
MIGRATION AND SECURITY CHALLENGES AT THE COASTAL BORDERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of migration on the insecurity challenges at the coastal borders of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It observes that migration has been significant in the development discourse of the state yet it contributes to the security challenges that ravage the state's institutions. The study adopted the survey research design with emphasis on the assumptions of the Theory of Strain Behaviour. It selected 228 respondents from four coastal communities in the state, namely, Ifiayongusuk, Ibaka, Atabong and Ukpenekang using the snowball and simple random sampling technique. Data was collected from the respondents using interview and focus group discussion while the result was presented and discussed descriptively. The study found that despite the national policy against illegal migration, effective mobilization of security forces and patrol of the coastal borders by the security operatives, the flow of persons, arms, and other goods illegally in and out of the state through the border communities has continued to persist. Similarly, the study found that the border communities serve as escape routes for criminals, kidnappers, oil pipeline vandals and people involved in trafficking and militant activities. This has caused a lot of security challenges to the state and the country in general. On account of this the study makes recommendations that will not only help to remedy the security challenges but contribute to the development of the state.

Keywords: Migration, Security challenges, Coastal borders, Development.

INTRODUCTION

Migration through coastal borders is a serious issue of concern because of its implications on security and development in any two border or neighbouring countries. Historically, people have had to cross the boundaries of their territories in search for conditions better than they are in their places of origin. In Africa, it is a common and generational practice, studies have shown that migration across national boundaries in many parts of Africa has been fostered by the historical,

cultural, social, religious and economic interdependence of the neighbouring countries and the fact that in most cases, specific natural boundaries hardly exist and in some parts, exact demarcation between countries remains unclear (Blum, 2014). While the evolution of modern government in the different parts of Africa has altered the traditional philosophy and perception of their people about cross-border linkages and relationships, evidence remains that the old pattern still subsist in the form of illegal or irregular migration.

Irregular migration through the coastal borders and or bush tracks is a common phenomenon in every part of the world. On regular basis, travel for cross-border trading also occurs between Africa and Europe and most of the travels are without official documents (Shaw, 2007). Similarly, the shipment of trafficked children and young girls arranged for the sex industry abroad; escape of wanted persons; and movement of smugglers have never been fully accounted for due to the existence of porous coastal borders or bush tracks (Adejuyigbe, 2006 and Osimen, Anegbode, Akande, and Oyewole, 2017). As argued by Adeola and Oluyemi (2012) migration became a subject of state policy especially for Nigerian authority with the increased rate of criminality recorded at the borders which come in form of smuggling, trafficking (drug and human), religious carnage fuelled by imported extremism and the resulting deaths of innocent Nigerians and threat to state security and stability.

Currently, Nigeria is faced with various challenges in the management of its national borders, including the activities of transnational criminal organizations that traffic and smuggle persons, arms, and drugs; porous land borders, with several illegal crossing points that facilitate illegal activities; and the increasing activities of transnational terrorist groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria's north east, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (which operates in the Sahel region) and the militants which harbors and operates from the lagoon in the South-South region, all of which are responsible for most of the cross-border crimes in the country (IOM, 2014). Records at the Nigerian Immigration Service Department show that there are 84 legal or regular routes in Nigeria and more than 1894 illegal routes (Osimen, Anegbode, Akande, and Oyewole, 2017), only one out of the 84 regular routes (Oron Control Post) is in Akwa Ibom State whereas there are at least nine irregular routes, namely, Ifiayongusuk or Nwaniba Beach, Ibaka, Atabong (Aband Beach) and Ukpenekeang (Ibeno Beach), Ebughu, Adadia Beach, Benson/Intermakosa Beach, Calabar Beach, and Oru/Senega Beach. The illegal routes in Nigeria serve as the hub of anti-security activities, opening windows for kidnapping, smuggling, trafficking, oil pipe vandalism, militant activities, bunkering, and arms trading.

It is obvious that individuals, groups and or families must migrate from one location to another since the social system is inherently characterized by inequality of resources, opportunities, skills, technology, and uncertainties, an example is the economic and technological dichotomy

between the developed and undeveloped countries of the world. According to Divinsky (2009) the mobility or migration of people is currently higher than ever before in modern history and continues to increase sharply, becoming one of the determining global issues of the 21st century (IOM, 2017). Indeed, globally, an estimated 244 million people, approximately 3.3 percent of the world's population are involved in migration (UN, 2016). Although the bulk of this number is contributed by the Asian and European countries, Africa and other continents have contributed and also hosted a significant proportion of migrants from different parts of the world as indicated in many studies such as Shaw (2007).

In the developed countries, 'who lives where or migrate from one location to the other' is of serious administrative, economic and security concern whereas in most developing countries, official attitude regarding the phenomenon of migration has been quite abysmal just as there is an absent of a pro-active policy (Martin and Taylor, 2001). As pointed out by Shaw (2007) data on migration in the developing countries is poor due to weaknesses on the part of the agencies responsible for collecting the data and the lack, or easy avoidance of border controls. More so, a reliable or even approximate data on migration is generally lacking (Afaha, 2013). Similarly, the quality and quantity of data on migration from and into the country (that is, Nigeria) is patchy despite the adoption in 2001 under the auspices of the African Union (AU) of a resolution to ensure the integration of migration into the national and regional agenda for security, stability, development and cooperation (FGN, 2015). Worst still, Nigeria is highly affected by corruption which makes everything possible no matter the circumstance. As pointed out by Afaha (2013) Nigeria neither registers nor estimates emigration statistics.

Studies such as IOM, 2017; UN, 2016; FGN, 2015; Afaha, 2013; Akaha, 2004; Martin, 2001; Hugo, 2003) have documented the benefits of migration to both the source and the receiving countries. The decision to shift residence permanently or temporary is widely accounted for by poverty, lack of decent jobs or unemployment, famine, political and religious crises or conflicts, inequality, and natural disasters (Adepoju, 2005). The United Nations (UN, 2016) for instance, argues that a major advantage of migration is that it helps to generate and remit funds that are used to improve the livelihoods of families and communities through investments in education, health, sanitation, housing and infrastructure. On the other hand, in the countries of destination, migrants often fill critical labour shortages, create jobs as entrepreneurs, and contribute to taxes and social security; forge new paths in science, medicine and technology and enrich their host communities by promoting cultural diversity (UN, 2016).

It is an acknowledged fact that migration is a phenomenon that carries with it both positive and negative consequences. The emphasis on the negative effects of migration nevertheless has centered on the issue of brain drain; the impact on health for example, the spread of HIV/AIDS,

EBOLA, and others; and, the pressure on the environment and infrastructures in the destination country (Docquier, Lohest, and Marfouk, 2007). However, data or information regarding the effects of illegal migration flow through the coastal borders in Akwa Ibom State and such countries as the Cameroun, Niger, Chad, Benin Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Gabon and others have remained consistently missing from academic literature. This study thus, seeks to investigate the implications of migration and security challenges at the coastal borders on the development of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were:

- (i) To investigate the characteristics of coastal border migrants in Akwa Ibom State.
- (ii) To investigate the effects of the coastal border migrants activities on the security of Akwa Ibom State.
- (iii) To investigate the effects of the coastal border migrants activities on the development of Akwa Ibom State.
- (iv) To makes recommendations that would serve as remedy to the coastal border migration and associated security challenges in the state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The decision to change residence temporary or otherwise has traditionally been linked with many factors. These factors include economic, political, environmental, ethnic and religious conflict. According to Grogger and Hanson (2011); Docquier, Lohest, and Marfouk (2007) and Docquier (2013), the lack of economic growth, rampant poverty and the correlates of poverty (weak institutions, discrimination, political repression, lack of freedom) motivate people to flee their own country. In most cases, highly skilled workers are found to be far more responsive to economic push-pull factors when compared to the low skilled. Weeks (2008) have identified several migration theories that explain the dimension and reasons why people opt to migrate. One of the theories found to be relevant in this argument is the network theory. The network theory offers a useful explanation of the basic determinants of the plan to migrate and those factors that sustain people who actually migrate. It assumes that migrants establish interpersonal ties that “connect other migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in the origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. This helps to increase the likelihood of international movement because it lowers the costs and risks of movement and increases the net returns on migration” (Weeks, 2008).

Literature has proved that an individual or group often change environment using illegal or illegal routes. The illegal route is synonymous with using bush tracks and or coastal border area.

The decision to use illegal route while migrating can partly be explained by the strain theory which argues among other things that when individuals are faced with a gap between their goals (usually finances/money related) and their current status, strain occurs; and when faced with strain conditions, five ways to adapt are opened. These include pursuing cultural goals through socially approved means; using socially unapproved or unconventional means to obtain culturally approved goals; using the same socially approved means to achieve less elusive goals (more modest and humble); rejecting both the cultural goals and the means to obtain it, and then finding a way to escape it; or rejecting the cultural goals and means and then working to replace them. Characteristically, people who make entry and exit through illegal routes at the coastal borders are strained; they lack valid or acceptable travelling documents.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MIGRATION, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

There is sufficient evidence on the positive connection between migration, security and development in many societies. The positive link between migration and development is assessed in terms of the flow of remittances, and the recent phenomenon of tourism. Migration plays important role in reducing poverty, mainly through remittances, and also contributes to smoothing consumption of the poor (Shaw, 2007). According to Docquier (2013), the effect of emigration on development and welfare in the source countries is likely to be heterogeneous: it increases natives' average labor income, reduces wage inequality and decreases fiscal pressure on them. Findley and Sow (1998) in a survey of households in the Senegal River valley which crosses Mali, Senegal and Mauritania, found that migrant remittances provided 65 percent of cash income, probably including remittances from internal migrants. A similar study by Adams (2006) discovered that remittances reduce the level, depth and severity of poverty in Ghana. This finding appears consistent with the submission of Afaha (2013) who observes that the steady growth of remittances from migrants to families back home can significantly help reduce poverty in recipient communities. Afaha (2013) equally argues that remittances have become significant private financial resources for households in countries of origin of migration. When supported by appropriate policies, migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development in both home and host communities (UN, 2016). However, on the contrary, Hugo (2003) believes remittances gain importance only where the inflow outweighs what the migrant would have contributed by staying at home.

Adeola and Oluyemi (2012) and Hugo (2003) among others who draw evidence from the September, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, have argued that migration contributes significantly to security challenges in destination countries. According to Adeola and Oluyemi (2012) the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York has brought to the center stage the security implications of migration, even as Nigeria has had at

different intervals serious armed confrontations with migration intruders from the Republics of Chad and Niger who try to forcefully import religious fanaticism and extremism into the country. Akaha (2004) who investigated cross-border migration as a new element of international relations in Northeast Asia found that the growing human flows across national borders in the region have the potential to contribute to the development of a regional identity, which has historically been prevented by imperial aggression, ideological conflict, and nationalist rivalries. Akaha (2004) further argues that if the migration flow is mismanaged, it may constitute new sources of tension in the international relations of the region.

The current issue of the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) has drawn attention to possible linkages between cross-border migration and health (Hugo, 2003). Health is an important determinant of development of any country. If human beings who constitute indispensable factor or element of development process are not in a state of social, physical and mental wellbeing, the task of harnessing resources and capital to promote development becomes impossible. Poor health causes low labour supply, frequent absent from work and low productivity. One way in which coastal border or illegal migration impacts on health is the spread of diseases that affect human and animals. In a few years back, migrants from Liberia carried with them the Ebola virus while the Avian Influenza (Bird flu) was spread to many countries by migrants. It is a common fact in academic literatures that HIV/AIDS crosses the length and breadth of the world through migrants (Thomson and Najera, 2001 and Perrin, et al, 2003).

Shaw (2007) indicated that migrants into a new environment are most often at risk because of not having resistance to the diseases prevailing in the environment. Migration can encourage the spread of communicable disease as people carry viruses over long distances, and illegal migrant populations tend to be vulnerable due to lack of health services and, in the case of AIDS, greater likelihood of risky sexual behavior. Similarly, World Bank (1993) shows that in Mali, the rise in HIV-positive cases and the high growth rate of new AIDS cases was partly due to migration from Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal, where zero-prevalence rates were increasing at a rapid rate while in some parts of Senegal, where AIDS is referred to as Cote d'Ivoire fever, as the first AIDS victims were returning migrants from that country (Shaw, 2007).

Education levels are frequently found to be tied to the ability to migrate. The greater the number of persons in a household with secondary education, the greater probability that someone from the household would migrate to another African country (controlling for income levels) perhaps due to greater access to information (Shaw, 2007). Migration relates both directly and indirectly with the educational level. People with higher degrees seldom migrate using the coastal borders. But where hardship caused by unemployment and poverty hit harder, one may sneak out using

illegal route. The cases of illegal migration of young girls and idle youths to Italy clearly define the indirect effect of migration on level of education vis-à-vis the use of illegal routes.

THE STUDY AREA

The study area comprised of Ifiayongusuk, Ibaka, Atabong and Ukpeneakang communities in Akwa Ibom State. Akwa Ibom State is one of the states in the oil rich, swampy and rain forest belt in the South-South region of Nigeria. It covers a land area of 8,412 square kilometers which spread between latitudes 4°32¹ and 5°53¹ north and longitudes 7°25¹, and 8°25¹ east. Based on the projection of the State Ministry of Economic Development (MOED, 2014) and given a growth rate of 2.94 per cent and a total fertility rate of 3.9 (NDHS, 2013), there are over 7 million people in the state. Thirteen out of the 31 Local Government Areas in the state are located at the coastline, sharing national boundary with some African countries. Among the Local Government Areas at the coastline are Uruan, Mbo, Oron and Ibeno from where Ifiayongusuk, Ibaka, Atabong and Ukpeneakang communities, respectively were selected. Historically, these communities have been the meeting points for the white merchants who traded on goods and slaves during the colonial era. After independence and until today the communities have continued to serve as outlets for different kind of activities including trading on contraband goods, and immigration and emigration of persons without official documents at the Nigerian Immigration Service. Apart from these, majority of the indigenes in these communities are fisher men and women, traders, and peasant farmers who often criss-cross the borders in the course of their activities. Evidence on the economic capacity of natives of the communities is not document in literature, but based on data elicited from the respondents, the level of educational attainment is comparatively low. Besides, the communities are basically rural; lacking in infrastructures such as tarred roads, hospitals and industries. The second home for most of the indigenes is the water. Transportation is mainly by canoe, speed boat and motorbike. This situation in addition to the general economic hardship has complicated the unemployment problems in the communities and the state at large.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study adopted the survey research design. Data were collected from 228 respondents in four communities in the coastal area of the state. These communities included Ifiayongusuk, Ibaka, Atabong and Ukpeneakang. The respondents were purposively distributed equally among the four communities. That is, in every community, an equal number of respondents (57) comprising male and female between the ages of 15-59 years were selected. The selection of the respondents in every community was done using the snowball and simple random sampling technique. First of all, the researcher met with the leaders of the youth and other groups in each community and discussed the objectives of the study and also clarified all necessary ethical obligations for the

conduct of the study, particularly the confidentiality of their responses. This process facilitated the identification of two sets of people (people ever involved in migration and those with in-depth knowledge of illegal migrant activities). After identifying the individuals in the sampling frame, the simple random sampling technique was used to select 57 targeted respondents. This process was repeated in the four communities to select the 228 respondents used in the study.

Due to the security risk of volunteering information on a sensitive issue like migration when smuggling, trafficking and other crimes have triggered serious security concern in the border communities, the respondents demanded knowledge of and a face to face interaction with the person who wanted information from them. This necessitated the adoption of interview and focus group discussion to collect data needed for the study. After the interview session, the respondents were divided into nine focus groups of 25 respondents each, and in every group questions that evaluated the objectives of the study were asked by the researcher for reactions and discussions by the respondents. The interview and focus group discussions were conducted in different languages (English, French, Pidgin, Ibibio, Efik, Oro and Igbo Languages) depending on the one which could interest the respondents or motivate their responses during the interview and group discussion. To have a smooth process, the researcher appointed one moderator in every group discussion session; someone who understood and could speak two or more other languages. The interaction in both cases was complemented with jokes and stories.

However, the age limits of the respondents were considered critical in the study because it is an important determinant of the three basic concepts in this study, namely, migration, security and development. At the age of 15 years, one can initiate a personal decision to relocate permanently or otherwise. On the contrary, at the age of 60 years, it is cultural or traditional among the study population that people bury the idea to migrate but rather bring themselves closer to the place of origin. So people at the age of 60 years and above were excluded from the study in case they were themselves migrants. The data obtained in the interview and focus group interactions were presented in frequency tables and discussed descriptively.

DATA PRESENTATION

Table 1: Background characteristics of the study respondents

Age	15-19	20-24	24-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	Total
Respondents	12	45	62	24	28	15	31	4	7	228
Percentages	5.3	19.7	27.2	10.5	12.3	6.6	13.6	1.8	3.1	100
Sex	Male		Female		Total					
Respondents	215		13		228					
Percentages	94.3		5.7		100					
Level of Edu.	No Education		Primary	Secondary	Higher	University	Total			
Respondents	1		14	167	23	nil	205			
Percentages	0.49		6.8	81.5	11.2	0.0	100			
Marital Status	Single	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widow	Cohabited	Total			
Respondents	32	147	3	nil	9	28	219			
Percentages	14.6	67.1	1.4	nil	4.1	12.8	100			
Occupation	Applicants	Traders	Fishermen	Farmers	Bizmen	Civil Servants	Total			
Respondents	23	59	66	51	26	3	228			
Percentages	10.1	25.9	28.9	22.4	11.4	1.3	100			

The data used in this study were collected from respondents mostly in the ages of 20-49 years; majority, 62 (27.2%) were aged 25-29 years. This number was followed by another 45 (19.7%) and 31 (13.6%) respondents who were selected from the age groups, 20-24 years and 45-49 years respectively. As indicated in the table, the male respondents were 215 constituting 94.3 percent of the total samples whereas the female respondents were 13 (5.7%). The table shows that 167 (81.5%) of the respondents have either completed or attempted secondary school education. None of the respondents reported to have attended the university education but one (0.49%) admitted that he has not had any formal education and 12 (5.3%) respondents have either had their higher education or university education. The data indicates that despite the low level of education of the respondents, most, 147 (67.1%) were married, 32 (14.6%) were single. The number of respondents who cohabited was 28 (12.8%), higher than the number divorced, 3 (1.4%) and widowed 9 (4.1%). In terms of types of occupation, the respondents indicated specialty in almost all types of occupation. The table shows that 66 (28.9%) indicated fishing, 51 (22.4%) mentioned farming while only three respondents (1.3%) said they were civil servants.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents who ever involved in border migration

Coastal border migration	Ever involved	Never involved	Total
Respondents	187	41	228
Percentages	82.0	18.0	100

The data presented in this table show the number of respondents who have ever involved in migration through the coastal borders. As indicated by the data, 187 (82%) comprising both the male and female respondents said they have crossed to other countries (Niger, Cameroun, Benin Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon) before through the water and bush tracks.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents by known characteristics of coastal border migrants

Characteristics of migrants	Trader	Smugglers	Criminals	Sex workers	Total
Respondents	43	105	51	29	228
Percentages	18.9	46.1	22.3	12.7	100

Table 3 presents data on the known characteristics of coastal border migrants. According to data presented in the table, 105 (46.1%) respondents said most of the migrants who enter the state through their communities are smugglers. Some of them are Nigerians; they normally do oil bunkering, trafficking and supply arms to the criminals and others. Another 51 (22.3%) of the sampled respondents argued that people that normally come in or move out of the state using their communities are criminals while 43 (18.9%) respondents claimed that it is only traders that normally used the illegal tracks in their communities. Yet, a total of 29 (12.7%) respondents maintained their position that most of the migrants who used the water or bush tracks in and out of the state are sex workers. They sometimes act as spies to the criminals and kidnappers and or disguised themselves and bring arms into the state.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The coastal communities of Ifiayongusuk, Ibaka, Atabong and Ukpeneikang have long become a settlement for people of different walks of life. Human activities pattern in these communities vary depending on the characteristics of people who routinely moved in and out of these communities. While some people carry out their legitimate activities; complying with state laws and exploiting the network of relationships in the family and community in which they are members, many others comprising both indigenes and settlers, adopt the illegitimate means to get what they want. In all the sessions of the focus group discussions, the respondents (discussants) gave explicit accounts of the characteristics of migrants who normally used the illegal routes in their communities. The discussions also reflected on the activities of the

migrants and on how such activities impact on the security and development discourse in Akwa Ibom State.

When Key informants were asked to describe the nature and characteristics of migrants, in responding to the question they admitted that:

“Two categories of people normally use the routes in this community to enter neighbouring countries: Cameroun, Equatorial Guinea and others. That is, our people and visitors (settlers); men and women, and even adolescent boys and girls who could have finished secondary school. Our people also travel out through the water ways. People who are not natives of our community also sneak out through this water. They include both good and bad people. Why we say bad people is the way they armed themselves and the things they normally come back with”.

In the coastal areas that also serve as border communities, different people such as farmers, fishermen and women, traders and smugglers are always found. Thus, when the respondents were asked if the migrants are only Nigerians and how long they stayed before coming back to the country, they (respondents) said:

“The migrants are not only Nigerians. Citizens of Cameroun, Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Niger and others have also migrated and stayed in Nigeria for sometimes. Most often Nigerians migrants stayed for two to three months, four months or six months. Some even stayed up to nine months before they find their way to come back safely. That is for those migrants who trade or farm. Fishermen and women usually stayed three weeks to a month or two before they came back whereas smugglers stayed for a year or more. The in migrants stayed for a long time in Nigeria when they succeed to come in until the coast is clear for them to go back safe”.

In the FGD conducted, when the respondents were asked “Are fishermen and women, farmers, traders and smugglers the only people who use the illegal routes in your community?” they unanimously responded that:

“No! No!! No!!! A lot of people with unknown identity are now making use of the tracks in our community. In both ways, some sneak out with under age or adolescent boys and girls, others with matured persons suspected to have been kidnapped. We suspect these people (migrants) might be kidnappers because when they want to go out they are always well armed and most often they shoot sporadically in the air to scare away people and security agents. They would mask the person that they carry so that he or she would see anything. Some other migrants travel with drums of oil, cables and many other things. Those who travel back after some months came in with guns and drugs”.

In responding to the question “what can you say about the in migrants?” respondents in the Focus Group Discussion Sessions reported that:

“Yes, they do come in to do many things. Although among them there are those that bring in goods like hot drinks, wares, shoes, and sell and make their monies genuinely, others come in and do nefarious acts. Both groups stay a while like three weeks to one month or more; survey the target very and execute action before rushing out. We have notice some of the in migrants who our people (Nigerians) collaborate with to carry out criminal acts”.

In the Focus Group Discussion and Interview carried out, the respondents expressed their opinion on the effects of the migrants’ activities on the state by reporting that:

“In our opinion, the activities of most of the migrants that operate at cross-borders are horrendous and horrible; the activities of these migrants are deleterious to the economies of the home and destination countries. In Akwa Ibom State, illegal migrants who include different kinds of people such as traders, farmers, fishermen and women, criminals, kidnappers, traffickers, harlots, oil bunkers, professionals, and job seekers, among others have constituted serious economic, security and health threats. First, the contraband and other goods brought into the country are cheaper. These goods compete and reduce

markets for the home produced goods. Farmers sneak in with animals that are not quarantined of diseases and sicknesses. Harlots and other people with dangerous disease like HIV/AIDS enter the state undetected. Professionals continue to drain the state of good brains while the heinous activities of the kidnappers and traffickers unleashed terribly on the citizens”.

Despite the number of years that Ifiayongusuk, Ibaka, Atabong and Ukpeneikang communities have served as nerve centers for trading on selected goods, and as points of entry and departure of people and goods from the country (Nigeria), their statuses as rural communities have not changed. The activities of people especially those that carry illegal transactions in the communities do not only hamper development in the communities but exert adverse impact on the state’s development as argued by the respondents in all the sessions of the focus group discussion.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of this study indicates a link between the phenomenon of migration, security challenge and development in Akwa Ibom State. Migrant activities convey one or two types of consequences on the source and destination countries. Many scholars (Adams, 2006; Adeola and Oluyemi, 2012; Afaha, 2013 and Docquier, 2013) have in their separate studies found that migration plays crucial roles in development of the affected societies. This study confirms that the bane of development in Akwa Ibom State is partly contributed by the illegal migrants who carry out activities such as oil bunkering, kidnapping, arms and drugs trafficking and smuggling that are security and development threats.

Security is one of the challenging issues that confront Nigeria as a nation. As indicated in many studies, this problem is fueled by illegal migrants. Recent submissions by IOM (2017) and FGN (2015) that illegal migration in Nigeria is responsible for most of the cross-border crimes in the country also support the findings of this study which discovered that most of the criminal activities in the state are carried out by people who cross in and out of the state through the illegal routes. As indicated by Blum (2014) and Shaw (2007), this study observed that a reliable statistics on the number of migrants in Akwa Ibom State, both the legal and the illegal ones and the rate of migration in and between the country and other countries is not known. The study noted that this is accounted for by the generous dispositions of the study population who welcome and accommodate visitors, the high rate of corruption which inhibits strict border check

and migrant control, and government insensitivity to border leakages; all of which are factors that promote illegal migration as discovered in many previous studies.

The arguments by the respondents during the interview and focus group discussion confirmed that border routes in the study communities provide outlets for various illegal kinds of business opportunities in addition to being channels for small and illicit arms flow, escape of wanted persons, the flow of contraband goods, kidnappings, arms and drugs smuggling, homicide and trafficking in persons. Criminal records kept by the Police in the state has shown that there have been more than 800 incidences of kidnappings in the state from 2011; out of the number, at least 347 cases occurred in the past three years. All the cases are associated with coastal border migrants and movers.

CONCLUSION

Security is an important factor in development. Inadequate security deters development as the threat scares away investors and directs the focus of the consumers to places that are safe. Similarly, the activities of illegal migrants push government into spending more money to secure and protect the business environment and lives and property of the citizens and provide health infrastructures and services to counter diseases that could be spread by the migrants. The commitments to divert funds from investment into security slow down the pace of development.

In Akwa Ibom State, the phenomenon of development has been slowed down particularly from the inception of the Third Republic in 1999 when high level corruption, unemployment, hardship, oil spillage and the neglect of oil bearing communities by both the oil multinational companies and national government imposed serious strain on the citizens. Thus, prompting them to seek unacceptable means of survival. The adoption of the illegal means partly contributed to the prevailing incidence of kidnapping, hooliganism, trafficking, oil pipeline vandalism, militancy, oil bunkering, and rampant activities of cultists that accompanied and continue to accompany illegal flow of illegal migrants at the coastal borders. As observed, remittances from out migrants (Nigerians) are not quite significant for the development of the state, because most of them (Nigerian migrants) often face repatriation by the government in the destination countries, or forced to return home as refugees. However, the pressures added on the environment and infrastructures by the illegal migrants as well as the potential threats to the health of the people in the state all add to the negative consequences of migration on development in Akwa Ibom State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The negative effect of migration and security at the coastal borders on the phenomenon of development in Akwa Ibom State is critical. As panacea, the following recommendations are made to help check the menace:

1. Enactment and enforcement of migration law. A proactive migration laws in the state or nation will help to control the activities of illegal migrants and tame down the effects their activities on security and development.
2. Government should devote serious attention and attitude to the phenomenon of migration the same way it does to the other demographic principles, namely fertility and mortality. This will help to make the phenomenon a challenging issue that requires consistent attention.
3. It is also recommended that accurate, consistent and current data on international migration be generated by both the Federal Government and the states that share national boundaries with other countries. Issues and policies about migration should not only be exclusive for the Federal Government, states in the country that share national boundaries with other countries should be allowed to contribute on issues and policies concerning migration in and out of the country.
4. Finally, the border community members should be involved in planning the strategies and tactics of effective control of illegal migration at the coastal borders in the country. This implies a re-structuring of the security check at the coastal borders to make it efficient and effective.

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