



## **The Other Side of Internal Migration: Exploring the Socio-economic and Traumatic Realities of Zamfara State Migrants**

**Aminu Idris, PhD & Milmela Umaru**

Department of Political Science, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria

Corresponding email: [aminuidris@fugusau.edu.ng](mailto:aminuidris@fugusau.edu.ng)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6442-2259>

---

### **Abstract**

While studies explore the fortunes of Nigeria's internal migration, they have glossed over its socio-cultural, economic, and traumatic consequences. This study, relying on primary and secondary sources of data, dwells on the other side of Nigeria's internal migration. Specifically, it focuses on the complexities of Zamfara migrants residing in southern Nigeria and highlights the intricacies surrounding their migration and residency in southern Nigeria. The findings of the study suggest that Zamfara migrants deal with harsh realities as migrants in southern Nigeria, including language barriers, psychological trauma, a lack of access to healthcare, quality education, and political and economic exclusion. On the other hand, some of the spouses and children left by the migrants in the north have to work hard to complement what they receive from their families in the south. As a solution, the research advocates for a comprehensive internal migration policy that would protect the rights of northern migrants in southern Nigeria and vice versa.

**Keywords:** Migration; Migrants; Internal Migration; Mobility; Nigeria.

---

### **Introduction**

Globally, migration and citizenship questions are becoming topical issues more than ever before (Curtin, 2018). From Africa, Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East, migration continues to dominate the world's socio-cultural, economic, and political landscapes. The rivalry between citizens and non-citizens, and who is to be granted citizenship, under what conditions states can grant asylum to non-citizens have further escalated migration debates across the globe. The current global debates on migration often remind us of the famous Gregory Feldman's controversial claim that "we are all immigrants" and the contestation between migrants and citizens (Feldman, 2015). Historically, migration is as old as human history and constitutes a permanent feature of a man as a social animal, thus, the world is characterized by the movement of people across continents for jobs, studies, asylum, sports, and tourism among others (Fransen, & De Haas, 2022).

Africa is frequently portrayed as a continent of enormous migration. As a result of war, famine, drought, poverty, and deadly ethno-religious conflicts, which have devastated many African states, millions of Africans see migration as the only option for a good living (Idemudia, Boehnke, Idemudia, & Boehnke, 2020). Africans' poor living conditions have portrayed Africa as a "continent on the move". In addition, the media images of illegal migrants to Europe by the boat and desert have compounded the challenge (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). Consequently, there has been an upsurge in irregular migration from Africa to Europe, despite the European Union's (EU) and African Union's (AU) attempts to contain the menace. Sensationalist media coverage and popular



discourse give rise to the image of an "exodus" of distressed Africans escaping poverty at home and relocating to other continents in search of available opportunities. Millions of Africans are thought to be waiting for a chance to cross the European borders by all means, including desert, and boat and cargo ships (Helliwell, 1997; Laine, 2020).

Nigeria is Africa's most populated country, with an estimated population of about 216.7 million people (Doris, 2022). Before Nigeria's invasion by the British colonialists, the southern and northern pre-colonial traditional societies existed independently with distinct forms of administration. After the conquest of the pre-colonial territories in 1900, the British colonialists amalgamated the colony of Lagos, the northern and southern protectorates in 1914 to form what is today known as Nigeria (Falola, 1985). The country has evolved from a federation of three regions in 1963 to 36 states, (and a capital territory Abuja), 774 local governments and six geopolitical zones namely; north-west, north-east and north-central, south-south, south-east and south-west (Idris & Tutumlu, 2022).

Ever since the amalgamation and independence of Nigeria in 1960, internal migration has become one of the defining features that continue to shape and reshape Nigeria's socio-cultural, economic, and political relations. For one reason or another, Nigerians from the north migrate to the southern part of Nigeria, and vice versa. Millions of northerners earn a living in southern Nigeria and vice versa. Thus, internal migration has created interdependence between northern and southern Nigeria (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

Nigeria's internal migration is fueled by a variety of internal and external variables. The northern economy is mainly agriculturally based, whereas the southern economy is petroleum and industry centred. This has enabled northern and southern Nigerians to migrate across the regions and engage in jobs and trade where they have a comparative advantage. Internal migration has influenced migrant's access to education, improvements in life expectancy, and living conditions for many generations of internal migrants (Adeyemi & Oyeniyi, 2013). For instance, the North-South internal migration has been the source of fortune for many northern migrants living in southern Nigeria. It has helped many northern families alleviate poverty, acquire jobs, and political appointments, buy landed properties, and send remittances to their families in the north, which improves the overall quality of the northern Nigeria's economy. In addition, thousands of northern migrants have found a second home in southern Nigeria.

However, studies have glossed over the consequences of northern Nigerians' migration to southern Nigeria. This study, using a qualitative method and a migration theory, attempts to investigate the other side of northern Nigerians' migration to southern Nigeria. Specifically, it will focus on the socio-cultural and traumatic consequences of internal migration for Zamfara migrants living in the southern Nigeria. It will also investigate the challenges the northern migrants face in the south and the trauma the families of the migrants face in the northern Nigeria.

Structurally, the study will be divided into five sections. The first section will deal with the introduction, the second section focuses on the literature review, the third section will focus on the socio-cultural challenges the Zamfara migrants are facing in the south and the traumatic consequences they are passing through in the north. Section four dwells on the presentation and analyses of the raw data to be generated from both primary and secondary sources, while the last segment of the research will focus on the conclusion and recommendations.



### **Review of Related Literature on Nigeria's Internal Migration**

All social science disciplines encounter challenges when attempting to explain some key concepts relating to human behaviour. Hence, most of the concepts in the social science disciplines lack a universally acceptable definition. Migration studies are not an exception; scholars are equally faced with operational and conceptual challenges since the subject matter of the area is hardly defined, quantified, or categorised (Arango, 2000). Consequently, there is no globally recognised definition of internal migration at the moment.

However, there is a consensus among scholars that any temporary or permanent movement of people from one region of a nation to another area of the same country with the intent of establishing a new habitation is within the purview of internal migration. Aside from a lack of universal theories and agreement on the definition, there are also disagreements over the length or duration of the migrants' stay and the distance between the place of usual residency and the host region. Afolayan et al. (2008) held that such mobility must have happened during the past six months and must have involved one local government area and another (Adeyemi & Oyeniyi, 2013).

Historically, Nigerians have for a long time migrated to different regions across the globe. They are found to be living everywhere, including in Europe, America, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America. However, Nigerian migrants choose to settle in nations where they have a higher chance of quickly adjusting in terms of their ability to grasp the local language, find a profitable job, and be able to connect with those from their home country or family. These factors make the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada some of the most sought-after migration destinations for Nigerians (Kómol á é 2022). Migrants' remittances, whether they are international or local, are seen as a channel through which developing countries can increase the outmigration of workers and individuals. Resources are repatriated from the source country to support the home economy; thus, the Nigerian migrants sought out places where remittances could flow to their families back home without hitches (Afaha, 2013).

Mabogunje's push and pull model, an innovative adaptation of Lee's (1966) global systems model, proposes that centrifugal influences at the site of habitual residency and centripetal variables at the point of destination function as push and pull factors, attracting migrants from one location to another (Mabogunje, 1970). As previously stated, centrifugal or push factors such as inadequate health care and unemployment, primitive conditions and natural disasters (such as desertification, famine, or drought), political fear and persecution, slavery and forced labour, and the like drive migration, whereas pull factors such as higher wage rates and job opportunities, social amenities and education, and better living conditions drive immigration. Attractive weather and other factors function as magnets that attract people from impoverished areas to developed or industrial countries (Mabogunje, 1978).

At the national level, the scarcity of jobs and other opportunities in the source regions may be one of the major driving forces behind internal migration in a country. The disparities in socio-cultural, economic, and educational development between regions may trigger the likelihood of internal migration within a country. People are more likely to relocate to other areas in search of opportunities and to improve their standard of living. This implies that people from states such as Adamawa, Kwara, Kaduna, Kano, and Gombe would likely migrate to southern states such as Abia, Anambra, Oyo, Lagos, Bayelsa, and Cross River to improve access to higher-quality education, jobs, and other opportunities (Tolorunju, Dipeolu, Sanusi, & Akerele, 2019).



It may be argued that internal migration has made a significant contribution to northern migrants' living conditions. It provides income to northern seasonal farmers who migrate to southern Nigeria in search of unskilled jobs and trade in areas of comparative advantage. In addition, it accelerates the growth of non-agricultural sectors, promotes industrialization, and provides southern industries with cheap labour. Migration helps reduce poverty for hundreds of thousands of northern households and further impacts the northern economy and overall Nigerian economy (Adedokun & Karzanova, 2019).

In areas of remittances, northern migrants working in southern Nigeria send monies to their families; they invest in the education of their children, buy landed properties, and invest in numerous profitable ventures. This suggests that the desire to improve living conditions through work, wealth creation, status changes, and other factors drives immigration from one state to another.

On the other hand, internal migration from southern Nigeria may be a result of the high cost of living. The north is generally cheaper to live in. Food, education, accommodation, and other necessities are cheaper in the north. This implies that internal migration from Abia, Anambra, Oyo, Lagos, Bayelsa, and Cross River to Adamawa, Kwara, Kaduna, Kano, Gombe, and Abuja may simply translate to leaving a high-cost area for lower-cost areas (Tolorunju, Dipeolu, Sanusi, & Akerele, 2019). Thus, millions of students from southern parts of the country acquire their basic, post-basic, and tertiary (polytechnics, colleges of education, and universities) education in northern Nigeria.

The people of Zamfara State are not only farmers but pastoralists, and by nature, they are highly mobile. Hausa and Fulani are the two largest ethnic groups that traditionally had a close-knit culture and are heavily intermingled with several minor tribes (Ifedi & Agu, 2021). The state is rich in terms of mineral resources such as gold, diamond, zinc, iron ore, and granite, among others.

However, despite its economic potential, the state has one of Nigeria's highest rates of unemployment, drug abuse, and insecurity, fueled by the proliferation of illegal arms through the Nigeria-Niger Republic's porous borders. The state poverty rate was almost 90% higher, much higher than the national average of 40.1%. It has some of the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality in the nation (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). This may perhaps explain why the people of the state massively migrate to southern Nigeria to earn a decent living.

At the beginning of every dry season, a substantial number of Zamfara indigenes migrate to southern Nigeria, most notably Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, and some states in the south-south and south-east, where they work mostly as petty traders, unskilled workers in industries, butchers, and commercial motorcyclists (Odimegwu, Adewoyin, 2020). Many of the Zamfara migrants have made a fortune through internal migration to southern Nigeria. They have established businesses, worked in the manufacturing sector, engaged in high- and low-paying jobs, and secured a brighter future for themselves and their families (International Crisis Group, 2020).

However, the available literature on the internal migration of Zamfara indigenes to southern Nigeria is one-sided. Only the positive aspect of internal migration is known, while the other side has been ignored by existing studies. Conversely, this study is a departure from the conventional literature that focuses on the positive impact of internal migration. Instead, the study will dwell on the socio-cultural challenges the Zamfara state migrants are facing in southern Nigeria, as well as the traumatic consequences the families of these migrants living in northern Nigeria are facing.

**Methodology and theoretical context of the study*****Sources of data collection***

This study collects data from both primary and secondary sources. From secondary sources, data was collected through books, journals, newspapers, magazines, special reports, and documentaries. From the primary source, a key informant (KII) interview was used to collect primary data from the northern migrants residing in southern Nigeria and their families living in the north, Nigerian immigration officers, traditional rulers, members of civil society organisations, and renowned academics on migration studies.

***Sampling method***

The study selected a total of 45 respondents using a purposive sampling method, 15 from each senatorial district of the state, who participated in a key informant interview. The first category of questions was designed for the migrants and centered on why they migrated to the South and the challenges they encountered as migrants in the South. The second category of questions was designed for the families (spouses, children) of the migrants to understand the traumatic consequences they face living without key members of the immediate family, particularly husbands. The third category was designed to get the views of academics, members of the CSO, traditional rulers, and immigration officials. The respondents were chosen from six local government areas (15 from each senatorial district). They were chosen based on their expertise, roles, and internal migration knowledge. The data collection commenced in September and lasted through December 2023. For ethical considerations, the names of the respondents will be anonymized, while their designation, place, and date of interviews are stated for clarity.

***Theoretical underpinning***

S.A. Stouffer's migration theory serves as a theoretical guide for the study. We chose this theory because it focuses on the decision-making process of migrants and the role of intervening opportunities in shaping migration patterns. Stouffer's theory enables us to analyse both push and pull factors in migration decisions and analyse the factors pushing Zamfara residents to migrate (e.g., economic challenges, insecurity, lack of opportunities) and the factors pulling them towards southern Nigeria (e.g., economic opportunities, better living conditions). Stouffer's theory suggests that migration decisions are influenced by a comparison of perceived opportunities at the destination against those at the origin (Stouffer, 1940). In this context, Zamfara migrants engage in a cost-benefit analysis when deciding to migrate. They consider the perceived benefits of internal migration, such as economic emancipation, improved living standards, and access to better education and healthcare. The conviction of the migrants that the benefits outweigh the challenges influences their decision to migrate to the south.

***Data Analysis***

A thematic method of data analysis was used to analyse the raw data collected from the text and the KII with key stakeholders. Specifically, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach was used to analyse the raw data by including what is necessary to answer the research question and excluding what is considered redundant.

**Migration Exodus: Why Do Northerners Migrate to the South? An Insight from Zamfara Migrants**

The people of Zamfara State engage in two types of internal migration to southern Nigeria: seasonal migration and permanent migration. The seasonal migrants relocate to southern Nigeria after the



rainy season and engage in mostly unskilled labour jobs such as commercial motorcycle riding, popularly known as "*Okada*," guarding, butchering, and scavenging, among others. Seasonal migrants usually return to the state as the rainy season begins and engage in farming activities. On the other hand, permanent migrants are those who migrate alone or along with their family members and settle in southern Nigeria's states, such as Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Benin, and Enugu, among others. They engage in different kinds of jobs, businesses, and other services. Permanent migrants often visit their families in the state during festivities and return immediately after festive periods. The majority of them live in the south, adapt to the southern culture, and speak the local dialect fluently (Interview with one of the traditional rulers in Nahuce, Bungudu, Zamfara State, September 2023).

According to one of the key informants, poverty and recent insecurity have made the people of Zamfara highly mobile, to the extent that there is hardly a family in the state without a migrant in southern Nigeria. For most families, having at least one household member who lives outside the state is a source of pride. This is because the possibility of immediate family or extended family members benefiting from the migrant's achievement is relatively high. Migration to southern Nigeria has enabled migrants to establish themselves quickly, send some money home, and provide for the basic needs of their family members (Interview with a senior academic on migration and border security studies, Gusau, Zamfara State, October 2023).

A member of the CSO corroborates the above position and argues that "if a person lives in any of the southern states, the expectation is that he is much more likely to make a fortune and provide a quality life for his family members. During festive seasons, the migrants visit families and gift out cash to friends and relatives, which serves as a testimony that they are doing well in the south. These migrants' generosity towards friends and family members often fuels migration among the young people to migrate to southern Nigeria in search of opportunism" (Interview with a member of the CSO, Tsafe, Zamfara State, November 2023). A community leader added that migration to southern Nigeria is breeding poverty, a lack of access to quality education and security, unemployment, and underemployment, ravaging the youth. They lost all hope and believed that their hope for a better life lies outside the state (Interview with a community leader, Kura Namoda, Zamfara State, October 2023).

Most young people who live in southern Nigeria as migrants have been able to provide for the fundamental needs of their families and maintain a minimal level of decent living. Their families have been able to fight and escape poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, and illiteracy which are severe in most communities in the state. A Zamfara migrant who resides in Lagos has stated that migration to the south has enabled him to build decent accommodation, give quality education and health to his children, and assist his parents and extended family financially. He is seen by many as the pillar of the family (Interview with one of the migrants residing in Lagos, Gusau, Zamfara State, October 2023).

The degree of infrastructural development in most of the state communities is poor. Basic amenities such as good roads, water supply, electricity, and health care services are almost absent in most of the communities. In the majority of towns and cities, prospects for jobs are uncertain; thus, the rate of unemployment is so alarming that even those with academic qualifications find it difficult to get jobs (Interview with one of the migrants who reside in Benin, Maru, Zamfara State, November 2023). Basic needs and infrastructure are often found in urban centres and local government headquarters, while rural communities still live in the dark ages. Therefore, disparities in the accessibility of





resources and infrastructure serve as both pull and push forces for young people to migrate to southern Nigeria in search of a better life.

In another interview with a migrant, he stressed that internal migration has changed his life. He has been able to establish himself, enrol his children in one of the best schools in Benin City, live in one of the choice areas of the city, make friends, and build a reliable business partnership with southern communities. He is seen by many as neither a mere migrant nor a business partner who brings development to his host community. Back home in the north, he has been able to acquire properties in choice areas, assist members of his family, and engage in philanthropic activities in his community. His philanthropic activities earned him respect in the community, and he is referred to as a champion of community development (Interview with a migrant who is based in Benin City, Gusau, Zamfara State, November 2023).

### **The Other Side of Internal Migration: An Insight from Zamfara Migrants and their Families**

No doubt, internal migration has influenced the Zamfara state's socio-cultural, economic, and political development. At the end of every rainy season, a substantial number of Zamfara indigenes migrate to southern Nigeria in search of opportunities. They engaged in trades and other menial jobs to support the families they left in the north. Many indigenes of the state make fortunes that uplift the quality of not only their lives but those of their immediate and extended families.

However, the other side of internal migration is neglected by scholars, despite the vast literature on internal migration. Zamfara has one of the greatest internal migration rates in the country; this is likely related to population expansion, climate change, unfavourable political and economic conditions, and recently, insecurity, particularly kidnapping. As a result, there has been a persistent mass exodus of people from the state to southern Nigeria. A community leader revealed that roughly over 32% of the young, abled people in his community (Yan Doton Daji) reside in southern Nigeria. The consequences are that most family farmlands are abandoned by young people who perceive migration as more lucrative than farming. They see it as the only alternative to a decent living. This is similar to what is obtainable in most of the state's semi-urban and rural communities, where thousands of young people have abandoned farming and migrated to southern Nigeria, where they work and send money to support their poor families. This has left thousands of hectares either uncultivated or rented to non-indigenes. Consequently, food insecurity is becoming worse as the active population deserts family farms. Food supplies cannot meet the rising demand of the booming population of the state (Interview with a respected traditional ruler, Yan Doto town, Tsafe, Zamfara State, September 2023).

The state's population explosion puts more strain on the social infrastructure, which is already inadequate. Rural poverty is increasing exponentially. It manifests in unemployment, underemployment of workers, and the shrinking of resources, especially land. This fuels a vicious cycle of low resources, low productivity, and low income, which serve as a push factor for the people to relocate alone or with their entire family to southern Nigeria (Interview with a member of CSO, Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria, November 2023). A senior immigration officer corroborated the above position and argued that climate change has led to environmental deterioration, which has significantly contributed to low agricultural outputs, resulting in higher costs of cultivation. On the other hand, as the farming population is ageing and often unable to benefit from new or improved technology, the youth are massively migrating to the south for opportunities (Interview with a senior immigration officer, Mafara, Zamfara State, November 2023).



Traditionally, the family structure in Zamfara is such that members of the nuclear and extended families live together in one single compound. The logic is for the elderly to train, monitor, and inculcate Hausa's moral values and traditions in the younger generation. In most Zamfara communities, young people between the ages of 10 and 25 often pursue fortune in their communities. This is because these age groups are considered too young and inexperienced to be left alone. They need to be nurtured by experienced and mature minds to be able to live and fit in their communities (Interview with a respected traditional ruler, Nahuze, Bungudu, Local Government, Zamfara State, November 2023).

However, many of the Zamfara migrants are underage. In this context, the migrant is geographically separated from their family unit. Thus, the immature and inexperienced youth begin to operate independently and struggle to stand alone. However, the tradition and culture of the south differ significantly from those of the north; the majority end up imbibing the southern values, traditions, and culture and transmitting the same to the home-based youth in Zamfara communities. The north-south cultural variations are so significant that what is seen as normal may be regarded as taboo in Zamfara communities. For instance, in the south, it's normal for a female to handshake a male; it's taboo in the Zamfara communities (Interview with a seasoned academic on migration and security studies, Gusau, Zamfara State, October 2023).

Life for migrants in the south is synonymous with life in the jungle. Everyone is a king in his own right (Interview with a teenage Zamfara migrant, residing in Benin City, Kaura Namoda Local Government, Zamfara State, October 2023). There is no parenting or caring because the house is simply a place to sleep. The majority of the migrants sleep in shanties, under bridges, and in motor parks. Adolescents who live alone and those who leave their spouses in Zamfara often engage in extramarital affairs with street girls. The sexual habits in such contexts are unhealthy and promote the spread of STDs (interview with one of the migrants based in Ogun, Gusau Local Government, Zamfara State, October 2023).

As mentioned earlier, the majority of Zamfara migrants are primary or secondary school dropouts; some did not acquire any form of formal education. Consequently, the majority of them could not speak the English language, which is mainly the medium of communication in southern Nigeria. This often results in a language barrier between them and the host communities. Assessing basic services in government institutions, such as hospitals, becomes a serious challenge for most migrants. Whenever they are sick, they resort to self-medication because of their inability to communicate with the hospital personnel in government hospitals (interview with a senior immigration officer based in Lagos, September 2023).

Economically, lack of formal education makes it difficult for the migrants to secure good-paying jobs in financial institutions, manufacturing industries, telecommunications, and oil services companies. The migrants are mostly found doing menial jobs as iron scavengers, butchers, watchmen, cobblers, and commercial motorcycle riders, among others, which makes them the subject of ridicule from the Southerners. They are called all sorts of derogatory names, including *Mallam*, *Aboki*, *Malo*, and so on (interview with a senior member of the CSO, Gusau, Zamfara State, September 2023).

Culturally, Nigeria has a diverse ethnic and religious population. The people of Zamfara are predominantly Hausa and Muslims, while the southerners are mostly Christians. However, a lack of religious tolerance between the Zamfara migrants and host communities often led to tension and





exacerbated religious and ethnic violence between the migrants and host communities. In many southern cities and towns, historic ethnic and religious hostilities have led to armed violence, impacting the social dynamics and relationships between migrants and the indigenous population (Interview with Zamfara Migrants Association Leader in Ogun, December 2023).

Politically, Zamfara migrants tend to associate themselves with the political parties in their home state. They always support parties with a northern inclination and hardly align themselves with the dominant southern political parties. In other words, they are often members of the dominant northern parties that are considered opposition parties in the south. Thus, they are often at loggerheads politically with the political leaders of their host communities. This puts them in an advantageous political position; their voices are hardly taken seriously in matters related to policy formulation and implementation. They are regarded as second-class citizens and less relevant not only politically but economically (Interview with one of the Zamfara migrants based in Etiki, October 2023).

The intention of every migrant is to secure a job, provide services, or engage in one form of trade or another. However, those who cannot get decent or legal jobs end up on the streets, doing whatever they can to survive. Most of the migrants survive through dubious ways to make ends meet, including shoplifting, pickpocketing, thuggery, and armed robbery, among others. Some of them get arrested, charged in court, and convicted without adequate legal representation. Hundreds of Zamfara migrants are being rotten in various southern prisons without the knowledge of their families and have lost any hope of meeting their families again (interview with senior Nigeria Immigration Officer, Gusau Zamfara State, September 2023). Consequently, the hopes and dreams of numerous migrants are shattered or delayed beyond their expectations (Interview with one of the migrants residing in Lagos, Gusau, Zamfara State, September 2023).

The young migrants, who could not make it as expected, are frequently unable to send money home on a regular basis. They sometimes bear hardship and are not able to send money to support their elderly parents and the spouses they left in Zamfara. Often, they abandoned their aged parents, wives, and children for years (Interview with one of the fathers of the migrants based in Lagos, Gusau Local Government, Zamfara State, September 2021). Consequently, the number of absentee fathers is growing, and women must bear the burden of caring for the family. Such women become more involved in informal occupations in order to supplement the little remittances received from their spouses (Interview with one of the spouses of a migrant, Nahuce Community, Bungudu, Local Government, Zamfara State, November 2023).

Most migrant spouses work hard and only spend money on things that matter the most. This means that the absence of their spouses strengthens the women's roles and decision-making powers. In some cases, keeping the family may require additional labour, including working on the farms during the farming season and other off-farm revenue pursuits. In her husband's absence, the woman may be required to care for her mother and mother-in-law and attend to any extended family matters. In rare instances, the man may allow the lady and her children to join him after many years, or she may be compelled to leave some of the children behind in the village while she joins the man in the south (Interview with a mother of one of the migrants, Tsafe, Zmafara State, September 2023).

In the above circumstances, migrant spouses must maintain two homes; education and training are left to the grandparents. When a family becomes a quasi-single-parent home, the socialisation process changes; proper values and culture are not easily passed on. When a family becomes a quasi-single-parent home, the socialisation process changes, and it becomes challenging for the woman to



provide adequate childcare and nurturing. In such situations, alternative support systems like village schools or engaging older children can help (interview with a senior academic on migration, Mafara, Zamfara State, September 2023).

### **Conclusion**

For the majority of Zamfara migrants, internal migration has certainly been an economic emancipation strategy. It has provided an avenue for them to interact, work, and trade with Southerners where they have a comparative advantage. Thousands of Zamfara migrants have made fortunes by building houses, enrolling their children in qualitative schools, assessing quality health care, and investing in numerous sectors of the economy. It has enabled them to improve their standard of living and salvage their immediate and extended families from the shackles of poverty.

However, the far-reaching socio-cultural, economic, and political consequences of internal migration have been neglected by scholars. These consequences have gone beyond the migrants but extended to their spouses, their children, and their parents. It affects culture, food security, and family moral values. Internal migration from Zamfara to southern Nigeria has been a complicated phenomenon with far-reaching repercussions for economic, social, and cultural dynamics. While migration contributes to the economic viability of Zamfara State, effective governance and comprehensive regulations are critical for maximising the benefits of internal migration while reducing its risks.

Furthermore, establishing sustainable solutions that satisfy the needs of both migrants and host communities requires a comprehensive understanding of the different motives and experiences of migrants. However, Nigeria's lack of a comprehensive internal migration policy has been the biggest challenge for Zamfara migrants. The absence of the policy has created intense fear and distrust and sown the seed of hatred between indigenous people and the Zamfara migrants. The indigenes and migrants' conflict has become a recurring phenomenon and continues to claim the lives of thousands of internal migrants and indigenes, as well as the destruction of properties worth billions of naira. This suggests that, notwithstanding the inevitability of internal migration, the relationship between some of the Zamfara migrants and their host communities has been hostile. To address this challenge, there is the need for a comprehensive internal migration policy that will regulate the conduct of the migrants and host communities to maximise the gains and minimise the effects of internal migration.

**Funding:** The study was supported by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) research funding with reference number: TETF/DR&D/CE/UNIV/GUSAU/IBR/2023/VOL.1.

**Acknowledgement:** The authors express gratitude to the Research Centre, Federal University Gusau, for facilitating the submission and approval of this study's grant application with TETFund.

### **References**

- Adedokun, O. A., & Karzanova, I. V. (2019). Impact of migration on the economy of Nigeria: Recent Trends. *Вестник НГУЭУ*, (2), 204-211.
- Adeyemi, B. & Oyeniyi, B. (2013). Internal migration in Nigeria- A positive contribution to human development. International Organization for Migration (IOM), ACP Technical



Report February 2013.  
DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.36178.6624310.13140/RG.2.2.36178.66243.

- Afaha, J. S. (2013). Migration, remittance and development in origin countries: Evidence from Nigeria. *African Population Studies*, 27(1).
- Arango, J. (2000). Explaining migration: a critical view. *International Social Science Journal*, 52(165), 283-296.
- Curtin, P. D. (2018). Africa and global patterns of migration. In *Global history and migrations* (pp. 63-94). Routledge.
- Doris, D. S. (2022). Population of Nigeria in selected years between 1950 and 2022. *Statistica*. March 10.
- Falola, T. (1985). *Politics and Economy in Ibadan, 1893-1945*. Ibadan: Modelor Press.
- Falola, T., & Heaton, M. M. (2008). *A history of Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press.
- Feldman, G. (2015). *We Are All Migrants: Political Action and the Ubiquitous Condition of Migrant-hood*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Flahaux, M. L., & De Haas, H. (2016). African migration: trends, patterns, drivers. *Comparative Migration Studies* 4, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-015-0015-6>.
- Fransen, S., & De Haas, H. (2022). Trends and patterns of global refugee migration. *Population and Development Review*, 48(1), 97-128.
- Helliwell, J. F. (1997). National borders, trade and migration. *Pacific Economic Review*, 2(3), 165-185.
- Ifedi, F. O., & Agu, C. F. (2021). Migration and Security Challenges in Zamfara State Nigeria, *University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*, 11(2).
- Idemudia, E., Boehnke, K., Idemudia, E., & Boehnke, K. (2020). Patterns and current trends in African migration to Europe. *Psychosocial Experiences of African Migrants in Six European Countries: A Mixed Method Study*, 15-31.
- Idris, A., & Tutumlu, A. (2021). Nigeria and Niger Republic trans-border management against arms trafficking: A whistleblowing model. *Security Journal*, 1-18. doi: <https://org/10.1057/s41284-021-00307-0>
- International Crisis Group (2020). Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem. Crisis Group Africa Report N 288, 18 May.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2019) Poverty Index Report. Retrieved online at <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/eLibrary/read/1092>
- Johnston, R. J. (1981). The dictionary of human geography. In *The dictionary of human geography*. Basil Blackwell.
- Kómoláfé J. (2002). Searching for fortune: The geographical process of Nigerian migration to Dublin, Ireland. *Ìnkèrindò: a journal of African migration*, 1(1).



- Lee, E. S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47-57.
- Laine, J. P. (2020). Reframing African migration to Europe: an alternative narrative. *Migration conundrums, regional integration and development: Africa-Europe relations in a changing global order*, 93-116.
- Mabogunje, A. L. (1970). Systems approach to a theory of rural-urban migration. *Geographical analysis*, 2(1), 1-18.
- Mabogunje, A.L. (1978). *Urbanization in Nigeria*. New York: Africana Publishing Corporation.
- Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, (2022). Zamfara State –Retrieved online at <https://www.nipc.gov.ng › nigeria-states › zamfara-state>.
- Odimegwu, C.O., Adewoyin, Y. (2020). Ethnic fertility behavior and internal migration in Nigeria: revisiting the migrant fertility hypotheses. *Genus* 76, 3 [https://doi.org/10.1186/s41118-020-m\\_00073-8](https://doi.org/10.1186/s41118-020-m_00073-8)
- Stouffer, S. A. (1940). Intervening opportunities: a theory relating mobility and distance. *American Sociological Review*, 5(6), 845-867.
- Tolorunju, E. T., Dipeolu, A. O., Sanusi, R. A., & Akerele, D. (2019). Effects of the reward of internal migration on poverty status of rural households left behind in Ogun and Osun States, Nigeria. *Agricultura Tropica et Subtropica*, 52(3-4), 129-138.