

RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN OSUN STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Rural-Urban migration continues to be a phenomenon that has persisted over time. Men and women, especially youths are commonly in the habit of leaving the rural areas in search of the proverbial *golden fleece* in the urban areas. However, contrary to the widespread belief that limitless job opportunities exist in the urban areas, data from the National Bureau of Statistics indicate that youths' unemployment is on a steady increase in Nigeria. The study explored reasons for rural-urban migration and its implication for national development. The study was anchored on the Push and Pull theory as propounded by Everett Lee. The study was carried out in Obokun Local Government area of Osun State and four rural communities were randomly selected. Fifty respondents were randomly selected from each of the rural communities making it a total number of 200 respondents comprising of males and females aged 15 years and above. Questionnaire was used to obtain data and analysed using frequency and percentages. The study found that the failure of successive government's rural development programmes, neglect of rural infrastructures, apathy to agriculture, desire for unavailable white collar jobs are the push-pull factors for rural-urban migration. It was recommended that government should take rural infrastructural development as a priority in its plans, create employment opportunities in the rural areas, as well as make agriculture attractive and profitable for the youths to curtail rural-urban migration.

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Introduction

Migration is the movement of people from one geographical location to another, involving permanent or temporary settlement. The region where people are leaving is referred to as the source region whereas the region to which people are entering is known as destination region. While rural-urban migration is the movement of people from rural areas (villages) to urban centres (cities). One noticeable aspect in the society today is the rate at which people move from the rural to the urban centres (Bukar, Mohammed and Ngada, 2021). The trends, challenges and impacts of rural-urban migration has continued to generate great debates since the last three decades. Amrevurayire and Ojeh (2016) argued that 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. Those moving from rural to urban areas constitute certain classes, categories and strata of the society that are basically plagued with certain social and economic problems in which poverty ranks highest and most fundamental. Migration is considered as the movement of people from one geographical region to another, which may be on temporary or permanent basis. People migrate based on the prevailing conditions and the reasons for it vary from one person to another depending on the situation that brought about the decision. While the urban centres are increasing in population, the rural areas are decreasing in population (Bukar, Mohammed and Ngada, 2021). The development of rural areas constitutes an important sector in any nation's economy and their rapid development and modernization have gained the attention of policy makers and governments globally. This is due to the fact that a majority of the population lives therein (Johnson and Ifeoma, 2018). Migration as one of the intractable realities of modern life has over the years in Nigeria had far-reaching impact on the security situation of the nation in general (Edeh, Ndukwe and Nwuzor, 2021).

Migration is a selective process affecting individuals or families with certain economic, social, educational and demographic characteristics. 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. 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 (Nweke, 2020). There is usually the absence of sustained, comprehensive and conclusive implementation of rural development policies in Nigeria. The result of the aforementioned is high rate ruralurban migration in Nigeria with its attendant challenges (Johnson and Ifeoma, 2018). The trend of the movement of the rural people into the city has also militated against the agricultural development. This rapid urban growth portends serious implications on the environmental and the well-being of the citizenry (Amrevurayire and Ojeh, 2016).

Rural-urban migration may be occasioned by voluntary forces or involuntary forces. Involuntary or forced migration is migration that takes place when the migrant has no choice on whether to move or not. Examples include ethno-religious crises, conflicts and wars, political strife, family and land disputes, conflicts with neighbours. Voluntary migration is movement done by choice. Factors responsible for voluntary rural-urban migration include urban job opportunities, better housing conditions, rural land tenure and inheritance patterns, better education opportunities, better health services, extreme poverty (Nweke, 2020). Oftentimes, rural dwellers see and hear success stories about people that left the community, moved to cities and are supposedly 'doing well'. This acts as incentives for outmigration especially among youths. Various studies have been carried out on the causes and consequences of rural-urban migration. While some of these studies related the causes of rural-urban migration to discriminatory government policies in favour of urban development, response to disparities in income, employment and other socio-economic amenities available within the urban and rural areas, with the urban areas being privileged, others related it to spontaneous, emotional, structural, traditional and some other factors (Johnson and Ifeoma, 2018).

At the beginning, migration existed internally to enable excess labour to be taken slowly from the rural areas to provide workforce for industries in the urban areas and therefore aid industrial growth. However, experience in developing and underdeveloped countries has shown that the rate of rural-urban migration has ceaselessly outweighed the rate of job creation and having an overweight on the social and infrastructural amenities available in the urban areas (Omonigho & Opafunso, 2013). Also, the urge to be travelers, quest for a greener pasture for better living conditions like search for a better employment opportunities, among others, are the major reasons for the persistent rural-urban migration among the people (Edeh, Ndukwe and Nwuzor, 2021). As a result of this situation, this worsens the already severe urban unemployment problems triggered by economic and physical inequality between urban and rural areas.

Over the years, rural-urban migration which has been conceptualized as a phenomenon of historically unprecedented movement of people from the rural countryside to the burgeoning cities or urban areas has been one of the most embarrassing problems in the Nigerian development experience. Migration has existed internally to enable resources (labour and materials) to be taken slowly from the rural areas to provide workforce and materials for industries in the urban areas; consequently, aiding industrial growth in the receiving cities and rural impoverishment in the source areas. Experiences in developing or underdeveloped countries (Nigeria inclusive) has shown that the rate of rural-urban migration has ceaselessly outweighed the rate of job creation and had an overweight on the social and infrastructural amenities available in the urban areas. Prior to colonialism in Nigeria, the extended families lived a communal life, carried out their daily activities together in one accord and shared their yields adequately following a well comprehended custom (Omonigho and Opafunso, 2013; Edeh, Ndukwe and Nwuzor, 2021).

Before colonialism in Nigeria, the extended families lived a communal life. They carried out their daily activities together in accord and shared their yield adequately following a well comprehended custom (Omonigho & Opafunso, 2013). Colonial escapades exposed Nigerians to international

market by the introduction of cash crops and creation of administrative offices in planned zones which necessitated the investment in socio-economic amenities within these urban areas. This adventure invigorated the quest for paid employment and migration of workforce into these areas and therefore prompted the commencement of ruralurban migration in Nigeria. This stimulated the quest for paid employment and migration of workforce into these areas and therefore prompted the commencement of rural-urban migration in Nigeria. This resulted in an increased migration into new cities such as Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Enugu, Jos and Kaduna. Unskilled labours were required for menial jobs in the urban centers of colonial administration (Aworemi et. al. 2011; Ajaero and Madu, 2014; Edeh, Ndukwe and Nwuzor, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for this study is the Push and Pull Theory as propounded by Everett Lee. The theory proposes the motivations for rural-urban migration by considering how the relationship between two points-origin and destination are affected by push factors and pull factors. According to the theory, push factors exist at the point of origin and act to trigger emigration. These factors include the lack of economic opportunities, religious or political persecution, hazardous environmental conditions, and poor infrastructural facilities, among others. On the other hand, pull factors exist at the destination and include the availability of jobs, religious or political freedom, and the perception of a relatively better environment (Martínez-Cañas, Ruiz-Palomino, Jiménez-Moreno and Linuesa-Langreo, 2023). Push factors and pull factors are complementary in the sense that migration can only occur if the reason to emigrate is accompanied by the corresponding pull at an attainable destination. By way of theoretical relevance, this theory explains that rural-urban migration in Nigeria is caused by push factors and the corresponding pull factors.

The push factors motivate the rural dwellers to emigrate the rural areas as a result of such acute shortage or in existence of white-collar jobs and basic amenities such as roads, electricity, portable water, famine, drought or crop failure, poor medical care, natural disasters, poverty, unemployment, and

general infrastructure in the rural areas while in contrast, those factors are presumably existing in abundance in the urban areas. Therefore, addressing these push factors in the rural areas would contain the incidence of rural dwellers migrating to urban areas. Hence, so long as the push factors continue to persist in the rural areas, the incidence of rural urban migration will continue to rise.

Materials and Methods

The research was designed as a survey of the implications of continuous migration of people from the rural areas to the urban areas for national development using Obokun Local Government Area of Osun State as a case study. Data was obtained through administration of structured questionnaire. The sampled framework adopted involved the selection of four settlements using random sampling technique. The study location was Obokun Local Government area of osun State. Four rural towns in the local government area were randomly selected and they are Ibokun, Ilare, Ilahun and Ilase. Because the selected rural communities were almost of equal sizes, fifty copies of the research questionnaire were administered in each of the four towns making a total number of 200 respondents comprising of males and females aged 15 years and above so as to give a fair representation of each of the selected communities. The respondents were randomly selected in the households based on age, sex and availability. Data were analysed using frequency and tables.

Results and discussion

The results presented here are based on the analysis of the information provided by the respondents. The results are presented and illustrated with tables.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-25 years	36	18
26-35 years	28	14
36-45 years	24	12
46-55 years	56	28
56 years and above	60	30
Sex		
Male	82	41
Female	118	59
Marital Status		
Single	36	18
Married	112	56
Divorced	4	2
Widowed	48	24
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Farmers	148	74
Traders	32	16
Civil Servant	12	6
Others	8	4
Educational Status		
No Formal Education	48	24
Primary	98	49
Secondary	42	21
Tertiary	12	6
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work, 2023

Table 1 reveals that respondents of 56 years and above have the highest percentage at 30%. Age group 45-55 years were 28%, 36-45 were 12, 26-35 were 14%, 15-25 constituted 18% of the total number of respondents. This shows that majority of the people in the rural areas are aging adults. The table also shows that 41% of the respondents are male and 59% are females. This indicates that more males migrate out of the rural areas than females. Majority of the respondents are married at 56%, 24% were widows, 18% were single while only 2% were divorced. This shows that the respondents were mostly married people. This may be due to the phenomenon of early marriage in the rural areas. The divorced constituted the lowest proportion with only 2% probably because it is a sign of irresponsibility to be a single

parent in the rural areas. This finding reveal that majority of the youths have left the rural areas to the urban areas leaving behind the older people.

Furthermore, the table shows that the 74% of the respondent are farmers, 16% are traders, 6% are civil servants who are teachers in nearby schools while 4% are engaged in other forms of occupations. This shows that agriculture is the mainstay of rural economy which is mostly subsistent. Majority of the respondents (49%) have primary have primary education, 21% have secondary education, 6% have tertiary education while 24% have no formal education. It can be deduced from this data that majority of the respondents took to farming after primary education while some chose to further their education.

Table 2: Characteristics of migrants and reasons

Families Having Migrants	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	198	99
No	2	1
Gender of Migrants		
Male	116	58
Female	84	42
*Reasons for Migration		
Economic	200	100
Education	52	26
Environmental hazards	24	12
Age of Migrants		
15-20 years	20	10
21-45 years	164	82
46-55 years	12	6
56 years and above	4	2
Total	200	100

Source: Field Work, 2023. *Multiple responses

Table 2 shows that 99% of the respondents have family members who have migrated to the urban areas. This shows the high rate of migration from the

rural areas. 58% of the migrants are male while 42% are female. This means that more men seek the supposed greener pastures from the rural areas than women. This is probably due to the facts that male take more family responsibilities and more ambitious in seeking new adventures to fulfil assigned societal roles. All the respondents agreed that rural-urban migration is predominantly for economic reasons. Also, 26% held that people migrate for educational pursuits while 12% held that people migrate because of environmental hazards. This indicates that even though few people migrate to seek education, while some migrate as a result of drought, disease outbreaks and other environmental hazards in the rural areas, the main reason for rural-urban migration is predominantly for economic empowerment. This is due to the assumption of the availability of jobs and trading opportunities present in the urban centers. The table further shows that majority of the migrants fall between the ages of 21-45 years as they account for 82%. This is because those within this age bracket are still active, need to make career choices, move in the search for opportunities and can undertake the risk of migration.

Discussion of major findings

The study revealed that in reality, the youths have left the rural areas in droves in search of greener pastures in the city. Majority of the respondents in the study are older people some of whom are farmers who have always been in the village, teachers or some government workers as well as retirees who have returned from the city after retirement. Based on the prevailing circumstances in the rural areas, it is safe to conclude that the few youths around and the children who are still in primary and secondary schools will also be on their way out of the rural areas as soon as they feel the time is ripe to migrate to the cities for various reasons already outline. Majority of the respondents claimed that they have members of their families who have followed the trend of migration into the cities. It was also revealed that majority of those who migrate from the rural areas are within the 21-45 years of age bracket. This means that immediately after secondary school education in the village, the urge to migrate to the city either for education, work becomes stronger since there are no higher institutions or the desired white collar jobs in the rural areas. In a similar vien, a cross sectional study of

causes of rural-urban migration in Borno State: A case of Maiduguri metropolis, Gimba and Kumshe (2012), cited in Johnson and Ifeoma (2018) found that the major causes of rural-urban migration are search for better education, employment, and business opportunities. The implication of this situation is that it leaves the rural areas scantily populated and makes the urban areas densely populated. Poor rural infrastructural facilities, rural poverty and quest for improved standard of living are major factors accounting for the persistent incidence of rural-urban migration. In the rural areas of south-western Nigeria, there exists pitiable living conditions, acute/absolute rural poverty, dilapidated rural infrastructure, illiteracy coupled with ailing health care facilities which consequently push the rural dwellers to evict the demoralizing areas and migrate into the fashionably luxurious urban centres for better living conditions. The assumption that there is abundance of jobs and infrastructural facilities like electricity, good roads, portable water supply, street lighting, recreational centers in the urban areas will continue to constitute the push and pull factors until the relevant stakeholders bring development to the rural areas.

However, it must be noted that an uncontrolled rural to urban migration creates challenges for national development. Apart from the fact that it threatens food production in the rural areas, it also causes problems in the urban areas. For instance, it significantly induces security challenges in the cities. Rural urban migration over the years has culminated into social, economic, environmental, physical insecurities and other severe problems such as congestion in the urban centers which has increased the spread of communicable diseases in the centers, insufficient physical, and social infrastructural amenities such as; electricity, health, educational, recreational facilities, motorable roads, pipe borne water, housing among others. This has caused overstretched use of physical and social infrastructural facilities. This menace has degenerated into traffic congestion, unemployment, high crime rate such as advance fee fraud (419), hired assassins, armed robbery, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, hooliganism, health hazard from pollution, cultural change, juvenile delinquency, and decline in social values. This agrees with a study carried out by Eghweree and Imuetinyan (2019) who found out that unmitigated

rural-urban migration increases urban youth unemployment to a critical level, creating a whole set of challenges often seen manifested in social problems. Besides shortages of basic amenities in the urban centres due to population explosion on account of rural-urban migration, urban youth unemployment leads to poverty and inequalities. Inequality fuels instability and unrest. When this is the case, large groups of jobless urban youths, economically dislocated with diminished employment opportunities, become willing recruits into Armed Non-State Groups (ANSGs) and hence pose a tangible threat to internal security. Therefore, in order to achieve a holistic and sustainable national development, development of the rural areas must be seen as a priority, as that it is the only way to curtail rural-urban migration.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, it could be deduced that majority of migrants from the rural areas to urban centers are youths and they migrated to continue their education while others migrated in search of employment, basic amenities etc. The implication of this is that until the disparity in socio-economic development between the rural and urban areas are removed, no persuasion or coercion can curtail rural-urban migration and its consequent effects in Nigeria. Therefore, to curtail the trend of rural-urban migration and its attendant implications on national development, the following recommendations are proffered:

Government should revive agriculture through giving incentives to farmers, encouragement of mechanized and plantation agriculture in the rural areas in order to improve the rural economies, foster food security and provide employment and also embark on functional rural development initiatives that primarily focus on rural infrastructural development and poverty eradication. There should be intense efforts to transform the rural areas holistically, by making available sufficient socio-economic and infrastructural amenities such as: higher income earning jobs, educational (especially tertiary education) facilities, sanitation, health services, electricity, motorable roads (including the farm roads), pipe borne water, good housing condition, financial institutions small and medium scale industries and other basic socio-economic services for the rural dwellers.

As youths' unemployment continues to rise even in the urban areas, government should create agricultural incentives to attract youths to farming. This will help to harness the potential for massive employment inherent in agriculture. There is also the need to re-orientate the youths on the need to jettison get-rich quick mentality that readily pull them to the cities.

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