

INTERNAL MIGRATION IN NIGERIA:

*A positive contribution
to human development*

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Internal Migration Study

- **Author:** Bukola Adeyemi Oyeniya
- **Objective:** to analyze the impact of internal migration on human development in selected communities in Nigeria.
- **Methodology:**
 - Literature review (2010 Internal Migration Survey)
 - Group discussions
 - In-depth interviews with internal migrants

Key Findings:

- Drivers of internal migration, include **economic reasons, educational opportunities, marriage, civil service (in-service) transfer, National Youth Service (NYSC), freedom from parents, human trafficking**, among others.
- Occurs where there is **poverty, a severe shortage of viable employment and educational opportunities**, or where there is **uneven development**.
- Internal migration is **not essentially rural-urban in nature**. It is **rural-rural, urban-urban, rural-urban and urban-rural in nature**. It involves both genders, although more males than females migrated.
- In existing studies and policy discussions, **internal migration is seen essentially as a planning and developmental problem** (environmental displacement, lack of economic opportunities).

Key Findings:

- Internal migration in **Nigeria** may have negative impacts, it is also a **positive contributor** to human development in three key areas: increasing access to education, life expectancy and living standards.
- Existing government policies and programs create barriers to internal migration or do not adequately harness the potential positive contribution of migration
- Example: **indigenization laws**, which give certain rights and privileges only to “natives” of the area (property ownership, educational scholarships, access to services, political office, etc).

Key Recommendations

- **Develop internal migration policy**, which aims to maximize positive contributions and minimize negative – ensuring that migration can occur in a safe, legal and humane manner
- **Provide awareness and education on internal migration** for policymakers and general public, demonstrating how internal migration can give access to education, increase life expectancy and improve living standards.
- **Reform indigenization laws.** Internal migrants, especially second-generation migrants, should be allowed the rights and privileges due to all citizens, irrespective of their origin/place of birth. This is important for property ownership, qualifications for elective positions and the like. Above all, this will help in breaking down the ethnic and religious divides that militate against national integration.

Key Recommendations

- **Improve data collection for policymaking and planning purposes.** Lack of dependable data informed the skewed conceptualization of internal migration and its potential by the Government of Nigeria.
- **State and local governments, especially in Northern Nigeria, can deliberately encourage internal migration to and from the South for developmental purposes in education, health care and so on.** NYSC members from the South can be deployed into teaching and health care services in Northern Nigeria and incentives can be provided to encourage them to stay, even after the one-year national service.
- **Provide training for government agencies, such as NAPTIP and the Nigeria Police Force, in screening and profiling,** to ensure that internal migrants and trafficked persons receive assistance specific to their particular needs, but would also impact positively on data collection.

Innovative Points

- Contrary to existing perception and literature (IMS 2010), **internal migration in Nigeria can lead to positive contributions to human development** in three key areas: increasing **access to education, life expectancy and living standards** (also cash flow, skills and training transfers, development of local economies, etc).
- However, it is necessary for **government policies to facilitate migration and develop policies and programs that harness these contributions and minimize negative impacts** -- currently, the primary obstacles in Nigeria are **indigenization laws** that hinder opportunities of internal migrants and encourage ethnic and religious divisions.