

As one of the developing countries that experienced military dictatorship, for the most part of the last three decades of the preceding century, Nigeria was characterized by visible underdevelopment in virtually all sectors. Poverty and other retrogressive indicators became unwittingly institutionalized. Consequently, emigration rate increased among all categories of Nigerians who had lost hope in the Nigerian project. As a result, a new set of values was entrenched in most communities; being abroad, no matter the emigrant's condition in the new destination, was revered. This paper argues quite forcefully that although migration affects development in several ways, it is a fallacy to locate underdevelopment of Nigeria and African states in the "brain-drain syndrome". This view derives from the position that while it is accepted that highly skilled Nigerians are among those leaving the country, a far higher number of the same category of people, still, are unemployed. At best, such migration is developmental in view of the fact that it reduces the army of unemployed and the attendant frustrations on one hand and explains huge remittances for developmental purposes at micro-family and macro-community levels on the other.

A normal Nigeria, hopefully, would instead be concerned with the "brain-dry" phenomenon which exists only when although a state is willing and able to employ every available employable person, individuals still emigrate to take up jobs in other countries. This paper however appreciates the effects of brain-drain, but notes that ineffective leadership, gender inequity, ethnicity, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, conflicts and youth restiveness individually and collectively have greater implications for African development dilemma.

A feature of Nigeria's demographic landscape is constant transition in terms of migration. Although a high volume of internal movement of people takes place in Nigeria, the present analysis will concentrate on international migration and in particular emigration which is conceived as anti-developmental mainly among developing societies. Although a case can be made against this position by reference to remittances of proceeds by emigrants to their home countries, those who conceive it as annihilation rely on its relationship with knowledge transfer.

This study would engage the interaction between migration and development as a way of understanding issues that relate with return-migration as well as reverse-migration

in the context of uncertainty that characterizes migration processes in less developed societies. An attempt at conceptual synthesis aimed at demystifying decades old fallacies ascribed to brain-drain shall be undertaken to reflect relevant society specifics in a multicultural and ethno-complex country such as Nigeria.