

**DIASPORA AND MIGRANT IMPERATIVES AND  
CONSEQUENCES OF “JAPA” TOMORROW IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*Migration is the act of people relocating from one location to another, often motivated by factors such as religious conflict, joblessness, warfare, and natural calamities, in pursuit of improved living conditions. Many individuals travel extensively to various regions of the world, primarily driven by socio-economic factors. One can inquire: What are the reasons behind human migration? What are the ramifications for migrants and their countries of origin? The aforementioned inquiries, along with other interconnected ones, will provide the foundation around which this research endeavour is constructed. This research utilised analytical techniques to investigate migration difficulties pertaining to the current topic. This research attempts to examine the socio-economic consequences of migration in Nigerian societies. The study examined the profound consequences of migration and explored strategies to tackle current socio-economic ramifications. Secondary sources, including resources obtained from the library, internet, and published sources, were utilised. The study made a substantial contribution to the existing body of knowledge on migration in Nigeria and also prompted the development of crucial policies (such as social, economic, and legal policies) to address*

*the highlighted concerns and obstacles. The presentation will conclude that migrations are driven by the pursuit of economic prosperity and the fulfilment of social demands.*

**Keywords:** Migrants, Migration, “Japa”, Brain drain, Diaspora, Unemployment.

## **Introduction**

The word “diaspora” stems from the Greek verb diaspeiro, which denotes the actions of scattering or spreading about. A diaspora is a term used to describe a population that is scattered over regions that are different from its original geographic location. Individuals who currently reside in foreign countries but nevertheless have a sense of belonging to a specific geographical region are now commonly referred to as members of the “diaspora”. The term “diaspora” refers to a sizable collective of individuals who have departed from their native country, yet share same cultural and geographical origins. The primary factors contributing to diaspora are immigration and coerced population displacements.

Diaspora communities often exhibit many cultural identities, although they consistently preserve robust social and cultural connections with their place of origin. Contemporary scholars have classified the many types of diaspora based on the underlying causes of each. According to Egbule (2023), individuals such as scientists, engineers, professors, and doctors were educated in their home countries at a considerable cost to society, only to subsequently benefit from and contribute to the economic growth of already prosperous nations. Individuals possessing expertise in technology, management, and entrepreneurship are among the individuals departing from Nigeria. Knowledge-driven persons are the primary drivers of economic growth and development in the emerging global order. The individuals with the highest aptitude should be responsible for generating wealth and eradicating poverty.

Given the growing global mobility, it is crucial for policymakers, researchers, and the wider society to comprehend the complexities of “Japa” within the Nigerian setting. This research aims to enhance the ongoing discussion on migration trends by providing valuable

insights that might guide specific initiatives and promote a more sophisticated comprehension of the difficulties and possibilities associated with the diaspora and migrant experiences in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Issues**

The term “migrant” is subject to multiple interpretations, and there is no established legal basis for categorising individuals as migrants. A migrant is an individual who was born in a foreign country, possesses dual citizenship, or relocates to a different country with the intention of residing there either temporarily or permanently. A migrant is an individual who, irrespective of their reason for migration or legal standing, alters their habitual place of residence. In general, there is a clear differentiation made between migrations that last from three to twelve months, known as short-term or temporary migration, and long-term or permanent migration, which involves a change of residence lasting one year or longer. An asylum seeker is an individual who has fled their country and is currently awaiting a decision on their asylum application. They seek shelter in another country to escape persecution and serious violations of their rights in their native country, but they have not yet received legal refugee status. Seeking asylum is a fundamental human right. This indicates that it is imperative for individuals to have the freedom to travel internationally and seek asylum. Currently, researchers acknowledge the existence of two distinct types of diaspora.

### ***Forced Diaspora***

Forced migration is frequently the result of traumatic experiences like war, enslavement, or imperialist invasion, as well as natural disasters like prolonged drought or starvation. Because of this, individuals living in forced diasporas frequently express sentiments of loss, persecution, and longing to go back to their native country.

### ***Voluntary Diaspora***

This community is made up of individuals who, like the great emigration of people from economically distressed areas of Europe to the United States in the late 1800s, left their native countries in

pursuit of better economic opportunities. Even though they still have strong spiritual and cultural ties to their home countries, voluntary immigrant groups are less likely to want to move back there permanently. Instead, they feel a certain social and political strength in numbers and take pride in their common experience. Human migration includes: Emigrant, leaving one’s resident country with the intent to settle elsewhere. Immigration, movement into a country with the intent to settle. Economic migrant, someone who leaves their home country in search of a better life elsewhere. Migrant worker. One, who migrates possibly to another country for work (Klemens, 2021) and expatriate.

### **The Concepts of ‘Japa’ Tomorrow**

Considerable debate surrounds the emigration rate of Nigerians seeking safer and more fertile surroundings in other countries, and the consequent brain drain phenomenon. Since the Stone Age, the human race has been engaged in continual migration, prompted by either extreme weather conditions or the pursuit of sustenance and water. In Nigeria, there is presently a prevalent occurrence of brain drain referred to as the “Japa syndrome,” which involves a significant number of talented and young individuals departing the country. Unfortunately, this situation is unstoppable. When our present circumstances jeopardise our survival, it is inherent in human nature to seek improved living situations.

Japa, a term derived from the Yoruba language, precisely denotes the act of departing or moving away. Nevertheless, the issue at hand is that those who are departing in search of better opportunities are not only those with specialised expertise in areas such as engineering, medicine, education, law, or information technology. Currently, a substantial proportion of Nigerians join the labour force through informal means, engaging in occupations such as mechanics, labourers, cleaners, taxi drivers, and hairdressers, among others. During this endeavour, people endanger their lives by traversing the Sahara Desert or attempting to reach Europe through the Mediterranean Sea in overcrowded dinghies.

Nigerian expatriates face a multitude of challenges in their host

countries, including issues related to assimilation, discrimination, and availability of crucial amenities. Numerous Nigerians residing overseas often face disillusionment as they encounter cultural shock and disorientation in their unfamiliar environment. Furthermore, there exists a glass ceiling that limits the upward mobility of Nigerians in America, irrespective of their level of education. Moreover, African Americans hold an unfavourable view of individuals from Nigeria who reside overseas due to the notion that Nigerians prioritise sending money back home rather than addressing the underlying challenges and difficulties that have historically influenced racial dynamics in contemporary America.

### **Factors that Necessitated This “Japarism”**

The factors responsible for this movement are as follows: Mounting insecurity or social distress, unemployment, the Nigerian democracy is a sham, corruption streaks across all sectors, lack of infrastructure in all spheres or sectors, the impunity and lawlessness that exist in the country, unfulfilled government promises and bad socio-economic challenges, lack of transparency and accountability among our leaders, dislocation in our educational sector, responsible political leaders, inconsistency policies, political patronage, as well as high cost of living and low standard of living.

### **Consequences of Migration in the Home Country**

Undoubtedly, mass migration has numerous detrimental repercussions on the economy and various facets of a nation's existence. However, what specific factors or stimuli serve as triggers? What factors could motivate young people to endure the challenges of travelling abroad and leave their own country? Nigerian youngsters aspire for economic prosperity, which is one of the main drivers of mass migration. Some other explanations include the factors stated below: The consequences include diminished investor trust, emigration of skilled individuals, reduced economic output, increased instances of fatal workplace accidents due to mistakes, organisational skill deficiencies, stunted industrial expansion, outflow of taxes and finances to other countries, and the devaluation

of the naira due to high demand for the dollar.

Diminishment of investor’s trust: The exodus of Nigerians undermines the enthusiasm of foreign investors to start enterprises that would lead to the creation of employment opportunities for our large population of young people. This conveys to investors that the country’s business climate would not be conducive to investments, and a dearth of employment leads to societal problems.

Brain drain syndrome refers to the negative impact of widespread migration on the economy, namely the loss of highly skilled individuals. For instance, a significant proportion of our proficient and well-informed workforce emigrates from the country in pursuit of superior prospects in the healthcare and academic sectors. Consequently, the younger generation today lacks the requisite expertise in the pertinent economic domains. Foreign countries are recruiting experienced individuals in the healthcare field who are responsible for training and mentoring the future generation of practitioners. This disheartening reality remains applicable to contemporary schools and universities, since the majority of classrooms are predominantly manned by professors lacking adequate skills.

Migration leads to a scarcity of skilled individuals in the country of origin, resulting in a talent deficit. The highly educated and privileged individuals, rather than contributing to their own nation, choose to work for wealthy countries due to the allure of higher remuneration, an elevated quality of life, or other personal motivations. This is apparent in Nigeria, particularly in the realm of medical care. Rural regions experience a severe scarcity of healthcare professionals. Moreover, there is a substantial demand for IT specialists in telecommunications software companies that has not yet been fulfilled. In order to meet the requirements of overseas software companies, the majority of eligible professionals are willing to relocate abroad. This leads to a scarcity of opportunities for experts in these industries in Nigeria (Ajeli, 2019).

An enhancement in the economic performance of Nigeria: Remittances in 2021 were estimated to range from \$17 billion to \$20 billion, according to experts. It seems that this sum exclusively

comprises funds that were processed through approved means. Some are delivered by human couriers or disguised as objects. Moreover, specific remittances are allocated for investment purposes. Western Union has become an essential means of support for some Nigerian families. Remittances have mitigated the societal repercussions of poverty, while elevating the living standards of numerous individuals. The diaspora contributes significant funding towards numerous construction projects, hence creating employment opportunities for skilled craftsmen such as masons, plumbers, electricians, and labourers.

Despite lagging behind other countries in terms of remittances, Nigerians ranked lower in comparison to many nationalities. The Migration and Development Brief (May 2022) revealed that the top five countries receiving the highest remittances in 2021 were India (\$89 billion), Mexico (\$54 billion), China (\$53 billion), the Philippines (\$37 billion), and Egypt (\$32 billion). India has consistently held the highest position on the list since 2008. In addition, significant emigration can still result in a financial influx. These funds have the capacity to be allocated towards local enterprises or retained. Undoubtedly, this would inherently stimulate the Nigerian economy. Nevertheless, I am not pushing for Nigerians to continue fleeing. Not all things that shine are composed of gold. Many individuals who previously engaged in “japa” now desire to “japada” (return), as they have come to realise that the streets of Western nations are not paved with riches. Certain individuals have difficulties throughout life. It is indeed advantageous for our nation to maintain peace and progress, enabling people to come back.

The standards of work reached international levels. Alterations in labour dynamics generally result in a domino effect on the global job market. A fascinating prospect emerging from this flight is that Nigerian businesses are making efforts to raise their standards to meet global benchmarks. In order to rival their international adversaries, they implemented this strategy. Many businesses in the US and the UK have chosen to register as limited liability corporations in order to enhance their worldwide competitiveness. Consequently, Nigeria’s potential to attract international investment has

significantly increased, thereby improving the country’s overall economic reputation. In order to effectively manage the surge in Japanese job applicants, firms must adopt novel approaches that optimise the hiring process and enhance employee contentment. Jobberman is ready to help you keep ahead of the curve, making this process less intimidating.

### **Possible Solutions to ‘Japa’ Tomorrow**

Despite the complexity and diversity of the worker migration issue, Nigerian firms can adopt a number of strategies to lessen its impact on their operations. Government policies that address the underlying causes of migration, corporate investments in training and development initiatives, technological investments to boost automation and efficiency, business alliances and collaborations, and the promotion of remote work are a few of these options.

#### **Government Policies to Address the Root Causes of Migration**

The government can play a key role in addressing the root causes of worker migration, such as high unemployment and a lack of economic opportunity. This can include policies to promote job creation and economic growth, as well as programs to provide education and training to workers to increase their employability.

#### ***Businesses Invest in Training and Development Programmes***

This is possible of building a skilled and experienced workforce. This can include programs to provide education and training to current employees, as well as programs to attract and retain new workers.

#### ***Investment in Technology to Increase Efficiency and Automation***

This can help businesses become more productive and profitable and reduce their dependence on human labour.



***Partnerships With Other Businesses***

Partnerships or collaborate with other businesses to share resources and expertise. This can include sharing recruiting and training resources as well as collaborating on research and development projects to create new products and services.

***Encourage Remote Working***

Promoting remote work is another way to lessen the effects of employee emigration. Thanks to technological advancements, companies can now allow their workers to work remotely, even if they are located abroad. In addition to the previously mentioned points, we as a country need to move quickly to change communication habits and mobilize society by involving and inspiring relevant bodies and partners nationwide to use persuasion and effective, repeated communication to instill a sense of confidence and patriotism in our fellow citizens. We must convince our fellow Nigerians that achieving economic prosperity is possible in any part of the country.

Governments at all levels must make significant investments in modern agriculture, ICT, and the digital economy, as well as addressing the root causes of mass migration, which include hunger, poverty, and unemployment. To accomplish this, governments must design the macroeconomic policies that will elevate us to the level of other nations and increase our competitiveness.

In addition, we must encourage social inclusion, close the widening wealth disparity, and concentrate our efforts on initiatives that will raise living standards and lower costs of living. Additionally, it is imperative that we work with pertinent educational organizations to develop curricula that specifically educate young people survival skills beyond the theoretical entrepreneurship being taught, as well as innovation and problem-solving abilities, from the very beginning of schooling. Additionally, we must work to commercialize our expertise.

***Conclusion***

To sum up, the issue of worker migration poses a continuous

difficulty for businesses in Nigeria since it leads to the departure of knowledgeable and experienced personnel and makes it more difficult to find and onboard new hires. Businesses' profitability and productivity may suffer as a result. The government will need to take a diversified approach in tackling worker migration. cooperation between persons working with the Nigerian Diaspora Commission (NDC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) These pertinent organizations will be essential in giving companies the technology and tools they require to increase their productivity, profitability, and efficiency. Last but not least, labor migration presents a big difficulty for Nigerian firms. However, the consequences can be lessened and the country's economy can grow with the application of the right solutions, digital solutions, and other pertinent agencies.

### **Suggestions**

In order to escape the perpetual pattern of both lawful and unlawful migration, it is imperative to create an inclusive environment for all individuals. The influx of migrants to the country will be greatly reduced through the creation of employment prospects, the elimination of poverty, the development of infrastructure for the welfare of citizens, and, most importantly, the maintenance of national security.

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