

# **AFRICAN MIGRATION AND GLOBAL COMMUNITY**

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## **Abstract**

*Migration as a movement has been a natural and human affair in the history of humanity. The world, structured in continents, Continental Africa has been greatly involved in migration before and more right from the dawn of her expedition that culminated in colonization through slavery unto neo-colonization and recently through the open market policies. Using the method of sheer analysis, the researcher finds out and acknowledges the travails and contemporary challenges of African Migration within the global community.*

**Keywords:** Africa, migration, global community.

## **Introduction**

Migration has always been part of human existence. Human beings being curious can never be static. They move around and explore things or places unknown to them, thereby making new findings. This desire to make discoveries make them interact, relate and connect with people outside their environment. Some people move in search of work or economic opportunities, to join family, or to study. Others move to escape conflict, persecution, terrorism, or human rights violations. Still, others move in response to the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, or other environmental factors.

Many people migrate out of choice while some migrate out of necessity. Some of these people who migrate to other states or countries end up experiencing the opposite of what they had expected. Many get frustrated and take up any available job not minding its legality and morality. The effect of migration is not only felt by the receiving countries alone, the countries of origin of the migrants are equally affected. The population decreases and many homes are left desolate as many migrants refuse to return to their home countries. Lack of manpower to execute tasks, especially in the rural areas also

deepens underdevelopment, poverty and increased lack, thereby, encouraging lawlessness and leadership by the wealthy. This work tries to link African migration with the global community taking into cognisance the European migration and the reasons behind their movement. The effects of the movement of Africans on the world as a whole because no man is an island.

## **Appreciation of Migration**

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. It can be within a country, between countries or even regions. It can also be a permanent, temporary or seasonal movement. Migration happens for various reasons which may be economic, social, political or environmental. The impact of migration is felt in both the place left behind and the place where migrants settle. This impact can either be positive or negative. Some people may decide to migrate to another country to improve career opportunities. Some others are forced to migrate, for example, someone who migrates because of war or famine or even as a slave. In Geography, migration is referred to as the movement of humans from one place to another. It is most times prompted by "push" and "pull" factors.

Push factors are those negative elements that force one to leave an environment like wars, political instability, famine drought among others. Pull factors are those positive elements that attract people to another environment like political stability, improved healthcare services, lots of employment opportunities, better working conditions, better learning institutions and also better climate. National Geographic Expedition (2015) defined migration as the movement of people from one geographical location to another to settle either permanently or semi-permanently. Migration (human) is the movement of people from one place in the world to another to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence usually across a political boundary. An example of "semi-permanent residence" would be the seasonal movement of migrant farmers/ labourers. People can either choose to move ("voluntary migration") or be forced to move ("involuntary migration"). Migration has occurred throughout human history beginning with the movements of the first human groups from their origin in East Africa to their current location in the world. (para.1).

The major cause of rural-urban migration is identified as the search for better wages, education, political and social stability, better technologies, employment and business opportunities. Others are poverty, unemployment, crop failures and famine, and

inadequate social amenities and facilities in the urban centres such as pipe-borne water, electricity, good roads, hospitals, schools, and vocational centres. Migration is certainly not a recent phenomenon, on the contrary, it has been part of human history since its very beginning. People have migrated from one continent to the other, from country to country or internally, inside the same country. While migration has been beneficial in one aspect, it has equally been destructive on the other hand. People move intending to live a more promising life, have access to basic life amenities and advance the developmental and infrastructural conditions of their countries of origin. Many remit money, foodstuff, cars etc to their families, introduce innovations to their communities and assist in improving the infrastructural and technological standards of their countries while away and for these purposes, any parents, relatives and communities do not object to either the temporary or permanent migration of their citizens.

Migration as we already know is the movement of people from one geographical location to another due to some reasons like insecurity as we are experiencing in some regions in Africa; for greener pastures and so many other reasons. Migration, again, is as old as the world for even in the Scriptures, Abram was told by God to leave his town to another place unknown to him where He (GOD) will show him (Gen. 12: 1-9). People migrate daily and this can be temporary, permanent or seasonal movement. In migration, the geographical location where one is coming from is known as the Origin or Source region while the location where one is going into or entering is destination or receiving region.

## **Types of Migration**

**Immigration:** When a migrant goes into another location from his or her original location or moves into a new location. For example, the Europeans who came to Africa are African immigrants

**Emigration:-** When a migrant leaves his original location and goes to another location. For example, Africans who left the African continent for Europe are European emigrants.

In general, migration leads to the discovery of new areas around the global community. This implies that without immigration, there will be no development, no interaction among people and people will live in isolation.

## **Understanding of the African Continent**

Africa is one of the seven continents of the world. It is the second largest continent and is bounded by the Red Sea on the East, the Mediterranean Sea on the North, the Indian Ocean on the South and the Atlantic Ocean on the West. It is divided almost equally in half by the equator. Africa's physical geography, environment, resources and human geography can be considered separately. Africa has eight main physical regions which are the Sahara, the Sahel, the Ethiopian Highlands, the Savanna, Swahili Coast, the Rainforest, the African Great Lakes and Southern Africa.

According to Clarke, Middleton and Mabogunje (2023), Africa has several islands associated with it. Of these, Madagascar, one of the largest islands in the world is the most significant. Other smaller islands include Seychelles, Socotra and other islands to the east; the Comoros, Mauritius, Reunion and other islands to the southeast; Ascension, St. Helena and Tristan da Cunha to the southwest; Cape Verde, the Bijagos islands, Bioko and Sao Tome and Principe to the west and the Azores and Madeira and Canary islands to the northwest. Africa is the most tropical continent. Its climate and vegetation range from equatorial rainforest to tropical deserts and savanna grasslands. Africa is most likely one of the must-see places for many people around the world. Its massive land mass covers approximately 6% of the entire surface of the earth.

Africa can boast of having the longest river in the world which is the River Nile, a very large waterfall which is Victoria Falls located between Zimbabwe and Zambia, having the largest desert in the world which is the Sahara Desert, a very large mountain - a free-standing mountain- Kilimanjaro, a very large lake called Lake Victoria. It also has the 4th largest Island in the world, is, Madagascar.

Recently, the African continent is seen to be splitting into two and it is speculated that a new ocean will be formed between Africa and the new continent in the future. This break-up which is happening around the East African Rift will now make landlocked countries like Zambia and Uganda have coastlines in the nearest future.

## **Concept of Global Community**

### **Globalization**

Ochigbo(2004) explains that globalization has become the defining ideology that describes the fast-paced breaking down of barriers that use to define regions and nation-states. Globalization is the word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world's economies, culture and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology and the flow of investment, people and information. Intriligator (2003) posits that globalization is a powerful real aspect of the new world system, and it represents one of the most influential forces in determining the future course of the planet. It has manifold dimensions: economic, political, security, environmental, health, social, cultural, and others.

Globalization has had significant impacts on all economies of the world, with manifold effects. It affects their production of goods and services. It also affects the employment of labour and other inputs into the production process. In addition, it affects investment, both in physical capital and in human capital. It affects technology and results in the diffusion of technology from initiating nations to other nations. It also has major effects on efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. With all that has happened, one can say that Globalization has become an emerging reality. Countries have built economic partnerships to facilitate these movements over many centuries. Globalization has to do with the spreading of international interconnectedness and interrelationships in all aspects of life. Thus, the universe is being shaped by economic and technological forces which promote shared economic, cultural, religious and political spheres of human activities. Globalization makes it possible for migration or immigration.

### **Global Community**

The global community, according to Forgeard (2021) refers to the growing interconnectedness of people around the world. It is made up of people from all over the world who are connected by gender, interests such as technology, economics, global issues and more. People who look similar and have similar backgrounds can easily communicate with each other but when people from different cultures come together, they learn each other's values and begin to understand each other.

A global community is important because it brings together people from all over the world who share common values and beliefs. "Global Community" has become a buzzword due to the result of globalization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## **European Migration**

European migration is appreciated in Africa as African Immigration. This means that the Europeans left the shores of their continent and came into Africa (immigration). These Europeans came to Africa because they are curious to find out if there was anything useful or resourceful in Africa. They came, searched and discovered not only natural but also human resources. Reasons for European Migration

**Exploration:** The motives that spur human beings to examine their environment are many. Strong among them are the satisfaction of curiosity, the pursuit of trade, the spread of religion, and the desire for security and political power. At different times and in different places, different motives are dominant. Sometimes one motive inspires the promoters of discovery, and another motive may inspire the individuals who search.

The Europeans came to discover the continent, of Africa, to find out what Africa is endowed with in terms of natural resources. They discovered many natural resources which include petroleum, gold, diamond and many others. They discovered that Africa have in abundance what they needed to develop their economies and these kept them coming.

**Spread of Religion/Christianity:** European countries like Great Britain, France and the Netherlands sought to educate and reform African cultures through the dissemination of Christian doctrine. European explorers viewed practices unfamiliar to them and the diverse cultures on the continent of Africa as lesser and uncivilized. Again, they view the religious practices of Africa as witchcraft and heathenism and therefore sought to convert the indigenous peoples of Africa.

**Engagement in Commerce/ Trade:** These Europeans discovered Africa when they were searching for trade routes that will lead them to India. They found out that there were varieties of untapped natural resources which would help them grow their economies, and then they started bringing us items like sugar, dry gin, clothes and many others in

exchange for our resources. Within the continent itself, local exchanges among adjacent peoples fit into a greater framework of long-range trade.

The merchants from Britain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands who began trading along the Atlantic coast of Africa, therefore, encountered a well-established trading population regulated by *savvy* and experienced local rulers. European companies quickly developed mercantile ties with these indigenous powers and erected fortified “factories,” or warehouses, on coastal areas to store goods and defend their trading rights from foreign encroachment. It may therefore seem surprising that European importers found many customers for their goods among local populations in West Africa. In exchange for their wares, Europeans returned with textiles, carvings, spices, ivory, gum, and African slaves.

**Slavery/ Slave trade:** The Europeans later realized that Africans were willing to give away their relatives in exchange for goods and /or at any price so they also started trading on human beings. Slaves were purchased in West Africa, and shipped to the Americas to work and produce cotton etc. The cotton was then shipped to Europe and converted into textiles. The textiles were then shipped to Africa in exchange for more slaves. During the 16th century, Portuguese explorers became engaged in the African slave trade. They kidnapped Africans and forced them to work on plantations and mines in their colonies in the New World. Other European countries soon participated in the slave trade as well.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade lasted from the 1500s to the mid-1800s. Even after the slave trade had ended, European interest in Africa was still going strong. European countries saw that Africa was a continent full of vast natural resources and mineral wealth. They started nursing another plan on how to take Africa for keeping.

**Colonialism:** Collins English Dictionary defines Colonialism as the practice by which a powerful country directly controls less powerful countries and uses its resources to increase its power and wealth. The colonizers in Africa were mainly the European countries and the effect of this colonialism is still felt today. The main reason for colonization was for the Europeans to acquire raw materials for their industries in Europe, although they claimed that they were on a mission to civilize the Africans (Boahen 1974). The colonialists also had to take direct control of the African economy and political administration to produce the type of food required for their industrial workers back home. One of the reasons for the colonization of Africa, as we know, is that the

colonialists required additional food supply and spices for the fast-increasing urban population as a result of the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution initially came with a decline in agricultural production in Europe and as a result, it was hard for the rural areas to produce enough food for the increasing urban population. There was therefore the need for the market not only for the population of raw materials but for the food to sustain the increasing population.

The African economy before colonization was primitive and based on the barter system. Since one of the objectives of colonialism was to find a market for European manufactured goods and raw materials for the industries, there was a need for an organic linkage between the African economy and market with that of the international system controlled and directed by the colonizers. Direct control of the African economy and political administration made possible colonialism. Africa was compelled or forced to accept the international division of labour which assigned her the compulsory role of production of agricultural raw materials required by the industries in Europe. During this time, many European countries expanded their empires by aggressively establishing colonies in Africa so that they could exploit and export Africa's resources. Raw materials like rubber, timber, diamonds, and gold were found in Africa. Europeans moved further into the continent in search of raw materials and places to build successful colonies. Great Britain, France and Germany were the biggest contenders. The natives often fought against the European powers; however, they often lost because the European weapons were superior.

## **African Migration**

Since Africa referred to as the "Mother Continent" is believed to be the oldest inhabited continent on Earth. One can rightly say that migration started from Africa because it was from there that the movement of people to discover other lands started. There are three types of migration in Africa: Movement of people within the continent (Internal); Movement of people from outside into the Continent and Movement of people out of the continent. Movement of People from Outside into the Continent: This refers to the Europeans who came to Africa. These Europeans came with diverse opinions. Some of their reasons are;



**Religion:** Europeans came to Africa with their religion. They converted Africans from their traditional religion and idol worshipping to Christianity through the introduction of the Bible and Churches to us.

**Exploration:** They came to explore and discover what Africa is endowed with. When they came, they discovered many mineral and natural resources like gold, diamond, petroleum and so many other resources which they do not have and this exploration and discovery led to exploitation.

**Colonialism:** Seven European countries came and divided Africa among themselves. Countries like Britain, Germany, Portugal, France, Belgium, Italy and Spain. This is so because, they were searching for new markets for their manufactured products, needed raw materials for their industries need to invest surplus capital in the less advanced regions of the world and desired to spread their western education and Christian religion to Africa.

**Movement of People within the African Continent:** People move from one African country to another due to some factors like political instability, religious factors and sometimes nature disasters. Some other factors are for further studies like some students from Nigeria going to Ghana for studies; Again, nomadic farmers (Fulani) from countries like Niger, Mali, etc leave their countries with their herds of cattle and flocks of sheep to other countries like Nigeria. Some others leave their countries to others for commercial purposes that is business merchandise for example many Nigerians go to South Africa, Cameroon, Ghana and so on to do business.

**Movement of People out of Africa:** This refers to Africans who left the African Continent for other countries of the world. This group of people can be referred to as “African Migrants”. Some of these migrants were forced to leave the continent against their will-Slavery. For most of Tropical Africa, the first extensive involvement with the outside world was through the slave trade where people were exported in return for goods. Educational purposes are one of the reasons why many young African migrate abroad. They go out to get better quality and free education just as is obtained in Canada now.

**Career enhancement:** people irrespective of their profession are willing to work abroad to explore new places, get better employment and be stable in life.

**Population:** The increased population has resulted in lesser job opportunities and lower wages.

**Poverty:** This is a situation where an individual household is not able to meet the basic living requirement due to low wages, unemployment, constant increase in prices of commodities and so on.

**Better Health Care:** Due to this singular reason that everyone has the right to good health, people most times migrate to get better and improved healthcare. For example, people normally go to India in search of improved healthcare. The reasons why people migrate from Africa to other foreign countries are very many.

### **Effects of African Migration in the Global Community**

This African migration has not been in favour of us Africans because we suffer labour shortages in highly skilled areas such as information technology and health services and also in manufacturing and construction. For fear of rising national unemployment, many receiving countries have become more selective about the migrants they are willing to take in, preferring mainly those with skills or capital to invest.

On the other hand, developing countries view migration as offering an opportunity to reduce unemployed citizens, earn revenue through the remittance of workers' salaries and import skills, knowledge and technology through returning citizens. Demography is another effect of African migration in the sense that the population in Africa keeps increasing rapidly while in the developed countries, it is not and to keep their economies working, they need manpower which is readily available in Africa.

### **Solutions to These African Migration Problems**

Jobs should be created in the home countries of the migrants. Most times, jobs are scarce and salaries very low obliging people to seek opportunities elsewhere. Government can stem the flow of citizens seeking to leave by creating jobs and making the region conducive for their citizens. The health care sector should be enhanced by equipping hospitals and health centres with modern medical facilities and also upgrading the salaries of health workers. Upgrading our educational sectors by making the teaching and learning environment conducive and making the welfare of teachers better. Government

should equally solve this problem of insecurity which has become the order of the day in recent times as well as put an end to ethnic and religious wars which have become rampant recently.

## **Conclusion**

African migration has a very serious impact on the global community not minding what caused the movement. Many times, people migrate out of their own will, others are forced while others are due to circumstances. Migration should be encouraged especially when both the Source and the Receiving regions benefits from it. Whichever may be the case, African migration brings about the interaction between Africa and the World at Large.

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