

Migration and Socio-Economic Development: The Case of Tahoua Migrants in Sokoto Metropolis 1931-2016

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Abstract: Migration is defined as the movement of people from one place to another or the process of moving from one region or country to another as a result of so many factors. In this respect, people become migrants for so many reasons. The most pronounced factor to that effect is the economic opportunity. Most immigrants are lured or attracted to other countries by the promise of jobs, shifting cultivation, quest for shelter, knowledge or business opportunities. Notwithstanding however, others become immigrants to flee maltreatment or natural disasters. Economic development on the other hand centers on the situation that causes change or progress, that is to say a process of changing and becoming larger and stronger or more successful and advanced. Migration plays an important role in the economic growth and development between Sokoto caliphate and the region of Tahoua in so many aspects. International transactions in the name of “Fatauci” between Nigeria and Niger have existed from time immemorial. Migration dynamics in West Africa and the global context in general has attracted scholars in conducting research. This phenomenon generated debates and arguments among scholars of social sciences and humanities. The arguments are not unconnected with the ongoing challenges to the subject under review. Despite the current challenges that are attributed to the migration pattern in West Africa and beyond, the paper aims to peep through the positive aspects of migration. The topic under review will therefore pinpoint some areas of socio-economic impact of Tahoua migrants in Sokoto metropolis of Nigeria from 1931-2016. It is the interest of the paper to study the spatial distribution of Tahoua migrants in Sokoto metropolis with emphasis on where they concentrated in Sokoto town and their socio-economic relevance in the development of Sokoto metropolis in particular and the state at large. The paper will also look into some problems associated with migration, such as the issue of dual citizenship, migration crime and so on. The methodology to be use in carrying out the research is by the use of careful observation of the activities embarks upon by Tahoua migrants in Sokoto metropolis, verbal interviews and the relevant related researches on the subject.

Keywords: Migration, Economic Development, Sokoto Metropolis, Tahoua.

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to highlight the evolution and the increase of migrants from the region of Tahoua to Sokoto Metropolis and their socio-economic relevance dated from 1931-2016. The influx of migrants from Niger Republic and of course the Tahoua region in particular was at high rate in the early years of 1930 to 1931 following the drought and food shortage of that particular time, which has pushed many people from Niger Republic to Nigeria (Northern parts of Nigeria) in search for better place for leaving. Apeldom [1]. The paper will therefore peep through and see how the Tahoua community residing in Sokoto metropolis engaged themselves in businesses to earn a living and how this trend enhanced economic growth of the environs in particular and Sokoto state at large.

But before moving into the detail discussion of the paper, it is pertinent to shade light on the key issues that make the subject under review so as to have the direction of the paper; the issues includes; migration, economic development, Sokoto metropolis and Tahoua region.

Migration and its Classification

Migration means movement from one place to another or the process of moving from one region or country to another. A migrant is described as someone who moves to another place of residence for some minimum period of time[1]. Migrants themselves can be divided into two broad categories: Humanitarian and Economic. Humanitarian migrants include asylum seekers and refugees. These individuals generally migrate to countries geographically close to their

country of origin. Migration between Hausaland (Sokoto in particular) and the region of Tahoua is much more pronounced on the basis of economic reasons and Islamic scholarship. Economic migrants, on the other hand, migrate in order to find employment or improve their financial situations. In the past, these migrants have generally moved from poorer to richer countries. But what is happening today is both inter regional and intra-regional migration.

Why Migration?

The reason for migration of people from Niger to Nigeria and other African countries is captured on the basis of push-pull effects as maintained by Amin [2] Migration therefore can either be as a result of certain issues that may push people out of their original territory or may pull them to an area with much greater opportunities. The reasons for the migrating of people from one part of the country into another country more especially Niger and Nigeria Republics can best be described under the following basis;

- Ecological factors like drought and famine (food shortage)[1]. The droughts of 1942-1943, 1972-1973, 1983-1984, 1993, 1997 and 2005 has pushed many people from Tahoua and other parts of Niger republic to Sokoto state in search for food and water for themselves their animals.
- The searching for shelter and the quest for the perfect location.
- Economic reasons.
- Searching for knowledge and Islamic scholarships.
- Intensive tax and forced labor by French colonial policies in Niger[2].
- Assimilation factor, example enforcement of French culture to Nigerien.
- Unemployment rate.
- viii. Current security issue of Boko Haram.

Economic Development

This is the process by which a nation improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people. The term has been used frequently by economists, politicians, and others in the 20th century. The concept, however, has been in existence in the West for centuries. Modernization, Westernization, and especially Industrialization are other terms people have used while discussing economic development. Economic development has a direct relationship with the environment and environmental issues.

Sokoto Metropolis

Sokoto is a city located in the extreme northwest of Nigeria, near the confluence of the Sokoto River and the Rima Basin. As at 2006 it has a population of 427,760. Sokoto is the modern-day capital of Sokoto State (and its predecessor, the north-western State). The name Sokoto (which is the modern/anglicized version of the local name, Sakkwato) is of Arabic origin, representing suk[3], 'Market'. It is

also known as *Sakkwato*, *Birnin Shaihu da Bello* or "Sokoto, Capital of Shaihu and Bello". Being the seat of the Sokoto Caliphate, the city is predominantly Muslims and an important seat of Islamic learning in Nigeria. The Sultan who heads the caliphate is effectively the spiritual leader of Nigerian Muslims.

The region's lifeline for growing crops is the floodplains of the Sokoto-Rima river system, which are covered with rich alluvial soil. For the rest, the general dryness of the region allows for few crops, millet perhaps being the most abundant, complemented by maize, rice, beans and other cereals crops. Apart from tomatoes, few vegetables grow in the region. The low variety of foodstuffs available has resulted in the relatively dull local cuisine. In terms of vegetation, Sokoto falls within the savannah zone.

Economic Activities in Sokoto Metropolis

Over eighty percent (80%) of the inhabitants of Sokoto practice one form of agriculture or another [4]. They produce such crops as millet, guinea corn, maize, rice, potatoes, cassava, groundnuts and beans for subsistence and produce wheat, cotton and vegetables for cash. Local crafts such as blacksmithing, weaving, dyeing, carving and leather works also play an important role in the economic life of the people of Sokoto; as a result different areas like Makera, Marina, Takalmawa and Majema became important. Sokoto is also one of the fish producing areas of the country. Thus a large number of people along the river basin engage in fishing as well.

Sokoto is equally endowed with natural and mineral resources. Agro allied industries using cotton, groundnut, sorghum, gum, maize, rice, wheat sugar cane, cassava, gum Arabic and tobacco as raw materials can be established in the area.

Large scale farming can also be practiced in the state using irrigation water from Goronyo Dam, Lugu, Kalmalo, Wammakko and Kwakwazo lakes among others.

Minerals such as kaolin, gypsum, limestone, laterite, red mills, phosphate both yellow and green, shade clay, sand etc., are available in commercial quantities. Mineral based industries using these raw materials could be established in the state [6].

Tahoua Region

Tahoua is one the eight administrative Regions in Niger. The Capital of the Region is Tahoua. Therefore, the Region covers 106,677 km². The present Governor of the Region is Alhaji Abdulrahman Musa. Tahoua is divided into twelve (12) Departments which includes; Abalak, Bagaroua, Brini N'Konni, Bouza, Iella, Keita, Madaoua, Malbaza, Tahoua Manicipal, Tassara, Tchintabaraden and Tillia respectively. The

predominant tribes of Tahoua are Tuaregs, Hausa, Fulani, Adarawa and very few Arabs.

Tahoua has the following foreign borders namely; Sokoto State to the South, Gao Region to the Northwest, and Kidal Region in Mali to the far Northwest. Tahoua has the following domestic borders, namely; Agadez Region to the Northeast, Maradi Region to the Southeast, Dosso Region to the Southwest and Tellaberi Region to the West.

METHODOLOGY

The methods employed in this study are based on those outlined in the abstract of this paper which involves the use of careful observation of the economic activities embarked upon by Tahoua migrants in Sokoto metropolis, verbal interviews and making reference to the relevant related researches on the subject. This can only be possible by;

- Conducting a literature review on the origins and current status of Tahoua community in Sokoto Metropolis.
- Review the increase and the spatial distribution of Tahoua migrants in Sokoto Metropolis.
- Design and carry out a survey of their socio-economic participation in the city of Sokoto.
- Looking at the inter-group relation between guest-host relations.

Materials for literature review have been drawn from libraries and archives in Sokoto and the academic researches on migration, other resources available on the internet, and local publications purchased or borrowed in the course of the research. Verbal interviews were also conducted with Tahoua migrants and the host communities to see if there is any socio-economic interdependence between Tahoua migrants in Sokoto metropolis or not.

Socio-Economic Participation of Tahoua Migrants in Sokoto Metropolis

Prior to the episode of drought and subsequent famine of the 1931-1930 in Niger region, there were few numbers of Tahoua communities in the town of Sokoto who settled for the purposes of Islamic knowledge and scholarship[5]. However, the consequent famine and hardship of the drought forced those affected to seek for alternative strategies of survival. The works of Ahmed [6], Aliyu[7], Audu[8], Gatawa [9] and that of Sarkin Gulbi [10] provide valuable clue on how drought and famine served as 'push factors' that compelled people to migrate from one location to the other in search for shelter.

People move from Tahoua Region and other parts of Niger to Sokoto in the quest for better opportunities. These Immigrants are therefore hosted by the people of Sokoto, and as time goes on some of them embarked on petty trades to earn their living. The

female ones were said to marry well to do individuals in the town, thereby bonding social relationship between the host and the guest.

As regards to their economic participation in Sokoto Metropolis, can be seen from various angles as follows;

- **Watchman ship:** The practice of employing a man or a person to guard or patrol a building or an area has come to people of Sokoto and in fact Hausaland at large after their direct contact with Tuareg immigrants from Niger Republic. Between the years 1916-1919 about 30,000 Tuaregs who rebelled against French colonialism immigrated into Nigeria and settled in various town and villages in different parts of Northern Nigeria. Some of them engaged in various menial jobs and night watchmen[11]. Some migrants view it as an avenue through which they can get their daily incomes. The trend has extended to the Hausas themselves. Where you can see people engaged in watchman ship activity to sustain their living.
- **General Traditional Healing Art:** People who migrated from Tahoua Region and very few from Agadez in Niger republic engaged in the selling of medicinal plants to the people of Sokoto in particular and Hausaland at large in exchange for food items or money[12]. This trend continued to occur even after the drought period. Where they use to come to Hausaland during harvesting period and go back when it is about to rain, that is why they were termed as seasonal migrants in some texts. They often returned to Tahoua and other parts of Niger Republic with food items.
- **Water Vendors:** Selling or hawking of water across Sokoto town and the surrounding villages by the use of initially local pots and later jerry cans and wheelbarrows are one of the economic activities carried out by the Tahoua Communities residing in Sokoto metropolis. In fact they are the largest community that engages in the selling of water for domestic use in various areas of the city of Sokoto.
- **Tea Vendors (Ataye):** The culture of taking tea and bread in Hausaland is a new innovation that came to Hausa people. They do not have it in their dietary habits until when they came into contact with Tuaregs from Tahoua and Arabs from North Africa. The *Ataye* tea has generated a lot of people forming an association of taking tea popularly known as "*Kungiyar Mashaya shayi*." This association has specialized in taking tea more especially in the evening and night time, where you see people in group taking tea. Sometimes they buy it from the tea vendors who usually go round from one place to another searching for customers. While others buy tealeaves from the immigrants and prepare by themselves.

- **Drugs Vendors:** Some Tahoua community residing in Sokoto metropolis practices the selling of medicinal drugs to people. Those engaged in the business do buy it from the pharmaceutical chemist in the town and go round to specific areas like markets, garage or motor packs, and mechanic garages selling it in plastic buckets to customers that are interested in buying the drugs.
- **Livestock Importation:** The business migrants from Tahoua region and other parts of Niger Republic take part in livestock importation to Sokoto. Some of them have their agents who are migrants who settled permanently in Sokoto assisted them in the business, These include; Rams, Cattles, Sheeps, which were imported from Tahoua and Gidan Bado, but horses were imported from Agadez and Air. In return they export back grains, clothes and kola nuts[13].
- **Leather Works:** Immigrants from Tahoua engaged in leather works more especially in shoe making and repairs. For example, in Sokoto Metropolis there are a lot of people who migrated from the region of Tahoua and specialized in leather works and shoe making. They engaged indigenous youth to the business, thereby reducing the rate of unemployment in the area. Such areas that benefit from such business include Madinka and kofar taramniya.
- **Selling of Spectacles and Fragrance:** This business is mostly carried out by Tahoua and Dosso communities and very few from Maradi and Damagaram Regions of Niger Republic. Those that excel in the business are business migrants from Tahoua, some of them are permanently settled in Sokoto and established their families. By fragrance it consists of all sorts of perfumes that people used in their cars, offices, rooms and so on.
- **Selling of Secondhand Clothes:** Some migrants from Tahoua and Dosso Regions engaged in the selling of fairly used clothes (known as *gwanjo* in Hausa) like shirts, gowns, turbans and rings etc to the public. By so doing, they contribute to the economic growth and development of the Sokoto.
- **Hair Dressing:** The female ones who happened to be the wives of male migrants from Tahoua involved in hairdressing (*kitso* in Hausa), they usually go around the area looking for people that are interested, and sometimes they were patronized at their place of residents.

Spatial Distribution of Tahoua Communities in Sokoto Metropolis

When something is spatially distributed is referring to anything that occupies a given space. The early settlers of Tahoua Community in Sokoto reside in Gidan Igwai under the leadership of Malam Umarou[14]. But it is pertinent to note that Tahoua communities can be found in most areas of Sokoto

Metropolis undergoing their business as well. The most pronounced areas where they concentrated include;

- Gidan Igwai
- Gidan Dare
- Kalfu
- Rumjin Sambo
- Arkilla Gandu
- Kwannawa
- Mabera
- Arkilla Federal Lowcost[15]

CONCLUSION

From the forgoing discussions one may deduced that migration play a significant role in the socio- economic development of the people of Sokoto and Tahoua Regions, despites the negative notions some people may have on it. The paper therefore has come up with the following findings, that migration led to economic advancement of the migrants and the host communities, because, it gives room for the exchange of goods and services between Sokoto State and the people of Tahoua region. Migration helped in livestock production in Sokoto and Hausaland at large for commercial and Agricultural purposes.

The paper also conclude that there are some social factors that without them the stated economic factors cannot be stable, these include; Inter racial marriages between Hausas and people of Tahoua region. This gives room for building peace and sense of togetherness. Finally the prayer of this paper is that government and other stakeholders should encourage the free movement of people in respective of their ethnic, socio-economic and political differences to benefit from each other, as in the case of Sokoto and the region of Tahoua.

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