Effect of Xenophobia on Migration and the Quest for Regional Integration in Africa

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[0164] Abstract

Hundreds of people, often of the poorest and most vulnerable leave their habitats to settle elsewhere in order to survive. Some do so voluntarily and others involuntarily. The interplay between migration and xenophobia in Africa is increasingly becoming a complex and multifarious problem in the international system. This study examines the factors responsible for the movement of Africans most especially Nigerian citizens out of their countries to other countries of the world. But it focuses more on xenophobic attacks on Nigerian migrants in African countries, specifically in South Africa and Ghana among others and its implications on African regional integration efforts. The data for the study was secondary sources derived from documentary evidences. The analysis was contextually carried out. Findings revealed that majority of Nigerian nationals move out of the country to other countries in African and the developed countries of Europe and America where they find better structured economy, greater economic opportunities and assured security. Findings has also revealed that a good number of Nigerians leave their country to other countries as a result of bad government and failure of the Nigerian government to provide enabling environment for businesses to thrive. Investigation has shown that attacks and hostilities on African nationals resident in South Africa and Ghana in the recent time are basically targeted on established businesses of Nigerians and a few other nationals of other African countries. Xenophobic attacks on migrants in any part of the world is not a welcomed development because labour migrants contribute to the growth and development of the host countries. It is even more disheartening for Africans attacking fellow Africans in Africa. It is therefore a big crack on the acclaimed regional integration and co-operation among African nations. In conclusion, the work recommends among other things that the governments of South Africa and Ghana should look inwards to unravel the root causes of incessant xenophobic attacks on African nationals resident in their countries and address it by resettling the affected individuals. It also enjoins the government of Nigeria and other African nations affected by xenophobic attacks to quickly address the deteriorating economic and security situations in their countries in order to curb the outflow of their citizens to developed countries with better structured economies.

Keywords: Africa, migration, regional integration, xenophobia

Introduction

Migration involves the movement of people from one place to another; and this occurs when an individual   moves from his or her place of normal abode to take up residence in another place, and it

could be within one's territorial state or to another for the same purpose. He or she is seen as a migrant. In fact, if you are in a country without being sent by your government or an international institution but in search of employment, business or better means of living, then you are a migrant. (Ogunsanwo 2015)

International organizations such as the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) and the African Regional Integration treaties recognize and encourage the free movement of capital, goods and peoples across national borders, as a way of promoting regional and sub-regional integration, but despite this, often times the movement of people especially unskilled labour from one country to another and even from within one part of a country to another is becoming increasingly circumscribed and threatened. Free movement however comes with its own associated problems such as anti-migration sentiments which however may be stronger in some countries than the others and could as well result in xenophobia, which is an unreasonable fear or hatred of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. Xenophobic attitude from some segments of the population towards migrants are in most cases false and unfounded. Ogunsanwo (2015) noted that people at the lower and lowest levels of the society feel more threatened by the influx or presence of migrants who are perceived as willing and indeed determined to compete for and snatch their lowly paid jobs. Even where there is no scarcity of jobs, the feeling that there is foreign "unfair competition may be strong, thereby leading to interpreting wrongly the intentions of the migrant, which he/she may indeed not have

The intersection between migration and xenophobia is an age long phenomenon in international relations, and it is not the exclusive of any country. There have been cases or instances of xenophobic attacks on migrants both in Nigeria, South Africa and Ghana among others as well as other countries of the world since the colonial period. What is worrisome however is the sudden increase in the movement of Africans most especially Nigerian youths out of their countries to other parts of Africa, Europe and America and the incessant xenophobic attacks on them and other African nationals by fellow Africans despite the efforts of the regional bodies/organizations and their leaders towards encouraging regional collaboration and integration for economic growth and development.

It is in this regard that this work examines the reasons behind the xenophobic attacks on African migrants within Africa, especially Nigerians. Whatever may have been the reasons given for the incessant xenophobic attack on Nigerians and other African nationals in Africa, the truth remains that discouraging people from moving freely and establishing their businesses in nations within the African region is totally wrong. Besides, xenophobia constitutes a serious threat to economic development and African regional integration. The work, therefore, tries to highlight the reasons why many Nigerians migrate to take up residency in other parts of the world and examines the implication of xenophobia on Africa regional integration and development.

Conceptual Clarification:
Xenophobia and Migration. Migration and xenophobia are two closely related issues that cannot be divorced from one another. The intersection between migration and xenophobia, and its attendant outcome is not new. It has been a generational phenomenon. The movement of people from one location to another search of permanent residence and greener pastures is as old as the existence of most nation states in Africa and beyond.

Free movement of persons, goods and services was further enhanced by the formation of the Economic Community of West African States in 1975, as it expanded migration opportunities for West Africans. "The ECOWAS protocol of 29th May, 1979 on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishments, changed the face of intra-regional migration (Ikwuyatum 2020) Unfortunately, the traditional hospitality Africa is noted for is gradually eroded with the increasing level of intra and1 extra-regional migrations within the continent which has in recent time been resented in some areas by the locals. According to Ikwuyatum (2020)

The competition for dwindling resources and unlimited employment opportunities in many countries have pitched labour migrants against locals who often claim that the limited employment opportunities are being taken over by labour migrants. This situation has created xenophobic tendencies as migrants are discriminated against on the basis of their nationality, ethnicity and religion.

Post-independence period in South Africa witnessed the influx of labour migrants and other unskilled workers from across Africa, as a result of the boast in the country's industrial sector. " In the recent time, these set of migrants had often been attacked and harassed by South African locals who often see them as intruders.Tafira (2020) has also noted that the anti-migrant attack on foreign nationals living in South Africa started in May 2008 in Alexandra township of Johannesburg, which claimed the lives of about 64 immigrants, while thousands were displaced, many sustained severe injuries.The problem remains that while apartheid ended in South Africa in 1994, the country still struggles with deep-rooted inequality and racial tension among its diverse people.

South Africa with its long history of settler colonialism, has endured long lasting effects of racism, ethnicism and xenophobia that has continued to afflict the contemporary society. Xenophobic attacks has equally being meted out to African nationals resident in Ghana, where shops belonging to Nigerians were locked up by Ghanaians at the popular Opara Square electronic market in the business district of Accra. Ghanaians faced similar fate in the hands of Nigeria government around the 1980s. The fear of foreigners taking over what should have been left for the host country citizens is believed to be one major factor responsible for the hatred for foreigners. For instance, it is a general belief that South African women prefer foreign black men whom they claim perform better economically and sexually than their native South African men. Dauda, Sakariyan & Ameen (2018) observed that:

The ugly trend has been linked to the parochial mindset among South Africans with the belief that foreign nationals in their land are the cause of unemployment, high poverty rate, and the spread of deadly diseases in the country. Given this fact, it has become a notion within the country that foreigners have hijacked the socio-economic sector of South Africa and the solution was to frustrate the migrants out of the society.

In September 2019, native South African nationals once again attacked foreign-owned shops and businesses in Johannesburg and Pretoria belonging mostly to Nigerians and other African nationals on the allegation that they are responsible for South Africa's current socio- economic woes. This act drew wide spread condemnation from across the African continent and resulted in reprisal attacks on South African citizens and businesses abroad. In reaction too, Nigeria government evacuated her citizens, recalled its high commissioner and boycotted the World.

Economic Forum on Africa Summit in Cape Town
Dahir (2020) noted that South Africa for sure has serious crime problem with over 21,000 people killed by the end of March 2019, with attendant sexual offence, assaults, robberies and violence against women. But he however digressed, saying that it is not possible to conclude that foreigners commit most of these violent crimes because the police do not publicly release data on the nationalities of those they arrest and in most cases have no idea of whom the perpetrators are.

Methuselah (2019) is of the view that xenophobia is not fear of foreigners but deep seated hatred of Africans against their fellow Africans. He explained that many years of apartheid

in South Africa, bad governance and high level of poverty experienced in many of these African countries has robbed most Africans of their self-esteem and isolated them from other Africans, which result into this psycho-phobia attitude.

Most times corrupt and inefficient leaders and the political class instigate xenophobia attacks against immigrants as cover up for their inefficiencies and failures in governance. Wuam (2019) said that "the intense competition on the 10 percent economic opportunities by the indigenous population of South Africa and other Africans was among factors fueling xenophobic attacks.

Genesis of Migration in Nigeria

International migration in Nigeria predates the colonization of Nigeria. This form of movement was mostly associated with slave raiding, slave-trading, inter-ethnic conflicts, warfare, legitimate trading, nomadic herding of live-stock and pilgrimage to religious places in the Arabian Peninsula. These brought about diverse human mobility and migration within and across borders of existing empires and kingdoms. Although there is paucity of documentation on human mobility and migration during this era, Alkali & Armstrong quoted in Ikwuyatum (2020) had presented few ideas which conveyed the idea that migration actually flourished widely during the pre- colonial period. According to them, human mobility and/or migration flow and trends during this era indicate that Sokoto caliphate was essentially populated by immigrants of Gobirawa, Nufawa, Bussawa, Tuaregs, Adrawa and the Zebrama ethnic groups, while the emigrants were mostly Hausa-Fulani. Also the dynamics of migration in the north-central part of Nigeria was noted as early as 500 BC, when it was essentially determined by the quest for territory.

The arrival of the British in the 19th century marked a turning point and added another angle to both internal and international migration in Nigeria. Activities of the colonial administration led to the demarcation of boundaries, relatively stable government, modern means of transportation, monetized economy, among others. The political economy of the country was such that it provided a framework for large scale migration, derived from the need for large labour force for mines, plantation and public administration. The dynamics of unhindered spatial movement of people within and outside empires and kingdoms in Nigeria and Africa were encouraged by the artificial and undefined boundaries created by the colonial masters. Studies on internal migration revealed that migration labourers from different parts of Nigeria, especially from the rural areas moved into regional headquarters, administrative and market centres of Lagos, Kano, Zaria, Enugu, Ibadan, Sokoto, and Kaduna, in quest of trade and gainful employment. During the colonial and post-colonial periods, agriculture had remained the most staple source of income and livelihood of Nigerians, most especially the Igbo of South-East, before its decline in the late 1960s. Korieh (2010) observed that household members participated in the formal economy as producers and marketers of palm produce, and for most of the colonial and early post-colonial period, they built substantial wealth until the decline in agricultural production from the late 1960s. This was attributed to the stupendous revenue from sale of crude oil. The commercial exploitation of oil at Oloibiri in 1956 created a shift in attention from agriculture to oil production as a major source of revenue for the country. the 1970s and the first half of 1980s marked a boom period due to the Israeli-Arab crisis but the gains of this period was frittered away by corrupt politicians and their counterparts in army uniform. Moreover, the glut after the Middle East war led to a drop in the demand for oil products at the international market and resulted in high poverty rate and much hardship on the people of Nigeria. The appalling situation triggered the collapse of the Nigerian economy which escalated insecurity and high rate of unemployment that culminated in the mass emigration of Nigerian skilled and unskilled workers; initially from the rural to urban cities within the country and in recent time, to other countries of the world which have better structured and improved economies.

Pull and Push Factors Responsible for the Rise in Movement of Nigerians out of the Country to other countries of the world in the Recent Time

In recent time, there is a huge rise in the number of Nigerians that leave the country to seek permanent residence and greener pastures in other parts of the world, most especially Europe and America. This trend is more prevalent among fresh graduates, medical practitioner and unskilled workers who are prepared to take any form of risk to explore other areas even at the risk of their lives. Ogunsanwo (2015) noted that:

> During the conflict in Libya, majority of Nigerian migrants, among other nationals ignored the efforts of their governments to get them out of the harm's way, as they preferred to remain in the cauldron than return to Nigeria. Their decision to stay behind badly reflected on the country from which they had departed to embark on the perilous journey across the hot desert to North Africa.

This worrisome trend among Nigerians, most especially the youths, to leave the country to other countries within Africa and beyond has been attributed to a number of factors which have been classified under "pull and push" factors. The push factors are those unfavorable situations and conditions that make life miserable and uncomfortable for people, and which tend to force them to move out to look for alternatives. These include among others: Failure of Nigeria government to create employment opportunities and enabling environment for businesses and entrepreneurship skills to thrive; bad governance and corruption among Nigeria leaders; poor funding of Education, lack of infrastructural development; ethnic sentiments religious intolerance, insecurity and nepotism. The pull factors on the other hand are better and favourable environments, with well-developed and structured economy, assured security and employment opportunities for all. These tend to attract people to such environments. Countries in Europe and America but more specifically the United States of America, Canada, Britain and Australia have in the recent time received the highest number of migrants from across the world. The Pull factors among others include : high Living standard, attractive welfare packages, assured security, availability of job opportunities, good governance and political and religious freedom and tolerance.

Xenophobia in Ghana

Xenophobia has become a recurrent phenomenon in Africa. It often occurs with attendant consequences for lives and properties, and inter-state diplomatic relations. Though globalization has purportedly conscripted the world into a concise village where everyone is recognized as a global citizen, ethnic and identity consciousness still define the basis for cross-border interaction. Nigerians by nature are adventurers and explorers who take their business to all parts of the globe. Nigeria has huge human resources, this explains why you find Nigerians in all fields of human endeavours. All over the world Nigerian medical doctors, nurses and other health workers, engineers, university professors, business men and women are migrant workers in virtually all parts of Africa, Europe and America contributing immensely to the growth and development of such countries.

Although some of these migrants have gone into such countries without the necessary traveling documents, but majority are business men and women and legal labour migrants who have traveled out of their countries of origin with legal travel documents, but unfortunately some of them have been made to face unjust and inhuman treatments in their countries of residence and Nigerians had been identified to be the most affected in this unusual attacks on foreigners. In the recent time, there was reported case of xenophobic attack on Nigerian traders resident in Ghana. In January 2018, Ghanaian

government deported about seven hundred and twenty three Nigerians on alleged illegal stay, cybercrimes and prostitution, also in June 2019, several shops belonging to Nigerian traders were locked up by Ghana Electrical Dealers Association (GEDA), though it was swiftly resolved and shops reopened within 48 hours later with government intervention. Unfortunately however, the latest incident which had government backing occurred few day after the Ghanaian parliament placed ban on retail business by foreigners (Editorial Board of Guardian Newspaper, 2029). This was what gave Ghanaian traders the impetus to attack Nigerian traders once more on the flimsy excuse of not abiding by the country's retail laws. Nigeria Senate Minority Leader, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe described the recent closure of hundreds of shops belonging to Nigerians in Ghana by Ghanaian authorities as a clear case of official endorsement of xenophobia. He further describes the action of the Ghanaian government as a willful denigration of sub-regional brotherhood and one that is in clear conflict with ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of goods and services within the sub-region. He noted that Ghana's recent regulations, which stipulates that retail trade is the exclusive preserve of Ghanaians is against the spirit of economic co-operation as envisaged by African leaders at independence. If at the end of the day each country resolves to make laws and regulations that are in contradiction with the binding protocol, what becomes the fate of the regions integration efforts? This is quite absurd as it negate the spirit that propelled the formation of ECOWAS in the first place. (Deji 2020)

Xenophobia in South Africa

Xenophobia which is assumed to be the abnormal fear or envy or hatred of foreigners/strangers in a country by the citizens living in that country is one of the many threats to security all over the world. The rate at which xenophobic attacks are increasing in South Africa is becoming worrisome and invariably poses a major threat to peace and security in international relations. From 1994 when apartheid was dismantled in South Africa, this ugly trend has continued to create bad blood in South Africa, where South Africans rise against fellow blacks. A good number of reasons have been adduced for this unusual phenomenon, which includes misconstrued perception of foreigners, poverty and unemployment, crime among the immigrants or anti-immigrant sentiments among South African citizens, and social class/structural injustice.

Factors Responsible for Xenophobia in South Africa Misconstrued Perception of Foreigners by South African Natives Foreign nationals resident in South Africa are most often confronted with xenophobic attacks from South African nationals, most especially the "locals" who accuse them of being responsible for their socio-economic woes and insecurity in the country. For instance, they attributed the increase in crime in most of the informal settlements in South Africa to the influx of illegal migrants from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Tanzania, among others. According to Nwaubani, (2020) South Africa has a history of xenophobic attacks by black South Africans who accuse citizens of other African countries as well as Asian countries, of coming to steal their jobs. This scholar states further that investigation has shown that South Africans detest Nigerians because they believe they are criminals, too loud, too arrogant, and also that they don't know how to talk to people, and that their women (South African ladies) prefer foreign men to theirs.

Corroborating the above assertion, Benedict and Mensah (2016) noted that migrants in South Africa face various problems, ranging from culture shock, to probable discernment from the host /country's natives, especially in some informal settlements where government presence was scarcely felt and services of social welfare, health care, employment and education are in direct competition with the natives and migrants. Foreign nationals are often accused of alleged involvement in drug peddling, prostitution, sexual abuses, theft, etc. South Africans also accuse Nigerians and other nationals of aggravating the unemployment situation in the country, taking up jobs that would otherwise have been available to them (South African citizens).

Findings however revealed that major drug businesses in South Africa are carried out by South Africans themselves, precisely the "White South Africans/Boers who constitute a cartel that import major drugs from Holland which is the Boers original home. Also drugs are imported from South America, Asia and Europe in collaboration with the police and immigration officers that give them coverage. Other foreign nationals such as Nigerians, Tanzanians, Indians, Pakistanis, etc. only act or serve as middle men and form the second, third and final categories in the chains of drug distribution to the consumers in South Africa, but they do not have protection and coverage from the security agencies and therefore fall victims of the crime in the eyes of the South African authority and the natives who already see them as their problem.

Poverty and Unemployment

The inability of governments of African nations to create jobs, enabling environment for their youths to thrive, and to provide the basic amenities and infrastructures which encourage economic growth and development are the major problems facing virtually all African countries including South Africa. This situation and the high level of poverty in the land is largely responsible for the frustration and hostility exhibited by youths in these countries which has its manifestations in incessant killings, kidnappings, banditry, armed robbery and xenophobia witnessed in most African countries in recent time.

South Africans continuously attack immigrants, and their main reason has always been that these immigrants (foreigners) are taking over their jobs and thus making them jobless. Besides, those who engage in private businesses are also seen as competitors that out-shine and outsmart them in businesses. Adepoju (1991) noted that "the uneducated migrants are scapegoats in periods of economic recession and are accused of stealing jobs from nationals. They are also stigmatized as criminals and in places like South Africa, blamed for spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS".

Some scholars are of the view that the South African political class is not making adequate effort to accommodate the immigrant workers in the country, and also to improve the living conditions of their citizens. Suleiman (2020) is of the view that:

> Africans need fellow Africans to move forward as a continent, adding that embracing inclusive policies would help attract more ideas and skills needed for growth and development of the country. He noted further that the intense competition on the ten percent economic opportunities by the indigenous population of South Africa and the other African nationals are among the major factors fueling xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Government should therefore provide the basic needs of its youths who form the greater percentage of its population, who also forms the nucleus of future leaders of tomorrow.

Crime among the Immigrants/Anti-Immigrant Sentiment among South African Citizens South African government had in recent time placed restriction on the influx of foreigners whom they believe are responsible for most crimes in their country. Despite this ban, illegal migrants from other parts of Africa have continued to make their way into the country. Some of these migrants engage in genuine businesses, while others engage in illegal trade in drugs, prostitution and gambling. Some live flamboyantly without any obvious source of income and therefore constitute themselves into nuisance in South Africa. This notwithstanding, there are lots of Nigerian professionals such as medical doctors, lecturers, engineers and businessmen, holding positions of pride in the economy of South Africa, but the problem with the South African locals/natives as Anup (2016) observes, is that " they generalize one bad experience of crime to every other stranger. According to him, xenophobic people do not easily trust, they are hostile in their behaviour, and can

easily get abusive when dealing with those whom they hate or fear. The fact remains that most foreign nationals who were attacked and maltreated during the xenophobic attack in South Africa had lived in South Africa for years, doing genuine businesses and are therefore victims of transferred aggression.

Social Class/Structural Injustice Post-apartheid experiences and social inequality prevalent in South African is another factor that ignites xenophobia in South Africa. Since the end of apartheid in South Africa, there has been an increase in inequality among the people. This has bred obstinate cultures of relative deprivation, which lies at the root of social instability in that country. Hiropoulas (2019) observes that "apartheid era created unnecessary class distinction in terms of distribution of social amenities and rights to certain privileges such as education, health care delivery, housing and residential privileges". For instance, South Africa had categories of settlements also known as locations for different categories of her citizens. The level of development and attention each location receives from government was determined by the caliber of people living there. This has been carried into the present era as a result of negligence by the government in elevating such areas to modern standard.

It is pertinent to note that xenophobia and crime are more prevalent in informal settlements or locations such as Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa, Lenasia, Zululand, Eldorado Park in Gauteng province, among others where poor native South Africans live.. In line with this view, Hiropoulos (2019) further observed that most attacks on foreigners were from Gauteng and West Cape which experience   high social deprivation such as informal settlements, dense population, racial heterogeneity, unemployment, lack of access to sanitation and low education.

Xenophobia in Nigeria
Nigeria equally experienced the influx of migrants in the 1980s. The immigration of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) citizens into Nigeria took a different dimension after the adoption of the protocol on free movement of goods, capital and people, which was ratified in the 1980s. This almost coincided with the period of Economic buoyancy in Nigeria. Arthur (1991) noted that:

> The 1973 global oil crisis brought Nigeria into prominence, as oil prices surged to great height and this made oil rich Nigeria attractive economic destination and haven for migrants from other regions of West Africa. However, between 1983 and 1985, Nigeria followed the Ghanaian example and expelled an estimated 2 million low skilled African migrants, including over one million Ghanaians, on the excuse that the aliens had been responsible for most of the crimes and socio-economic problems in the country as well as threatening the nation's security.

The Ghanaian head of state, Flight – Lt. Jerry Rawlings described the quit order Shehu Shagari's government gave to foreign nationals as an electoral gimmick by the then National Party of Nigeria – controlled Federal Government to divert attention from its failures, so that it could be returned to power later in August/September 1983. It was equally observed that even within the same state, the movement of people from one part of the country to another has often been resisted by communities who felt that the mass influx of the supposed aliens would pollute their culture and put pressure on its economy and job opportunities meant for the citizens. The first of this trend had emerged in the northern part of Nigeria where the traditional rulers succeeded in persuading the colonial officials to ensure that southerners were not allowed to establish their settlements or place of abode near the old cities of Kano, Sokoto etc. Such

policy still exists in Nigeria and the immigrants are made to settle in areas known as " stranger elements' Quarters or Sabongari settlements. The mass influx of people of the Southern region of Nigeria was not welcomed by the indigenous people of the north who saw their presence as threat to the socio-economic wellbeing and development of their region. Ogunsanwo, (2015) pointed out that " what was more troubling was the translation of the inner feeling of " you are different from us and therefore should not stay among us or near us" into policy. Hence the first form of xenophobia in Nigeria emerged as everything was done to frustrate the migrant traders from the south.

Implications of Xenophobia on African Regional Integration

Regional integration, widely accepted as important process for development particularly among the third world poor countries, is perceived as a process by which a group of nation states voluntarily and in various degrees have access to each other's markets and establish mechanisms and techniques that minimize conflicts and maximize internal and external economic, political, social and cultural benefits of their interaction.Dauda, Sakariyan & Ameen (2018). In other words, it is a process in which neighbouring states enter into an agreement in order to upgrade cooperation through common institutions and rules.

Also, African Union and ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons, goods and services and Right of Residence and establishment, equally expanded migration opportunities and privileges to nations within the region. Therefore the incessant attack on nationals of African origin in South Africa and a few other countries is not healthy. Regional integration no doubt has a lot of benefits to integrating states particularly African states. According to Haarlov (1997) one of the most decisive benefits to African states is that African regional integration allows the countries of the region to stand up to the challenges of globalization, and endure the pressure of global leaders who dictate the rules of the game. It is in this regard that Salim (2008) asserts that:

> Integration is no longer a question of propriety; it is an inevitable strategy of survival and   development.   The rhythm of globalization sustained by the tidal wave of economic liberalization and disparities in the share of projects, have made it a matter of emergency for African countries to hold each other's hands if they wish to expand, strengthen, and integrate their economic areas as well as achieve social cohesion and political unity.

The import of this assertion is that xenophobia in South Africa or any African country does not only undermine integration and mutual cooperation but incapacitates the gross economic, socio-cultural and political development of the continent and therefore should be discouraged, if full regional integration which forms the hallmark of the founding fathers of AU and ECOWAS is to be actualized.

Conclusion

The intersection between migration and xenophobia has in the recent time attracted global attention. This is as a result of the inherent danger the interplay of the phenomenon poses on international relations presently. Movement of people from one location to another in search of permanent residence or greener pastures is not new and has been a welcome practice among African Union member Countries, the ECOWAS countries and the global community. This has remained a means of encouraging economic growth and development among friendly nations. However this trend has changed in recent time, as immigration privileges are increasingly being restricted to certain categories

of intending migrants by some countries within and outside Africa. More disturbing is the incessant xenophobic attack on African migrants by fellow Africans within the region and sub-regional member countries.

Findings revealed that there has equally been massive increase in the number of people leaving their countries to other countries within Africa, Europe and America in search of better structured economies, security and greater job opportunities, most especially Nigerian youths. However, it is an established fact that the foreign policy of a country depends on the strength of its economy and leadership. Nigerian leaders have not really been responsive to their primary responsibility of providing the basic needs of their citizens in terms of employment, security and social amenities. Abdullahi (2019) had observed that:

> Nigeria has retrogressed and became irrelevant because she has been surpassed by countries that once looked up to her as a destination for better living. In the eyes of many, Nigeria has been sleeping for too long, governed by corrupt, gluttons, predatory and irresponsible clique of elites. The country has allowed itself to be defined by corruption, terrorism, banditry, lawlessness, laziness, bad roads, and non-functional institutions and infrastructures.

This therefore is part of the reasons why most Nigerians leave the country in search of better and improved life in other countries. Findings have also revealed that majority of Africans who leave their countries to other countries within Africa and beyond at the risk of their lives, do so in the bid to run away from the harsh economic situations, increasing rate of insecurity, unemployment and lack of basic infrastructures in their countries. For instance, The EndSARS protest in Nigeria which engulfed the country in the recnt past, precisely from October 13th 2020, and beyond is an agitation against police brutality, government ineptitude and bad governance. Rotimi (2020) rightly observed that " it is the expression of built up anger over the years against all forms of official excesses and failure in governance". It is therefore a wakeup call on the APC- led government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Nigeria and other African leaders to rise up to their primary responsibilities of providing security, employment opportunities, conducive environment and basic amenities for their citizens, as this would reduce their urge to leave their countries. Moreover, good governance would curb brain-drain and in fact, protect African citizens from xenophobic attacks in other countries in the world. This should serve as a moral boost to Nigerian leaders and other leaders of African origin to live up to their primary responsibility of rebuilding the economy, strengthening its security and making the continent great and attractive destination for foreign investors, and to boost tourism and industrial growth. If for anything, the South Africa and Ghana experiences should galvanize the Nigeria political class and leaders to do things that would encourage Nigerians to stay in the country to pursue their legitimate goals as was done by Ghanaian leaders in the 1980s during the "Ghana Must Go" incident

It should however be noted that migration is not totally out of place as most migrants who leave their countries to other countries do so for different genuine reasons. Some have good intentions of exploring other areas outside their countries, rather than just to settle there permanently, besides, they contribute adequately to the growth and development of the host countries' economies. However, the increasing rate of xenophobic attacks on Africans by fellow Africans in African countries is not a welcome development, if Nigerians and other nationals of Africa are banned from engaging in business and other retail trading in Ghana, South Africa and other African countries, what then is the essence of ECOWAS Protocol and AU charter that guarantee free movement and settlement of nationals of member countries within the region and sub-regions. This work maintains that xenophobia poses grave danger to

the African dream of actualizing regional integration for the growth and development of the continent. The xenophobic attacks on Nigerians and other African nationals in South Africa and Ghana does not in any way encourage peace and stability in the region and therefore should be stopped.

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