

THE JAPA SYNDROME IN NIGERIA: EXAMINING THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

The work is a study of a disturbing phenomenon in Nigeria which sees the Nigerian youths fleeing the country for better opportunities abroad as a result of the economic malaise that has led to lack of employment opportunity, incessant industrial actions, insurgency and insecurity. The economic malaise is occasioned by bad governance - misappropriation, mismanagement, prebendalism, nepotism, ineptitude, and squandermania etc. Many Nigerians of the productive age bracket are massively leaving the shores of the country in what in Nigerian usage is known as 'Japa'. Japa is a Yoruba slang which means 'to run away', 'to flee' or 'to escape'. This word has gained increased usage especially among the Nigerian youths to describe the trend of leaving the shores of Nigeria in search of better opportunities and better living standard abroad. Even though, the Japa syndrome is not a new thing in Nigeria, it however, came to the national consciousness with the advent of the Second Republic. It became an overwhelming

phenomenon in the Fourth Republic, especially during the Buhari Administration. It has, however, become scandalous in the present Tinubu Administration. The study advanced measures that could be taken by the Nigerian government to curtail the Japa syndrome and its negative effects. It deployed Expo Facto as its research design. The method of data collection employed by the study was Secondary Data Collection. The instrument of data analysis deployed was Relational Content Analysis. The study deployed a combination of Relative Deprivation Theory and Push/Pull Theory of Migration as its theoretical framework.

Keywords: Bad Governance, Better Opportunities, Corruption, Insecurity, Japa Syndrome

Introduction

During the colonial days when the administration and the economy of Nigeria were entirely in the control of the colonialists, Nigerians were not really given to migration to Europe and other parts of the world. One of the reasons for this was the fact that the colonialists were only interested in the recruitment of people of lower cadre of civil service who would help in the running of the colony for the effective exploitation of the bounties of the country. The colonialists therefore, engaged in the training and development of the junior cadre of civil service - clerks, typists, teachers etc. who would help not only in the day to day running of the government but also in the continuous production of the these lower cadre by the efforts of the teachers. Most young people cued into this.

The second reason was that even though there were no opportunities to acquire higher degrees in Nigeria as higher institutions were not in existence in the early days of colonisation and could only be acquired overseas, not many families or communities had the wherewithal to send their children overseas for higher education. This is tied to the facts that the salaries and wages of the lower cadre of civil servants were not enough to contemplate overseas education of their children. The Nigerian artisans and businessmen also did not make enough to send their children out for educational endeavour. Only a very insignificant few could contemplate this.

Even though, things changed at independence in October 1960, this trend did not change much. Universities and other higher institutions started to spring up. So, as a result of the springing up of higher institutions of learning, the quest for migration for educational purposes was no longer seriously there even if and when it could be afforded. With independence, the economic standing of Nigerians improved somewhat. Though, the economic fortune of Nigerians was only slightly improved, the people could get by and therefore not wired for migration in search of education or better standard of living and consequently concentrated their efforts in obtaining education in Nigeria.

With the advent of the oil boom of the 1970s, the quest for migration for whatever reason was at its lowest. The Nigerian economy was at its best, civil servants had glorious times. What with Udoji Award! Artisans and businessmen were smiling to the banks. The military that

were at the helms of power at this period had a better understanding of running the machinery of governance of Nigeria.

In 1979, the military handed the reins of power to civilians. Contrary to expectations, the civilian administration visited the country with an onslaught of economic mismanagement, misappropriation, outright embezzlement, ineptitude, prebendalism and squander mania etc. It was corruption galore. The economy collapsed. Things were not helped by the oil glut and economic recession it engendered throughout the world. The civilian administration was toppled at the end of 1983. The military regime that took over the reins of power, the Buhari/Idiagbon regime, had a better promise of revamping the economy but was subsequently toppled by General Ibrahim Babangida whose economic ineptitude plunged Nigeria back into the dark alleys. The subsequent military regime that followed his was even worse.

In 1999, the military handed power back to civilians. The Obasanjo Administration had a positive promise, but those that followed it became worse by the day. Everything came to a head with the administration of President Buhari. Things have not improved under President Bola Tinubu. As a matter of fact, the economy and its indices are at the lowest since independence now. Many Nigerians cannot afford two meals per day.

Issues such kidnapping, banditry, ritual killings, organ harvesting, herdsmen-farmers clashes, armed robbery etc. are on the rise. There is no peace in the land.

The future looks so bleak. The young people want to escape the hardship. The ‘Japa’ syndrome is on in Nigeria.

Conceptualisation of Japa

Japa (pronounce Jakpa) is a Nigerian slang of Yoruba origin which means ‘to run away’ ‘to escape’ or ‘to flee’. The word has gained an increased usage especially among Nigerian youths to describe the trend of leaving the shores of the country in search of better opportunities and better standard of living abroad.

Dayo (2022) states that Japa is a Yoruba word which means ‘to run, flee, or escape’. He contends that the word took firm root in the aspiration that young Nigerians have; to leave the country for good. He opines that while migration is a natural human phenomenon, an array of circumstances trigger reasons for people’s quest for relocation. He states that in Nigeria, emigration is a serious issue, often triggered by economic hardship and in recent years, the pursuit for a better standard of living overseas has taken on an anxious nerve-tingling quality. He went further to state that Japa is both a disavowal of patriotism and a new cultural personality. He avers that “With origins from the 2018 Naira Marley song of the same name, the word has shifted into the lexicon of Nigeria’s young demographic as a marker of discontent” (Dayo 2022, P1).

In line with the above, Akinwotu (2023) states that Japa is a Nigerian slang which means to flee or to escape, often used in the context of Nigerians seeking for

better opportunities abroad. He states that it is a Yoruba word that has gained widespread acceptance and usage to describe the trend of Nigerians emigrating, especially the youths, seeking a better quality of life or economic opportunities in other countries. So, the desire to ‘Japa’, he states, is often driven by factors such as high cost of living, unemployment, insecurity, civil strife, political instability, and lack of economic opportunities in Nigeria. The term is not only used in emigrating to other countries, even though that is the popular usage, it also means, according to Akinwotu, the act of escaping, fleeing or disappearing quickly from a situation, often in a hasty and urgent manner.

Adetayo (2023) states that essentially one can say that Japa means to ‘run hard’ or more preferably to ‘run away’. He went further to state that the etymology of the word involves ‘Ja’ which stands for to break loose and ‘Pa’ which shows, in the context it is often used, the intensity or severity of an action. He contends that simply put, it is a Yoruba word that means to flee. He notes that when the word switched to its current usage cannot be ascertained with certainty, but the first popularised pop-culture use of the word can be traced to Naira Marley’s 2018 song ‘Japa’.

Efekudo (2023) adds a twist to the term. He states that the term is a Yoruba slang that means to ‘call it quits and run away’. This is because, according to him, many Nigerians are not quite convinced of their nation and just sit down to observing the government and its jurisdiction.

There are some who see Japa from a novel perspective though. For instance, Okunade and Awosusi (2023) state that at a recent Youths in Business Forum, a French Ambassador curiously wanted to find out from one of the Nigerian youths in attendance the context and meaning of Japa, as popularly used in the country. Okunade and Awosusi report that the Nigerian youth, Peter Dimgba, averred that Japa is a word that describes the entrepreneurial spirit of Nigerians; in that same word, it means that Nigerians want to export their contents, gift, skills and products, including themselves. This Okunade and Awosusi sum up means that Japa is a self-exportation. However, Professor Toyin Falola, according to Okunade and Awosusi, embellished the term when he stated that “Japa is a Yoruba word that means to flee, and once achieved, a celebration comes with it as it feels like gaining freedom at last” (Okunade & Awosusi 2023, p2). And freedom is what Nigerians seek.

Theoretical Underpinning

Scholars who have discussed and analysed migration in this era have deployed different theoretical frameworks such as Globalisation, Neo-Liberalism, The State Fragility and Anomic Financialisation, and Political Economy of Migration theories. In as much as these paradigms can be used to analyse migration in its general understanding, they may not adequately suit the analysis of the migration going on in Africa, especially that of Nigeria, which the youth have termed ‘Japa’.

The study therefore, adopts Robert Milton's Relative Deprivation Theory and Everett Lee's Push and Pull Theory of Migration as its theoretical framework. Relative deprivation theory looks at migration mainly from the socio-economic point of view especially as it concern class status and poverty. Milton (1964) contends that social formations are full of unequal privileges. He avers that people who feel short-changed in societal essentials like good medical and health care, money, freedom, good housing etc. may decide to move away from their present locations and surroundings and relocate abroad where they think they will get better opportunities and a better standard of living. This, therefore, means that relative deprivation is not only poverty driven. Relative deprivation may be felt in other areas such as quality but cheap education, freedom from political instability or insecurity, and affordable health care. However, people of extreme poverty may resign themselves to fate as they do not have the resources to contemplate migrating. At the extreme level, some poor people instead of trying to move out may resort to crime. Young (2022) states that a fundamental reason why young people resort to crime; is the issue of relative deprivation. This notwithstanding, in an earlier research, Jones (2006), maintained that the school of left realism, that is, the sociologists who developed a perspective on crime and deviance, failed to explain why some who experienced relative deprivation resort to crime, while others do not. Be that as it may, migration as Iheonu (2024) noted is as a result of relative deprivation and poverty is a strong factor in it. He contends that it is poverty and other economic, social and political factors

that drive some of the youths to migrate to Europe and elsewhere.

Similar to the Theory of Relative Deprivation is the Theory of Push and Pull as expounded by Everett Lee. Walker (1984) states that Lee's theory accounts for push and pull factors, and intervening variables when predicting migration patterns. In this light, Walker contends that the theory advocates the idea that intervening obstacles block migration to certain areas while push and pull factors may promote migration. Everett Lee, according to Walker (1984), states that there are some factors that lead to spatial mobility of population. These are:

- i. Factors associated with the place of origin;
- ii. Factors associated with the place of destination;
- iii. Intervening obstacles; and
- iv. Personal factors.

To Lee, each place of residence has a set of positive and negative factors. He argues that positive factors are circumstances that help to hold people within their place of origin or attract people from other places while the negative factors are the ones that act to make people want to emigrate. He also avers that there are factors which remain neutral and to which people are mainly indifferent. Based on these, Faridi (2018) contends that migration in any area is the net result of the interplay between these factors. According to Faridi, Lee suggests that people who emigrate have near perfect

assessment of the facts and situations in their place of origin due to their long associations with the place but not so with the area of destination. This, Lee contends, is because there is always some element of ignorance and uncertainty with regards to reception of migrants in the new area. On this note Farida (2028, p6) states that:

Lee asserts that an important factor that determines migration is the perceived difference between the areas of origin and destination which is related to the stage of the life circle of the individual. In effect, along association of an individual with a place may result in an over evaluation of negative factors in the area of origin. Also, the perceived difficulties may lead to a wrong evaluation of positive and negative factors in the area of destination.

To sum up his discourse on Lee's push and pull theory of migration, Faridi (2028) agrees with Lee's view that the final decision to move does not depend merely upon the balance of positive and negative factors at the places of origin and destination. The balances in favour of the move must be enough to overcome the natural inertia and intervening obstacles.

Agreeing with Lee's postulations, Mytutor.com (2022) states that pull factors are factors that attract a person to move to a new area which may include political stability, higher wages, better standard of living, higher standard of education and more job opportunities. Push factors on the other hand, Mytutor.com avers, may include drought, conflicts and insecurity, political instability, lack of job

opportunities and poor standard of living. Added to these are intervening obstacles which are factors that can prevent or make it difficult for someone to migrate to another country. Some of the intervening obstacles include, but not limited, to transport difficulties, passport and visa requirements, and/or lack of money to embark on the journey.

There is no gainsaying that there is a relationship between Robert Milton's Theory of Relative Deprivation and Everett Lee's Push and Pull Theory of Migration. As Iheonu (2024) notes, the difference between the two is more on the areas of stress. While the theory of relative deprivation stresses more on the push factors especially as it has to do with poverty, insecurity and general hardship, Everett Lee's push and pull theory is wider in scope by not only focusing on factors that push people away from their places of origin but also the things that pull or lure them to the countries of destination.

Causes of Japa Syndrome in Nigeria

There are many factors that bring about the Japa syndrome in Nigeria. Amongst them are:

- i) **Bad governance:** There is no denying the fact that the successive governments in Nigeria whether at the national, state or local governments have shown great ineptitude at governance. In the Nigerian political sphere, especially at the national level, it seems that each succeeding government becomes worse than the one it replaced.

It was bad governance that led to Endsars national youth protests. The government knew the atrocities that Sars were committing and turned blind eyes to them. It was gruesome. The Sars killed many Nigerians and molested as many. At no time did the government call the leaderships of this outfit to order until everything came to a head. Okunade & Awosusi (2023, p3) quoting the U.S. News (2021) state that:

The recent Endsars national youth protests of October 2021 and the attendant Toll Gate Massacre have been argued to have influenced the massive outmigration of Nigerians. The Nigerian youth's protest, which was an outburst against police brutality over the years, was alleged to have been aborted by the Nigerian government.

ii) Declining Economic Condition with its Attendant Unemployment:

Since the period the Nigerian military handed over power to civilian authorities in 1979, the economy has been making a downward slide. This declining accounts for many Nigerians' desire to migrate to UK, US and elsewhere either to study or to look for employment that pays better, especially in terms of exchange rate.

While Nigerians were bemoaning the hardship that befell them as a result of dwindling economy, Covid-19 pandemic of late 2019 came to ferociously hit the already vanquished Nigerians. The youth

who were already traumatised saw the pandemic adding another terror on the people which includes increased inflation, unemployment and other economic malaise. The youth only wanted to bolt away to see how they could rearrange themselves abroad.

iii) Insecurity:

With bad governance, declining economic condition and its attendant unemployment and political crisis, insecurity flourished across the length and breadth of the country. Terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, human organ harvesting, farmers-herdsmen clashes, ritual killings etc. became the order of the day. Adeyemi, Alao, Opakunbi & Ajibade (2024) state that factors like the chronic unemployment rate, which stands at 33.3% as at 2020, high levels of insecurity, and unfulfilled aspirations have brought about increased pressure in the search for better opportunities abroad. They further note that the increased rate of unemployment, insecurity etc. most likely have nothing to do with the idolisation of the destination states outside Africa but is rather largely due to a lack of national development and economic growth, as many youths have been found to migrate to countries with better economies within Africa.

Whatever the case, the degree of insecurity in Nigeria presently is alarming and youths especially those in the southern part of Nigeria are migrating out of the country in their numbers.

iv) Incessant strikes and career projection:

Incessant strikes in Nigeria education system is one of the factors that are driving the youths out of the country. A year will not pass without strike or threat of strike in Nigeria's higher institutions be it the Universities, Polytechnics or Colleges of Education. Sometimes a student in a four-year course may stay extra two years for no fault of his but the downing of tools by staff unions especially the academic staff unions.

According to Okunade and Awosusi (2023) many students who migrate to the United Kingdom (UK) state that their desire to study in UK was stirred by their belief that the Nigerian space currently denies them good opportunities for career advancement due to the incessant industrial actions which keep them out of school for long periods of time. They note that a student stated that he took this decision, that is, to migrate, to add to his professional qualification and also work in a better environment. Others, they report, said that they took the decision to 'Japa' because of the prolonged ASUU strikes which made it very difficult for them to complete their postgraduate studies, which could enhance their chances of getting desired jobs.

v) Migration delusion and obsession:

There are Nigerians who desire to migrate out of the country just because it is their hearts' desire. These, Okunade and Awosusi (2023) contend, are people

who hold a strong opinion but a misguided conviction that they will never make it in Nigeria unless they migrate to other countries. They quoted a Nigerian youth who confessed that he has been desperate to leave Nigeria at all cost as his siblings are currently living in the United States. Okunade and Awosusi note that these type of youths reflect the illogical mindset of some Nigerian youths, an aftermath of the anomia which is currently ravaging the Nigerian space.

Effects of Japa Syndrome on Nigeria

The effects of the Japa syndrome can be both positive and negative. Some, however, think that the negative outweighs the positive. Be that as it may, we shall take a look at both sides before making our conclusion.

The Positive Effects of the Japa Syndrome

Johnson (2022) states that professionals leaving the shores of the country have a mostly negative outcome but, however, think that some unthought-of silver linings may come out of it. One of the silver linings of the Japa syndrome is that many of the Nigerians who migrated out of the country are contributing to the country's foreign exchange through remittances. These remittances play a very important role in boosting Nigeria's economy and supporting the livelihood of the families at home in Nigeria (Oyekanmi, 2000). Johnson (2022) agrees with this when he states that remittances from Nigerians in Diaspora were \$19.2 billion in 2021. This,

he avers, is by far the most of any country in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To Johnson (2022), another good outcome of the Japa syndrome is that Nigeria professionals can potentially gain world-class status as they work in a safer environment. One other positive outcome, Johnson avers, is that employers out of fear of losing employees may revise working conditions with more incentives to the workers. Again, while some employees flee the country employers may be compelled to encourage employees that stay behind to fill positions that were left by the fleeing Nigerians.

The Negative Effects

One of the negative effects of Japa is the profound impact it has on family dynamics. Fasina (2024) contends that the emotional toll it takes on parents, siblings, and the extended family is enormous. Further to that, families are faced with challenges of adapting to changes in roles and responsibilities. This is more so when it is the main bread winner that leaves. Fasina notes that this can lead to increased stress and strained relationship within the family unit and could also impact mental health in a very significant way as a result of adjustment and adaptation. Because of this Japa syndrome, some women have been known to have gone astray from their marital vows as a result of their husband's long absence. Some men who had permitted their wives to migrate have fallen into the snares of ladies at home and this has caused some remarkable furor with their wives.

One other problem with the Japa syndrome has to do with brain drain. This is a situation where many of the best brains leave the shores of the country for better opportunities abroad. For instance Adetunji, Agun & Akinfiso (2023) state that:

There are certain push factors causing brain drain - to leave the less developed country to developed countries – which are substandard living conditions, dearth of conveyance, accommodation, under utilisation of skilled and semi-skilled personnel, lack of adequate working conditions, low panorama of specialised development, low and corroding wages, discrimination in recruitments and promotion, social unrest, political instability, conflicts and wars...

The pull factors that attract brain drain according to Adetunji *et al* include sophisticated standard of living abroad, employment opportunities, greater income and higher wages, political stability and foreign secured policies, meritocracy, transparency etc. As a matter of fact, the push and pull factors enabling brain drain in Nigeria are really enormous.

The impact of brain drain on Nigerian healthcare system cannot be over emphasised. Medical doctors and nurses are leaving the shores of the country in their numbers. CLS Stockbrokers (2023) state that the consequence of the Japa syndrome in Nigeria is evident in the healthcare sphere, noting that a recent report by Vesta Health states that there are an estimated 125,000

nurses in Nigeria, six times lower than the 800,000 that are recommended. The reason for this is that many of them have jetted out of the country. CLS Stockbrokers aver that the rising number of nurses migrating to the United Kingdom can be tied to the new and easy migration entry requirements of the country which leads to a severe shortage of healthcare workers, especially in Nigeria National Healthcare system. Same thing applies to the doctors. For instance Shabu (2024) states that the migration of skilled workers such as engineers, doctors and teachers has brought about a shortage of professionals in key sectors of the economy such as healthcare and education. He notes that in October 2022 that the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) stated that Nigeria has one doctor to 10,000 patients as against the one doctor to 600 patients recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). He contends that Nigeria has lost her best productive brains to Europe, America and even Asia. To buttress this point, he recalled that the first successful effort of the World Health Organisation at developing Covid-19 vaccine was as a result of a Nigerian doctor, Dr. Onyema Ogbuagu, who developed the Pfizer vaccine in the United States.

The Japa Syndrome in Nigeria

From the above, there is no denial of the fact that the Japa syndrome has had tremendous negative effects on all the sectors of the Nigerian state notwithstanding the little positive effects that may not really be of any consequence. Fasina (2024) avers that the immediate outcome of the Japa syndrome is the significant depletion of skilled and semi-skilled labour from various

sectors in Nigeria. He states that industries in healthcare, engineering, information, technology, and education are the ones that have been hit mostly with the mass exodus of some of our best skilled professionals. In line with this, Olunoyo and Abiri (2023), contend that the Japa syndrome has really taken a toll on all sectors of the Nigeria economy. They state that it is no longer news that the Japa syndrome is a national issue that has paralysed nearly all sectors of the Nigerian economy.

The impact of the Japa Syndrome on the Nigerian economy is enormous. One of the impacts is on the reduction of taxes that enter into the government coffers. The great exodus of skilled workers, especially the youthful ones, has serious negative impact on the country's tax base as it reduces the number of individuals who contribute to Nigeria's tax revenue. There is no gainsaying the fact that those who 'Japa' especially those of the productive age, contribute immensely to the economy and the government's ability to collect taxes. Of course, the outmigration of these tax payers leads to the decrease in revenue which hinders the government's ability to fund essential services for developmental purposes. Thateccentricgirl.com (2021 p.2) agreeing with this, states that national gross income through taxes and revenues will depreciate rapidly because of reduction in the working class. This is further compounded when business owners 'Japa' in large numbers. This adds another dimension to the discourse. It is not only the loss of employees to the Japa syndrome that is the problem now but also the jetting out of business owners. If and when they establish the same

business in the foreign country, the taxes that would have accrued to Nigeria are lost to that foreign country.

Solutions and Recommendations

The Japa syndrome is taking some of the best brains away from the country. The youths that are of the productive age are also jetting out to foreign countries in search of better standards of living and away from political turmoil, instability and the insecurity that is ravaging the country. To curtail this massive exodus of Nigerians from the country, the government must put up actions that would stem the tide. These actions include but not limited to the following:

i. With the current state of the Nigerian economy and its attendant inflation, the remuneration of workers should be increased. This is more so with the professional cadre like the doctors. Ileyemi (2025) states that the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) has advocated that one way to tackle the mass exodus of doctors seeking opportunities abroad is the improvement of remuneration, such as introducing non-taxable call duty allowances in line with the national inflation rate. Again, Professors and PhD holders in the Nigerian Ivory Tower are leaving the shores of Nigeria to countries that value who and what they are.

Added to these, government should create employment opportunities for the youths. Massive education without employment opportunity is a fertile ground for the desire to escape from the country. Willing

entrepreneurs should be encouraged by giving to them loans that would help boost their business.

ii. Another factor that can help stem the desire to flee the country is the improvement of the security situation of the country. Okunade and Awosusi (2023) note that one of the reasons why Nigerians relocate abroad is tied to insecurity in Nigeria. For instance, they related a story of a Nigerian who invested in his hometown agricultural and hospitality sectors and was kidnapped by bandits on arrival to his farm. His abductors eventually killed him and others after receiving the demanded ransom.

There is no doubt that improving security is a crucial step in stemming the desire to flee the country. By creating a safer and more secure environment, the government, no doubt would encourage Nigerians to stay and contribute to the nation's economy, growth and development. It won't be out of place if the government strengthens law enforcement, improve intelligence gathering, and address the root causes of insecurity.

iii. Our educational system needs to be revitalised if the Japa syndrome is to be curtailed. Medugu (2023) states that Nigeria needs to restructure the education system to align with global demands. He contends that Nigeria should prioritise practical skill-based education, entrepreneurship training, and industry-academia partnership to equip graduates with the necessary competences to survive in the country's competitive setting where the economy is not stable with rising unemployment rate. Along with the entrepreneurship

training, affordable loans, grants, and mentorship opportunities should be made available to inspire and support the Nigerians youths in exploring local opportunities.

iv. Infrastructural development is another important factor that can help check the massive fleeing of Nigerians from the country. The government should invest in reliable power, transportation, healthcare, and affordable housing to create an enabling environment for businesses and enhance the overall quality of life (Medugu, 2023, p.1).

v. The ultimate solution to the Japa syndrome is good governance. The factors that engender the quest to flee the country include poverty, oppression, lack of human rights, lack of social and economic opportunities, danger from conflicts, political instability, civil unrest, internal armed conflicts and danger of being kidnapped etc. All these are tied to bad governance. Successive Nigerian governments have not shown interest in changing the political and economic situation of the country. Succeeding governments tend to get worse than the one they replaced. They not only get saddled in the same miasma but tend to further complicate the already existing complicity. Corruption, mismanagement, misappropriation of funds, nepotism, prebendalism, and squandermania are all heightened by the succeeding government. For Nigeria to stem the tide of the Japa syndrome everything must be done to turn the political and economic situation of the country for the better. This is because, as has been stated, the main culprit in the desire to flee the country is bad governance.

Conclusion

Nigerians' quest to migrate out of the country is not a new thing. Before independence in 1960 some Nigerians had sought higher education abroad especially in Britain and the United States. But after independence the need to pursue higher education decreased as institutions of higher education started springing up. With the advent of oil boom in the 1970s and the glory time all the sectors of the economy had, including civil servants, many Nigerians did not contemplate moving out of the country.

However, with the advent of the Second Republic in the 1980s the Nigeria economy nosedived and this led to people moving abroad but it was nothing scandalous because the number of people who wanted to leave the country at that point was not much. It was, however, in the Fourth Republic that the issue got out of hand, especially from the Buhari Administration. The economic malaise got worse in this period. The insecurity that became a national concern during Goodluck Jonathan Administration heightened during the Buhari Administration and Nigerians not only wanted to leave country but to flee the country. It was the effort to escape the tragedy that Nigeria has become that brought the Japa Syndrome into the national lexicon. But what Nigerians suffered during the Buhari Administration is now seen as a child's play compared to the malaise that is now staring at Nigerians in the current Tinubu Administration.

There are some positive effects of the Japa syndrome though, but how do they sit with the negatives effects? Whatever the case, the causes, the positive and the negatives effects of the Japa syndrome were articulated in this study. The possible solutions to the negative effects were also advanced. It is hoped that Nigerians will one day heave a sigh of relief.

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