

BRAIN DRAIN AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Brain Drain has caused Africans to search for a better condition for living which is a great challenge facing them for development. The countries economy is harmed as each professional represent surplus spending in replacing them. Dependency theory was used to explain and analyze more why it is so in developing country. In respect of the causes of brain drain in Africa some factors were identified in the research as poor condition of service among professionals, lack of development of human talent, mass unemployment, poor salaries, bad leadership, high rate of illiteracy, mass poverty, etc. also the effects are: loss of human capital assets to man various institutions in the country, loss of tax of migrated manpower to foreign countries, loss of capital invested in education of migrated manpower assets etc. There is also promotion of mediocrity which is occasioned by the corrupt nature of the system. The paper suggested that political leaders need to be sensitized on putting society interest first and committing to developmental visions and programmes. It also opined that Nigerians need to be sensitized on holding political leaders accountable on areas of development and movement of our professionals to developed countries. It further recommend the need to co-opt the National Economic Empowerment and Developmental Strategy (NEEDS) in order to restore development in Nigeria, as it is hoped that this will curb the extent of brain drain in Nigeria.

The mass departure of Africa's intellectuals and skilled population to western nations, which is called "Brain Drain," has been one of the greatest obstacles to the development of African countries which has resulted to suffering from the shortage of

professionals and skilful individuals necessary for the advancement of the nation's capital. (<http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/164>).

This study focused on Africans underdevelopment arising from failed development visions and programmes that has resulted into brain drain. Brain drain (human capital flight) is the large-scale emigration of a large group of individuals with highly skilled labours or knowledge. The reasons that account for this are usually of two aspects which respectively come from countries' and individuals' decisions. In terms of countries, there may be such reasons such as poor social conditions, poor governance, corruption, lack of development of human talent thereby leading to lack of opportunities, poverty, high rate of illiteracy, economic depression, health risks, corruption, nepotism, bad leadership, lack of patriotism, unemployment, poor funding of education, insecurity, human rights abuses and mostly poor condition of service. The opposite is found in developed countries, there are rich opportunities, political stability and freedom of all kinds, developed economy, better living conditions, better telecommunications and technology, security to mention only these. When we talk of individual reasons, there are pressure from the family and personal preferences for exploring ambition for an improved career or the get rich syndrome which is a great threat facing the youth of nowadays.

Most developing countries of Africa are desperately in need of valuable professionals and personnel to develop their workforce, but incidentally several African intelligentsias are contributing enormously to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of their host countries outside Africa (Todaro & Smith, 2006: 390). "About 17 sub-Saharan countries have less than half of the World Health Organization's (WHO) minimum standard for nurses of 1000 nurses per 100,000 people. For example, Malawi has only 17 nurses per 100,000 people (Africa's Health-care Brain Drain." *New York Times*, 13 August 2004). This source further has it that, in contrast, many Western countries have not more than 1,000 nurses for 100, 000 of their citizens.

The migration of highly trained professionals leaves many countries in the continent short of the skills needed to meet the challenges of development. According to the United States Census Bureau, Nigerians are the most educated ethnic group in the United States. According to Speranta Dimitru she stated that the skilled migrants are an economic loss for the country that sent them Our leaders can seek technical assistance from Nigerians living in the United States to help to develop the country (Dimitru, 2011)

For a long time, the developed world had used all sorts of tactics to exploit the nations of Africa and indeed other developing nations. History books and some other printed materials are replete with instances of how and to what extent the resources of the third world nations have been devastated. Examples of such mindless exploitation can be found in Rodney Walter's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novels: *River Between*, *Weep Not Child*, *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* to mention but a few. The developed countries' exploitative

stance is fuelled by most underdeveloped countries' leaders who, over the years, have supported and actively impoverish their developing nations. Such African leaders have continued to patronise and import most of the developed countries' industrial and other goods thereby depending solemnly on them (www.gamji.com/article600/NEWS6246.htm).

So many measures have been advanced on how to achieve an effective means of curbing the devastating phenomenon of brain drain in Africa; such measures have failed to materialize. The problem has not also been given the attention it deserves, and since not much attention has been paid to it the nation has been faced with an economic, social and political hazard.

The paper further discussed how high rate of professional migration has contributed to the underdevelopment of the area. In doing this, the study investigated the nature of havoc brain drain has brought upon Africans and her citizens. Secondly the paper critically investigated the poor conditions of service leading to the migration of professionals to the developed countries and the extent corruption has undermined African development.

Theoretical Framework

For further understanding of this research paper we shall use modernization theory to explain some of the problems facing the national development. Modernization theory is one of the most popular theories of political development. Modernization is defined as a systematic process in which societies change fundamentally across board from the approximations of the traditional model to the approximations of the modern model.

The main basis of the theory is that the persistence of underdevelopment in the developing states is due to the existence of conservative culture and traditional institutions as well as lack of achievement, motivation and positive orientation towards change. According to Wilbert More he states that, "conceived Modernization in terms of a total transformation of tradition or pre-modern entities into that type of technologies and associated social organizations characterized the advanced capitalist societies."

This theory suggested that the problem of African countries is how to move the developing countries from their traditional level of development to the modern stage. The reason for this is that they argued that every society undergoes stages of development and the basic stages are traditional, transitional and modern. One of those theorists went further to set five stages (Rostow,1960), the traditional society, the pre- condition for take- off, the take- offstage, the age of high mass consumption and final stage. Moreover, the theory also argues that the problem of African countries is that they lack resources of skilled man- power, slow growth, high level of corruption, high level of illiteracy, unemployment, it does not stop at that, they are also usually very poor, high level of nepotism, usually diseased, lack adequate

institutional framework. Due to these problems, the aim of the modernization theory is how to move developing countries out from their decadent states.

The goals of development are as follows: wealth, equity, stability, democracy and autonomy. It is assumed that all these are good and they go together. For (Parson) universalism, achievements and specificity are found in developed countries, while their opposites above are found in the developing countries. The theory also influenced the theory of political development where they talk of role differentiation, sub-system autonomy and cultural secularized of world countries nation.

This theory is of the view that by the process of continuous interaction with developed nations, some aspects of the modernized institutions of developed nations would be imbibed by the developing nations. This will also help in technological transfer which a developing country requires for their developmental process.

Research carried out by some scholars has it that many of the people, who once worked in the agricultural areas in Africa, move to cities where they are expecting to find a white collar jobs that will sustain them for a living. Their recommendations are on two levels first, economies recommendations; the theory believes that in order to bring about greater development, the interaction between developed and under- developed nations should be encouraged. Secondly they also recommended high level of technical assistance as a measure of development.

The Concept of Brain Drain and African Development

Standard dictionary defines brain drain “as the loss of skilled intellectual and technical labour through the movement of such labour to more favourable, technical, economic, or professional environ, depletion or loss of intellectual and technical personnel, a gradual depletion of energy or resources; a drain of young talented by emigration” (www.gamji.com/article6000/NEWS6246.htm).

Development is a process of change, according to Walter Rodney; it was seen as many-sided involving individualism, social stratification/castes, and the society at large. This development is said to be represented in the context of increased skill, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, and responsibility and material well-being. Walter Rodney’s greater attention was directed at material well-being, freedom and skill. At the level of social groups, development implied an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships while for the society at large, development has exhibited strength to single-handedly improve their ability to live better lives through harnessing the earth’s resources available to them (<http://ikhidero.wordpress.com/2013/06/02/walter>)

Speaking on the effect of brain drain, the Nigeria foreign minister – Sule Lamido – the then Central Bank of Nigerian (CBN) governor reported that over 10,000 Nigerians died between 1999 and 2002 while trying to cross to Europe through North Africa. In the United States and Europe, 83 percent and 46 percent,

respectively, of the Nigerian Immigrant Population are highly skilled. (risingnetworks.org/...brain-drain-big-hurdle-to-realize-Nigeria's vision).

Brain Drain lowers the rate of investment in a country. This is mainly because investments move with people and also helps them for quick development and as a result of this, if more people keep moving from one country to other countries, they also move with their investments thereby adding up to under-development or under-investment on the available local resources of the country.

The Causes and Consequences of Brain Drain

The causes of brain drain occurs as a result of many factors which include, but not limited to, the following: lack of development of human talent, bad leadership, high rate of illiteracy, poor funding of education, health risk, insecurity, economic depression, corruption, nepotism, poverty, lack of patriotism, unemployment, human rights abuses and poor conditions of service.

In fact, brain drain is not uniquely an African affair alone; it is obtainable worldwide; except that the situations in African countries, especially Nigeria, are very high. Experts in research and development from developing countries migrate to developed countries on a regular basis. About 80% of Indian computer programmers migrated to the USA, depriving the Indian economy of growth. (Oduba, 2000), China, Haiti, Portugal, to mention no more, face the same problem.

S/N	Sector	Salary per annum (N)
1	Public Sector (oil)	450, 000-600, 000
2	Public sector(iron & steel)	300, 000-400, 000
3	Nigerian economy(Average)	100, 000-200, 000
4	University academic staff	30, 000-54, 000 000

Source: ASSU, *National Secretariat Publication, cited in Oni 2010*

Consequently, the areas from where the skilled personnel departed are being impoverished in one way or the other. Education is poorly funded, and this leads to low moral of the staff of educational institutions which in turn leads to brain drain. In 2004, the Nigerian National Planning Commission described the country's education system as "dysfunctional." The apparent and prevalent consequences of this scenario include decaying institutions and ill-prepared graduates. The table below shows the salary grade of some Nigerian parastatals.

The above data indicates the salary of academic staff per annum. This, undoubtedly, will occasion low morale among staff leading to brain drain, persistent crisis arising from neoliberal policies of government, among other problems which have also brought the higher education sub-sector to its knees. According to Docquier and Marfouk (2006), over 10.7 percent of the highly skilled population who were trained in Nigeria ended up working abroad in 2006. Most of such people are working in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. An average of 64 percent of the Nigerian emigrant population has tertiary education. It was discovered that 90 percent of Nigerians not to talk of other African countries live and work in the United States and the United Kingdom (Clemens & Petterson, 2007).

African Immigrants to the United States by Country of Birth 1981-2000

Country of birth	1981-1990	1991-2000
Nigeria	35.3	67.3
Ethiopia	27.2	49.3
Egypt	31.4	46.7
Ghana	14.9	35.6
South Africa	15.7	22.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, statistical abstract of the United States (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2003).

Some countries in Africa, like Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa are highly affected by brain drain. This phenomenon leaves these countries in a state of acute shortage of skilled professionals despite their investment on human capital (Nazish Imran, Zahra Azeem, Imran Haider, Naeem Amjad & Muhammad R. Bhatti, 2011).

Furthermore, African countries are being faced with the problems of corruption. Corruption is the abuse of public trust for private gain; it is outright stealing; in fact, it is the main cause of poor conditions of living in Nigeria. To this extent, improvements in governance in general and reduction of corruption in particular could be means to accelerate the process of development. In addition, as society grows wealthier, good governance becomes more widely demanded by the public (Todaro & Smith, 2006: 552).

The World Bank Report (1997) defined corruption as “the abuse of public power for private gains”. Political corruption takes three basic forms: embezzlement, bribery and nepotism. Presently, 2015 - 2017 administration in Nigeria suffers more of nepotism which is the brain child of brain drain. It was stated that \$400 billion was stolen from the treasury by Nigeria's leaders between 1960 and 1999. Based on

Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2011 reported that it is only in Nigeria that individuals with affluence are above the law.

However, the destructive effects of the brain-drain arise when some highly skilled professionals choose not to return to their native country, because of the poor conditions of living and after being established in developed country like America through education and employment they become “Americanized” and do not want to go back to the old ways of life in their homeland (<http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/164>). All these pull down our economy to zero percent.

In west Africa they have the lowest average per capita Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and the second highest average infant mortality rate after Middle Africa(Mba & Ekeopara, 2007). This is shocking news that numerous natural resources found in Africa have not improved the wellbeing of the people. The West Africans are underdeveloped and yet they are influential and highly respected scientists of all sorts in the developed countries of the world.

Migration of African Medical Personnel

It has been found that a lot of Nigerians who are into medical profession are working for other countries that have a stable economy. In the medical field, in Ghana, there are about 15,000 Nigerian doctors; this figure is just one per cent out of those in the United States, India, China, Germany and other countries. This is just to satisfy the insatiable need for “good working atmosphere” which is not available at home. It is not surprising that high levels of skilled emigration are consistent with data on Nigerians in both countries. In several countries, including Kenya and Ghana, the brain drain of medical professionals is threatening the very existence of the countries’ health services. Kenya loses on average 20 medical doctors each month. Ghana lost 60% of its medical doctors in the 1980s, and between 600 to 700 Ghanaian physicians is currently practicing in the USA alone, a figure that represents roughly 50% of the total population of doctors in Ghana.

There are about 14 percent of physicians who were trained in Nigeria working abroad and, 90 percent of whom live and work in the United States and the United Kingdom (Clemens and Peterson, 2007). There have been marked increases in the number of Nigerians working for developed nations all in the name of poor condition of service at home. In addition, relatively highly skilled nurses and doctors were recruited from Nigeria to work in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States (Dumont & Lemaitre, 2004).

The UNDP Human Development Report in 1993 indicated that more than 21,000 Nigerian doctors are practicing in the United States alone while Nigeria suffers from a shortage of doctors. If we were to add the minimum standard set by the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure a basic healthcare service as to 20 physicians per 100 people. While in Africa one doctor caters for 5000 people. It is

alarming in the number of African doctors especially from Nigeria in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, Europe, Australia and those in other African countries; the figure would be close to 30,000 or there about (www.ng.undp.org/documents/Needs.pdf).

One third of Ethiopian medical doctors have already left the country. According to Randall Tobias, the United States Government's global AIDS coordinator, stated that, there are more Ethiopian trained doctors practicing in the city of Chicago alone than in Ethiopia. In Zambia, the public sector only retained 50 out of 600 doctors trained in the country's medical school from 1978-1999. The flight of health professionals is not limited to doctors it also affects nurses, pharmacists and social services personnel as well. The loss of nurses, in particular, is a growing phenomenon, fuelled principally by the shortages in developed countries. The United States has 126,000 fewer nurses than it needs and government figures show that the country could face a shortage of 800,000 registered nurses by 2020 (Orozco, & Carana, 2006).

This is just to satisfy the insatiable need for "good working atmosphere" which is not available at home. Indeed, for Africans, this is not a good time. Improvement in healthcare services across the country is a source of major concern, as Federal Medical Centres and teaching hospitals remain ill-equipped, under-staffed and under-funded. Preventable diseases such as polio, malaria, cholera and heart related diseases that have over stretched Africa's healthcare facilities and lack of improvement in medical services is forcing more and more Africans, who can afford it, to seek better healthcare services abroad (United Nations, 2006).

Empirical Verification

Based on this study we find out that brain drain reduces the already low quantity of skilled manpower available in the country and needed for their development. It also reduces numbers of dynamic and innovative people, whether entrepreneurs or academics, increases dependence on foreign technical assistance, slows the transfer of technology and widens the gap between Africa and industrialized countries. This has negatively affects the country's scientific output. Money lost in income tax revenues and in potential contributions to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Our leaders are corrupt and do not pay attention to the well being of the masses thereby heightening poor condition of living and the result is checking out of this country to find a better job to earn a good living. There is no encouragement of the well talented ones, Nigerians thrive on mediocrity allowing these dull ones to manage some sensitive areas that would have been reserved for the intelligent ones and the end result of it is folding of industries or companies thereby creating a loop holes and also encouraging brain drain. We found out that literate ones are not employed there by facing high rate of unemployment and Nigerian government are paying deaf ear towards that to the extent that our educational system has fallen to zero standard as a result of poor funding of education leading to poor condition of

service that drives lots of our professionals out of this country.

People are frustrated and aggrieved towards the corrupt practices of our government. Nigerians are facing insecurity, the citizens especially the poor masses are abandoned to their faith. Our security system is porous the Boko Haram are almost trying to close northern area of the country by bomb blast of every nook and cranny of the place, there are kidnappers in the eastern part of the country, in fact everything has turned upside down or we may say things has fallen apart, the country is no longer safe for leaving. All these problems cause migration of the people coupled with poor condition of service and economic meltdown thereby leading to brain drain at its highest peak.

Measures Explored to Curbing Brain Drain in Nigeria

It has not been a hidden thing that for some years now the Nigeria has focused on reversing the brain drain by attracting back the skilled people who left the country, without dramatic and rapid economic and social transformation, the dream of mass return has been impossible to realize. Since the return of democracy in 1999, the Nigerian government has changed its approach by officially recognizing Nigerians abroad as important stakeholders and potential partners in the country's development.

In September 2000, President Olusegun Obasanjo convened a meeting in Atlanta of Nigerians in the Americas, and later a meeting in London for those in Europe, to engage them in creating a mechanism through which they could effectively be mobilized and involved in development process for Nigerians. This resulted to 3,700 Nigerians who attended the Atlanta meeting, while the London meeting attracted 500. The double events led to a presidential consultative meeting in Abuja and then the formation of the Nigerians in the Diaspora Organization (NIDO) in 2001, modelled on similar organizations in China and India. At that time they established the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS), a quasi-government organization to help in the coordination of the government engagement with its Diasporas.

The problem of the brain drain from poor to rich countries has been paid more attention in the world's press as well as from academics and researchers such as Data Collection on African Experts (DTCA), the building capacities in various areas of development, Promoting research for development as well as institutional Strengthening of some Nigerians institutions.

(<http://www.iom.int/africandiaspora/pdf/TEFERRA.pdf>)

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) calls for the establishment of a reliable, continental database to determine the magnitude of the problem of brain drain and promote collaboration between Africans abroad and those at home. This programme will help if it will be well implemented. An important NEPAD priority is to develop Africa's human resources and reverse the brain drain. Under NEPAD, African leaders explicitly call for the creation of the "necessary political, social and economic conditions that would serve as incentives to curb brain

drain." Even though all these measures have been taken to find a solution to end this canker worm that is eating our system, yet the problem of brain drain still stares at our face, because Nigerians are good at theory, but lag behind in practice. This is a nation where well articulated policy is taken for the benefit of all but when it comes to implantation it scores zero thereby escalating the problems of the masses. These measures that have been taken by the government are very good one if and only if it will be well implemented.

Conclusion

The brain drain is especially visible and problematic in Africa. This is because the loss of the region's brightest people contributes to the continent's continued people languishing in another land. Without professional and intellectual leaders to help solve the region's problems, Africa must depend on outside assistance and forever lag behind other nations.

African's lose lots of economic potentials. This means that potential investors shy away from nations whose best teachers, doctors, students, and business professionals relocate, perpetuating the poverty that led to the brain drain in the first place. Indeed, brain drain is "a disastrous misfortune to Africa" Even though brain drain is a global issue that is, it does not happen only in Africa yet the problem still remains that Africans are feeling the impact most because this issue has helped to under-develop the continent. In this situation we blame our leaders who have refused to make favourable conditions for those intelligentsias to stay in their fatherlands and develop them. The issue of brain drain will continue to occur except a cogent thing is done.

Africans have failed woefully to develop her visions; absconded development programmes and lack of policy implementation are common problems that militate against development in the continent, there are products of corruption and political leadership and ineptitude that characterize in all the countries in Africa. These factors have combined to mastermind under-development and have given rise to a failed African state. In spite of abundant natural and human resources in the country, corruption in Africa has rubbished the good development of our dreams, visions, policies and plans and kept developments crawling. For any meaningful development to take place and root in Africa, corruption must first be erased by the leaders. Capital investments in infrastructure are the keys to economic growth, because this would help reduce cost of investment and production, generate employment, reduce migration rate and improve the conditions of leaving.

Recommendations

This paper urges the policy makers and implementers in the democratic Nigeria to pay attention to the well being of the masses, thereby creating an enabling environment for the dispersed African intelligentsia/professionals to return home to

assist in the development and modernization project. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is the response to the development challenges in Nigeria if well implemented because the greatest problem of Nigerians is management. NEEDS remains the answer and are what Nigeria needs to move forward. Education they say is the key to success, it is the heart, the engine and power house for any nation to move forward that is what Nigerians need and to achieve this education should be funded at all cost.

The reform programme is rightly ambitious. For one thing, we need focused goals and ambition to make progress. The programme reflects the impatience of Nigerians to see quick and dramatic changes and also the fact that Nigeria has immense potential waiting to be unleashed, talents to be tapped. Having lost some decades, they are in haste to cover lost ground, catch up with other contemporaries, and become the largest and strongest economy in Africa. They are, however, mindful of the need to sequence the reforms to minimize the costs and preventable pitfalls while maximizing the benefits.

Investment also is a very good essential tool for development. Mba, (2010) stressed that, Government should invest in productive sector of the economy and minimize expenditure on things that do not add to the productive capacity of the nation and this is the reason why we should embrace the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). Government should encourage investors through provision of basic amenities like good roads, steady power supply and security; this will encourage employment and also attract foreign investors in the country. There should also be training vocational skill that will create self employment there by discouraging our talented youths from going abroad to seek for job. From the above, low interest rate, enabling environment with other variables could lead to increase in investment, create employment, reduce poverty rate and inevitably reduce rate of migration and boost the economy thereby promoting national development which are the main aim of NEEDS.

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