

MIGRATION, REMITTANCES AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Nigeria is a country of origin, transit nation and country of destination in the migration route. The implication being that while many Nigerians are in different parts of the world, many non nationals are also in Nigeria contributing to both their countries of origin and destination. Nigerian migrant workers have continued to play a key role in the development of their home country. Through remittances, Nigerians in the Diaspora have shown their importance as a viable economic force. Nigeria receives the largest inflow of remittances in Sub-Saharan Africa with 65% of its total and 2% of global inflow. In 2012, Nigeria was ranked as the 5th largest remittance receiving developing country with an estimate of 21 billion US dollars. With the increase of the number of Nigerians abroad to a number beyond 17 million, it is without doubt that the sum of inflow for Nigerians living abroad would have increased as well. However, as a result of poor migration governance by many African nations, African migration story is yet marred by brain drain, and brain waste with their impacts and challenges. The situation makes urgent the need for investment in migration and development management in such a way as to maximize their positive economic and social impacts to the migrants and the continent. This paper focuses on the relevance of migration to the story of development. For the purpose of the study, it employed the analytical and hermeneutic methods of inquiry. While asserting the significant role of migration in development, it points out that there is the need for effective migration governance structures in nations for the maximization of the economic and social contributions of migration to development.

Keywords: Migration, Development, National, Africa, Diaspora, Remittances, Governance

Introduction

Barely a day goes by without multiple media reports – whether in traditional or newer forms of media – focusing on aspects of migration, frequently on negative aspects. On the international media, we are used to headlines like: Migrants swarm to Britain, Migration is out of control, The Swarm on our Streets, Migration has Created 900 No Go Areas in the EU, Migrant Numbers at Crisis Point, Migrants Take all New Jobs in Britain, New Migrant Flood on the Way, Immigrants Bring More Crime, You Pay to Teach Migrants Manners, Each Illegal Migrant to Cost Us 1 Million Pounds, etc. Moving away from the international scene to our local media, during a capacity building workshop I facilitated for media personnel in Benin, Abuja and Kano, I asked them to propose headlines that would give a picture of migration, I was amazed at the negative perspectives that emerged: Endless

Irregular Migration: The Shame of a Nation; Thousands of Migrants Drawn at the Mediterranean Sea; Irregular Migrants Flood European Cities; Rage and Anger as Syrian Migrant Rapes a German Woman; Brain Drain at its Highest Level: All Skilled Workers Leave Nigeria; Illegal Togolese Tilers Take Over Nigerian Building Industry.

These reports may not be entirely false, however, they are only versions of a single story about migration. These headlines configure the mind, such that it becomes difficult for us to see migration as anything but a criminal enterprise, a single story of catastrophe with no possibility of feelings more complex than pity and rage, and no possibility of connections as human equals. Migrants have been presented in the media as one thing over and over again and they have gradually become that. To insist only on these negative stories is to flatten the experience of migrants and overlook its indispensable highpoints. Single stories create stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. The consequence is that it robs migrants of dignity and makes our recognition of our equal humanity with them difficult. Stories have been used to dispossess and malign migrants; but they can also be used to empower and humanize them. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie said that: “When we reject a single story; when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise”.

We have incredible stories of migrants. No one remembers the story of Barrack Obama, the 44th President of the United States of America, who is a migrant from Kenya, East of Africa. No one tells the story of Cornel Ronald West, a leading scholar in the United States of America, with a migrant background. No one remembers the story of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a migrant of Nigerian origin in the United States of America. No one remembers Alexander Miles, the first African-American to invent the elevator. No one remembers Shirley Jackson who invented the touch-tone telephone. And yet, these are migrants with a story to be told.

There is need for a mental shift in our understanding and presentation of migration. This is exactly why the Journalists International Forum for Migration (JIFORM) has brought us together to establish the nexus between migration and development. This piece would study the connection between migration and national development and the need for migration governance by governments for the enhancement of development, especially in Africa.

Migration, Remittances and Development: Linkages

A concept is an idea of a particular theme while approach is the way of dealing with the concept. Both are very essential as they set a new direction in the study of any given subject of inquiry. This section of research would focus on understanding these concepts, while establishing their linkages.

1. Migration

The word migration came from a Latin word *migrare*, which means to change one's residence. As the concept took centre stage in discourses after the First and Second World Wars, scholars have tried to define it from their specific perspectives. The geographers lay emphasis on the time and space significance of mobility; sociologists have laid stress on social consequences of mobility whereas importance to economic aspect of migration has been given by the economists (Ndubisi 2013). This notwithstanding, Bhugra and Becker (2019) define migration as “the process of going from one country, region or place of residence to settle in another”. The duration of this new settlement varies, but the central focus is on those who move either semi-permanent or permanently to another geographical region.

Migration is the movement of a person or group of persons either across an international border or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes. It includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants and persons moving for other purposes including family reunification (Kanu 2019a).

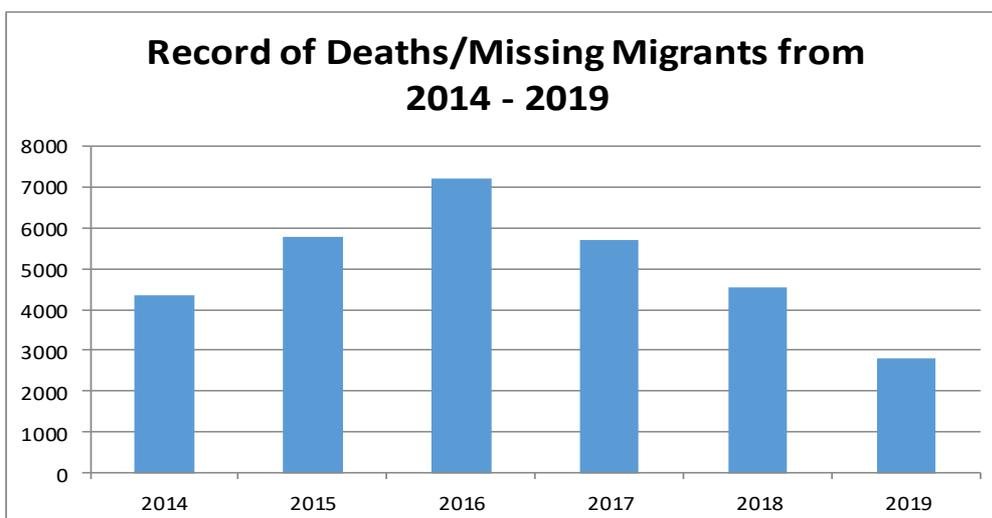
Year	Number of migrants	Migrants as a % of world's population
1970	84,460,125	2.3%
1975	90,368,010	2.2%
1980	101,983,149	2.3%
1985	113,206,691	2.3%
1990	152,563,212	2.9%
1995	160,801,752	2.8%
2000	172,703,309	2.8%
2005	191,269,100	2.9%
2010	221,714,243	3.2%
2015	243,700,236	3.3%

UNDESA 2008 and 2015

- ▶ 2018- 258,000,000
- ▶ 2019- 272,000,000

While the proportion of international migrants globally has increased over this period, it is evident that the vast majority of people continue to live in the country in which they were born.

From the statistics of 2015, with 244 million international migrants out of a global population of 7.3 billion, it meant that 1 in every 30 people were migrants. With world population at 7.7 billion (World Population Report 2019) and the number of migrants reaching 272 million, 1 in every 28 people are migrants.



Source: IOM- Missing Migrants 2019

2014: 4,347; **2015:** 5,762; **2016:** 7,207; **2017:** 5,695; **2018:** 4,551; **2019:** 2,822
Deaths during migration are accounted for by harsh natural environment, violence and physical abuse, dehydration, dangerous transportation conditions, and sickness and lack of medicine, vehicle accident and starvation.

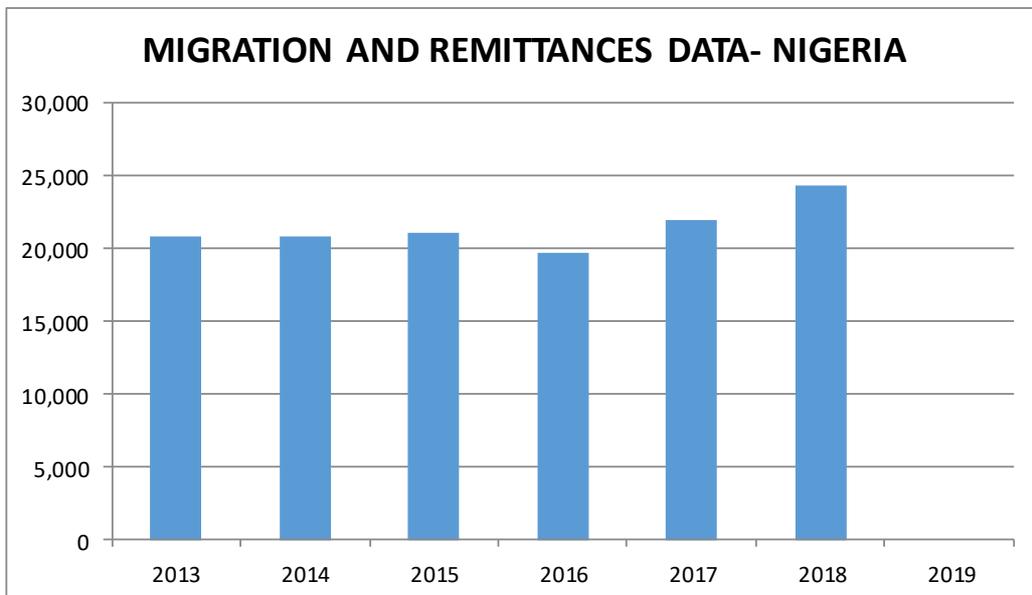
2. Remittances

Remittances could be defined as the monies earned or acquired by non-nationals that are transferred back to their country of origin. However, remittances today are used beyond the economic perspective to include those of services, knowledge, cultures and values – these are classified as social remittances. Therefore, we can speak of economic and social remittances (Kanu 2019a).

The World Bank in 2019 estimates that officially recorded annual remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries reached \$529 billion in 2018. Global remittances, which include flows to high-income countries, reached

\$689 billion in 2018. High-income countries are almost always the main sources of remittances.

For decades, the United States has consistently been the top remittance-sending country, with a total outflow of USD 61.38 billion in 2015, followed by Saudi Arabia (USD 38.79 billion) and Switzerland (USD 24.38 billion). China, which is classified as an upper-middle income country by the World Bank, is also a major source (in addition to its role as a top recipient), with an outflow of USD 20.42 billion in 2015. The fifth-highest remittance-sending country in 2015 was the Russian Federation (USD 19.7 billion).



**2013:20, 2014:20, 2015:21, 2016:19, 2017:22, 2018:24, 2019:25,
797 806 158 679 001 356 368**

Source: The World Bank: Migration Remittances Data October 2019

Nigeria receives the largest inflow of remittances in Sub-Saharan Africa with 65% of its total and 2% of global inflow.

Even though these remittances are private funds sent home by Nigerians in Diaspora for the meeting of needs such as health, feeding, education, they are also used for the improvement of homes, purchase of landed property, entrepreneurial activities, social infrastructure, human capital, economic activities of various kinds, etc. (National Migration Policy 2015). Through this, huge contribution is made to national development.

3. Development

Eliot (1971) observes that there is no agreement as to what development is. It was coined by developed nations to describe the power and powerless nations. According to Onwuliri (2008), there are various aspects to what constitutes development, however, common to all these is, **a positive change in human wellbeing**. The individual and his quality of life must be the centre of the conception of national development. It is in this regard that Schumacher (1975), avers that development should not start with goods, but with the people, their education, organization and discipline. It is not all about money, profit and the number of industries. Levi and Havinden (1982) understand it as a long-term improvement in the standard of living, as felt and judged to be by most of the people in the country. Schumacher (1975) names education, organization and discipline as the three ingredients of development. This perspective sees development as an overall social process including economics, social, political, cultural and moral dimensions of life.

In the past, discussions and commentaries on development easily tended to be developed by economists who saw it primarily from the perspective of economic growth. In that context, so long as the monetary value of goods and services (Gross Domestic Product) increased yearly, there was development. According to Nwajiuba (1999), this perspective is false as there could be an economic growth, but not development, that is, if the majority of the people did not benefit from it. Onwuliri (2008), therefore, argues that development goes beyond the narrow lines of economic and material advancement. It is all encompassing. Development is a multidimensional process involving the totality of the human person in his or her political, economic, psychological, social relations, among others.

A discuss on migration and development becomes relevant as transnational migrants and returning migrants contribute enormously to investments, transfer of technology and skills, human capital formation, business links, good governance, etc., to their countries of origin.

Migration and Development

The history of human migration and development are intertwined and the nexus between the two is currently becoming more popular. This is rightly so because migration is one of the defining features of the 21st century and contributes significantly to all aspects of economic and social development. Migration is a veritable means of development with a life-changing experience for migrants and their communities, both communities of origin and destination. Migrants and the Diaspora are agents of development and opportunities in their homelands and destination countries.

In 2018 alone, International migrants, 258 million people, about 3% of the world population remitted over 689 billion USD to their homelands. \$45bn of this total went to sub-Saharan Africa. Migrants' remittances also include transfers and circulation of ideas, skills, knowledge, entrepreneurship and building of investment networks. This population equally impacts positively the socio-political landscape and helps in breaking down varied stereotypes, such as gender and classism, which endanger the full development of all citizens.

Migrants' contributions to their new communities in their destinations are also dual in terms of economic and social impacts that are of substantial development benefits. The whole financial returns migrants send back home account for only 15% of their entire earnings. The remaining 85% is spent in their destination communities in form of payment of taxes, housing, goods, and services. This is one visible way, apart from increasing the labor force, migrants contribute to promoting growth and prosperity of their new communities. Enormous also are the social, cultural and value enrichment they bring to their new homes. Thus the goal of maximizing the migration and development nexus as proposed in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development together with the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration is a win-win benefit for all involved.

In recognizing migration as a cross-cutting issue and key to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda became the first time an internationally negotiated development agenda recognizes the contribution of migration to development. Eleven out of the seventeen goals contain targets and indicators that are relevant to migration or mobility.

Conclusion

The discussion on the relationship between migration and development has a great deal to do with the management of migration by nations, especially in the area of harnessing the potentials of citizens living abroad as they constitute a major source of remittances, foreign investment, expertise and skills. National efforts will include reforming of key sectors of the economy where the Diaspora can make a contribution. The prosperity of countries such as China, Korea, Pakistan, India, etc., which is linked to the leading role played by her Diaspora in attracting foreign investment reminds us of the important role that the government can play in creating the conducive environment for the contribution of the Diaspora to national development.

Remittances alone cannot achieve national development if the conditions of those sending and those receiving these moneys are not conducive to development. Most African migrants and Diasporas' potential to national

development have not been harnessed effectively for many reasons including those of unfavorable conditions and insecure environments at home. Socio-economic and political conditions in many African countries are still breeding more desires for emigration with little or no incentive and impetus for return. **There is, therefore, the need to promote the transfer of remittances through efficient formal channels at low transfer cost**, as well as to encourage senders and recipients to invest part of their savings (National Migration Policy 2015).

Another way that a nation can impact on the contribution of Diaspora to national development is through **concrete efforts to develop or improve the quality of life in home countries**. It is obvious that development progress especially at countries of origin creates more opportunities that may in time reduce the urge to emigrate. Likewise, such development progress would attract migrants and Diaspora to return as they see opportunities to apply their skills back home. Nevertheless, development is not aimed at forestalling migration rather it helps to ensure that migration is by choice and not by necessity.

As a result of poor migration governance by many African nations, African migration story is yet marred by brain drain, and brain waste with their impacts and challenges. The situation makes urgent the need for investment in migration and development management in such a way as to maximize their positive economic and social impacts to the migrants and the African continent at large.

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