Chapter 13

Newspaper Coverage of Internal Youth Migration in Nigeria

Chinyere Azuka Mbaka
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1268-9904
Mountain Top University, Prayer City, Nigeria

Onyinyechi Nancy Nwaolikpe
Caleb University, Imota, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Nigeria has witnessed the migration of her citizens from one location to another within her geographical boundaries. This is generally known as internal migration. The push and pull factors have been identified by scholars and the effects on the nation’s development documented. However, the media’s role in elevating internal migration discourse to public space and consciousness has not been adequately studied. A content analysis of four purposely selected national dailies, with a total of 584 systematically selected editions from 2017 and 2018, was done. In the study, 196 stories (33.6%) were found to be qualified as internal migration stories involving young Nigerians. Domestic violence and abuse (38.3%) were found to be the major cause of internal migration amongst youths. Results also show that internal migration stories were not prominently positioned or placed in the dailies. Seventy-five percent of the stories were placed as inside page stories in tiny corners of the newspapers. The print media should consistently and prominently raise the issue of internal migration and migrants to public attention and discourse so that the causes of internal migration and the attendant consequences can be addressed by all concerned.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is the movement of people from their actual place of residence or homeland to another destination mostly because of economic recession, lack of employment opportunities, education opportunities, natural disasters, wars, terrorist attacks, loss of family member(s), inadequate access to protection, and support services and lack of support generally. It is a phenomenon that affects both developed and
developing countries. Migration involves external and internal movements. Internal movement is the movement of people from one location to another (rural or urban) within a national boundary. On the other hand, external migration is the movement of people from one country to another. Internal migration in Nigeria involves movement from rural places to urban, rural place to rural, urban to urban and urban to rural places (Oyeniyi, 2013).

Migration can be voluntary, with the consent of the individual involved or his/her family and involuntary without the consent of the individual, the individual is forced to migrate against his/her wish. Issues that are migration based such as, child labour, child trafficking, prostitution, baby factory and others are mostly seen in Nigeria (IOM, 2009). Young people escape and/or migrate to other states within the country because of hardship, unrest, violence, inequality and economic opportunities. A typical example of violence/war-induced migration is the case of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), who are forced to leave their homes and take refuge in IDP camps (far away from their homes) as a result of Boko Haram and/or herdsmen attacks and other natural or human disasters. Cases of abuse (sexual abuse, physical abuse and mental abuse) these youths face daily in these camps have not been widely reported. Therefore, the push factors or drivers of youth’s internal migration have been identified for this study as poor economy, civil conflicts, environmental disasters, domestic violence and abuse.

Victims of forced internal migration in Nigeria are mostly young people and they are by their age vulnerable and prone to be coerced into hard labour and other social vices because of poverty and terrible living conditions (Ikwuyatum, 2016). According to Ikwuyatum (2016), a survey conducted by National Population Commission in 2010 revealed that migrants and return migrants showed a youthful age structure of 10-34 years and the peak age of migrants and return migrants is between 25-29 age group. It further showed that majority of the internal migrants are those with no formal education. According to UNICEF (2007) the FOS/ILO National Child Labour Survey of 2003 estimates that there are 15 million children engaged in child labour in Nigeria with 40% of them at risk of being trafficked both internally and externally for domestic and forced labour and other menial destructive jobs. Also, according to UNICEF (2017) in sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence of child labour is high. In the least developed countries, around one in four children (ages 5 to 17) are engaged in labour that is considered detrimental to their health and development. Internal migration fosters child labour. Many children who are migrated or who migrated from the rural communities to urban areas are routinely engaged in paid and unpaid forms of work. They are classified as child labourers because they are either too young to work or are involved in hazardous activities that may compromise their physical, mental, social or educational development.

Urbanization and the quest to leave the rural area for the city where there are promises of better education and acquiring of new skills have made youths become prey in the hands of traffickers. These young ones are taken to the cities to be domestic servants, construction sites and factory workers, street/road beggars, hawkers and are sometimes exploited sexually. This movement denies them basic education and access to social amenities. These young ones go through tough situations that are devastating and so are affected physically, socially, and psychologically.

There are also instances where migration is seen in a positive light in terms of its impact on the economic situation of the migrants and their family members. Some of the migrants have their economic status changed significantly because they are able to access better opportunities in their new locations and this also indirectly impacts positively on their relations who may depend on the migrant’s remittances for their own survival (Ajaero and Onokala, 2013; Oyeniyi, 2013).
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