 2011) A Nigerian Tabloid. In another measurement, floods desolated Ibadan, South West of African country on the twenty 6th of Sept, 2011. The Red Cross supposed that at least 100 and 2 (102) people were slaughtered by the flood, though some one, 500 people stay uprooted by the deluge. The water also damaged three bridges in the area, trapping people in their neighborhoods, the official with Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency reported. The Agency equally reported in January 2014 that some 500,000 people were displaced

nationwide by floods in the country in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

The Vulnerability of Northern Nigeria to Terrorism

Even though it is not the contention of this paper whether Boko Haram and Islamic- motivated group called the Maitatsine of the 1 980s, which started in Kano by a man whose name was Muhammadu Marwa, are the same, for obvious reasons of similar or same ideological orientation, philosophy, mode of operation and aspiration, we can argue that Boko Haram is at least, building on the precedent or rather a resurgence of notorious Maitatsine group. The leader of the terror Islamic sect, Muhammadu Marwa, became known in Hausa-Fulani predominant northern society as "Maitatsine", which literally translates to "the one who curses." This was because of his rudeness and abusive trademarks and his ragtag army of acolytes mostly made up of the 'talakawas' (the poor) and 'almajiris' (who are mostly male children learning to read the Quran under an Islamic scholar and forced to beg in order to earn a living for themselves and their teachers).

Initially, Muhammadu Marwa was thought to be a mad! Derika teacher. Derika is one of the Islamic sects in the country and the Islamic world generally. There are different Islamic sects in Nigeria which include the Derika, the Izala, the Kaulu (or Kablu), the Tijaniya, the Quaddiriya, the Shiite, the Muslim Brotherhood, and several other splinter groups. So, there had been long-standing cross-sectarian suspicion among the small Derika and Izala sects in the Nigeria Cameroun border town of Marwa. But contrary to the belief that Muhammadu Marwa was a Nigerian, a surprise revelation was the fact that he was an illegal immigrant from Cameroun, a country that borders the Northeastern flank of Nigeria. Specifically, he was from the town of Marwa, which also had area with same name on the Nigerian side of the border. It was rumoured then that as a marabout he had fallen out with Ahmadou Ahidjo, the president of Cameroun, which led to his 'exile' in Nigeria, albeit, illegally.

According to the account separately reported by Danjibo (n. d) and Falola (1998: 153), on December 18, 1980, the Maitatsine group went to a popular open field called Shahuci in Kano state to sermonize without obtaining police permit for the purpose.

Infuriated by this action and considering the security risk involved going by the sect's fanatic brand of Islam, the police stormed the place to prevent them from preaching. Moreover, the public had always complained of harassment by Muhammadu Marwa and his numerous adherents whenever they preach. The prevention by the police led to the outbreak of conflict between the sect and the police. Obviously, the police who was ill-prepared for underrating the terror capability of the sect were soon overpowered by the members of the sect who appeared sophisticated with bows and arrows, knives and locally made guns. Incredibly, the Maitatsine group burnt down all the thirteen police vehicles, killed four policemen and injured several others whom they stripped off their weapons. Emboldened by this seeming victory, the sect marched in Kano city chanting "Yau zamu sha jini" in Hausa, meaning "we shall drink blood today".

The following day, the sect took over strategic places in Kano city including the Fagge mosque, some schools, a cinema house and the Sabon Gari market and challenged the capacity of the Nigerian state and its security apparatus for eleven days. Apparently, the incapacity of the Nigerian police to contain the sect and restore law and order within Kano metropolis necessitated the drafting of the Nigerian army by then President Shehu Shagari. Even for the army, it took the soldiers almost two days to displace the sect whose followers spread in all major cities of the North, especially Kano, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Gombe, Potiskurn, Yola, Azare and Jalingo while their leader was killed in the action. More than 1,000 members of the sect were arrested and detained in various prison cells where they were manhandled by the security agencies especially the police. Expectedly, the crisis that lasted for 11 days claimed the lives of over 4,179 people and hundreds of houses and shops were either torched or destroyed, Okafor, (1997); Isichei (1987); and Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry on Kano Disturbances, (1981).

According to Danjibo (2009):*Muhammed Marwa was once an Islamic student who migrated from the city of Marwa in Northern Carneroun to the metropolis of Kano in 1945.* While in Kano he grew to be an Islamic zealot involved with the purification of Islam. 1-Ic believed that Islam had been corrupted by way of modernization

(Westernization) and the formation of the contemporary state. His consistent preaching grew to become very abusive and provocative, specifically towards hooked up establishments like the emirate and the political type to the extent that the then Ernir of Kano. Aihaji Sanusi Larnido, expelled him from Kano. Marwa located his way returned to Kano in 1966, possibly after the loss of life of Alhaji Sanusi. Between 1972 and 1979 Marwa was once detained in jail numerous instances for his provocative preaching and acts of lawlessness in opposition to the state.

Deportation and Everyday Violence among Nigerian Migrants

"Victims" and "Criminals" compared in terms of the violence the two faced over-seas and "home" put both participants and the public in dileman. Despite the hard work of designated bodies in identifying "victims" of trafficking from "criminals", most "innocent migrants" become criminals as they might fail in their response to interrogation by these bodies. The victims are the migrants that are forced and deceived into migration for the purpose of satisfying the interest of the traffickers while criminals are the category of migrants that unlawfully and intentionally made their ways to foreign countries. The examination of everyday violence upon return to violence abroad showed that "participants" could be in dileman if given opportunity to choose between the two experiences. Tolulope counted his loses both abroad and at home:

I was lured into the mess by my friend. He told me that I could escape from the torture of unemployment and scam in Nigeria. Nigeria is a scam and everything is not real. I raised about eight hundred thousand naira for the trip to China and he was successful at first. I began to be restless when I spent a whole two month in the room without going out. He told me that he will need to get my papers for me to be able to walk freely on the streets. I manage to go out on a faithful day and I was exposed to how many Nigerians are captured by Chinese Immigration and sent to prison. Many died in the course and some continue to be on the run. They do not want to come back to Nigeria in any case. After staying more than two months indoor; I chose to report myself and I paid fine of about three hundred thousand.

Tolulope is from Ado Ekiti, Ekiti state in Nigeria. He narrated his unpleasant experience and what other foreigners are passing through in China. He said, some are deceiving their people at home by saying that they are studying or doing business in China. "The truth is that they are serving prison sentence or rather be on the run".

Upon Tolulope's return to Nigeria, he narrated his experience that:

I am a graduate of mathematics. I have my BSc in 2012 and I finished National Youth Service Corps in 2013. Knowing fully well that no opportunity in Nigeria, I left for China and it was horrible there. I came back and met what I was running away from. I got a teaching job of twelve thousand naira per month, (is really ridiculous) I was on it for more than a year. I enrolled for master's and got MSc in Mathematics yet I got no opportunity to showcase my skill and knowledge in Mathematics whatsoever. This got to me and I was beginning to consider choosing to be on the run in China than seeing myself going through this torture of a failed state.

In the European Union's context, return of victims and deportation of criminals are carried out primarily through two different programs: the EU Joint Return Program (JRP) deports the "criminals," and the Assisted Voluntary Return Program (AVR) returns the "victims." These are done after thorough investigations. AVR compensate victims by supporting them with a sum of money upon return while JRP do not offer any assistance to criminals whatsoever. The reflection mounting on international attention channeled towards "sex trafficking in women" as both victims and criminals become object of shame and ridicules with their approach to addressing the situation both abroad and "home", World Development Indicators, (2010).

The Curse of Irregular Migration and the other Side of the Coin

Kohnert, Dirk in his paper titled: Crisis Region Western Africa-The Cradle of African Migration to Europe examined the two sides of influxes migration from Africa to Europe. The history of Nigeria before colonialism had reflected influx migration as a result of slave trade and this migration, both regular and irregular continued and increased with unemployment, insecurity, ecological degradation, poverty/suffering, and

population pressure without social amenities. It is on this background that migrants broke all odds to cross to Europe, Kohnert, Dirk, (2007). Despite the drain of human capital and resources from Nigeria; the migrants to a large extent transferred innovations and skill they acquired from overseas to their home land and integrated the idea to Nigeria. It is on this background that this paper highlights the transfer of innovation and skill as a blessing even when it could be defined as a curse by reason of its evacuation of able "bodies" from Nigeria. It is evident in seeing the impact the returnees made in Nigeria in all aspects of life. The elites both of the colonial, post-colonial and the more contemporary periods are products of abroad genius.

It is needless to say that irregular migration steers and triggers trans-border crime, trafficking, brain-drain and abuse of human. However, it is focusing attention on "prevention rather than cure" when one continue to see irregular migration as the sole factor responsible for the above cankerworms. It is better to attend to what gave birth to irregular migration in Nigeria rather than putting effort to stop it. By reason of human development and natural phenomenon; when these factors that gave birth to irregular migration are tackled; Nigeria will only pay attention to the "attraction" it may cause rather than losing her citizens to violence and maltreatment overseas.

The Africa Capacity Building foundation (ACBF) elucidates the human Capital flight problem as it is related to Nigeria as thus:

• Political and social intolerance-continual tussle over management succession, political repression, separatist irredentism and corruption, disillusionment inner conflicts and wars.

• Political violence, political persecution, huge unfold use of political energy via way of means of non-public gains, corruption and lack of self-assurance in authorities

• Repression of human rights, along with instructional and expert freedom and shortage of political environment conducive to loose and open debate. Some have resorted to proscription of unions, confiscations of unions' assets, subjection in their leaders to harassment, dismissal from paintings arrests and detention, and different types of persecution, World Development Indicators, (2010).

The premises for this study stems from a persistent reality that Africa seems stuck at the lower rungs of the development ladder, as revealed by the daunting figures in the Human Development Index released constantly by the World Bank aid other development agencies. Contrary to the swelling juicy records of remittances flowing to developing countries in Nigeria year after year, the loss of human capital still remains paramount to the issue of Nigeria's development in the long-run.

The Mission Impossible

Authors and writers have done a great deal in showing that irregular migration steers and triggers trans-border crime, trafficking, brain-drain and abuse of human. The findings of these authors are contributive yet it could only be tackled by dealing with the causes of irregular migration that include: poor governance/corruption, unemployment, insecurity, ecological degradation, poverty/suffering, and population pressure without social amenities. An attempt to curb irregular migration without prioritizing solving its causes will be mission impossible. That is the reason that lack of economic success prevented migrants from returning home; because they could not withstand the shame and fear of rejection by families and society they left for greener pasture, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate, (2007).

Taking cognizance of the three stages of Nigeria history of pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial epochs, as the postcolonial epoch witnessed a drastic increase in the number of irregular migrants. The Nigerian Civil War, Youth unemployment, terrorism poverty and poor governance are all highlighted as causes of irregular migration. Factors responsible for internal migration were also highlighted with creation of employment opportunities and social amenities in urban centers at the detriment of the rural areas taking the lead. The positive attitude and enthusiasm toward irregular migration expressed by the informants and irregular migration's participants in the paper anchored on a general belief that there is greener pasture and "better life" abroad. Finally, most of the informants have this to say: "To me, I cannot see any criminality in adopting any means whether irregular (illegal) or regular (legal) to go abroad. There is a difference between being "criminal" and being "diplomatic." They strongly believe that those

who leave Nigeria by irregular migration are being diplomatic and that, Irregular migration is not a crime." This motivated youths to be susceptible toward its vices, Amadi, S.O. and Udo, S.O. (2015).

Conclusion

Irregular migration has become a part of social order and networking across the globe; nations of the world have gotten to know that it is a two side coin; it has its "blessing" and its "curses". Nigeria, having over two hundred million population has struggled to meet the economy and social needs of her population in the recent years. The situation led to social cankerworm such as banditry, kidnapping, terrorism, protest, and many others. These are the push factors with unpleasant and endless effects on the nation. It will be careless to conclude that the irregular migration has more of blessings than curse; as many Nigerians in diaspora are heavy weight in the economy and social developments of the various nations they reside. Nevertheless, the irregular migration would be a means of embracing, and transferring inventions and ideas from other nations if proper policy and measures could be taken.

Now that it is obvious that the policies of neo-liberalism seem to be the absolutist and sovereign economic ideology which African states must continue to follow religiously, in an age whereby they are mostly aid dependent, it is important for the peoples of Africa to become truly mobilized for their collective transformation and development, in an integrated African economy, where they would be able to collectively muster their bargaining power vis-à-vis the external world. If African states are indeed determined to embark on the path of socio-economic development of their continent they should realize that their humble beginning, on the path of their economic integration, would be the construction of transport and other basic infrastructure, possibly from the sub-regional levels, to link up the entire continent. This would be necessarily followed up with the development of other fundamental integrative structures which, all together, would open up the various potentials of the continent to the African peoples and other positive external dynamics.

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