

Governance and Mass Migration Of Nigerians Abroad: The Causes and Consequences

Tata Kelola dan Migrasi Massal Warga Negara Nigeria ke Luar Negeri: Penyebab dan Konsekuensinya

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Abstract

The optimism that civilian administration in Nigeria's Fourth Republic would catalyze unparalleled development has gradually waned as Nigerians continue to grapple with precarious economic conditions. A significant proportion of the country's annual revenue is allocated to servicing domestic and external debts, further diminishing prospects for an improved quality of life. Within this context, this study explores the driving factors behind the mass migration of Nigerians, the preferred destinations of these migrants, and the broader implications of this migration on Nigeria and its citizens. Utilizing both primary and secondary data sources—including direct observations, textbooks, academic journals, official records, and resources from Nigerian government and international organization websites—the study identifies several interrelated drivers of migration. These include widespread poverty, high unemployment rates, poor economic conditions, an underfunded public healthcare system, escalating insecurity, and persistent political challenges. Popular destinations for Nigerian migrants include the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, France, and Canada. The findings reveal both positive and negative impacts of mass migration. On one hand, remittances from migrants provide a critical source of income and contribute to economic development. On the other hand, significant challenges arise in key sectors, particularly healthcare and education. For instance, migration-induced shortages of healthcare professionals compromise service delivery, while the outflow of university lecturers creates gaps in research and teaching capacities. Additionally, funds spent by students on tuition fees abroad could otherwise be invested in strengthening Nigeria's domestic education system. The study concludes that curbing mass migration requires substantive improvements in governance, including the creation of employment opportunities, poverty alleviation, enhanced security, access to quality education and healthcare, improved labor conditions, and an overall elevation in living standards.

Keywords: Governance, Mass migration, Poverty, Unemployment, Insecurity, Violent conflict



Abstrak

Optimisme pemerintahan sipil di Republik Keempat Nigeria akan mendorong perkembangan yang tak tertandingi secara perlahan memudar karena rakyat Nigeria terus menghadapi kondisi ekonomi yang genting. Sebagian besar pendapatan tahunan negara dialokasikan untuk membayar utang dalam negeri dan luar negeri, sehingga semakin mempersempit peluang masyarakat untuk menikmati peningkatan kualitas hidup. Dalam konteks ini, studi ini mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor yang mendorong migrasi massal warga Nigeria, destinasi utama para migran, serta dampak lebih luas dari migrasi ini terhadap Nigeria dan warganya. Dengan menggunakan sumber data primer dan sekunder termasuk observasi langsung, buku teks, jurnal akademik, catatan resmi, serta sumber daya dari situs web pemerintah Nigeria dan organisasi internasional, studi ini mengidentifikasi sejumlah faktor saling terkait yang mendorong migrasi. Faktor-faktor tersebut mencakup kemiskinan yang meluas, tingginya tingkat pengangguran, kondisi ekonomi yang buruk, sistem kesehatan publik yang kurang terdani, meningkatnya ketidakamanan, serta tantangan politik yang terus berlanjut. Destinasi utama bagi para migran Nigeria meliputi Amerika Serikat, Inggris, Italia, Jerman, Prancis, dan Kanada. Temuan studi ini mengungkapkan dampak positif dan negatif dari migrasi massal. Di satu sisi, remitansi dari para migran menjadi sumber pendapatan penting dan berkontribusi pada pembangunan ekonomi. Di sisi lain, tantangan signifikan muncul di sektor-sektor utama, khususnya kesehatan dan pendidikan. Misalnya, kekurangan tenaga kesehatan akibat migrasi mengurangi kualitas layanan kesehatan, sementara migrasi dosen universitas menciptakan kekosongan dalam kapasitas penelitian dan pengajaran. Selain itu, dana yang dihabiskan mahasiswa untuk biaya pendidikan di luar negeri seharusnya dapat diinvestasikan untuk memperkuat sistem pendidikan domestik Nigeria. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa mengurangi migrasi massal membutuhkan perbaikan signifikan dalam tata kelola, termasuk penciptaan lapangan kerja, pengentasan kemiskinan, peningkatan keamanan, akses terhadap pendidikan dan layanan kesehatan berkualitas, perbaikan kondisi tenaga kerja, serta peningkatan standar hidup secara keseluruhan.

Kata kunci: Tata kelola, Migrasi massal, Kemiskinan, Pengangguran, Ketidakamanan, Konflik kekerasan.

Introduction

Following the transition from military to civilian administration in 1999, there was widespread hope and high expectations among Nigerians that the new regime would catalyze unprecedented development, particularly in social service delivery, employment generation, and improved living conditions (Adegbami & Uche, 2015). However, these hopes have gradually diminished as Nigerians continue to face deteriorating economic conditions.

With a population exceeding 200 million as of 2022 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023) and United Nations projections indicating that Nigeria's population will double by 2050 (United Nations, 2019), the current socio-economic challenges cast doubt on the feasibility of safeguarding and improving the quality of life for its citizens. The country is burdened by a high debt profile, which consumes a significant portion of its annual revenue for debt servicing. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), Nigeria's total debt—both external and domestic—reached “N87.38 trillion (US\$113.42 billion) in Q2 2023, up from N49.85 trillion (US\$108.30 billion) in Q1 2023, reflecting a quarter-on-quarter growth rate of 75.27%.” Consequently, over 133 million Nigerians, representing 63% of the population, live in poverty (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Many lack access to essential services such as clean water, cooking fuel, proper sanitation, education, and basic healthcare (Nigeria Poverty Map, 2023). These individuals are categorized as multidimensionally poor or colloquially referred to as "the poorest of the poor."

Regarding unemployment, the National Bureau of Statistics recently reported a rate of 4.1%. While this appears to be the lowest in many years, it is likely a result of the agency's adoption of a new analytical method, which considers individuals working for at least one hour per week as employed—an adjustment from the previous threshold of 20 hours per week. This methodological change has drawn criticism for failing to accurately reflect the extent of unemployment. The statistics obscure the reality of widespread joblessness, exacerbated by inflation (Asadu, 2023), rising insecurity, an unfavorable business environment, and the government's limited capacity to create jobs. Many Nigerians have also lost their jobs recently, further worsening the already precarious unemployment situation.

The challenges outlined above, exacerbated by the recent removal of the petroleum subsidy announced during the inauguration of President Bola Tinubu's administration on May 29, 2023, have led to hyperinflation and the collapse of numerous industries and companies. These developments have significantly worsened living conditions for the Nigerian population. Hunger has emerged as one of the most pressing issues, pushing many individuals toward criminal activities as a means of survival. As a result, crime has increasingly become a pervasive feature of the country's

economic landscape. Falola (2023) aptly describes this dire situation, stating that the Nigerian environment has reached a point where “avoidable compromises and prolonged discomfort cannot be endured any further.”

This precarious socio-economic condition has also contributed to an unprecedented wave of emigration, as Nigerians increasingly migrate en masse in search of better opportunities abroad. Although the country has historically relied on revenue from crude oil sales, recent years have seen efforts to diversify the economy. Sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, financial services, communications, technology, telecommunications, and entertainment have been expanded to reduce dependence on oil. However, despite these diversification efforts, the anticipated national development remains elusive.

Nigerians had hoped for a governance system that would improve their quality of life, but the reality has been disillusioning. Many now express the sentiment that the capable leaders needed to drive transformative governance have yet to emerge. Against this backdrop, this study explores the underlying reasons for the mass emigration of Nigerians, identifies the preferred destinations of Nigerian immigrants, and examines the impacts of this migration on the country and its citizens.

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach and a case study design to explore the governance-related factors driving the mass migration of Nigerians abroad and its socio-economic consequences. Focusing on Nigeria as the locus, the research investigates the interplay between governance failures and migration trends, drawing on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is derived from direct observations, providing firsthand insights into the root causes of migration. Secondary data is sourced from textbooks, academic journals, official records, and reputable online resources, including those from Nigerian government institutions and international organizations. Data collection is strategically guided by the research objectives, ensuring a focused analysis of the causes, destinations, and impacts of migration. The study employs content analysis to systematically examine and interpret patterns, themes, and relationships within the data. This approach enables a nuanced

understanding of how poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and political instability interact to propel migration. To ensure rigor and validity, multiple data sources are triangulated, and findings are contextualized within Nigeria's socio-economic landscape. The combination of diverse data sources, a structured analytical framework, and a qualitative lens allows the study to provide robust insights into the drivers and implications of mass migration, highlighting critical governance reforms necessary to address this phenomenon.

Results And Discussion

Factors Driving Mass Migration of Nigerians

Migration has been a historical phenomenon among Nigerians, characterized by movement across regions and borders. However, the reasons behind this migration are often complex, context-specific, and multifaceted, making generalizations challenging (Isiugo-Abanihe & IOM Nigeria, 2016). Several key factors drive the large-scale emigration of Nigerians to various parts of the world, including:

(a) Poor Economic Conditions

Nigeria's persistent economic challenges, exacerbated by poor governance in the Fourth Republic, have created an environment marked by insecurity, unemployment, widespread poverty, and a declining standard of living. These systemic issues highlight the precarious state of the country's economy. In recent years, poverty levels have increased significantly, with many citizens struggling to afford even basic necessities, such as three meals a day. The dire economic conditions are a primary driver of migration, as many Nigerians seek better opportunities abroad. Rufai et al. (2019) note that the mass exodus, particularly of youths and skilled professionals, is directly linked to unemployment, poverty, and an unstable economy. This phenomenon has further contributed to the "brain drain" in Nigeria, where the country loses a substantial portion of its human capital to more developed nations.

(b) High Unemployment Rate

High unemployment remains a significant factor driving migration from Nigeria. This issue is partly attributed to the country's demographic structure, where youth comprise more than 60% of the total population, yet less than half of them are

able to secure employment. Additionally, the rapid expansion of Nigeria's educational system has resulted in a growing number of graduates, leading to an oversupply of skilled labor relative to the availability of jobs. Compounding this problem is the government's limited ability to create employment opportunities due to a lack of vision and political will. Nigeria's labor market also suffers from structural issues, including a high unemployment rate and rigid wage adjustments that fail to respond effectively to market forces. While unemployment continues to rise, wages lag behind inflation, diminishing workers' purchasing power and overall welfare (Olubiyi & Olarinde, 2015). These conditions have collectively contributed to the increasing emigration of Nigerians seeking better economic opportunities abroad.

Currently, unemployment remains a pressing challenge. According to KPMG, as reported by Egole (2023), Nigeria's unemployment rate rose to 37.7% in 2022 and is projected to increase to approximately 40.6% in 2023, driven by the continuous inflow of job seekers into the labor market. In its 2023 report, titled KPMG Global Economy Outlook Report, H1 2023, the firm emphasized that unemployment will persist as long as Nigeria maintains its "slower-than-required economic growth" and fails to accommodate over 4 million new entrants into the labor market annually. By 2024, the unemployment rate is expected to rise further to 43% (Egole, 2023). This persistent and unpalatable unemployment rate remains a powerful force driving Nigerians to migrate in search of better opportunities.

(c) Poor Public Healthcare System

One of the major drivers of migration, particularly to Europe and America, is the poor state of Nigeria's public healthcare system. The condition of public healthcare facilities in Nigeria is substandard, with many hospitals functioning more like consulting clinics. Consequently, Nigerians who can afford the costs of healthcare are often left with no choice but to seek services from the private healthcare sector. However, private healthcare in Nigeria is comparatively expensive, especially when considering the higher quality, advanced facilities, and superior performance of healthcare systems abroad. This disparity has led to the frequent emigration of wealthy citizens and top government officials who travel overseas to access better medical

services. Unfortunately, these officials, who are in positions to effect change, have shown little concern for the country's deteriorating healthcare system.

The Nigerian government has largely neglected the principle of social justice, which underscores the right to health as a fundamental human right that should be guaranteed by the state. This principle has been inadequately addressed due to poor leadership and governance. The government's *laissez-faire* approach is evident in insufficient funding, weak policy formulation, and ineffective implementation of healthcare policies (Abah, 2023).

As a result of these systemic failures, many Nigerian medical professionals are increasingly motivated to emigrate for better opportunities abroad. Onah et al. (2022) identify several reasons for this trend, including poor remuneration, unfavorable working conditions, inadequate medical and diagnostic facilities, and rising insecurity. The mass emigration of physicians and other healthcare professionals is further exacerbating the deficit in Nigeria's healthcare workforce.

According to Dr. Ojinmah Uche, President of the Nigerian Medical Association, as cited in Adejoro (2022), Nigeria currently has approximately 24,000 active and licensed physicians to cater to a population of over 200 million. This shortage of healthcare professionals poses a serious threat to the country's health system. Adequate human resources are essential for delivering quality medical care, and the current deficit limits the capacity of the healthcare system to meet the needs of the population.

(d) Poverty

Poverty remains one of the most significant factors driving individuals and families in Nigeria to consider migration as a means of escaping financial hardship and securing a better future. According to Statista (2023), approximately 12% of the world's population living in extreme poverty resides in Nigeria, based on the international poverty threshold of \$1.90 per day.

Recent economic reforms by the federal government, including the removal of the petrol subsidy and the restructuring of the foreign exchange market rate, have exacerbated poverty levels in the country. These reforms have significantly increased the cost of living, pushing more Nigerians below the poverty line. According to a World Bank report, the number of Nigerians living in poverty rose from 95 million in 2021 to

100 million in 2022 and further increased to approximately 104 million in 2023 (Vanguard, 2023). The 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics revealed that 63% of Nigeria's population—equivalent to 133 million people—are classified as multidimensionally poor, highlighting the severity of the issue (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Poverty is a critical driver of migration, particularly among the youth, who often see leaving the country as their only viable option, despite the significant risks associated with illegal migration. Nwosu et al. (2022) note that many unemployed and financially disadvantaged Nigerian youths resort to dangerous and illegal routes in their attempt to escape poverty. Similarly, Anene, Njoku, and Iyala (2019) emphasize the strong link between poverty and the emigration of young Nigerians, driven by desperation to improve their socio-economic conditions.

(e) Political Factors

Political instability and poor governance have been significant drivers of emigration from Nigeria. Widespread mismanagement and corruption have resulted in severe hardship for the citizenry, prompting many Nigerians to overcome numerous challenges in their pursuit of better opportunities abroad. Additionally, some Nigerians have been compelled to emigrate due to recurring civil unrest, violent conflicts, or hostile and discriminatory state policies. Others, particularly those involved in politically sensitive roles—such as leaders of secessionist movements or agitation groups—have also left the country to escape persecution or political threats.

A notable example of politically motivated migration occurred following the #EndSARS protests in October 2020, where young Nigerians mobilized across the country to demand the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and an end to police brutality. The government's response, characterized by excessive use of force, resulted in numerous injuries and fatalities among protesters. Survivors who had the financial means to emigrate often chose to leave the country urgently to escape further threats or repercussions.

(f) Rising Waves of Insecurity

Insecurity has become another critical factor driving the mass migration of Nigerians. The country faces a myriad of security challenges that have overwhelmed its

security apparatus, creating what Adegami (2013) describes as “a hydra-headed monster.” Frequent incidents of bombing, kidnapping, hostage-taking, and property destruction have left many citizens feeling unsafe.

Specific contributors to the insecurity include Boko Haram insurgencies, Niger Delta militant activities, banditry, and farmer-herder conflicts, which are prevalent across various regions of the country. These issues have significantly impeded economic performance, creating an environment where crime has evolved into a lucrative economic activity (Adegami & Adepoju, 2017). The resulting instability has pushed many Nigerians, especially those with financial means, to seek refuge abroad in pursuit of safety, peace, and security.

Preferred Destinations for Nigerian Migrants

Migration has been a central aspect of Nigerian history, with many ethnic groups tracing their origins to ancestral movements. While Nigeria is often seen as a destination for immigrants, it remains a leading emigrant country as its citizens continue to seek better opportunities abroad. In the early 20th century, many Nigerians began migrating to neighboring African countries such as Ghana, Mali, Ivory Coast, and Sudan in search of employment and improved living conditions. Following independence, however, Nigerian migration increasingly shifted towards Europe and North America (De Haas, 2006).

In addition to economic migrants, many Nigerians have been displaced by violent conflicts. According to Integral Human Development (2023), approximately 3,098,404 individuals were internally displaced in 2022, with many seeking refuge in neighboring countries such as Niger, Cameroon, and Chad.

A study by Omotola (2023) identifies the primary destinations for Nigerian migrants as the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, and Canada. The United States hosts approximately 380,785 Nigerian residents, followed by the United Kingdom (190,000), Italy (71,000), Germany (56,000), and Canada (51,800). France and South Africa each host around 30,000 Nigerian residents, while Ireland is home to an estimated 17,542. These figures are approximations, as reliable data on Nigerians abroad is often scarce. Kevin Urama, Chief Economist and Vice-President of the

Economic Governance and Knowledge Management Department at the African Development Bank (AfDB), highlights Nigeria's position as one of the African countries with the highest number of diasporans outside the continent. He notes:

Nigeria is one of the countries with large numbers of diasporans. The Nigerian Diaspora living outside Africa has tripled between 2000 and 2020...While Nigeria ranks fourth among African countries with large numbers of diasporans outside the continent, the extra-continental Nigerian diaspora has tripled in two decades...From 320,000 people in 2000 to about one million in 2020. About 58 percent of Nigeria's diasporans live outside Africa, while 42 percent live in Africa (News Agency of Nigeria, 2023, para. 3-4)

In essence, Nigerians represent one of the largest African populations in the diaspora. Their presence is global, with Nigerian citizens residing in nearly every country in the world.

Mass Migration and Its Effects on Nigeria and Nigerians

The mass migration of Nigerians to different parts of the world has had a profound impact on the country, with effects that can be broadly categorized as positive and negative. This section examines these effects from both perspectives, focusing on their socio-economic and general implications for migrants and their families. Three key effects with direct socio-economic impacts are discussed in detail, followed by a summary of other notable effects.

Increase in Remittances to Nigeria

Remittances refer to the portion of income earned by migrants that is sent back to their home countries, often in the form of cash or goods. These transfers, commonly referred to as workers' or migrants' remittances, serve as a critical support mechanism for families left behind (Ratha, 2003). Over the past few decades, migrant remittances have grown significantly, becoming a major source of foreign income not only for Nigeria but for many developing countries (The World Bank, 2023). Nigeria has consistently ranked as a leading recipient of remittances in Africa, reflecting the large number of Nigerians residing abroad compared to other African nations (Adeagbo & Ayansola, 2014).

Remittances have become a cornerstone of Nigeria's economic development. Loto and Alao (2016) identify remittances as one of the most important drivers of economic progress in the country. In 2022 alone, Nigerians abroad sent approximately \$20.1 billion in remittances, accounting for the largest share of total remittance inflows to the Sub-Saharan Africa region. These funds have emerged as a key resource for economic growth and development. According to Adeseye (2021, p. 99), "a significant relationship exists between remittance and gross domestic product, exports, and imports in Nigeria." Thus, the steady inflow of remittances has significantly enhanced Nigeria's economic growth and contributed to its overall development.

Health

The mass emigration of Nigerian medical professionals has significantly weakened the country's healthcare delivery system. Skilled health workers, including nurses, pharmacists, anesthetists, and consultants, continue to leave for developed countries in pursuit of better working conditions, improved living standards, and more favorable work environments. This persistent brain drain has dealt a severe blow to Nigeria's healthcare sector, which the government appears to have underestimated. For instance, the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) was forced to shut down five wards, comprising 150 beds, due to a critical shortage of health workers (Ayetoto-Oladehinde, 2023).

The continued exodus of medical professionals has left Nigeria with a limited number of healthcare providers to serve its growing population of over 200 million. This shortage has severely strained government hospitals, which are often underfunded and understaffed. Consequently, patients frequently endure long wait times—sometimes up to eight hours—before receiving medical attention. Even in emergency situations, delays are commonplace.

According to Dr. Uche Rowland, President of the Nigerian Medical Association, only 24,000 doctors are currently working in Nigerian hospitals, equating to a doctor-patient ratio of 1:9,083. This falls far below the World Health Organization's recommended ratio of 1:600. To meet the healthcare needs of its population, Nigeria requires an additional 363,000 medical doctors (cited in Morphy, 2023). This acute shortage highlights the dire consequences of the ongoing brain drain in the healthcare

sector and underscores the urgent need for government intervention to address the systemic challenges driving medical professionals abroad.

Education

The Nigerian education sector faces numerous challenges, particularly inadequate funding, which has led to significant deficits in educational infrastructure. This underfunding has fueled ongoing industrial disputes between university unions and the government, with unions pressing successive administrations to address these challenges. Instead of resolving the issues, these disputes have often resulted in prolonged strike actions, disrupting teaching and learning activities in Nigerian universities. Consequently, the duration of students' academic programs is frequently extended (IseOlorunkanmi et al., 2021).

As a result of these persistent challenges, many Nigerian students, particularly postgraduate students, have opted to study abroad. According to Kell and Vogl (2012), the "Big Five" destinations for international students—namely, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Australia—have seen a significant influx of Nigerian students. Data from UNESCO indicates that as of 2020, 71,753 Nigerian students were studying abroad, with projections suggesting that this number would rise to approximately 100,000 by the end of the same year (International Centre for Investigative Reporting, 2023). The substantial funds paid in tuition to foreign universities could have been invested in developing Nigerian universities if these institutions were better managed.

In addition to students migrating abroad, there is also a significant exodus of Nigerian university lecturers. A report by The Guardian highlights that public universities in Nigeria are struggling due to the continuous migration of lecturers seeking better living conditions and career opportunities. Approximately 50% of lecturers have resigned from their positions, with many others considering similar moves. This trend, if unchecked, will exacerbate the shortage of teaching staff and further deteriorate the quality of research and teaching in Nigerian universities. The report identifies factors driving the mass migration of lecturers, including poor living conditions, limited career growth opportunities, insecurity, and inadequate

compensation (cited in Wright-Ukwu, 2023). Ogunode and Ishaya (2021) corroborate these findings, emphasizing that:

Brain drain is one of the major problems facing Nigerian higher institutions. Many higher institutions in Nigeria are losing their professors daily due to poor working conditions. The causes of brain drain in Nigerian higher institutions include but are not limited to; poor salary, unconducive working environment, poor staff development, inadequate infrastructural facilities, strike actions, insecurity, and inadequate funding, while the identified effects of brain drain on the higher institutions administration to includes; poor quality education, high student-teacher ratio, shortages of academic staff, poor research development and poor program development (Ogunode & Ishaya, 2021, p. 33).

This persistent brain drain is severely undermining the quality of education in Nigerian universities and poses a significant challenge to the country's overall academic and research development.

Other Effects

The ongoing mass migration of Nigerians to the diaspora is largely attributed to the poor governance provided by successive administrations in Nigeria. This governance failure is reflected in the country's weak socioeconomic performance, including limited access to rewarding employment, widespread poverty, hunger, declining educational standards, and inadequate healthcare services (Adegbami & Uche, 2016). These systemic challenges have perpetuated violent conflicts, insurgency, and banditry, further exacerbating insecurity and prompting Nigerians to leave their country in large numbers.

One notable negative effect of this mass migration is the significant loss of professionals, including academics, medical doctors, nurses, and engineers, to developed countries. These skilled individuals, who could have contributed to Nigeria's growth and development, are instead supporting the economies of their host countries. Consequently, Nigeria's loss has become a gain for these host nations, highlighting the detrimental impact of brain drain on the country's development.

On the positive side, however, mass migration has yielded some developmental benefits for Nigeria. Many Nigerian migrants earn higher incomes abroad than they did at home, enabling them to remit funds to their families. These remittances have played a critical role in alleviating poverty by improving access to basic needs and reducing

financial hardship for their dependents. Migrants also benefit from uninterrupted education, improved healthcare services, and better living conditions, which further enhance their potential to contribute positively to their families and communities. Idio et al. (2015) emphasize the transformative impact of migration, stating:

The main channels through which migration alleviates poverty are increased incomes from remittances, the ability to smooth consumption, access to finance for starting a new business, as well as tapping into the knowledge and resources provided by the international community of the migrant diaspora. Besides pure monetary gains, migration, and remittances allow for higher investment in health care and education (Idio, et al., 2015, p. 31).

In this regard, Nigerians in the diaspora contribute significantly to the development of their home country. Financial assistance provided by migrants helps families cover essential expenses such as rent, school fees, and healthcare costs. Moreover, remittances enable the establishment of small businesses, which generate income and employment opportunities. These contributions help mitigate hunger and poverty, albeit to a limited extent, by enhancing the socioeconomic stability of beneficiaries in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Nigeria, with a population exceeding 200 million and projections to double by 2050 (United Nations, 2019), faces significant socio-economic challenges that make safeguarding and improving the lives of its citizens seem improbable. A substantial portion of the country's annual revenue is allocated to servicing internal and external debt, further diminishing the prospects of achieving meaningful socio-economic development in the near future.

Currently, over 133 million Nigerians, representing 63% of the population, live in poverty. Many of these individuals lack access to basic amenities and essential social services, classifying them as multidimensionally poor or, as commonly referred to in Nigerian parlance, "the poorest of the poor." Their chances of escaping poverty are slim due to rising unemployment and the loss of jobs driven by persistent inflation. The removal of the petroleum subsidy has further exacerbated hyperinflation, worsening living conditions for the Nigerian populace. This precarious socio-economic situation is a key driver of the mass migration of Nigerians seeking better opportunities abroad.

Based on these observations, the study concludes that mass migration will persist unless Nigeria undergoes significant improvements in governance. Effective governance must prioritize employment generation, poverty reduction, enhanced security, access to quality education and healthcare services, improved working conditions, and an overall better standard of living for citizens. To address these challenges, the study recommends that Nigerians resist the appointment of corrupt individuals to leadership positions. The records of prospective leaders should be thoroughly scrutinized, and only candidates with proven integrity and competence should be entrusted with positions of authority..

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