

The Link between Rural-Urban Migration of Youth and Crime in Anyigba Town, Kogi State-Nigeria

Venatus V. Kakwagh

Department of Sociology, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria

vkakwagh2007@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract— This study was conducted to establish the link between rural-urban migration of youth and crime in Anyigba town of Dekina local government area of Kogi State- Nigeria. Data were collected through the application of structured questionnaire and personal interviews. The study has established that in Nigeria, the youths migrate from the rural areas to the cities due to the general lack of socio-economic facilities that would vitalize social life. It has shown that on getting into the urban centres, they face the problem of unemployment in the formal sector and therefore end up in the informal sector where incomes are low and intermittent. It has noted that due to the low incomes in the informal sector and their intermittent nature, these migrant youths get engaged in unlawful livelihood means. The study has thus recommended that since rural Nigeria is essentially rural and depend on agriculture, agriculture should be modernized. Modernization of agriculture could yield substantial benefits. For example, modernising agriculture will create new job opportunities in production, distribution, processing and other related services. Modernization of agriculture will provide the 'pull' needed to keep the young people on the land instead of migrating to the cities. Millions of Nigerian youth enter the labour market daily facing huge challenges especially unemployment. Therefore, the federal, state and local governments should provide the rural areas with more resources. Policies should be formulated to target the youth who are leaving the rural areas. Emphasis should be on entrepreneurship. In Nigeria, rural areas are not being provided with enough opportunities and are losing their young people. This has serious socio-economic consequences. Therefore, rural infrastructures such as electricity, water, roads, educational institutions, etc should be provided in the rural areas to make the young people to remain in the rural areas. The migrant youths are always normal people when they leave their villages but meet abnormal situations in the cities. Their actions are therefore a response to the abnormal situations.

Therefore, effective policing by both the community and other security agencies should be intensified so as to limit the freedom these youths have in expressing their dispositions and desires.

Keywords— Rural; Urban; Migration; Youth, Crime.

I. INTRODUCTION

Migration is the movement of people from one geographical location to another either for temporary residence or for permanent residence. Migration is a global phenomenon and has a long history. Even in the hunting and gathering societies people changed geographical locations. Migration could be within nations (internal migration) or across borders (international migration). The United Nations' estimates in 2016 showed that the world has over 763 million internal migrants and 244 international migrants.

Several reasons account for why people choose to change locations. For instance, some people change locations due to conflict, war, political and/or civil unrest, and economic and cultural reasons. Naturally, people move to urban areas in search of employment and to utilize urban services and facilities. Migration, whether internal or international, has serious demographic, economic, socio-cultural and environmental impact on both the place of origin and the point of destination.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, literature is replete with evidence that rural-urban migration is the most common form of migration. Evidence also abound that youths constitute a significant proportion of the migrant population. For example, the UN (2013) maintained that most internal migrants move from the rural areas to urban centres or from one rural area to another and many of them are youth.

In Nigeria, the movement of people from the rural to urban has been identified as one of the causes of rapid urban population growth (Aworemi, J.R; Abdul-Azeez, I.A and Apoola, N.A. 2011). For instance, in 2014, the population of urban dwellers in Nigeria was

46.94%; 2015, it was 47.78%, 2016, it rose to 48.60 and in 2017, it rose to 49.52 (Indexmundi, 2018). This shows that Nigeria has been experiencing steady growth of urbanization. It should be noted that growing cities provide opportunities for migrants to create livelihoods, engage in entrepreneurship and accumulate assets, thus contributing to human capital development. (Awumbila, 2015).

Migration is thus an important component of urban population growth and urbanization process. However, in Nigeria, the capacity of urban towns to plan for and accommodate the increasing number of migrants by providing employment and basic amenities is limited. Rural-urban migration is therefore creating pressure on urban infrastructure, environment, and employment. Indeed, urbanization in Nigeria is being translated into rising slum establishments, increasing poverty and inequality (African Development Bank, 2012). This is largely due to the fact that most of the migrants from the rural areas are not educated and are unskilled. Thus most of them end up in the informal sector. Regrettably, in Nigeria, incomes from the informal sector are very low and intermittent. Due to the low and intermittent nature of the informal sector incomes, most of the migrants seek shelters or become tenants of slum landlords (AfDB, 2012). As a consequence, most Nigerian towns and cities are dealing not only with the proliferation of slums but also with the increasing phenomenon of insecurity and crime. In fact, there is the underlying assumption in Nigeria that rural-urban migration is linked to rising levels of crime. It is on the basis of this underlying assumption that this study seeks to examine the link between rural-urban migration of youth and crime in Anyigba town of Kogi state Nigeria.

II. STUDY SETTING

Anyigba is a fast growing town in Dekina local government area of Kogi State-Nigeria. It is strategically situated along Ankpa-Itobe road. Anyigba is popularly referred to as the "Heartland" of Kogi state. Anyigba enjoys a very pleasant and healthy climate, with its beautiful weather that is mild in nature. The town is accessible by road from all parts of the country and there is regular road transport between the town and all parts of Kogi state. Anyigba is largely heterogeneous because of the presence of the state owned university-the Kogi State University. However, the predominant ethnic group is Igala.

Anyigba is the communication town of the state with Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) station and the Radio Kogi AM station located at Ochaja, a few kilometres away from the town. There is also a Post

Office, Cyber Cafes with telephone services and internet connectivity. There is also a Police station.

Anyigba boasts of the presence of branches of First Bank Nigeria PLC, United Bank for Africa PLC, Zenith Bank Nigeria PLC. Others include Union Bank Nigeria PLC and First City Monument Bank. Most importantly, the town hosts the prestigious state university- Kogi State University. The town is heavily dotted with petrol stations and other informal sector business outfits that provide employment opportunities to the youth. Anyigba has a bubbling market that operates both as daily market and as a periodic market with sellers and traders coming from far and near to transact business. There are also brothels as well as decent hotels. The presence of these facilities and services has continued to attract migrants, especially young adults, from the rural areas and elsewhere to move to Anyigba.

III. DATA COLLECTION

Anyigba town has been experiencing high level of influx of people from the surrounding rural villages. As the population of the town has continued to grow, so have the incidences of crime and the degree of violence continued to increase ranging from petty to organized crime. House breaking and theft, kidnapping, murder, illicit drug peddling, thuggery, etc. are amongst the common crimes the town is experiencing. Women, men, children, the elderly, the weak, rich and the poor are all victims of all kinds of crime

Data were collected through the application of a structured questionnaire, interview and the application of pairwise ranking. Three research assistants were employed for the distribution and retrieval of the copies of the distributed questionnaires. One hundred and twenty (120) copies of the designed questionnaire were distributed to the residents of Ajetachi, Abuja, Iji and behind NTA areas of Anyigba town. Out of the 120 copies, 103 copies of the distributed copies of questionnaire were correctly filled and returned representing a response rate of 85.83% which is very significant. Face-to-face interviews were also held with the landlords and opinion leaders of the surveyed areas. The personal interviews obtained information on who the major criminals were, income earning activities of the the migrant youths engage in and the possible reason(s) why the migrant youths get involved in crime. Pairwise Ranking, also known as Preference Ranking was also used. It gave the respondents the opportunity to assign priorities to the multiple available options. The information is presented in analytical, descriptive and quantitative form where necessary.

THEORETICAL ANCHORAGE

This work is anchored on two theories, namely social disorganization theory, and human capital theory because of the similarities in their assumptions.

Social disorganization theory: This theory grew out of research conducted in Chicago by Shaw and McKay (see Shaw and McKay, 1942). Other scholars that contributed to the development of the theory were Faris (1955) and Sampson (1993). Using spatial maps to examine the residential locations of juveniles referred to Chicago courts, Shaw and McKay discovered that rates of crime were not evenly dispersed across time and space in the city. Instead, crime tended to be concentrated in particular areas of the city, and importantly, remained relatively stable within different areas despite continual changes in the populations who lived in each area. In neighbourhoods with high crime rates, for example, the rates remained relatively high regardless of which racial or ethnic group happened to reside there at any particular time, and, as these previously “crime-prone groups” moved to lower-crime areas of the city, their rate of criminal activity decreased accordingly to correspond with the lower rates characteristic of that area. These observations led Shaw and McKay to the conclusion that crime was likely a function of neighbourhood dynamics, and not necessarily a function of the individuals within neighbourhoods. The question that remained was, what are the characteristics of various neighbourhoods which account for the stability of the crime rate?

In answering this question, Shaw and McKay focused on the urban areas experiencing rapid changes in their social and economic structure, or the “zones of transition.” In particular, they looked to neighbourhoods that were low in socio-economic status. It is important to clarify that, despite the economic deprivation of areas with higher than average crime rates, Shaw and McKay did not propose a simple direct relationship between economic deprivation and crime. They argued instead that areas characterized by economic deprivation had high rates of population turnover, since these were undesirable residential communities, which people left once it became feasible for them to do so. Socio-economically deprived areas also tended to be settled by newly arrived immigrants, which resulted in the ethnic and racial heterogeneity of these areas. As such, socio-economically deprived areas had high rates of residential mobility and racial heterogeneity. These neighbourhoods were viewed as “socially disorganized.” In such areas, conventional institutions of social control (e.g., family, schools, churches, voluntary community organizations) were weak and unable to regulate the behaviour of the neighbourhoods’ youths.

Shaw and McKay (1942) also noted that, aside from the lack of behavioural regulation, socially disorganized neighbourhoods tended to produce “criminal traditions” that could be passed to successive generations of youths. This system of pro-delinquency attitudes could be easily learned by youths through their daily contact with older juveniles. Thus, a neighbourhood characterized by social disorganization provides fertile soil for crime and delinquency in two ways: through a lack of behavioural control mechanisms and through the cultural transmission of delinquent values.

The Human Capital Theory: Human capital refers to the preservation of competences, knowledge and personality traits embedded in the capacity to do manual labour. It is the power gained by a worker through appropriate learning and practice. Human Capital Theory presumes, people have access to more or less equal information. But once we apply this in the context of our migrants who are forced, we cannot find the same is prevalent. Our poor migrants do not reflect the image of human capital theory. They do not judge their capability and assess how much benefit they will get in the place of destination.

From these theories, it can be discerned that there are interrelations especially of the circumstances explained by the theories. In Nigeria and specifically our study area, rural-urban migration is taking place overwhelmingly. The graph of migration towards the urban areas is increasing. One of the important economic reasons for this internal migration is the unemployment. Environmentalists define the causes as, rural circumstances and attraction by the urban areas – push and pull factor. In all cases the large numbers of migrants find their destiny in the slums or squatters of the urban areas. Most of the slums match the context of the social disorganization theory where formal social control mechanism does not function. If so then, it is assumed that crime is a natural phenomenon in those slums or squatters. The poor migrants, who are forced to migrate to urban area, usually operate with low human capital. They survive by the character of the culture of poverty. And as a natural phenomenon these people become influenced by the elements of social disorganization.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Major problems propelled by rural-urban migration by youth

Table 1 presents the ranking of respondents regarding the problems caused by the migrating rural youths. Respondents identified housing problems, unemployment, and development of shanty quarters and crime as the major problems rural-urban migration of the youth has brought into Anyigba town.

	Crime	Slums	Employment	Housing	Ranking order
Housing problems	1	1	1	1	1
Employment problem	2	2	2	X	2
Slum development	3	3	X		3
Rising crime	4	X			4

Pairwise ranking; 2019

In a pairwise ranking exercise, all the respondents ranked housing as the first major problem the migration of the youth into the town has been causing. Though Anyigba is a fast growing town, already it is the most densely populated town in Dekina local government area. Thus housing facilities are not enough to absorb the influx of the people into the town. Due to the migration, Anyigba is being overpopulated thus there is the problem of accommodation. Overpopulation is creating the problem of housing shortage with attendant consequence of increase in rents. The housing shortage is bringing about the issue of overcrowding which is affecting the health and living standard of the people. There is also increase in the risk of disease infection and rate of crime.

Unemployment was ranked second as the problem posed by the migrating youth from the rural areas to the town. Naturally, people move to urban areas in search of employment and to utilize urban services and facilities. This makes the cities to experience problems such as shortage of housing, unemployment, increasing cost of living, lack of access to social services, increased crime and expansion of urban informal sectors. As already stated, most of the migrants from the rural areas are illiterate and unskilled. In Anyigba, most of the employment opportunities are from the informal sector. So most of the migrating youth end up in the informal sector where incomes are low and intermittent. But in order to survive, the migrants use whatever little skill they have in the informal sector to earn an income. This quest to survive in the city most often pushes many of the migrant youth to crime.

The development of slums was ranked by the respondents as the third problem. As already stated, Anyigba is a fast growing town. As people are continually moving from the rural to Anyigba town, the population of the town is increasing rapidly leading to urbanization. This uncontrolled migration and rapid growth of the town is bringing about increasing urban poverty, inequality and rising slum and squatter populations.

The fourth problem identified by the respondents was crime. There is the underlying assumption that rural-urban migration which results to urbanization has link with crime and criminal activities. Due to the limited urban facilities, there is competition over their consumption by the city dwellers. Often there is some level of deprivation of the poor migrants thus making Source: Field survey 2019

them vulnerable to the opportunities in the criminal world. Most of the migrants cannot find decent accommodation and therefore end up in overcrowded rooms in the slums. The overcrowded life in the slums often leads to social disorganisation and the development of a sub-culture of violence.

In our context, a fast growing town like Anyigba offers many opportunities for criminal activities like burglary, car/motor cycle theft, robbery, peddling of illicit drugs, and thuggery. These and many other criminal activities are carried out by the youth in Anyigba because of the lack of employable education and skills. Most of the migrant youths are engaged in bricklaying, commercial motor cycle business, bar tending, and apprentices at food vending sites etc. Generally, people who are involved in these demeaning livelihoods are needy and can easily be bought. This is why most of the migrants are involved in thuggery. They are always used by the politically influential persons and Godfathers for their political ambition.

COMMON TYPES OF CRIME PREVALENT IN ANYIGBA

Table 2 presents the most common types of crime in anyigba. The table shows that the most common crime in Anyigba town is house breaking and theft which account for 47 (45.63%) and is followed by robbery with 21 (20.39%). Others are car/motorcycle theft (16.51%), thuggery (8.74%) and rape (8.74%) in order of prevalence.

On the basis of location, Abuja area has the highest number of criminal activities with 36 representing 34.95% and is closely followed by behind NTA area with 34 or 33.01%. The reason for the high prevalence of criminal activities in these areas particularly is the fact that they are new settlements and their population is predominantly young people who are either students of the state university, KSU or the migrant youths. Furthermore, the table shows that the most common form of crime in Behind NTA area is house breaking and theft with 17 cases and this is followed by Abuja area with 13 cases. Thuggery has also found roots in Abuja, Iji and Ajetachi areas because these are the areas where the political gladiators in Anyigba town reside. These thugs are always used to secure illegal victories at polls. These thugs are always seen in and around the homes of the politicians as body guards.

Crime type	Abuja area	Iji area	Ajetachi area	Behind NTA	Total
Robbery	9	3	3	6	21(20.39%)
Car/motorcycle theft	7	3	2	5	17 (16.50%)
Thuggery	4	2	3	=	9 (8.74%)
Rape	3	=	=	6	9 (8.74%)
House breaking and theft	13	6	11	17	47 (45.63%)
Total	36 (34.95%)	14 (13.59%)	19 (18.45%)	34 (33.01%)	103 (100%)

LINK BETWEEN RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION OF YOUTH AND CRIME IN ANYIGBA

The information presented in this section was obtained through in-depth interviews with the landlords and opinion leaders in the areas surveyed. During discussions with the interviewees, there was a consensus that most of the crimes committed in Anyigba town were perpetrated by the youth especially the migrant youth from the rural areas. For instance, a 56 year old interviewee who has been resident in Anyigba town from childhood had this to say;

These youths are new faces and therefore not well known in the areas they reside. Because they are well known anytime they commit a crime and the police or community vigilante group are after them, they run back to their rural communities only to resurface when the case might have been forgotten.

In response to what the migrant youth usually engage in while in Anyigba to earn a living, interviewees identified commercial motorcycling, bricklaying, security guards, bar-tending, barbing as the most common forms of jobs they engage in (It should be noted that it is these security guards and commercial motorcycle operators that usually metamorphose into thugs for the politicians). However, these are informal sector establishments and the monetary benefits from them are usually not enough to take care of housing (this is the reason why they always crowd in the slum areas), clothing and the food needs. This position was strongly emphasized by a retired Director from the Kogi State civil service thus;

Most of the youth that engage in these demeaning activities can hardly have enough income to sustain themselves not to talk of marrying and raising a decent family.

Taking a position that was coated with emotions, a landlord and a serving staff in the bursary department of Kogi State University had this to say;

All of us have limits to which we can endure pain. These youths leave the rural areas with the hope of getting good paying jobs. To them, without a good job means the limit to endure pain is reached. Thus many of them therefore engage in various forms of unlawful livelihood means.

From these responses, one can deduce that the social environment of Anyigba town is unhealthy due to the activities of the migrant youths from the rural areas.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural-urban migration is a challenge to both the point of origin and the point of destination. In our context, it is making the social environment of Anyigba town and indeed many other Nigerian cities and towns unhealthy. Anyigba is a fast growing town in Dekina local government area of Kogi State. The local government is essentially rural and depend on agriculture. Regrettably, in Nigeria agriculture which is the main focus of rural development receives inadequate resources and attention. Therefore, agriculture should be modernized. Modernization of agriculture could yield substantial benefits. For example, modernising agriculture will create new job opportunities in production, distribution, processing and other related services. Modernization of agriculture will therefore provide the 'pull' needed to keep the young people on the land instead of migrating to the cities.

Millions of Nigerian youth enter the labour market daily facing huge challenges especially unemployment. Therefore, the federal state and local governments should provide the rural areas with more resources. Policies should be formulated to target the youth who are leaving the rural areas. emphasis should be on entrepreneurship.

In Nigeria, rural areas are not being provided with enough opportunities and are losing their young people. This has serious socio-economic consequences. Therefore, rural infrastructures such as electricity, water, roads, educational institutions, etc should be provided in the rural areas to make the young people to remain in the rural areas.

The migrant youths are always normal people when they leave their villages but meet abnormal situations in the cities. Their actions are therefore a response to the abnormal situations. Therefore, effective policing by both the community and other security agencies should be intensified so as to limit the freedom these youths have in expressing their dispositions and desires.

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