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Title: Gargantuan Out-migration: An Emerging Culture among Youths in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of migration has been recorded to be a part of human history. Over the years, scholars have averred that people migrate for different reasons. While some do so for economic reasons and in search of greener pastures, others do so to escape either the wrath of the society or the government owing from their actions and way of life. This phenomenon is not restricted to gender and age, as both males and females, old and young, engage in this act. Of late, it has been discovered that there is a huge desire of youths, including those who have jobs, to exit the country, thereby leading to a massive emigration of youths out of Nigeria. Although it is an undeniable fact that the economy of the country is in shambles, which leads to a desire to search for greener pastures elsewhere, the trend in the youths' desire and rush to leave Nigeria transcends this sole reason. The belief among the youths that a good life exists only outside of Nigeria and they must therefore leave the country's shores has emerged as a youth culture. This paper investigates the reasons for this emerging culture among the youths in Nigeria using failed migrants who have attempted to emigrate via the Sahara and the Mediterranean into Europe bringing to fore the technological innovation which the Social Media presents for job creation. The paper concludes with suggestions on workable ways to dissuade this act among the youths so that the AU Vision of 2063 can be realizable.

Keywords: Emigration, Nigeria, Youth culture, Europe, Social Media

1. Introduction

Through many epochs, Africans have migrated across what has been termed to be international boundaries as pastoralists, traders, muggers, refugees etc. The scramble for Africa by the colonialists which eventually led to the partitioning of Africa following the Berlin Conference of 1885/1887, brought about artificial border that resulted to the curtailment of free movement of people, goods and services across the traditional, lax borders thus making movement across these borders restrictive and illegal without proper documentation. However, movements across these borders are carried out both legally and illegally by African migrants ranging from academia, skilled and unskilled men, women and the youths. This adventure is usually targeted towards seeking greener pastures and as such, endeavour to manoeuvre their ways through into the Europe, the US, Canada and even to some African countries most especially in the South African Development Commission (SADC) region either legally or illegally.

This phenomenon of massive migration has evoked scholarly recognition and consciousness (Chaichian 2014)). Globally, a number of reasons has been identified to be responsible for this drive. Such reasons include acquiring higher education, getting better jobs, starting a life by getting married and raising a family. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2016, statistics revealed that about 71 million youths remained unemployed globally therefore making the search for a greener pasture majorly tied to getting a “better” job offer.¹ In 2018 the figure increased slightly to 71.1 million². In West Africa, the drive for such adventure by the youth is quite rife and alarming. Quartz Africa averred that this is witnessed in the alarming number of youths emigrating either legally or illegally³.

In Nigeria, this phenomenon largely remains a critical scenario especially as many of the illegal migrants are being repatriated in their thousands from across Libya lately and are being kept in various camps across their different states. So many resigned their jobs and sold off their properties purposely for this course and in my interaction with a cross section of the Nigerian youths, quite a great number are still willing to follow suit. Although, the reason given for their desire to leave solely hinges on getting a better life outside of Africa and as such remains resolute to risk their lives through the desert to cross into Europe but evidently, a great number

¹ <https://plan-international.org/eu/youth-unemployment-facts>

² https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_597065/lang--en/index.htm

³ <https://qz.com/africa/1341221/the-harrowing-step-by-step-story-of-a-migrants-journey-to-europe/>

of them do not succeed in getting this life they anticipated after spending a good number of their youthful years abroad. Therefore, this paper examines the phenomenon of migration most importantly emigration in Nigeria with a view to critically and systematically analyse the root causes of the massive youth emigration witnessed currently in Nigeria. This paper mainly focuses on the various occurrences that has over the formative years gradually led the average Nigerian youth solely to the thought of emigrating the country not just for the fun of it but mainly as the only means to becoming successful in life thus leading to an emerging culture of out-migration among youths in Nigeria.

The study adopted a secondary data analysis. Useful primary and secondary sources of data were engaged such as scholarly articles, books, published reports from NAPTIP and documentaries conducted by Ross Kemp on the Libyan story which gives a first-hand information on the general and individual plight of failed migrants who are trapped in Libya. The documentary provided detailed interviews conducted with failed migrants from different part of Nigeria making it highly resourceful for this study. The information gathered were thematically analysed in relation to the crux of the study.

This paper is divided into various sections. The first which is introduction entails a background which gives an insight into what the paper intends to achieve. The succeeding section concentrates on the theoretical underpinning of the study while section three delves into the migration trajectories in Nigeria. Section four critically reviews existing literature to ascertain the domestic environment and the glaring causal factors responsible for the urge for citizens desire to emigrate from Nigeria while section five examines the perceived diaspora experiences of Nigerians and its influence on the Nigerian youths. Section six examines the story of Libya in relation to human smuggling through that route into Europe across the Mediterranean. Section seven delves into the experiences of failed migrant on their journey into Europe especially their lives experiences as they got stuck in Libya while section eight aggregates the points identified in preceding sections and establishes the core factors responsible for this emerging culture among the Nigerian youths, section nine explores the job opportunities the social media which has been established to have negative influence on the youth offers and which the youths can explore and make use of for wealth creation while section ten concludes and make pragmatic recommendations to dissuade the Nigerian youths from embarking on such dangerous and uncertain adventure.

2. Theoretical Underpinning

Anomie theory propounded by Robert K. Merton was adopted for the study as it addresses factors responsible for youth anti-social behaviour which he termed anomie. Robert K. Merton as a distinguished sociologist contributed so well to general sociological theory but he is well known for propounding and popularizing the anomie viewpoint on crime in the field of criminology.

This viewpoint identifies the dimensions in which the typical characteristics of an American society is partly responsible for the increased level of crime and several delinquent behaviours found mostly among the younger generation. This, Merton termed anomie or cultural breakdown which majorly is premised on strong importance placed on success goals particularly, monetary success without a corresponding emphasis on the legally acceptable ways of achieving such goals (Merton, 2010).

Merton (2010) argues further anomie tends to occur when the culture of the society pushes everyone to towards achieving majestic goals in a stratified environment where the proletariats are limited in their access to legitimate resources that guarantees success. In this instance, people in this class are pressurized to “innovate” different ways most often illegal means of achieving these goals.

Building on the preceding, Richard Rosenfeld and Steven Messner have identified the role the imbalances that exist in the society play with regards to anomie. The imbalances experienced between the core social institutions such as the economy, the family and the polity play a huge role in generating anomie (Merton, 2010).

This theory perfectly mirrors the existing situation in Nigeria. There is so much pressure on its youthful population to attain lofty goals. This pressure comes from the family, their peers, and the society itself and it pushes them to pursue monetary success through whatever means they can. It is thus an attitude of “who cares how the money is made?”. It should be noted that these youths fill the lowest level of the class hierarchy in the society and as such many of them run small businesses while others are artisans. These small-scale businesses are not enough for them to meet the demands and pressure put on them by their families, peers who are already “successful” and the society itself. Therefore, in a bid to meeting these demands, they are

pressurized into exploring illegal means of achieving these goals. Today in Nigeria this is manifested in several delinquent behaviour which the government seems to be incapable of managing and controlling such as cyber-crimes, kidnapping, armed robbery and the drive to emigrate Nigeria through whichever means available to them which is the focus of this study.

Furthermore, the wide imbalances experienced within the social institutions in Nigeria could be said to be responsible for this phenomenon emerging among the youths. The huge disconnect that exist between the family, the economy and the polity has laid a solid foundation for the phenomenon to thrive. The high wave of corrupt practices found among the politicians is alarming. Over the years, public funds are looted with impunity and the institutions responsible for probing such acts and prosecuting those found guilty are equally corrupt. This attitude peculiar with the ruling class has taken its toll on the vast majority who are at the lowest level of the class hierarchy in the society. As such, everyone seems to carry a mind-set of getting monetary success through whatever means possible legally or illegally.

3. Overview of Migration trajectories in Nigeria

As it has been noted, migration has since been part of the human history globally. In Nigeria, migration predates the colonial epoch when Africa was partitioned into smaller countries and Nigeria colonized. Nigerians moved freely as traders, herders and pilgrims to holy sites in the Arabian Peninsula across various empires and kingdoms within and without Nigeria without fear or threat as the borders and boundaries were not well defined (Ezeokafor, 2018).

Colonization brought about the demarcation of international borders to clearly define the territorial limits of sovereign states thus making movement and migration restricted unlike the pre-colonial era (Afolayan, et'al, 2008). The post-colonial era although has brought about a restriction in the movement of Africans and Nigerians across the international borders, many Nigerian still find their routes along the vast land borders which span across over 400,000 square kilometre land boundaries, which has over the years been difficult to manage (Afolayan, et'al, 2008). The post-independence era in Nigeria has witnessed many regimes both military and civilian with diverse policies and programmes peculiar to each government. These policies had either of two outcomes which were to improve the system and bring about development or

mar the system such that it leads to economic decline. This further goes to affect and inform the decision of Nigerians either to stay or to leave.

On a number of occasions, some of the policies of government had led to economic decline forcing Nigerians to depart Nigeria en-masse. This decision to leave Nigeria was taken by different class of people ranging from academics to skilled and unskilled individuals all in search of a better life in form of greener pasture. The economic decline thus became a “push” factor for academics and artisans to emigrate Nigeria leading to a brain drain. According to Astor et al. (2005), Carrington (1999), Hagopian et al (2005), Nwajiuba (2005), Aboderin (2007) and Obialo and Museckaite (2008) emigrants consisting of professionals and skilled workers gave the reason behind their decision to emigrate to be socio-economic inequality, poor wages when compared to their counterpart abroad, poor working condition leading to job dissatisfaction and low productivity. Other reasons are lack of necessary equipment and technology needed for working, epileptic power supply affecting production and productivity, constant industrial actions owing from retrenchment and under-utilization of resources by the ruling class. One of such policies was the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under the rulership of Military President Mohammadu Badamosi Babangida in 1980. This policy practically diminished the economy as it led to poor working conditions and a drastic reduction in the salaries of professionals. Equally, it led to a decline of the existing infrastructural system and basic social amenities needed for daily survival. It also led to a devaluation of the naira, decreased the standard of education and massive looting of the public treasury by serving public officers (Afolayan, et'al, 2008).

Furthermore, these emigrants find their ways into countries like the US, the United Kingdom, Europe, Canada and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf such as the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia etc. however, the destinations of the emigrants varied based on the motive behind their decision, the class of migrant they fall into and the nature of the environment they emigrating to. For instance, the professionals (academics and engineers) and skilled migrants emigrate to countries like USA, the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa and countries of Western Europe such as France, Denmark, Spain, Ireland etc while the traffickers and the trafficked (women and children) transit via Mauritania, Mali and the North African countries like Morocco and Libya to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Spain and Italy that accommodates their motives (Nightingale, 2003; Nwajiuba, 2005; Carling, 2005; Obialo and Museckaite, 2008).

In addition, some African countries were host to some Nigerian emigrants. Countries such as Kenya, Botswana, South Africa, Gabon, Ghana etc accommodated the Nigerian emigrants in different capacities as skilled workers and professionals mostly academics Afolayan, et'al, 2008). Some emigrants were typically driven by socio-cultural reasons which largely forms the underlying factors for emigration. An instance is the Ejigbo population predominantly found in the southwestern region of Nigeria who emigrate to Cote d'Ivoire due to the perceived affluence of the country. The first set of migrants who migrated between 1950 and 1970 had success stories to tell and this has gone a long way in attracting and leading to an influx of so many who are their relatives and friends at home into Abidjan, a trend which still remains till date (Adegbola, 1972; Afolayan, 2004). This was witnessed in Ghana as well in the 1960s as 192,000 Nigerians emigrated to Ghana forming 23% of the Ghana populations. The Alien Compliance Order of 1969 forced Nigerians and other foreigners out of Ghana reducing the Nigerian population in Ghana drastically (Afolayan, 2008).

Moreover, various entry programs initiated by different countries have contributed to the urge of Nigerians to emigrate leading to brain drain in Nigeria. These programs seek to provide jobs and resident status to successfully applicants either through a poll as in the American Visa Lottery and/ or the Canadian and Australian Skilled Immigrant Visa programs. Many Nigerians have successfully emigrated through these various programs over the years making the drive and desire a continuum.

Ngwainmbi (2014) argued that the luck-based program such as the DV Visa lottery Program (DLVP) of the US Department of States give its beneficiaries who are African immigrants the privilege of not been subjected to the formal and rigorous process of obtaining a visa because of the long-standing immigration history Black Africans have in the USA. However, he stated further that though Black Africans from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and across different regions have a history of migrating into USA most especially during the slave trade period, a few Black Africans from the African continent have been allowed into USA thereafter when compared with Black Africans from the Caribbean and the continent of South America. This program has therefore allowed entrance of over one million legal Black African immigrants from politically and economically challenged countries of the South that are well rooted in cultural values since 2013 (Ngwainmbi, 2014). But record has shown that while many of the Black immigrants stay and continue to live within the American shores, some have returned to

their countries of origin simply because, they cannot cope with provision of the capitalist economy and the socio-cultural disparities (Ngwainmbi, 2014).

4. Nigerian Domestic Environment and the Urge for Citizens Migration

Migration either in-migration or out-migration has its causal factors. Different studies have enunciated these factors to be the “push” and “pull” factors. The Nigerian environment is worth examining holistically for the purpose of ascertaining its past and present status and how this has greatly influenced or triggered the desire of the Nigerian citizens to emigrate Nigeria. The Nigerian environment will be reviewed from the political, economic and socio-cultural angles.

i. Political Environment

The Nigerian political environment since independence has been a mix of both military and democratic regimes. Since Nigeria returned to democratic form of government in 1999, successive governments have endeavoured to deliver the dividends of democracy to the citizens in a fair and equitable manner utilizing the instrumentation of democratic governance such as the rule of law, separation of powers (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2016). These various efforts by different government yielded little to no result as the citizens continue to wallow in abject poverty while the ruling class continue to amass wealth by siphoning and converting public funds into their personal coffers. This phenomenon continues to create a clear disparity between the rich and the poor consisting of the populace as the political class continue to fail in their duties of delivering the dividends of democracy to its people.

Currently, the greatest of the challenges that confronts the political structure in Nigeria is the Boko Haram insurgency whose activities is been felt mostly in the North-Eastern Nigeria. This sect has unleashed a lot of mayhem and inimical act on the polity and its citizens. A major effect of this phenomenon has been massive displacement of people from the troubled zones into areas that are relatively safe.

ii. Economic Status

Across different regimes witnessed in Nigeria, what has been witnessed so far has been economic growth which has not led to economic development (Chete, 2016). Though different regimes both military and civilian came up with good economic policies to improve the system and allow Nigerians have access to good life but none has been able to achieve this goal (Bangboye, 2014). Nigerians continue to wallow in abject poverty daily.

In 1999, a major policy which was developed to ensure stability, economic growth and development across the whole country was the National Economic and Development Strategy (NEEDS). This policy formed the masterpiece of Nigeria's socio-economic development plans (Chete and Falokun, 2010). This policy was drafted in consonance with the African Union (AU) initiative New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), targeted at eradicating poverty (Akande and Roberts, 2010). Some of the achievements of NEEDS include an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate. Between the period of 2004 – 2007, it rose to 6.0% as against 3.3% which it was in 1999. The oil and non-oil sectors had a GDP growth rates of 0% and 8.3% respectively. Again, the foreign reserve increased to US\$43 billion in 2007 as against US\$4 billion in 1999 while, the foreign debt stood at US\$34 billion with an inflation rate of 9.5%. Aside these, commercial banks became more consolidated and the telecommunication sector became liberalized. In addition, the privatization of government operated enterprises were carried out with about 110 privatization transactions carried out between the year 2000 - 2006 (NPC 2007).

Another of such initiative is the Vision 20:2020. This initiative was meant to serve as a blueprint for harnessing the country's huge resources for the betterment of all citizens and to make Nigeria be among the top 20 developed economies globally by year 2020. According to (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2016) these initiatives though yielded some remarkable achievements, could not be sustained due to constant breakout of violence among states ranging from political, ethno-religious and resource scuffles that has pervaded the civilian dispensation.

iii. High Rate of Unemployment

Despite the acclaimed growth in GDP, Nigeria remains characterized by unemployment, underemployment and low per capita income. These phenomenon poses serious socio-economic challenge in Nigeria most especially, with an increase in the rate of unemployment and underemployment of the educated youths (Bolarinwa, 2012). Year in year out graduates are being produced leading to a geometric increase in the labour market as against the dwindling productive employment opportunities available meaning that, the labour demand is less than the labour available. "This supply-side challenge in the labour market has been exacerbated by the high rate of population growth, which is vibrant and youthful. Besides, the Nigerian labour force is characterized by capacity underutilization and low productivity" (Bolarinwa, 2012).

Few years ago, this phenomenon of unemployment has been on the rise in Nigeria and continues to increase. In 2011, the rate of unemployment increased from 21.1% which it used to be to 23.9% meaning that, 38.24 million Nigerians mostly youths remained unemployed. The latest National Bureau of Statistics survey on unemployment in Nigeria (2010) indicates that there were more unemployed females (24.9%) than males (17.7%). According to the trend in the global labour market, the youths constitute the highest number of unemployed. In 2010, unemployment among youths between the ages of 15–24 was 39.9 per cent, while between the ages of 25–34 was 23.3 per cent and the ages of 35–44 remained 16.8 per cent. In 2011, these rates sky-rocketed especially, among the Nigerian youths. In 2012, the National Baseline Youth Survey showed that about 54 per cent of Nigerian youth were unemployed (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2016).

iv. **High Level of Poverty**

Ironically, as the economic growth rate in Nigeria increases, the poverty level equally increases instead of declining. The NBS Survey shows that there was an increase in the poverty level from 54.4% in 2004 to 69% in 2010 representing about 112.8 million Nigerians. According to Taiwo (2013), a researcher at the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), averred that the healthy economic growth witnessed in Nigeria has no positive influence on poverty reduction and inequality in Nigeria but rather a negative one as the level of poverty and inequality continues to increase. A study carried out by NISER in 2012 attest to the preceding. Also, the NBS Report revealed that the percentage of Nigerians totally impoverished increased from 54% in 2004 to 60.9% in 2010. Specifically, this rate varies across the regions of Nigeria. The study reveals that “the north-western and north-eastern geopolitical zones of the country experienced the highest rates of poverty of 77.7 per cent and 76.3 per cent, respectively, while the south-western geopolitical zone had the lowest rate of poverty” (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2016). The federal government even though continues to thrive to deal with this menace by formulating policies and creating programmes but the solution seems not any close by as the situation continues to deteriorate.

5. Perceived Diaspora Experiences and its Influence on Youth Migration

Over the years, many Nigeria youths have succeeded in exiting the shores of Nigeria via the land borders and air into countries in Europe, USA, the Middle East, and some African

countries for different purposes ranging from academic furtherance to better job opportunities all geared towards living a good life. No doubt, many Nigerian migrants both professionals and skilled workers have their success stories to share meaning that they have been able to achieve their goals of leaving the shores of Nigeria. Many of them have been able to acquire higher education, secure good jobs, established stable businesses and raise a family (Quartz Africa, 2016). On the other hand, there are a lot of adults and youths who are jobless and living in abject poverty in different countries of the world where they have succeeded in migrating into. A bulk of them do not have the necessary documentation to qualify them as a legal migrant and so they keep wandering and running away from the Police and Immigration Officers as the case may be. Whatever the story is, these experiences of their peers abroad have had a great influence on those that are left back home and as such they are stirred up to jet out of the country en-masse via any means available to them.

According to Vanguard (2014) many Nigerians daily wallow in hopeless poverty, which leads them to engaging in different criminal engagements and activities from where they are eventually arrested, put in detention, and tortured. Most times, the torture lead to the death of many Nigerians. A Nigerian named Joseph Ugboulo shared his personal story and ordeal experienced from his adventure. He explained that the inhumane living conditions experienced in Nigeria led him to taking a decision to leaving his growing and booming business to migrate to South Korea. Upon arrival in South Korea, he got a job as a casual in a production company, but the monthly pay could only pay his monthly bills leaving no room for savings to send home for the up keep of his family left behind in Nigeria. He said further that

“it is so pathetic how Nigerians are being lumped together by foreign hosts as people without a future, and or direction. Here in South Korea, my fate is hanging, and I have no future. We are about seven Africans sharing an apartment that could barely accommodate three persons comfortably, and if you feel so disturbed, someone waiting would gladly take your position and you will be thrown out on the street. The conditions of many of us in South Korea aptly capture the pathetic condition back home in Nigeria as a good number of us would rather die than come back to Nigeria as a nobody”. Vanguard, 2014

In addition, I could recall my experience in the united Arab Emirate while on a vacation, I decided to visit where some Nigerians and West Africans live in Ras Al Khaimah one of the Emirates in the UAE (See Picture 5.1). They live in dilapidated buildings situated far from the

city from where they go to town to do odd jobs while those who don't have jobs roam the street of Dubai taking pictures in centres of attractions and posting on their Facebook page for people back at home to see.

Picture 5.1. Shows the Dilapidated Building inhabited by some Nigerians and West Africans in the United Arab Emirate.



Source: The Author

Currently, this is the phenomenon I have observed in South Africa where I presently reside. Many Nigerians live a fake life. Legal immigrants turned illegal due to expired papers, visit public places posing for pictures and posting on Facebook for their friends to see, comment and raise their curiosity towards jetting out of the country as well to come join their friends. According to a cross section of returnees from Libya, they said were made to believe that their friends live in paradise while they suffered in Nigeria. However, it is most unfortunate that many Nigerian youths do not seek for the knowledge and the truth. Genuine and concerned Nigerians constantly write articles on the plight of the Nigerian youths abroad but instead of the youths reading such they spend time on Facebook checking profiles and commenting on pictures and lifestyles of friend that are unreal. Moreover, these friends would not reveal the real situation they are confronted with wherever they are. They further justify their long stay

abroad without visiting home for the good life they live rather than letting them know they do not have the necessary documents to qualify them as legal citizens.

Furthermore, the Nigerian smugglers equally contribute to this menace. Due to the nature of their nefarious activities, they return home frequently to canvass youth to leave whatever they are doing and plan leaving the country. They promise them a good life abroad and as well offer to assist them migrate into those countries if they are willing and can afford to pay the fees. Many of the smugglers have been apprehended by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) while some have escaped arrest (NAPTIP, 2017; Vanguard, 2018).

6. The Libyan Story vis-à-vis Human Smuggling across the Desert and the Mediterranean

According to Kemp (2017) the withdrawal of the West and humanitarian organizations from Libya after the downfall of the Gaddafi regime aggravated the state of insecurity within Libya as about 170 militia groups came up and migrants left to their fate by being subjected to horrific abuses without any support of returning home. In other words, migrants then became confronted with an uncertain future. In an interview with a popular militant leader called Abdul-Rahman Milad popularly known as Bija who controls a group of 34 men is paid by the Libyan government to intercept illegal migrants on the Mediterranean. And so, they patrol the Mediterranean in search of illegal migrants. Once rescued, migrants were returned to facilities that are unfit for the purpose for which they were created. According to Kemp, a UN Report indicted Bija in the smuggling business which he denied. However, if that was true, Bija made money from both ends by “smuggling out migrants who pay him and bringing back migrants who pay his rivals” on behalf of the government who pays him. Bija is known to be in control of Sabratha, a town notorious for smuggling and the point where migrants start their movement across the Mediterranean after a fierce battle with rival militia. According to Kemp, Sabratha is the Libya’s smuggling hub and anyone who controls this area controls the smuggling industry hence, the reason for the constant fighting.

In an interview conducted by Kemp with a notorious smuggler in Libya in 2017, he revealed how lucrative the smuggling job is. The Libyan smuggler explained how he started the job as a small boy and was paid between 500 – 1000 dinars (250 – 500 pounds) until he grew to becoming a full-time smuggler because of the links he has made with middlemen mostly from West Africa who constantly migrate West Africans into Libya where they are smuggled

through the Mediterranean into Italy. The notorious smuggler revealed that he crosses two to three boats filled with illegal migrants across the Mediterranean weekly and as such made a profit of 25,00 pounds every week even when the average monthly wage in Libya was 400 pounds. This explains why Nigerian smugglers come into the country to lure the gullible youths into this uncertain adventure even with their hard-earned savings as they have established connections to facilitate their movements. It also explains why the traffic across the sub Saharan dessert is huge.

Furthermore, Kemp pointed out that in 2016 about 180,000 illegal migrants successfully crossed the Mediterranean into Italy but in 2017, the number reduced drastically as the Italian government entered into an agreement with the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept illegal African migrants on the Mediterranean and return them to Detention Facilities in Libya. As such, in February 2017, the Italian government paid the Libyan government \$236 million to take migrants back to Libya. According to Kemp, the Italian government entered into this agreement because of the huge number of migrants they have to deal with. The European Rescue boats stay 13 miles off the Italian coast and as such have rescued many migrants and taken to Italy. Because of this they no longer want to be involved in the rescue missions anymore as they will be forced to take the migrants into Italy once they are on-board their boats. This singular act therefore made Libya a stopping point for many migrants as they could not succeed crossing into Italy after several unsuccessful attempts across the Mediterranean. At the point of rescue and further return into the facilities, migrants were beaten and maltreated as against the ethics of humanitarian response. This phenomenon degenerated into a modern-day slavery in Libya. No wonder Kemp tagged this route the “deadliest migrant routes in the world”.

7. Our Stories of Woe in Libya: Experiences of Migrants’ in their Adventure to Europe via Libya and the Mediterranean

Of a fact, Nigerian returnees who took the decision to migrate via the dessert had so many devastating stories to tell. This section will reveal the experiences of the migrant from the start of their journeys till the point of entering Libya. The experiences of both gender (male and female) will also be investigated to ascertain to what extent these migrants were humiliated and treated by smugglers who are Nigerians and Libyans.

According to a group of returnees mostly men, who recounted their ordeal from the start of the journey, pointed out that even though they faced difficult challenges as they journeyed across different countries, the challenges faced as they approached Libya became worse as it claimed

the lives of many migrants. They averred that while journeying in the desert, they were jam packed on Hilux and whoever falls off the Hilux automatically loses his life as the movers do not wait to rescue anybody. This corroborates the migrants' responses when interviewed by Kemp while on their mission in the desert. They further averred that they went starving for days as they had no access to food and water and in the process, some lost their lives. In all, not all of them that started the journey from Kano in Nigeria made it into Libya for reasons highlighted above. Kemp was forced to inquire from the migrants why they decided to subject themselves to that kind of adventure. The migrants gave several reasons for taking the decision to embark on such dangerous journey. While most of the men said that they left Nigeria because they could not get any job to do, many of the ladies said they left the country to seek for better life to support their family members at home as they remain the bread winners. According to them, they have lost their parents to Boko Haram attacks and their houses burnt down by these sect.

Upon their arrival in Libya, many of them got the shock of their lives as they could not proceed further on their journey. This was solely because their Pusher men who they paid fully the cost of travel from Nigeria to Europe disappeared and did not pay the different smugglers who were supposed to move them all through the different routes within Libya and across the Mediterranean into Italy knowing fully well the dangerous terrain that awaits these migrants. What then happens is so shocking. According to the returnees, the smugglers proceeded to selling them off for ridiculous prices ranging between 100 dinars (\$73) to 200 dinars (\$146). Once sold, they were taken to a facility, locked up and tortured so they can pay on time. While some of the returnees pointed out that they started been tortured after a week in the prison some said they were been tortured even before they got to the detention and this continued until they were able to raise funds to bail themselves. According to one of the returnees from Edo State, he stated that he was tortured for eight months until he was able to bail himself and released. This was evident in the documentary done by Kemp as many of the returnees showed their mutilated bodies. They all had marks on their bodies which symbolizes the fact that they were tortured heavily. They said they were tortured with electric cables and their buttocks and buttholes pierced with sharp object.

Unknowing to them after their release from a facility, they were quickly captured by another set of militants/ smugglers who kidnap them and put them in another prison and demand a sum of money from their captives for them to be released. This could also take them many months or years to raise the needed fund for their release. Once they are out another set of smugglers

apprehend them, and the vicious cycle continues. This phenomenon is able to thrive as a result of the fractured nature of Libya after the defeat of Gaddafi. According to Kemp, the UN-backed government does not have enough control of the country such that it can deal with human smuggling and trafficking and so, different militias due to the massive presence of arms and weapons, engage in this act uncontrollably. The returnees confirmed that weapons are everywhere in Libya and once a car is approaching them, they run even when the car is filled up with young boys. Based on their experiences, young Libyan boys who are not more than 15 years and are heavily armed in their cars, do attack them in the streets and proceed to selling them off to prospective buyers.

On the other hand, the female's situation was not in any way better. They were subjected to all forms of molestation upon arrival in Libya. As the men were sold, they were also exploited by their buyers. They were forced into prostitution in the different enclaves they were held for them to be able to pay up their debts before they could also proceed in their journey. The female returnees recounted in tears the inhumane ordeal they went through. They were kidnapped, beaten and raped consistently. After their release, they avoided walking in the streets for fear of kidnap and rape. Moreover, according to some of them, they were trafficked out of Nigeria purposely for prostitution in Libya and this they did for years under captivity. According to Kemp (2018), a UN Report shows that 80% of Nigerian female migrants are trafficked into Libya for prostitution.

Fortunately for some of them, they made it through to the Port of Sabratha from where they were ferried at night across the Mediterranean into Italy. The returnees recalled that while some were lucky as they made it through, many of them did not make it after several attempts. They were always intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guards who rescue them and return them to any of the three facilities established in Tripoli for this purpose. This became the order after the Italian government entered into an agreement with the Libyan government to intercept migrants and return them to Libya. According to Kemp, in one of the rescue missions, the Libyan Coast Guards in 11 hours were able to intercept three boats conveying 750 migrants who were returned to the facilities that have records of human right abuses as the officers in charge remained largely untrained for the purpose. According to the returnees, they always felt that they were rescued to be taken to Italy only to find out that they were to be returned to Libya. They were never happy to be returned to Libya knowing the agony and inhumane treatment that await them. Right from the point of rescue off shore, they were beaten by the Libyan Coastal Guards till they finally transport them to the facilities. Some of the returnees further

pointed out that whenever they were captured, the militants were always swift to demand for euros, dollars and cellphones and if you do not have any of those, you are hit with a big iron bar. They also recalled the horrific trauma they went through in those facilities upon arrival in Lagos, Nigeria. They quickly pointed out that though they were looking tattered, they were not insane. Their appearance was a product of the inhumane facilities they were kept in for years. For many of them, the facilities do not allow them to have their bath for months neither do they wash their teeth hence the reason for them looking haggard. Both male and female were maltreated in diverse crude ways. One of the returnees said that “if we all open our bodies, you will see that these people have finished us. Is it bullet wounds? Is it gunshots? When we want to eat, they beat us, when we are going back inside after eating, they beat us. We were treated like slaves No.....it was more than slaves”. According to Kemp (2018), when he visited one of the facilities in Tripoli, he found out that 490 migrants were kept there with only two toilets. When he visited the ladies camp the revelation there was shocking. A Nigerian lady named Aisha was found lying sick on the floor. When asked what her situation was, she explained that she gave birth to a premature baby seven months ago in the toilet without the help of any medical personnel. She was assisted by her co migrants. In tears she said, “when I gave birth to my baby, my baby bleed, ‘shit’, cough, and died after one week. There is no caring and am dying also. Look at me there is no blood, no water in my body, I can’t even walk anymore. People hold me to bathroom and help me back.....am dying”. These humiliating experiences depicts what the kind of inimical treatment the migrants were subjected to.

8. Factors responsible for this Emerging Culture among the Nigerian Youths

From the forgoing, it is undeniable that the current state of the Nigerian economy is in shambles. Its critical state makes it difficult for many Nigerians to live a good life. For many government workers, salaries are not being paid for months and for the teeming youths, job opportunities are not just available hence, the populace has lost hope in the current regime just as it happened in the previous dispensation. However, this study is meant to delve more into the intrinsic factor/s that stirs up the youth toward emigrating Nigeria in large numbers.

Aside the aforementioned point, this study has revealed that misinformation is a cogent factor responsible for the massive emigration of youths in Nigeria. It is obvious that many youths get information from wrong sources and no thanks to Facebook which largely remains a platform from where this attitude stems from. Nigerians who have succeeded in cross into Europe and some other parts of Nigeria go on Facebook and other social media giving false information

about their status and the location where they now reside even when their status remains fugitives. They as well post pictures taken in strategic locations to corroborate their point to friends and online admirers. An aggregate of this leads to curiosity, enthusiasm and desperation of the youths to leave Nigeria through whatever means available. It is to be pointed out at this juncture, that scholars and columnists have shared the experiences of pain and agony of many Nigerians who have succeeded in leaving the shores of Nigeria but it is unfortunate that the Nigerian youths are not inclined to reading such articles where they can read and learn from the experiences of their peers who gave up all that they had amassed in Nigeria for their trip and the hope of a better life abroad. In addition, they listen to Nigerian middlemen who come in purposely to deceive the youths of a better life that await them in Europe and promise them of a smooth transit into Europe. As a result, they sell off all they have gathered in years, so they can raise the requested money from these dubious Nigerians (both men and women). Some were deceived to thinking they will be secured the necessary visas and air tickets to fly while some knew *ab initio* that they will be travelling via the dessert. For the former they were disappointed after their passports and cash had been collected. They were asked to proceed to Kano and call a number. There they realized they will be travelling via the dessert.

Secondly, another factor which can be deduced from the findings of this study is greed. The responses of the returnees allude to this. Their responses showed that for them to be able to raise the needed cash for the journey, some returnees sold off all the properties they possessed, some shut down their growing business, and some took a loan that attract interests. This was because with what they have seen via social media and promised by their smugglers it will only take them a few months to recover their expenses upon arrival in Europe. This prompted many leave their nuclear and extended family members behind with the hope that they will be sending monthly stipend to them but unfortunately, they could not even feed themselves let alone sending money home. For many of them, they lost touch with their family members as they could not call them since they entered Libya.

Furthermore, some of the returnees who were southerners claimed that Boko Haram had killed all their family members and as well burnt down their houses and so they are left with no other option but to take the risk of taking this route. These are false statements made by the respondents. The direct effect of the Boko Haram insurrection is been felt in the North-Eastern Nigeria and interestingly, northerners were not found among the returnees except southerners who reside in the comfort zones where northerners run to for protection. By implication, the southerners are not troubled directly as the South was never invaded by the Boko Haram.

Again, some of the returnees admitted that they were working before they decided to resign so they could embark on their journey to Europe where they will secure their dream jobs that will fetch them enough money. It is very unwise to leave certainty for uncertainty and unfortunately for them it turned out to be so as they did not even get through into Europe which they desired so much.

8. Social Media: A Potential Source of Wealth Creation

Social media which could also be referred to as crowd sourcing, user-generated content, and Web 2.0. has been defined in different ways. Manning (2014) define it to mean a new form of media that entails interactive participation with friends, family members, associates or with new persons with whom you share ideas with. According to Bertot (2010) social media refers to both the enabling tools and technology and the content that they generate. Social media include among others, wikis (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs, social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), multimedia sharing services (e.g. YouTube, Flickr) and micro-blogging services (e.g. Twitter).

Social media enabled by Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays a vital role in the life of the users. It has a great influence on their psyche which could turn out to be either positive or negative depending on its usage. In a study carried out by Singh, et'al (2017) in India, it was averred that though the usage of social media has proven to have negative influence on a great number of the youths, it has also proven to have positive impact on some. It therefore means that social media still has its positive side which is rather salient and utilized by the few for good reasons most especially wealth creation. As proven in subsequent sections, it is of no doubt that many Nigerian youths have allowed the social media to influence them negatively instead of harnessing the diverse opportunity that it presents.

Social media as pointed out, serves as a medium of wealth creation as it offers job opportunities for professionals, and artisans of all sorts. Yee et'al (2008) noted that the social media exists as one of the platforms which facilitates the need of corporate bodies to establish a link with individual, groups and institutions. Organizations have utilized this to carry out institutional awareness and job advertisement. This is done mostly with the assistance of newspapers, websites, and more professional platforms like LinkedIn, Jobberman and even on social sites like Facebook, twitter, Instagram etc which have been identified as the main sources of negative influence on the youths. Nigerian youths can explore these platforms by reviewing the focus of different companies and interacting with those that utilizes his or her skills. Of a

fact, there are limited companies available but the few available do recruit on a daily basis. If only much attention as given to Facebook can be given to these platforms, positive outcome is assured. In addition, fiverr is another platform that can be engaged. It is a website that houses top talents in the world. It encourages and facilitates virtual transaction between service providers and potential users of such services. Once an agreement is made and the job delivered, payment is made into your account. This means that you do not need to have a recognized office or shop before you can sell out your products and services. All can be done within the confine of your home. This is another source through which people get jobs and get paid.

Moreover, recently, these social platforms have been utilized for trading purpose by small, medium and large-scale businesses. According to Njoroge (2013) these platforms serve as virtual spaces of real economic infrastructure which allow users Real Trade money (RTM) for buying and selling purposes. Artisans such as fashion designers, hair stylists, make-up artists, furniture makers, painters, builders, traders etc. now advertise their products and designs on Facebook, Instagram, etc. for a wider view and for attracting more prospective clients. Through this, many have attracted more clients mostly virtual clients who they transact with daily and get products to them promptly. As a result of this, many businesses have grown and continue to thrive. This is equally, a medium the youths can try out. As observed, many failed migrants are artisans of all sorts who were engaged with one thing or the other prior to taking a decision to dispose-off their properties and commit the proceeds to the Europe project which never came through for many of them.

9. Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

This paper has been able to explore the core factors responsible for the massive migration of Nigerian youths out of Nigeria especially via the dangerous routes into Libya and across the Mediterranean. No doubt, the current political and economic situation of the country is embarrassing making unemployment and poverty be on the rife. However, this situation is not enough for anybody to subject himself to that kind of uncertain adventure when the home front does not pose any threat to their lives. The responses of the returnees who are simply youths has clearly shown that misinformation and greed are the core factors responsible for their blind decision to leave Nigeria. Unfortunately, it is the same Nigeria which they detested that they pleaded with to rescue them from the unfriendly environment of Libya where they walk themselves into.

Obviously, the returnees were so ecstatic about touching the Nigerian soil again. They were so happy because, they had given up and never felt they will be privileged to see their country anymore. For many of them their excitement depicts that God has given them a second chance. One of them stressed the fact that the common saying that the best live can only be found abroad is a fallacy as their own stories has proved that wrong and so everyone should be grateful to God for whatever little he or she finds doing. As for her, she further stressed her willingness to return to the farms no matter how little. Interestingly, she is not even waiting for whatever assistance from the government. Albinio, these were youths who gave up all they had worked for, so they can migrate to Europe for a better life. Upon their arrival, they implored the government to go back to Libya and look for other Nigerians who are still been held in different prisons operated by different militia while stressing the inhumane treatment they will be subjected to knowing fully well they will be rescued and freed soon. Conclusively, for the returnees, they have discovered that the journey they embarked on was not worth the risk they subjected themselves to. They counted themselves fortunate to have returned back to Nigeria and for them they are back for good as returning to Nigeria remains the best thing that has ever happened to them which a lot of their peers they made the journey together could not see as they lost their lives at different points starting from the dessert to the inhumane attention received in Libya especially women and on the Mediterranean after drowning. They are therefore willing to start up with whatever they can lay their hands on, no matter how little.

In the light of above discussed, I therefore recommend that the youths should engage themselves in a self-reorientation on what they consider valuable to them. The kind of information they feed themselves with, goes a long way in forming and influencing their opinions, thought process and actions. If this is done, they will be able to decipher what is right and good for them at a particular point in time without been necessary swept off their feet for lies told them by dubious friends and people who are only interested in reaping them of their possessions and as well subjecting and exposing them to dangerous adventure that will mar them and eventually claim their lives. No ephemeral accumulation is worth risking a life for.

Secondly, there should be a societal reorientation. Our value system is fast eroding. Material possession is being prioritized over diligence, hard work, consistency. This phenomenon contributes to the desperation growing among the youths to getting rich quick and the only way for that to be realizable is to leave the shores of Nigeria because they believe that kind of live can not be gotten in Nigeria but once they step their feet on the soil of Europe, USA, etc, they are already made. Family members should stop been pushy as to what these individuals have

to offer after doing a comparison with what their peers have amassed in the community even when their sources of wealth are unknown.

Thirdly, the government should be proactive in performing its role. They should be more pragmatic in revamping the economy. As it stands there is no doubt that the Nigerian government remains unpopular to the citizenry due to the dwindling economic growth and development leading to massive unemployment and high poverty level among the Nigerian populace. If this can be given a priority by the government, the poverty level will drastically reduce, and the rate of unemployment minimized. It will therefore go along way in discouraging the youths from giving up on Nigeria and having a desire to jet out at all cost.

Above all, Nigeria remains a country blessed with human and natural resources and if properly harnessed and utilized, Nigeria will be a better place to live in thus putting the AU on the path of actualizing its Vision 2063.

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