

**EFFECT OF RURAL -URBAN MIGRATION ON RURAL AREAS: A
CASE OF NORTH-EAST ZONE- NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

In recent years the rate of Rural – Urban migration has become alarming and worrisome as more and more people continue to drift to Urban Centers from the Areas. It is against this backdrop that this paper adopted secondary data to examine the effects of rural urban migration in North – East of Nigeria. Data used was generated through the secondary sources in the north east geopolitical zone. The findings of the study show that both females and males migrate in the north east due to the activities of the insurgency (Boko-Haram), Fulani herdsmen and other factors like non – availabilities of social amenities in rural areas. Furthermore, the study revealed that migration is affected by socio economic, demographic and cultural factors. The study paper therefore recommended that functional social amenities such as electricity, pipe borne water and security should be provided in the rural areas of north east.

KEYWORDS: Rural Urban Migration, Migration , Urban area, Urbanization, Rural area.

Introduction

Migration is considered as the movement of people from one geographical region to another, which may be on temporary or permanent basis (Adewale, 2005). 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. The movement of people from rural to urban areas is a common occurrence in Nigeria. The movement poses some problems in the rural as well as in the urban centre 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). These arise mainly due to excessive drain of youth from the rural populace thus leaving only the older and aged members to constitute the labour force of the rural area particularly in the North eastern part of Nigeria as results of the Boko Haram insurgency.

Migration to urban areas is placing increasing pressure on local government's ability to respond to social service needs of urban populations. This is a worldwide challenge and also in Africa the urban population is set to double between 2000 and 2030 (UNFPA, 2007). On-going migration to urban areas is placing pressure on limited appropriate housing, resulting in increases in the numbers of urban residents now found to reside in informal housing. Informal settlements present a range of health and development challenges to governments, including access to water, sanitation, housing, and adequate health services, including HIV services (Thomas, 2007). Apart from smoothing income flows by providing employment during the agricultural lean season, temporary migration to urban centres is undertaken for increasing disposable income which is then invested in a variety of production and consumption uses. However, the relative importance of migration is highly contested specific as its effects on the local agricultural economy and poverty reduction is enhanced.

The movement from rural to urban areas makes a negative impact on the quality of rural life especially when such migrants carry away their needed consumption into the city. Migration of young adults from the rural areas also placed a greater burden on the farmers. For farmers to cover the same area of land as when he had extra assistance, he must work much longer hours thus depriving him of some time for leisure or participation in various social activities. The trend of the movement of the rural people into the city has also militated against the agricultural development in these areas. The stage of agricultural development in North East is labour intensive, able-bodied men who should till the land have abandoned their role in the farms, and have engaged themselves in petty trading in the urban areas.

In recent times there are more problems associated with rural urban migration; the impacts of these problems have apparently outweighed the

associated benefits. The governments are not aware of the annual internal migration trend, neither most of them know the factors responsible for the movement of rural people into their cities. At the same time, most African governments have little or no knowledge about the problems encountered by the various households in the depressed communities of their cities. This situation has made it very difficult or rather impossible for Nigeria governments including North East to plan and deliver the most needed social amenities for their subjects, especially those living in the rural areas to dissuade them from migrating into the city. More so, because of the movement of people from these rural areas, its consequent reduction in population has attracted less attention from the government as some already existing infrastructure facilities may be left non-functional and new ones may not be brought to replace the old ones. Nevertheless, North East is a symbol of deliberate neglect as the zones lacks those infrastructural facilities that make life meaningful (Ihonvbere, 2000).

According to Baskerville (1994), some rural communities like Nigeria Community have been experiencing drift of its population into neighbouring cities and towns. This migrating population comprises mainly people of ages between 15 and 35 years. These people make up the largest proportion of the required manpower of these areas. These movements obviously led to the reduction of the workforce and consequently decrease in the agricultural output of the area, because farming was left in the hands of aged men and women. Furthermore, the reduction in output has brought about less income and gradual increase in poverty level.

Although, these problems are of larger dimension, pervasive and are continuing unabated, not many governments have launched any regular research programme to monitor the trend of the movement of their subjects on the sustainable basis. Thus the motivation of this research is to evaluate the problems encountered by migrants, even as these problems impact the social economic status of the North East community. The study is also meant to assess the effects of rural urban migration on rural areas of North East.

Conceptual Issues

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 (Adewale, 2005). 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.

Rural–Urban-migration is a response to diverse economic opportunities across space. Historically it has played a significant role in the urbanization process of several countries and continues to be significant in scale, even though migration rates have slowed down in some countries (Lall, 2006). According to Torum (2002), the interplay of both “Push and Pull” factors at the points of origin and destination stimulates migrations. The push factors, which cause migration include: political fear, lack of food, unemployment, wars and unhappy lifestyle, etc. Similarly, the pull factors are the desire to better life, job opportunities, improved living conditions, desire for qualitative education, better housing, improved medical care and a good network of roads. Urban and rural areas all over the developing world are becoming more closely linked socially, economically and politically (Deshingkar, 2004). An important manifestation of this is the increasing mobility of rural populations through temporary migration and commuting.

The burden of rural to urban migration in Nigeria is multifaceted and intertwining. As such, an analysis of one decomposable component or consequence, such as unbearable population density, impinges on other issues within the identifiable cycle of burdens. For instance, in examining the immediate effect of rural to urban migration, which is an increase in population or at the extreme its explosion, various other subsequent effects are expected to be considered. Population explosion activates the housing challenge both at micro family and macro society levels. Congestion in households and communities has implications for both the health and psychology of victims.

This paper argues that although maternal and infant mortality have been identified as accounting for a significant number of deaths in Nigeria (Okolocha et al., 2003) Population Reference Bureau, 2005; (Nwokocha, 2006), frustration, conflicts, poor sanitary conditions and frequent road accidents, which have associations with dense population, collectively contribute most significantly to mortality statistics. Research shows that life expectancy among Nigerians dropped from an average of 52 to 44 years between 2002 and 2005 (Population Reference Bureau 2002; 2005), even when there was marked reduction in HIV/AIDS prevalence from 5.8 percent in 2001 to 4.4 percent in 2005 (Olaleye et al., 2006).

Unplanned population increases in most cities explain infrastructural decay in relevant contexts. This is especially the case in North East where maintenance of existing amenities, are haphazardly situated due to

unprecedented corruption and biased award of contracts, is not prioritized (Okafor, 2005). It is interesting to note that most roads in the North East are impassable, hospitals lack human and necessary material resource, schools are dilapidated and electricity supply is very far from stable in most rural communities, though, none of these infrastructures exists. The people's agony is visible in frustrations arising from avoidable diseases and deaths, lack of access to portable water, subsistent economic activities, various kinds of unemployment, child abuse in all its ramifications and dwindling focus on societal norms and values.

The burden inherent in normative conflict and social maladjustment in a non-regulatory system is enormous (Kammeyer, 1986). Given that individuals are culture-bearing, in-migrants do not immediately adjust sufficiently to cultures at destinations, while others are for very long time guided by ethnocentric orientations hardly adapting to the realities of new locations. High crime rate has also been linked to rural-urban migration given the anonymity provided by urban environments. Rural communities share this burden through loss of manpower necessary for agricultural activities and production. The impoverishment of rural areas in Nigeria is partly explainable by out-migration of able youths in search of employment in cities.

Migration is the movement of people from one area to another involving permanent or temporary residence or settlement. Some migrants are forced or voluntary. There are different forms of migration, but the one we are principally interested in this piece of work or paper is the rural urban migration which is seen or defined as the movement of the people from the countryside or rural areas to the urban area. This type of migration takes place in less developed part of the world or the third world countries. In most developed countries now, the movement of people has reversed and people are moving from urban areas back to countryside in search for a quiet life. This is popularly called counter-urbanization. However, in most less developed countries cities are experiencing massive rural to urban migration, mainly majority of which are youths. The main reasons for this movement can be classified into push and pull factors (UN, 2014).

A push factor is something that can force a person to move away from an area, push factors included famine, drought, flooding, lack of employment opportunities, population growth, civil war, etc.

A pull factor is one that encourages people to move to an area. Pull factors include the chance for a better job, better access to education services, a higher standard of living etc. these factors have contributed to millions of people moving to the cities thereby mass urbanization (Ravenstem 1889).

Urban Area

The Oxford English Dictionary defines urban as an area having the qualities or characteristics of associated with town or city life, especially elegant and refined in manner “Urban is associated with characteristic that incorporates element of population density, social and economic organization and the transformation of the neutral environment into a built and well organized environment. If we agree that urban is a place based characteristic, then we can proceed to say that the urban area is a special concentration of the people whose lives are organized around non-agricultural activities. The essential characteristics here are that urban is non-agricultural whereas, rural means any place that is not urban.

Urban area or settlement is defined as a large compact densely built up area where open spaces are often short in supply except at the periphery (Mabogunje, 2005). He further stressed that characteristics of an urban area could include settlements where population tends to be heterogeneous and social diversification such as kinship relationship is of minimal importance, goods and services are largely commoditized such that everything tends to have a price tag to it. Interactive and interpersonal relations are virtually contractual in nature with the maintenance of law and order being rather formula and impersonal. Urban areas are also associated with towns or mega cities. This classification reflects the population as small towns has a population of at least 20,000 while mega-city parades population in million.

The urban centres perform the following functions for the rural areas:

Manufactured Goods: Manufactured of finished goods like milk, sugar, bread, etc usually come from urban areas to rural areas before they are processed into finished products.

Higher Education: Rural areas depend on urban areas for higher education in Universities, College and Polytechnics. This is because most of them are sited in urban areas.

Market: Urban areas usually provide market for agricultural produce from the rural areas.

Capital Flow: There is usually flow of capital from urban to rural areas e.g. most of the banks and employment centres are in urban centres.

Information: Information usually flows from urban to rural areas, Radio, Television and Newspapers etc. usually disseminate information from the urban to rural areas.

Medical Services: Rural Areas depend on Urban Centres for their medical services e.g. teaching and specialist hospitals are located in the centres or areas.

Administrative Headquarters: Most of the administrative headquarters are in the urban centres, rural areas therefore, depend on the urban centres for effective governance. (Chukwuedozie et al 2013)

Rural area:

In general, a rural area is a geographic area that is located outside cities and towns. The health resources and services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines the word “Rural” as encompassing”....all population, housing and territory not included within an urban area. Whatever is not urban is considered rural”. Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas are commonly rural. Though some are made up of forests. Different countries have varying definition of “rural”. For the purpose of this paper, the following are few distinctive characteristics of rural areas:-

Relatively smaller in size

The main occupation of the dwellers is farming and at a subsistent level.

Existence of high level of illiteracy

Lack of basic social amenities like electricity, good roads, portable water, good health care services. Etc.

The rural areas perform the following functions for the urban centres.

Provision of food: Urban areas depend on rural areas for food stuff like yam, cassava, plantain etc.

Unskilled labour supply; Unskilled labour are usually from the rural area to urban industries.

Industrial raw materials: Raw materials like cocoa, rubber cotton, etc for industries are supplies from rural areas to the industries in the urban areas. (Deaver 1992).

Urbanization

Urbanization is defined as the population of people living in a built environment such as towns and cities. Urbanization also refers to the growth of towns especially in terms of population size. In order words, urbanization means a change in the function of a settlement from rural character to an urban centre. Urbanization developed as a result of increasing number of people coming into town couple with proportionate increase in physical size of the town and the basic infrastructures. E.g. New York, London, Paris, Moscow, Lagos, Accra, Kano, Enugu, Abuja, Jos, Ibadan etc. (Fadayomi 1992)

Urbanization is closely linked to modernization, industrialization and the sociological process of rationalization. So the term urbanization can be represent the level of urban development relatively to the overall population

or I can represent the rate at which people move to urban centre (Fadayomi 1992)

Methodology

The data used for this research was derived from secondary sources using journal/ publications and other published materials from textbooks. The study area is one among the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The North-east as a study area has six (6) states which are; Taraba, Gombe, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Adamawa and Yobe state respectively.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the “push-pull theory which is used as a guide for this study. The theory was postulated by Ravenstern (1889), who analyzed migration in England using data from the 1881 census of England and Wales. This theory suggests that people move out of their location because they are pushed out, while others move because of forces pulling them from their location to a new one. Ravenstern further concluded that pull forces were more important than push factors. As he puts it, “bad or oppressive laws, heavy taxation, an unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings, and even compulsion (slave trade, transportation), all have produced and are still producing currents of migration, but none of these currents can compare in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in most men to better themselves in materially (Onokerhoraye, 1985). Thus, it is the desire to move more than the desire to escape an unpleasant situation that is most responsible for the voluntary migration of people, at least in the late nineteenth century England.

Similarly, Stouffer (1940) in his theory of “Intervening opportunity” looks not at the size of settlements or the distance between them, but at perceived opportunities between them; maintaining that the amount of migration over a given distance is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at the point of destination, but inversely proportional to the number of opportunities between the point of departure and the destination. Thus, in line with Ravenstern’s basic law which identified three major determinants of migration as follows:

Migration stimulating situations for individual migrants, for example, marriage, employment opportunities, political oppression and graduation from school, Factors affecting the choice of destination, for example, cost of transportation and presence of relatives and friends; and Socio-economic conditions that underlie individual migration decision, for example, the quality of housing in an area, ethnic or racial tolerance and economic investments in the area, especially those that can generate job opportunities (Boque, 1959).

Similarly, Udo (1982) identified a number of reasons why people migrate which include: The desire to escape from an inferior social status imposed by the community because of the social status of one's parents. In many villages in parts of Ibo land, for example, some people are stigmatized Osu because they are descendants of slaves who are considered inferior and are isolated due to their dedication to the earth-gods, the desire to evade domination and restrictions imposed by one's parents or local custom, the desire to attend high education institutions, which are mostly located in urban centres, the desire to evade punishment for crimes committed in the local communities or to escape from perceived local enemies and witchcraft and the desire to move to an area with more varied recreational activities, and modified cultural practices devoid of morbid superstition.

The Macaulay Institute (2004), identified the push factors, which stimulate migration to include; little work and low pay, drought/crop failure, large family, land inherited by eldest child, evolution of mechanized farming, poor services (e.g. transport, schools, doctors, etc.) and little or no entertainment or leisure facilities. Others include: isolation, boredom, lack of housing and generally poor quality of life. Also, the pull factors identified by the Macaulay Institute (2004) are better job prospects and wages, exciting and lots of opportunities, variety of shops, entertainment (e.g. theatres, restaurants, etc.) good services (transport, schools, colleges, hospitals) a range of accommodation available as well as better overall quality of life (Torrey, 2005).

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examines the effect of rural-urban migration on the rural areas. The paper reveals that rural-urban migration is a double-edge problem affecting the rural community in Nigeria as well as the urban areas. The rural community is being affected in such a way that youths and adults that suppose to remain in the community and contribute their quota to development of Agricultural and their community migrated to the urban centre for greener pasture. Subsequently, this tends to reduce agricultural production and food availability in the country. In urban areas, increase in the population of urban dwellers tend to lead to inadequate housing, poor education to overcrowded schools, inadequate health care facilities, increase in criminals activities, traffic problem, few employment opportunities thereby breeding some ill-social vices like prostitution, child trafficking, kidnapping. The study, therefore, recommends that functional social amenities such as electricity, pipe borne water should be provided in the rural areas of North east. Good schools and qualified teachers should be made available in the rural areas. Agro-allied industries must be set-up in

the rural areas to reduce rural-urban migration in order to provide job opportunities for the people of the rural area. The agricultural inputs and farming technologies should be introduced to the rural people to improve the production level. The good road should be constructed for the rural area and credit facilities should be provided for the rural people to improve their production level, which will lead to improvement in their standard of living. Government should provide more security in the North east to curb the issues of insurgences (Bokoharam) and Fulani herdsmen in the north east.

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