URBAN PULL AND RURAL PUSH: THE CHALLENGES OF URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper examines Urban Pull and Rural Rush (Rural and Urban Migration) in Nigeria. This paper which was based on the study of secondary sources of data reveals that the urban areas has been recognized as a living organism with people living and moving within it. The realization is the growth of a whole new range of urban economics. The paper reveals the causes, challenges, as well as the consequences of Rural Push and Urban Pull (Rural - Urban Migration). However, the paper concludes by making recommendations that: the Federal/State government should formulate policies that will improve the quality of rural life; create job (employment) opportunities for the masses; improve the standard of living in rural centres; and provisions of educational facilities etc.

Since the pre-colonial era till date, there has been increasing rate of urban migration in Nigeria. Infact, it is observed that, it was during this period that the emergence of kingdoms surfaced. The surfacing of these traditional institutions: kingdoms encouraged urban growth as result of rural-urban migration in Nigeria. The fact remains that these political kingdoms have integrated isolated settlements thereby promoting peace, security and stability. The peace, security and stability kingdoms encouraged regional and international trade between these kingdoms and other foreigners who were here in quest of exchange of “goods for goods” motivate the rural dwellers to sojourn to urban areas (towns and cities) in Nigeria (Igbinosa, 2000:47).

During the colonial period, there were large towns such as: Lagos, Kano, Enugu, Port Harcourt, and Benin. These towns encouraged the provision of basic facilities such as: schools, hospitals, pipe-borne water, electricity and postal services. The provision of these essentials encouraged urban migration as they attracted the rural dwellers to drift towards these urban areas in Nigeria. There is no doubt that the factors that encouraged urban migration during the pre-colonial and colonial era also encouraged the rate of urban migration during the post independence period. Because of the search for white-collar jobs in the urban areas where there are basic essentials, agricultural production tends to be neglected, creating social-economic problems such inflation and over-stressing of limited facilities.
This paper tends to examine the reasons over the years, why urban areas in Nigeria have been experiencing astronomical rise in the number of people pouring into their territories and the consequences of such influx (drift) from the rural to urban centres in Nigeria. The presence of these new dwellers has been of great concern for public administrators (urban administrators) and policy makers in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

People who migrate from one place to the other are motivated by some factors commonly categorized into push and pull factors.

**Urban Centre:** These are towns and cities in Nigeria.

**Urban Pull:** The pull factors are those factors conceived as favourable which attract the potential migrants to move to new areas (towns and cities) in Nigeria (Yesufu, 2005:273).

**Rural Centre:** These are hamlets, camps, and villages in Nigeria.

**Rural Push:** The push factors are those factors that act as “push” to rural dwellers in their initial residence. These are factors that motivate them to migrate from the rural areas (hamlets, camps, villages) to the urban areas (towns and cities) in Nigeria (Yesufu, 2005:278).

Factors that Influence Urban Pull and Rural Push in Nigeria.

These are as follows:

1. **The conducive environment factor:** Some environment favoured the settlements of people because of their contributive nature to their good health as observed in Jos, Plateau State and Obudu in Cross – River State in Nigeria.

2. **The existence of low income at the place of origin and the expectation of increasing it at the place of destination.** Closely associated with low levels of income as a factor influencing migration are other economic factors such as: unemployment, under – employment, or dissatisfaction with present job at place of origin and the expectation of better employment opportunities at place of destination. In fact, the significant gap between rural and urban areas has encouraged rural – urban migration, since employment opportunities are higher in the urban areas (Stephen & Miller, 1998:15).

3. **The desire for educational facilities has encouraged migration especially in Nigeria where social services are not equitably distributed within the cities, towns, villages in the 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria. Consequently, many migrants are attracted to localities particularly urban areas where essential social facilities are located (Yesufu, 2005:323).**

4. **Urban Pull migration could be as a result of marriage where by a spouse (wife) is joining her husband in the urban area where he works. Furthermore**
is the presence of friends (fiancés and relatives at the prospecting new place of residence.

(5) The quality of rural life in Nigeria is associated with, among other things, low income per capita, a high illiteracy rate, protein deficiency in diet and poor housing and inadequate social facilities, all these are to extent are available urban areas and better enjoined.

**Challenges of Urban Unemployment in Nigeria**

(1) Many people who have moved from rural to urban areas in quest of green pastures have in reality been disappointed in their urban havens. They are “caught in the web: To go home or not to”, is the ambivalent matter. The problem is that the majority of the jobless urban migrants are not willing to go home (rural areas) after they have failed to actualized their dreams principally due to social/psychological reason that should they go back to the rural areas, their people at home will see their level of poverty, and might be scorned. Therefore, such people prefer to dwell in the urban centres without gainfull employment rather than going back home to be mocked.

(2) Another reason of the migrants refusal to return home thereby remaining unemployed in the urban areas is constant day-dreaming of some disappointed migrants who still hope that someday, they will benefit from the opportunities in the urban areas. Therefore, the migrants prefer to be unemployed with the hope that tomorrow would be better.

(3) Urban literature reveals that despite the high level of unemployment rates in urban areas, rural-urban migration continues. The resistance is as a result of people in the rural areas moving to the urban areas in search of economic and socio-political opportunities, since government on their parts had failed to stimulate industrialization of the rural areas (Emielu, 2007:328).

(4) Urban literature reveals that the rate of urbanization has out grown the rate of industrialization as there are administrative and services personnel in the urban area, where government now finds itself placing emphasis on the provision of basic facilities rather than embarking on investment ventures that will produce commodities for the citizenry and then offer them full employment. Despite urban government efforts to help provide these facilities, there are still inadequate housing, inadequate educational facilities, and unacceptable levels of living condition (Martins & Widegren, 1996:23). Indeed, the rate of urbanization has encouraged behavioural vices such as: crime, beggary, delinquency, stealing and so forth.
Urban literature reveals that urban centres experience a high rate of unemployment. Many of those who move into towns and cities with the hope of finding employment do not usually succeed in doing so. When they become frustrated many of them take to social vices such as: crimes, drug trafficking, stealing, burglary, robbers, rape and murder (Igbinosa, 2000:58)

Consequences of Urban Pull in Nigeria

(1) **Urban Over-Population:** Urban Over-population is a serious problem in Nigeria. Urban literature reveals that in spite of the high congestion in the urban areas, rural – urban migration continues. The resistance is as a result of people in the rural areas moving to the urban areas in search of economic and socio-political opportunities. This continuous influx is as result of failure of government efforts to stimulate industrialization of the rural areas and encouraged agriculture in the rural areas in Nigeria.

(2) **The Land Use:** The land use is a huge problem in urban area. The more the population of a given society increases, the more the demand for land and space. This is because land will be required for building residential houses, for recreational activities, for industries, for establishing government departments, and so forth. The fact remains that urban areas in Nigeria started growing before the colonial era. So, when the new approaches for management of land in the urban areas started, many parts of the urban areas had the land predominantly occupied with little or no planning at all. This factor of lack of planning in land use has created a planning problem for urban administrators (urban / town planners) today. As a result of traditional beliefs, it is usually not easy to convince some people to relocate their traditional houses in face of modern urban/town planning. This problem persists in the face of a high level of scarcity of, and demand of land. As such, many policies on land use have included land use decrees or laws. They attempt to regulate the use of land in order to ensure its efficient use. Some policies are concerned with issues such as preservation of culture and tradition such as the Benin Moot, and opening up new areas for industrial and commercial purpose and also to give room construction of dual-carriage-ways as in Benin City today. The resistance by the people are the consequences of what Edo State Governor – Comrade Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole is facing in Edo State today for failing to pay compensations to affected victims.

(3) **The Crime Problem:** Recently, the nature and frequency of crime in urban Nigeria has reached an alarming threshold. Different social vices (ills) such as: stealing, robbery, fraudsters, ritual killings, drug abuse and kidnapping of high magnitude across all the major cities (urban areas) in Nigeria today. As a Public Administrator – one may ask, for research purposes: who are the perpetuators? What are their motives? Who are their victims? How secured are lives and property? These questions and similar ones warrant
investigations. The reason(s) is as result of unemployment of the youths in the polity. These youths now came up with different slogan such as: Man must wack! Man no die, man no rotten! Man must survive!

(4) **Problem of Inadequate Health Facilities:** the provision of health services has been a problem as result of congesting stemming from factors such as over-population, inadequate urban housing, and economic-oriented industries, urban areas are infested by, and enveloped in one health problem or more than one problem. Emissions from industries and automobiles (vehicle smug) are health hazards: they pollute the air. Because the majority of urban dwellers are not gainfully employed, they are unable to afford health care services.

(5) **The Congested Roads:** In most urban areas in Nigeria, there is a critical problem of traffic jams on roads. In spite of the efforts of relevant government and voluntary agencies such as the special marshal and private clubs to help control urban traffic, the problem still persists.

(6) **The Lack of Sewage Disposal:** The issue of sewage disposal has continued to be a teething problem to urban areas. The sewage problem is particularly glaring when one connects and relates it to several areas where garbage’s that is heaps of refuse are left everywhere uncollected thereby making urban areas very dirty as observed at Onitsha as one of the most dirtiest urban centers in Nigeria. Visit and take a look from Onitsha end of the River Niger main bridge through Awka and Owerri roads.

(7) **Over-stressed Urban Facilities:** too much pressure on urban facilities has become a problem area in most parts of urban Nigeria. This problem can be traced to shortsighted planning. The past town planners did not envisage population explosion. They went ahead to plan for the few. The facilities that are most hard – hit by the unanticipated surge include: Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) is erratic in its energy supply. Often PHCN resorts to rationing due to over loading. The ugly situation parallels that of the Water Board, which frequently runs into difficulties as the ever increasing demand cannot be meant (Yesufu, 2005:341).

(8) **The Parking Lot Problem:** Vehicle parking and the congested road (traffic jams) intertwine. It is a common feature on the busiest road (trunks A or Federal roads) in urban areas. The lack of plan of parking lot worsens the traffic situations and disturbs business activities (Igbinosa,2000:42).

(9) **High Cost of Transportation:** The cost of transportation has greatly increased in the urban areas as result of population explosion in the cities.
Conclusion

In Nigeria today, irrespective of whether migration is from rural to urban areas or vice versa, its impact is widely felt in both rural and urban areas. Also, in the urban areas where a large number of people have migrated to, from the rural areas, there is shortage of housing, inadequate social amenities, large-scale traffic congestion, high cost of living and much crime and delinquency. In addition, the paper reveals that many of those people who move into towns and cities with the hope of finding employment do not usually succeed in doing so. When they become frustrated many of them take to crimes such as drug trafficking, stealing, rape, burglary, robbery etc. and high spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Moreso, in the rural areas where a large number of people have migrated from, to the urban areas (centres) at the disadvantage of many of these rural areas are now depopulated, the young and educated people leave the old people and the young children who cannot contribute much to the development of the rural areas, most of rural areas are depressed.

Finally, this paper reveals that unemployment constitutes great danger to the safety and life property in urban centres today in Nigeria. Therefore, it is believed that if the recommendations are attended to, it might check this influx of people from the rural areas to the urban centres if not now but later.

Recommendations

This paper therefore recommend the followings:

(1) The Federal/State government should formulate some policy measures for improving the quality of rural life such as: the infrastructural provision approach which will make provision for housing, access roads, health centres, schools, pipe-borne water and electricity such investment could lead to a higher standard of living in rural areas and check migration to urban areas (urban pull).

(2) Creation of employment facilities which entails improvement in agricultural productivity through improvement in technology, providing of adequate credit facilities, improved marketing system, better farming practice and the development of cooperative societies. Incentives should also be given to small-scale enterprises such as: hair weaving, basket weaving, black smith and pottery.

(3) The quality of rural schools should be improved with a view at providing adequate facilities for vocational training that would enable them take advantage of new rural employment opportunities.

(4) Building of model villages with the basic infrastructures

(5) Legal restriction: imposition of working permit to resist the influx from rural to urban areas.

(6) Finally, rural inhabitants should be encouraged to organize themselves into effective political forces with capable rural leadership for the protection of exerting influence on government policy decisions as they affect rural areas.
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References

