

Japa Syndrome: Causes and Effects

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Introduction

Japaism is a trending word used in Nigeria by Nigerians to indicate travelling hurriedly abroad or escaping from the life problems by common men in Nigeria. Japa is associated with emigration which is a form of migration which can be defined in many ways based on the field in questions. Geography sociology, Political Geography. Waugh (2000) defined migration as the movement that usually involves a change of home. This may be temporary changes or permanent that may occur on daily basis, within a country or even between countries. We can also define migration as the inward and outward movement of people in a country. Ojo et.al (2007) opined that migration means the movement of people involving their change of residence. It may be a change from one village to another or from a village to a town or from one country to another. Orubuloye and Olorunfunmi (1986) regarded migration as an addictive mechanism for relocating factor of production and given natural resources which essentially are immobile. Migration has been a thing of old, which people move from a location to another because of a purpose. Felmann *et. al* (2003), defined migration as the permanent or semi-permanent relocation of an individual or group to a new distant place of residence and employment; it involves the movement

of people with countries across boarder and between continents. Before migration can take place in a geographical environment, three major aspects most be considered, complementarity, transferability and absence of intervening opportunities, most hold. In migration, the point or region where people are leaving or taking off is known as the source region while the point or region where people are entering is known as the destination region. There are different types of migration, the international migration is the movement of people from one country to another, the movement or migration of people to Europe from Nigeria is an international migration, which we term as emigration, while those that travel from other country to Nigeria is called immigration. This type of migration has been from ages, there are estimated 18 million migrants from Africa.

Onorkerharye (1994) defines emigration as moves which is semi-permanent which take place across definite geographical areas. The Immigration is when a migrant is moving from the destination to the source and emigration is when someone is moving from the source to the destination all these two are scope or forms under migration. Ofûcial records indicate that there are 1.24 million migrants from Nigeria in the diaspora (United Nations, 2017). This ûgure was higher in 2020 and 2022 with the recent trend in migration from the country; almost half of Nigerian adults have indicated their willingness to leave the country in the next five years, according to a 2018 survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre. The total stock of immigrants in the world stood at 232 million in 2013 according to United Nations estimates (United Nations 2013), representing an increase of about 30 percent from 2000. Recent World Bank estimates put that number at 250 million in 2015 (World Bank 2016). As a share of world population, however, the number of migrants only grew from 2.9 percent to 3.3 percent, as a result of rapid population growth in the world. The rate of emigrants to the European country and then to the host country increased day by day since 2021. For example, Spain has total number of 7,231,195 making up to 15.23% of the Spanish population in 2020 including 5,105263 compared with 1,045395 in 2019 out of this the number

of people passing through the Mediterranean Sea, the number of the irregular immigrants are 329,529 in those that passed through the North– African countries to the Europe and Belgium (476,408) in 2016 compared with 361,765 in 2009. In other words, the total inflows from Africa to Europe provided by numbers of residence. The African nationals in Europe through the Mediterranean Sea have increased by about 15 percent in two years from 276,737 in 2014 to 329,529 in 2016. Out of these, the number of Nigerians is 102,262 (Wikipedia, 2018). In Nigeria as a country, the number of people migrating to the western country in search of the greener pasture is totally high, some of the migrants move through the Sahara Desert via the Mediterranean Sea to the western countries, Since the turn of the decade, Niger, one of the Africa’s poorest countries has evolved into a key cog in the smuggling business. Agadez, the country’s largest central city has grown to become a transit hub for hundreds of thousands migrant annually. United Nation (2015) declared that there are up to 4000 undocumented migrants annually pass though Agadez every week. Netherlands Institute of International Relations Resort (2017). Found that Niger transit hub like Agadez have witnessed economic growth to all manner of migration-related activities which created a pillared economy. Huff Post Highline resort (2006) stated and estimated that a Niger “passeur” agents that arrange migrants from Nigeria to Libya can also make up to \$3,500 in profit per trip these large margins have drawn many to the migrants smuggling business making it difficult for local and international authorities to stop or eliminate, a free market business, there is no regularization, anybody can just enter the business, and quit, in this, the business people don’t need education and skill to do , just know the method of transporting and settlement process. Since the business has turning the Niger Republic economy into another thing, the government has inaugurated a tank force to crack zone, the smuggler’s business which created an anti-trafficking law which was passed in 2015 to prevent undocumented migrants from passing though the country. Migrants through Agadez has decrease to 80%. International federation of Red Cross and Re-crescent Societies (2016).



Figure 1: Youth moving with Hilux passing through the desert to Libya

Causes of Japa

There are several causes of Japaism in Nigeria:

- (i) **Unemployment/Under employment:** This is the common causes of Japaism in Nigeria, the rate of unemployment is so much alarming, it is one of the problems confronting the society in Nigeria. Employment problems has worsened to The extent that PhD holders now begs for the job meant for primary school certificate holders. Many higher institutions produce graduates every year without jobs after graduation. Graduate ride on commercial motor cycle popularly called okada to make ends meet. In year 2000 during the regime of Chief Governor Adefarati, many Lawyers were enrolled as teachers as a result of unemployment then. The scenario is worse presently. Unemployment is a global phenomenon, for instance the prospect for geography job in United state of America as a case study is very low. The Federal Reserve Bank of New Geography as 43rd with 8.8% unemployment rate and 48.1% unemployment which is the highest percentage of unemployment in the state.

- (ii) **Education:** This is another cause of japaism in Nigeria, many of our youth use this as an opportunity to check out of the country, many apply to study in foreign Universities and used the opportunity to stay put at the destination country after their studies. Many foreign countries use this as a bait to attract many of our brilliant youth to their country. Most of the developed countries offered scholarship to the students. The money generated from the scholarship given to Nigerians are indirectly repaid by the services offered to that host country when the students started working after graduation.
- (iii) **Social Status:** Social status has caused many problems to our youth, whenever people from abroad come back home, their flashy life styles have motivated some of the youth to move out of the country, because they want to be like the diasporans. Many of the unemployed graduates that japa to the European countries, eventually are better off than their mates that did japa and this has become a challenge to many youth.

Literature Review

The word brain drain first appeared in the British media a little over half a century ago to depict the loss of skilled labour from Britain, mainly to the United States, as noted by Clemens (2013) in Zovanga Kone and Caglar Ozden (2017) and Britain still remains one of the largest source countries of high-skilled emigrants, emigration put pressure on wages Mishra (2007) finds that for Mexico, emigration increased wage inequality with the greatest increase for the higher wage earners. General Medical Council the body which license and maintain the official register of medical practitioners in UK shows that the GMC licensed at least 353 Nigerians-trained doctors between June 10th, 2021 and September 20th, 2021 even as at July 24th 2020 and September 21st 2021 about 862 Nigerian trained doctors were licensed in the UK, despite the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall, 8737 doctors who obtained their degrees in Nigeria currently practice in the UK. Julian Ojebo (2021). The Vice President of the national Association of Residents Doctors. Stated that the migration of the

professional’s doctors to the western world is due to the low remuneration given to them by the Nigerian government. British agency (2021). There are many advantages and disadvantages of the brain drain. Many of the migrants from the source country left the country to better their life taking along the better part of their life to benefit the receiving countries, some of them are being trained and sponsored by the source country and the host countries become the beneficiaries. Brain gain the corresponding opposite of the brain drain according to Harry Johnson (1965, 299) in Zovanga Kone and Caglar Ozden (2017) brain gain is clearly a loaded phrase involving implicit definition of economic and social welfare implicit gains by the source country. This is because the term connotes received it, i.e merely opposite brain drain. This shows how high-skilled migration might generate welfare gains for the sending countries and the people left behind, which is the brain gain effects

Brain Gain

The implications of the brain gain are the opposite of those of brain drain, while brain drain is that emigration deprives a country of its human capital, while brain gain shows that the departure of high-skilled migrants may lead to an increase in the human capital level of the sending country. There are many benefits of the brain gain. According to the IMF, remittances represent household income from foreign economies arising mainly from the temporary or permanent movement of people to those economies. Remittances include cash and non-cash items that flow through formal channels such as electronic wire, or through informal channels, such as money or goods carried across borders. They help poorer recipients meet basic needs, funds cash and non-cash investments, finance education, foster new businesses, service debt and essentially, drive economic growth. Empirical studies show that the primary benefits of remittances to recipient households is the improvement in their general welfare. According to analysts, 70% of remittances are used for consumption purposes, while 30% of remittance funds go to investment related uses. The World Bank estimated that global remittances grew by 10% (\$689 billion in 2017 and \$633 billion in

2018), with developing countries receiving 77% or \$528 billion of the total inflows. India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt are among the largest remittance recipients globally, collectively accounting for approximately 36% of total inflows. However, these low levels of population movement mask several important changes and patterns, especially for high-skilled migration flows. Consequently, as a share of world population, however, PWC (Public wealth council) estimates that migrant remittances to Nigeria could grow to US\$25.5bn, US\$29.8bn and US\$34.8bn in 2019, 2021 and 2023 respectively. Over a 15-year period, PwC expects total remittance inflows to Nigeria to grow by almost double in size from US\$18.37 billion in 2009 to US\$34.89 billion in 2023. The growth in remittances is subject to global economic forces, which could spur or hinder growth of remittance flows; other factors that will drive remittance inflows include growth in emigration rate, economic conditions of the resident countries and the economic fundamentals in the Nigerian economy.

The official recorded remittances are much lower than the actual remittances that take place through official and unofficial channels. Remittances through informal channels could add at least 50% to the globally recorded flows (World Bank, 2006, *ibid.* 85). Freund and Spatafora (2005) estimate informal remittances to amount to between 35 and 75% of officially recorded flows.

The SSA (Sub Saharan Africa) region received a small share of the global remittances in 2018, with Nigeria accounting for over a third of regional inflows. Despite representing a small percentage of global flows, official remittances to Sub Saharan Africa grew by 10% in 2018. The World Bank also projects remittances to the region will grow by 7.2% in 2023, due to a moderation in global growth.

According to the International Monetary Fund (2019), remittances sent to SSA through informal channels, at 45 to 65% of formal flows, are significantly higher than in other regions. Overall, remittance inflows are anticipated to keep expanding as a result of two factors: projected strong regional economic growth in 2019 and large intra-regional migration flows from the SSA region. It is therefore imperative that countries in the region, especially Nigeria,

take advantage of this trend in the course of strategic economic decision-making. As of 2017, the number of international migrants worldwide stood at almost 258 million (or 3.4 percent of the world’s population), according to UN Population Division estimates. According to the UN migration data portal, there were 1.3 million emigrants from Nigeria in 2017, which represented 0.6% of the total population (net migration is ~300,000 in the last 5 years). Though the official records do not include those born of Nigerian parents in the diaspora and therefore, hold citizenship of their birth countries.

Brain Gain

Loss of investors’ confidence: When Nigerians are leaving in droves, it weakens the spirit of foreign investors to come and establish business that would translate to employment generation for our teeming youths. The message this sends to the investors is that the country’s business environment is not conducive and not favourable to investment and lack of job, drives social evils.

Negative Perception about the country: Mass migration of our people in a serious and delicate manner would make outsiders form an opinion about Nigeria. Our people would also be perceived abroad as those who had no good future in their home lands until they moved to the foreign land. The case of Ghana and South Africa is a study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Life in overseas is good, which makes the way people migrating to overseas to be alarming, without considering both the negative and positive benefit of it. Travelling through genuine and proper route or through the North Africa route has caused a lot of fortune and misfortune to many migrants, some are lucky to get to Europe, while some are not to reach the Sahara Desert especially those travelling through the Sahara Desert and some North Africa countries.

The gains from high-skilled emigration can be substantial if the right institutions are in place. These gains include large sums of

remittances to the sending countries, knowledge diffusion, and increases in FDI and trade. These benefits can continue with the offspring of emigrants born in the host country because diasporas continue to engage with their home countries for many generations. There are numerous examples of second- and third-generation attachment to their parents' birth countries. Many countries, such as Ireland, implement specific policies to stay engaged with and benefit from their diasporas (Dickerson and Ozdo 2017). The benefit depends on the trade-off between the host country spent in education an individual who migrated to abroad and his remittance back home over many years or even generations.

Recommendations

- There should be adequate relevant migration policies that can improve the method of traveling to oversea.
- There should be improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the people and security of as well as the security of lives and properties of Nigerians. Most importantly Nigeria request good governance by patriotic Nigerians to reduce the japa syndrome.
- Creation of platforms that increase accessibility of crucial information for Nigerians in the diaspora. The Nigerian diaspora constitutes mainly semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled professionals. They are in need of credible opportunities of investment with assured returns on their savings and earnings.
- A platform where information on opportunities can be shared will help to reduce information asymmetry when it comes to investment opportunities. Also, it is strategically important for state governments to also adopt these platforms to drive and attract remittance flows from migrant indigenes toward consumption, investment and development in their respective sub-nationals.
- Encouraging and creating pooled investment vehicles. One of the major barriers to investing for those in the diaspora is the minimum amount of funds, which investing firms accept.

Therefore, pooled investment vehicles where members of diaspora can be vetted and can aggregate funds for private equity investment for example, would encourage greater investments.

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