



THE JAPA SYNDROME AND THE DWINDLING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA: THE WAY FORWARD, 2014 - 2024

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Abstract

Over the past decade (2014–2024), Nigeria has experienced a significant rise in youth and skilled professional emigration, widely known as the Japa Syndrome. This mass migration, driven by economic hardship, insecurity, unemployment, and the decline in public services, has had a profound impact on the nation's socio-economic development. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining secondary data analysis with qualitative content review of policy documents, media reports, migration statistics, and academic literature as well as some oral histories. Key sectors such as healthcare, education, and innovation are examined to assess the short- and long-term consequences of brain drain. Findings indicate that while remittances from the Nigerian diaspora contribute to foreign exchange inflows, they do not compensate for the loss of skilled labour and weakened domestic productivity. The paper concludes by proposing strategic, evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at reversing the migration trend through systemic reform, diaspora engagement, and sustainable youth empowerment. The study underscores the urgent need for a coordinated national response to mitigate the adverse effects of the Japa Syndrome on Nigeria's development trajectory.

Keywords: JAPA Syndrome, Brain-Drain, Economy, emigration, Diaspora, Strategies

Introduction

In the trajectory of challenges that Nigeria is currently struggling with, the mass emigration is a constant one. The Japa syndrome as it is mostly referred to, is the migration of thousands of Nigerian people from their homeland to foreign states in search of greener pastures. This migration system has reshaped the socio-economic structure of Nigeria to say the least, in most cases, having adverse effects. The Japa Syndrome was coined from the Yoruba word 'Japa', which means to leave or escape permanently. The Yoruba tribe is a major one in the southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. They are the most well-travelled region and tribe in the nation, and they are often a step ahead in terms of educational accomplishments and acquaintance with Western culture. This Japa slang has become such a thing of vogue among Nigerians to the extent of becoming a noun used to illustrate the mass departure of Nigerians from their country to other countries.



A few decades after the country gained its independence, the massive movement of citizens to other continents cannot be overlooked as it has seen the spread of over 17 million Nigerians. Scholars and academia in general have made several attempts at investigating the root cause of the Japa syndrome. The purpose of this study is not just to interrogate both the driving factors of the issue and the effects it has imprinted on the fabrics of the Nigerian society, with particular focus on its socio-economy sector, but more so, deeply analyze the possible practical actions that need to be undertaken to provide solutions to the issue of brain drain. As of 2024, approximately 17 million Nigerians live abroad, forming a significant diaspora community globally. Major countries hosting large populations of Nigerians include the United States (over 400,000), the United Kingdom (215,000), and Canada (about 70,000). In addition, other prominent destinations include Italy (119,400), the United Arab Emirates (100,000), Germany (83,000), and Spain (70,000). Smaller but notable Nigerian communities exist in South Africa (31,000) and France (30,000). This analysis confirms the fact that 52% of Nigerians live outside of Africa, and 48% reside on the continent. According to Pulse Nigeria, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that there are about 17 million Nigerians in the diaspora as of 2024 (Ekanem, 2024).

Scholars have highlighted various factors such as ridiculously excessive levels of poverty, adverse economic situations, the search for a greener pasture, the inclination to achieve international certificates, a sky-scaping level of unemployment, and so on. Okunade, in different research, pointed out greed and disinformation as principal facets that could be to blamed for this verve (Okunade, 2023). The unemployment problem in Nigeria is never overstated as this is the foundational factor that drives its citizens out in search of jobs. The lengthened lack of fundamental opportunities for the working class, young professionals, and graduates has created a need to escape in a lookout of these engagements giving way to emigration. The deficiency of the Nigerian government to make these resources available to the governed culminates in the hunt for financial stability outside the Nigerian boundaries. Unemployment is a crucial social and economic issue that has a colossal aftermath on everything but is often overlooked (Olumoyo, 2023).

In addition, the absence of security within Nigeria, insurgency especially in the North, banditry, and kidnappings suffice as part of the many reasons behind the Japa syndrome as many Nigerians feel unsafe and prefer to reside and build their homes in safer countries. The cost of living in Nigeria is also becoming dangerously high as seen in the height of inflation in the country and many Nigerians choose to live in nations where the cost of living is considerate of human livelihood. Furthermore, the insufficiency of infrastructure and an unpromising sight of future investments in primary sectors such as education and healthcare have stimulated a sense of hopelessness in Nigerians as they believe that their goals may never be achieved. All these point to the developed nations that contain these opportunities, infrastructures, security, and excellent governance of which Nigeria falls unimaginably short.

In response to these causes, there have been effects, some of which are being felt to the present day. The emigration of doctors, engineers, IT professionals, and academics creates a critical skills shortage in key sectors. For instance, Nigeria is estimated to have lost thousands of healthcare professionals to the UK and Canada, further straining an already struggling healthcare system. As skilled and entrepreneurial individuals leave, Nigeria's potential for economic growth diminishes. The absence of talent impacts industries that rely on specialized skilled professionals like doctors,



engineers, and academics can lead to a shortage of talent in critical sectors, hindering economic growth and development and reducing productivity and innovation.

On a brighter note, Nigerians in the diaspora contribute significantly to the economy through remittances. In 2023, remittance inflows accounted for billions of dollars, helping many families survive despite economic difficulties. However, this is often not enough to offset the broader economic losses caused by emigration, and to add, reliance on remittances from emigrants can create a sense of dependency and reduce motivation for domestic economic growth and betterment (Umeh et al, 2024). The departure of peers and colleagues who have successfully "Japa-ed" often leaves those left behind feeling demoralized and less optimistic about their prospects, potentially reducing overall morale and productivity within the workforce (Nwobodo, 2024). Over time, if the trend continues unchecked, Nigeria may face deeper socio-economic crises. The absence of a skilled workforce could slow down industrialization and development, making it harder to attract foreign investment and achieve sustainable economic growth.

The Japa syndrome has undeniably become one of the biggest challenges to the growth of the Nigerian economy and a trend that does not seem to have an end, in addition to this, it has had effects on other aspects of the average Nigerian including the family life, tearing apart communities as every citizen seeks a better standard of living outside of the Nigerian borders. Healthcare faces continual disengagement as medical professionals emigrate in search of a working system where their expertise can have a tangible impact with the presence of efficient technology and infrastructure. Furthermore, it has deeply smeared a sense of hopelessness and dread into the minds of aspiring young professionals and graduates, as they believe that their goals or dreams cannot be achieved within the country's geography.

Policies Addressing the Japa Syndrome

The issue of the Japa syndrome which has had far-reaching adverse effects on Nigeria's socio-economic development, has prompted both the Nigerian government and private stakeholders to initiate policies and reforms aimed at mitigating the trend. While many of these efforts are still evolving, several policies have been implemented or proposed to address the root causes of the exodus, such as poor working conditions, low wages, insecurity, and lack of career growth. However, from what is seen, these policies have yet to do the job of really reducing the rate at which many emigrate, in fact, majority of Nigerians are yet to feel the impact of these claimed policies as the Japa wave has only grown worse. Nevertheless, this chapter will address the emigration trend problem by providing pragmatic solutions and strategies, if duly acted upon by the Nigerian government will surely see a better Nigeria, retainment of talent and skills, and skyrocketed innovation.

Improved Wage Structures and Incentives for Professionals

Now, one of the primary policy responses has been the review and implementation of improved wage structures, particularly in critical sectors like healthcare and education. In 2023, the Nigerian federal government approved a 25–35% salary increase for civil servants, including those in teaching and administrative roles, under the Consolidated Public Service Salary Structure (CONPSS) (Vanguard News, 2023). This was part of an effort to make public service more



attractive and suspend the wave of emigration among professionals who in most cases leave because of paltry amounts of salary. Similarly, doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers have been promised special hazard allowances and better working conditions through the National Health Workforce Strategic Plan (2020–2030), although the impact of this policy is barely seen as medical professionals are still exiting the country in mass and implementation remains uneven, with delays in disbursement and dissatisfaction over the adequacy of these measures expressed by healthcare workers (Premium Times, 2022). Critics argue that without holistic improvements in infrastructure, security, and institutional culture, salary increments alone are insufficient to reverse the trend.

Diaspora Engagement and Returnee Programs

The recognition of the value that Nigerian citizens have contributed to the foreign states they relocate to has driven the Nigerian government to promote diaspora engagement policies like the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM). The common goal is to tap into the skills, networks, and resources of Nigerians abroad by encouraging them to invest in or return to Nigeria through initiatives such as the Diaspora Investment Summit and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) (NiDCOM, 2025).

Undoubtedly, these programs aim to bring about collaboration between foreign-based Nigerian professionals and local institutions, especially in fields like medicine, technology, and engineering. However, while these initiatives have seen some success, such as diaspora-led investments in fintech and healthcare startups, they still face challenges related to bureaucracy, lack of incentives, and unstable policy environments, that often discourage returnees or limit the impact of their engagement.

Education and Training Reforms

In response to the mass departure of educators and researchers, the Nigerian government has proposed education reform policies which has targeted both basic and tertiary levels. The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) includes proposals to improve infrastructure in universities, to support postgraduate research funding, and introduce stimulus for lecturers to remain in academia (The Guardian Nigeria, 2024). Some universities have also initiated staff development programs that allow for flexible work arrangements or sabbaticals abroad with the expectation of return to add more value to the institution. Despite these efforts, the appeal of more stable and well-funded research environments abroad continues to lure academics out of the country. Thus, education reforms remain underfunded and inconsistently implemented.

Tech and Startup Ecosystem Support

In a bid to curb brain drain in the IT sector, the Nigerian government has launched initiatives like the Nigeria Startup Act (2022), which seeks to provide a regulatory organisation for startups, support access to funding, and encourage the retention of digital talent (Nigeria Startup Act, 2022). The Act also includes provisions for tax encouragements, training hubs, and ease of doing business, which are certainly essential in creating a functioning environment that reduces the need for tech professionals to emigrate. Several private-sector incubators and partnerships with global



tech companies (e.g., Google's Africa Developer Scholarship Program) have also assisted in retaining some talent locally. However, many Nigerians concerns over government censorship, infrastructure debts, and destabilised state of finances in Nigerian homes continue to drive digital professionals abroad.

National Development Plans and Migration Policies

At a broader level, the National Development Plan (2021–2025) stress the need to address the issues of unemployment, insecurity, and poor infrastructure which are prominent drivers of the Japa syndrome. The Plan aims to create 21 million full-time jobs and lift 35 million people out of poverty through large-scale investment in agriculture, manufacturing, and education (Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, 2021). The Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, has also called for the development of a National Migration Policy to manage and monitor emigration while also developing strategies to encourage return of Nigerians in diaspora.

Still, experts argue that unless these plans are carried out with concrete, timely action and political will, their impact will continue to remain minimal. Even though Nigeria has taken notable steps to address brain drain and the Japa syndrome through reviews of salary, diaspora engagement, education reform, and innovation policies, the success of these initiatives are hinged on transparent implementation, absolute commitment, and sustainable investment in human capital. Now, if the root causes such as insecurity, unemployment, and systemic corruption remain unattended to, these policy efforts are likely to not yield long-term results.

Strategies for Promoting Innovation Among Youths

To effectively mitigate the Japa wave, the mass emigration of Nigerian youths in search of better prospects abroad, there is a pressing need to promote innovation among young people at home. Innovation not only provides viable career paths and financial independence, but also cultivates a sense of ownership and hope for the future in Nigeria. Below are practical and extensive strategies that can help promote youth innovation and reduce the motivation to emigrate.

Establishing Innovation Hubs and Incubators/Improving Access to Funding and Microcredit for Startups

Creating and expanding innovation hubs in urban and rural areas provides youth with spaces to develop ideas, access mentorship, and receive technical training. These hubs should be equipped with resources such as internet access, computers, software, and tools for prototyping. Government-backed centres like the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)'s tech hubs in Abuja, Lagos, and Kano have already shown promise (NITDA, 2025). These models nationally can help bridge the rural-urban innovation gap and harness the creation of jobs in the local areas. Moreover, one of the biggest barriers to youth innovation which is the lack of access to startup capital has gained attention and it is nationally agreed that the government and financial institutions should provide low-interest loans, grants, and equity funding for youth-led businesses and tech startups (Korinya & Akran, 2025).



Programs like the Bank of Industry's Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) Program and the Tony Elumelu Foundation's Entrepreneurship Programme have already empowered thousands of young Nigerians, but the coverage remains limited as it requires more of the government's contributions (Bank of Industry, 2025). Indisputably, the expansion of these initiatives and removal of political obstructions in accessing funds will help more youth build and scale their innovations domestically and simultaneously, reduce the allure of moving abroad.

Reform the Education Curriculum and Promote Digital Skills and Remote Work Pathways

Unfavourable to her future, Nigeria's education system is largely theory-based and exam-oriented and so, to stimulate innovation, curriculum reform is needed to integrate design thinking, problem-solving, coding, robotics, and entrepreneurship across primary to tertiary levels. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has begun investing in Research and Development (R&D), but this needs to trickle down to public secondary schools and vocational colleges (TETFUND, 2023). Practical learning, industry collaborations, and internships will allow students to connect academic knowledge with real-world problem-solving.

In the same vein, with global demand for digital talent growing, equipping youths with remote work skills in fields like software engineering, digital marketing, UX/UI design, and data science will allow them to earn globally while living locally. Initiatives like Google's Africa Developer Scholarship, ALX Africa, and Decagon are already supplying such training (ALX AFRICA, 2024). National adoption and scaling of these programs would empower more youths to create value from Nigeria without needing to emigrate, additionally, impelling firms to hire remote Nigerian talent through tax discounts or public-private partnerships would deepen this model to admirable lengths.

Culture of Research and Development (R&D) and Entrepreneurship Empowerment.

Any investment in youth-led research and local innovation must be made a national priority and follow an intentional approach. Government institutions and universities should fund and commercialize research that would address local problems in health, agriculture, transportation, and energy. Creating national innovation competitions and offering seed funding to winning projects can motivate youths to initiate practical solutions to local needs rather than seek success abroad. An example is the Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing (IVM) collaboration with universities to engage engineering students in real-time product development.

On top of that, the National Youth Policy (2019–2023) outlines strategies for youth empowerment through entrepreneurship and skills development. However, implementation has been inconsistent (Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2019). To make innovation a primary youth agenda, the policy must be updated, fully funded, and enforced, with clear deliverables and youth representation in policymaking bodies to directly tackle this pressing issue of the younger generation feeling pressured to emigrate if they must achieve their goals. Regular youth innovation summits, town halls, and online platforms should be used to engage with young Nigerians and co-create pragmatic and applicable solutions to national issues, building a deeper sense of ownership and civic responsibility (The Guardian Nigeria, 2023).



Promoting innovation among Nigerian youth is one of the most sustainable ways to combat the Japa syndrome as it retains talent and predicts a bright future for Nigeria. A multi-sectoral approach that spans education, finance, infrastructure, and governance, is needed to build a thriving environment where young Nigerians see value in staying and innovating at home, and surely with adequate support, they can become the engine of national transformation by reversing the brain drain into a brain gain.

Strategies for Sustaining Skills in Major Sectors

The direct recipients of the adverse effects of the Japa syndrome besides the youths, are the primary sectors as they have experienced major breakdowns and decline in quality and in order to address the growing trend of emigration among professionals in Nigeria, from the healthcare, education, IT, public administration to agriculture sector, a multifaceted approach is necessary. All these sectors significantly contribute to the growth of Nigeria's economy when functioning properly, but in cases where they fail to work well, the economy also suffers it. These numerous system-eating issues of poor working conditions, inadequate remuneration, lack of continuous professional development (CPD), and limited career opportunities have contributed to the mass exodus of the labour force from Nigeria to other parts of the world and to retain and enhance the skills of professionals locally, the following strategies can be employed.

Healthcare Sector Strategies

Poor salaries, long working hours, and insufficient work-life balance make practicing medicine in Nigeria less attractive compared to other countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a better compensation package not only improves morale but also enhances productivity (WHO, 2020). By improving salaries and offering incentives such as hazard pay, bonuses, and competitive benefits, Nigeria can reduce the push factor driving doctors and nurses to seek opportunities abroad. Dr. Matthew, a medical doctor and lecturer, concurs with this as he states that “the Nigerian government should release funds and increase the pay of medical practitioners, because many of the medical professionals that have emigrated did so because they were not able to afford a quality standard of living” (Matthew, 2025).

Besides, the Nigerian government needs to prioritize the development of modern hospitals and clinics equipped with state-of-the-art technology to allow healthcare workers to perform to the best of their abilities. A report by the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) highlights that outdated equipment and lack of maintenance are significant barriers to effective healthcare delivery in the country (Nigerian Medical Association, 2019). A well-equipped healthcare system not only improves service delivery but also attracts and retains skilled medical professionals by offering them the opportunity to work with cutting-edge technology, facilitating better training, and allowing them to stay current with advancements in their field.

In addition, continuous professional development (CPD) is essential in ensuring that medical professionals remain up-to-date with the latest advancements in their field. CPD programs that are locally available and accessible can help address this issue. A report by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) stresses the importance of CPD programs in enhancing the



competency of medical professionals, especially in remote areas where exposure to advanced medical practices may be limited (Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, 2020).

To add, strengthening public-private partnerships (PPPs) can play a pivotal role in improving the healthcare sector in Nigeria. Collaborative efforts between the government and private sector entities can provide more resources, facilities, and opportunities for healthcare professionals. For instance, PPPs can help establish new healthcare facilities, improve service delivery, and foster innovation in medical research and treatment. According to the World Bank, PPPs have been instrumental in improving healthcare systems in developing countries by mobilizing private investment and improving service delivery (World Bank, 2021). A study by the Nigerian Health Workforce Observatory reveals that medical professionals who have worked abroad are more likely to return if they perceive a supportive and rewarding environment upon their return. By creating these favourable conditions, Nigeria can tap into the skills and expertise of returnees, which will strengthen the local healthcare system.

Education Sector Strategies

One of the primary factors driving the emigration of academic staff in Nigeria is the inadequate remuneration they receive in comparison to their international counterparts. Low salaries and limited research funding hinder academics' ability to perform at their best and stay motivated to contribute to the local educational system. Dr. Chinwuba, a school proprietress stresses that “the government should improve the standard of living and salaries of her citizens, they should also create more jobs” (Chiwuba, 2025).

According to the National Universities Commission (NUC), Nigerian university lecturers are often underpaid, especially when compared to international standards, which exacerbates the brain drain, however, research grants can further enhance job satisfaction by enabling academics to pursue meaningful research projects without financial constraints (NUC, 2020). As suggested by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), investing in the professional development of academics through financial support can significantly reduce the urge to emigrate and contribute to the retention of talent within the country (UNESCO, 2021).

Moreover, inadequate facilities and outdated infrastructure in schools and universities are major obstacles to the effective delivery of education in Nigeria. Upgrading facilities, such as libraries, classrooms, laboratories, and administrative offices, would not only create a conducive learning environment for students but also improve the work environment for lecturers. An interviewee agrees with this by stating that “more equipped infrastructures should be developed and more funds should be put into the educational sector.” The National Education Policy Review Committee emphasizes that the lack of modern facilities in Nigerian educational institutions hampers the potential of academic staff, thereby encouraging migration to better-equipped institutions abroad (National Education Policy Review Committee, 2021).

Prof. Okonkwo, strongly reiterates the fact that “well-functioning facilities that would encourage lecturers and teachers to educate better and reduce workload could increase the quality of education and reduce the rate at which they would ‘japa’”. The Nigerian government, in collaboration with private sector partners, should prioritize infrastructure development within educational institutions



to ensure that lecturers can offer the best quality education while remaining motivated to stay within the system (Okonkwo, 2025).

Also, sabbatical and exchange programs can provide Nigerian lecturers with opportunities to gain international experience, engage with global best practices, and develop professionally without having to permanently leave the country. According to a report by the Nigerian Universities Commission, while many lecturers seek permanent migration to improve their academic careers, opportunities for short-term sabbaticals and academic exchange programs can offer similar benefits while retaining them in Nigeria. By ensuring that these opportunities are accessible, Nigeria can offer a balance between global exposure and career satisfaction within the country, significantly reducing the desire for permanent migration.

Finally, teacher training institutes and postgraduate education are critical components in developing a highly skilled academic workforce. Enhanced funding would allow for the development of state-of-the-art training facilities, the recruitment of qualified trainers, and the expansion of research opportunities for postgraduate students. According to the National Policy on Education, teacher training is essential for the growth of Nigeria's education system, but the current funding levels are insufficient to meet the demand for high-quality education professionals. As noted by the World Bank, investing in teacher education is one of the most effective ways to improve educational outcomes, which would also help curb the tendency for skilled professionals to seek better opportunities abroad (World Bank, 2020).

The Information Technology (IT) Sector Strategies

Supporting the local tech ecosystem is crucial for pioneering innovation, creating jobs, and retaining IT talent. Grants, tax incentives, and the development of key infrastructure, especially broadband can significantly contribute to creating a more conducive environment for local tech startups and businesses. According to a report by the World Bank, offering tax incentives to tech companies not only boosts business growth but also enhances the overall economic environment, making the country more attractive for local and international investments (World Bank, 2020).

Additionally, the development of broadband infrastructure is vital for enabling high-speed internet access, which is fundamental for software development, remote work, and online education in the IT sector. Nigeria has one of the lowest internet penetration rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, with many rural areas still lacking access to reliable broadband services. This would not only improve productivity but also reduce the need for IT professionals to seek better opportunities abroad, as they would have the necessary infrastructure to work and collaborate effectively from home.

The Nigeria Startup Act, signed into law in 2022, aims to create an enabling environment for startups by offering support mechanisms such as tax breaks, funding, and regulatory reforms. If effectively implemented, the Nigeria Startup Act could play a pivotal role in reducing the Japa wave by encouraging young IT professionals to build and scale their startups within Nigeria. A report by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group highlights that the lack of regulatory support and access to funding are major reasons why many Nigerian tech startups struggle to scale locally, pushing entrepreneurs to emigrate in search of better opportunities (Nigeria Economic Summit Group, 2022).



By ensuring that the provisions of the Nigeria Startup Act are fully implemented, the government can provide young tech entrepreneurs with the incentives and support needed to thrive. This will not only help retain local talent but also attract international investors, who can bring additional expertise and resources into the Nigerian tech ecosystem. Coding bootcamps provide intensive training programs that help individuals quickly acquire the skills needed to succeed in the tech industry. These programs are particularly beneficial in Nigeria, where formal education systems often lack the capacity to meet the growing demand for IT professionals. One of the female interviewees, a civil servant states that “the government should ensure employment is based on merit and not connection which would in turn slowly but surely secure the future of the graduates in the country, so rather than leaving immediately after graduation, they can be sure their certificate will get them a job” (Esther, 2025).”

A study by the International Finance Corporation notes that the shortage of skilled tech workers in Nigeria could be mitigated through specialized training programs like coding bootcamps, which equip individuals with industry-relevant skills in a short period. Furthermore, partnerships with global IT firms can also offer valuable opportunities for local talent development (IFC, 2021). Collaborations between Nigerian universities, coding bootcamps, and global IT giants such as Google, Microsoft, and IBM can create pathways for internships, training programs, and exposure to global best practices.

These partnerships not only improve the skill set of local professionals but also help them build connections within the international tech community, making it more likely that they will remain in Nigeria to contribute to the country’s growing tech ecosystem. According to McKinsey & Company, collaborations with global firms can serve as a catalyst for innovation in emerging markets by transferring knowledge, creating job opportunities, and improving local education systems (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

Agriculture Sector Strategies.

The agriculture sector plays a critical role in Nigeria’s economy, providing employment for over 60% of the population and contributing significantly to the country’s GDP, therefore modernizing agricultural practices through technology adoption and mechanization is one of the most effective ways to enhance productivity, reduce manual labour, and attract young talent to the sector. By mechanizing tasks that were previously time-consuming and physically demanding, farmers can increase their output and reduce the risks associated with traditional farming practices, such as poor yields due to irregular weather patterns or pests. Sequel to that, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) reports that the mechanization of agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, has the potential to increase yields and improve food security, which is crucial for sustaining local farming communities and encouraging younger generations to stay in the sector.

The Nigerian government should intensify its efforts by radically injecting the appropriate technology, which will revolutionize modern tools into the farming process (Korinya & Akran, 2025). The introduction of Agri-tech innovations, including digital platforms for market access, farm management software, and online training, can help reduce the brain drain by making agriculture more attractive to tech-savvy, young professionals. To add to these strategies is the



need to invest, as one of the major barriers to growth and innovation in the agriculture sector is the lack of access to affordable inputs and financing. To mitigate the Japa wave, the government can subsidize agricultural inputs and offer credit facilities specifically targeted at young farmers and agribusiness startups. Subsidies for inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds, and machinery can reduce the cost of production, making it more affordable for young farmers to enter the industry and increase productivity. The Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Anchor Borrowers' Program is an example of a financing initiative aimed at providing loans to smallholder farmers, helping them improve their production (CBN, 2020). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), access to financing is one of the primary enablers of agricultural development and innovation (FAO, 2020).

By providing affordable credit and subsidies, Nigeria can lower the financial risks for young farmers, allowing them to remain in the sector, grow their businesses, and contribute to the country's agricultural sustainability. Last but not least is the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) in Nigeria which has been instrumental in disseminating agricultural knowledge to farmers across the country (NAERLS, 2020). However, the extension services need further strengthening, including better training for extension agents, the integration of digital tools for remote training, and increased funding to reach a larger number of farmers, particularly in remote areas which would clearly dissipate the Japa wave.

Conclusion

The Japa Syndrome, once a fringe phenomenon, has evolved into a major socio-economic crisis for Nigeria. The 2014–2024 decade has revealed a consistent pattern of mass emigration, underscored by frustration with systemic failures in governance, security, and economic management. As Nigeria continues to lose its brightest minds and most energetic youth to more stable economies, the repercussions are being felt across vital sectors, from healthcare and education to national productivity and innovation. While the financial inflow from remittances is notable, it cannot compensate for the human capital deficit or the stagnation of local development. Reversing this trend will require more than cosmetic changes; it demands a deliberate, holistic approach encompassing job creation, institutional reform, improved governance, and genuine youth inclusion in policy development. Only then can Nigeria hope to stem the tide of emigration and channel the talents of its citizens toward national growth and prosperity.

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