

Post-Migration Poverty Structures and Pentecostal Churches' Social Services in Nigeria

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Abstract

Many migrants who are pulled from their culture and traditional homes for the purpose of getting 'greener pastures' end up without realizing such motives. They become poorer, as they lose their old means of livelihood and, are also unable to find the desired better alternative. This is a ubiquitous experience in Nigerian cities. The teeming population of post-internal-migrant Nigerians makes the society vulnerable to low human development index and deviant behaviours. This is part of what makes poverty a social pathology of society. Apart from government programmes churches, especially the Pentecostal paradigms respond to poverty conditions of their followers through social services heralded in the wholesome presentation of the Christian message. In specifics, the churches' programmes towards poverty alleviation are the provision of education and healthcare facilities and services, Pentecostal empowerment, skills development through prosperity ministry and business seminars, charity and welfare schemes, religious networking of members, corporate investment and employment, loan facilities etc. These social services and social ministry contribute in no small measure to ameliorating poverty hassles of Christians, especially in the urban centres where the post migrant poor fall back on such facilities for survival and adaptation.

1. Introduction

Migration in human culture is the movement of people from one place in the world to another, occurring over a wide variety of spatial and temporal contexts and, for material and non-material reasons. Migration dates back to the movement of the first human beings on this planet. In Genesis, 11: 27-32, we have a record of how the descendants of Terah, among whom was Abram migrated from their homeland (Ur of the Chaldeans), to the land of Canaan. Also in Genesis 46, we see how Jacob and his descendants migrated to Egypt. But while the prime motive in ancient times was the search for more favorable conditions, patterns of migration underwent many changes since industrialization and urbanization. Large scale dimensions of migration have colonialism, missionary adventures and slavery as their antecedents. Colonialism and slavery are now history but missionary adventures and religious proselytization have grown to new dimensions. Today, the practice of moving away from home in search of a better place is common. It has become an integral part of the current global economy. Thus, migration in recent times is unprecedented and ever increasing.

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There are two types of migration: internal and international migrations. Internal migration is the movement of people within the boundaries of their countries of origin, but outside their place of birth. International migration involves the movement of people outside the boundaries of their country of origin. Whatever the perspective is, Papastergladis notes that migration is an ongoing process which surrounds and pervades almost all aspects of contemporary society.¹ Whether internally or internationally, people can either choose to move voluntarily or be forced to move involuntarily. Voluntary migration is born out of (rational) choice.² Here, migration decisions are undertaken by self-interested and rationally selective individuals with specific purposes. Involuntary migration is determined by forces and circumstances beyond individuals' control such as political strife, family disagreements, fighting with neighbours and wars that often make people refugees, internally displaced persons or asylum seekers.

The 2010 World Bank Report affirms that over 214 million people are living outside their countries of birth.³ Nevertheless, the number of people who move within the national borders is much higher than international migrants. The 2009 Human Development Report estimates internal migrants at about four times the number of international migrants.⁴ Either case, scholars identify that internal or international migrations are motivated by push and pull factors depending on individuals, or group of migrants. Push factors tend to move people away from their current locations for reasons ranging from unemployment, lack of services, lack of safety, high crime, crop failure, drought, flooding, poverty, to persecution and war. Similarly, pull factors are things that encourage people to move to a particular location for reasons including job opportunities, personal safety, better service provision, political stability, more fertile land, lower risk from natural hazards, good climate, less crime, among others. In all and for some people, the decision to move is generally not based on one reason alone, but may be in combination of a number of reasons.

This paper concentrates on internal migration, – within one's country of origin. In other words, internal migrants are citizens who move from one place to another within the confines of their state in order to take up employment, seek refuge, establish a residence, search for greener pasture, or seek education. Internal migration is usually regarded as a short distance movement. Migrating for short distance incurs lower costs, and Abrar and Seeley argue that this has led some poor people to engage more in short distance (internal) migrations.⁵

Internal migration is classified into rural-urban migration, urban-rural migration and urban-urban migration. Rural-urban migration is common among other forms of internal migration and international migration. Hence, from the standpoint of poverty reduction and rational choice intervention, rural-urban migration appears prevalent among the poor. Poverty and lack of opportunity in rural areas are the key drivers of rural-urban migration. Hence, rural-urban migration is the nucleus of internal migration, – citizens moving to the capital or more economically developed cities. In its part, the economic theory of migration asserts that rural-urban migration is caused by geographic differences in the supply and demand of labour.⁶ Many of the jobs available in rural areas are agricultural based. The decrease in the traditional form of employment in rural areas force many young people to leave the area in search of work in the urban centres of their country. Clemens and Ogden remarks that people (especially in developing countries) see migration as the most profitable investment open to the rural poor.⁷ In most cases, it is considered as the only investment opportunity available for people to change their lives and create a new future. As a result large numbers of people ranging from skilled, semi-skilled to unskilled migrants crowd the urban cities. Thus, our thrust is also focused on rural-urban variant of internal migration. In the rest of the essay we shall discuss the poverty push factors for migration; the post-migration poverty factors and experience of Nigeria; and the Pentecostal churches poverty alleviation strategies through social services.

¹ N. Papastergladi, *The Turbulence of Migration*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002, 2-4

² J.M. Nelson, *Access to Power, Politics and the Urban Poor in Developing Countries*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, 49.

³ World Bank, "The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change" (2010), <http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/wmr2010english.pdf>, accessed Nov. 12, 2014.

⁴ UNDP, "Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development" (2009) http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/269/hdr_2009_en_complete.pdf, accessed, Nov. 5, 2014.

⁵ R.C. Abrar & J. Seeley, *Social Protection and Livelihood: Marginalised Migrant Workers of India and Bangladesh*, Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2009, 72.

⁶ H. Waddington & R. Sabates – Wheeler, "How Does Poverty Affect Migration Choice?" (2003) www.migrationdrc.org, accessed Nov. 12, 2014.

⁷ M. Clemens & T. Ogden, *Migration as a Strategy for Household Finance: A Research Agenda on Remittances, Payments and Development*, Financial Access Initiative, New York: New York University, 2013, 7

2. Poverty Push Factors for Migration

Migration occur in response to a wide range of factors which affect people differently and to which they react differently. As such, people migrate for a range of reasons – such as crisis situations (as in the Boko Haram areas of terrorism or the ethno-crisis spots in North Central Nigeria), natural disasters (as in the flood and oil spills in the Niger Delta areas), for addressing and adjusting to social, economic, political, environmental and historical circumstances, (as in labour migration, political position, desert encroachment, ancestral ties). In all, the desire for quality life and overcoming poverty more than other factors account for why Nigerians migrate to places outside their places of birth and culture. The varieties they desire may not be as widely or conveniently available to them in their hometowns and thus, they consider migration as an option. Among these different reasons that inform why people migrate, this paper chooses to discuss poverty – the post internal migration variety.

The complexity and variety of ways in which the relationship between migration and poverty is understood and explained, reflects both the diversity of definitions and understandings of migrants and migration, as well as of poverty and poverty analysis.⁸ Thus, the face of poverty is diverse. As a result, it has been difficult to posit a comprehensively acceptable definition. Poverty is not only an expression of life situation, but includes a state of mind and a perception of self in the complex web of social relations. However, scholars have identified three major types of poverty: absolute, relative and subjective poverty.⁹ Chambers underscores this conception as he identifies different dimensions of poverty to include among others poverty proper, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness, all of which either works independently or combines to make an individual or group of people poor.¹⁰ Blanco also conceive poverty to be the total absence of opportunities, accompanied by hunger, lack of education, illiteracy, physical and mental ailment, high levels of undernourishment, emotional and social instability, sorrow and hopelessness for the future. Not only this, he goes further to state that poverty is also typified by a chronic shortage of political, social and economic participation and thus, denying individuals access to societal privileges.¹¹ Furthermore, the United Nations define poverty not only in terms of earnings but also by access to services including lack or limited access to education and other basic services, homelessness and inadequate housing, a lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger and malnutrition, unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion, and ill-health.¹² Giddens underscore this character of exclusion as he identifies the exclusion to include labour market exclusion, service exclusion, exclusion from social relations, political exclusion and homelessness, among others.¹³

In the World Bank's inductive approach, poverty is the lack of what is necessary for human well-being – lack of resources that lead to hunger and physical deprivation. Poverty is a state of deprivation or want in which a person is incapable of satisfying the minimum basic human needs and, is excluded from socially adequate living standards – a state of deprivations from aspects of human capabilities: economic (income, livelihoods, decent work), human (health, education), political (empowerment, rights, voice), socio-cultural (status, dignity) and protective (insecurity, risk, vulnerability).¹⁴ In the main, poverty is a social problem associated with physical want. That is insufficient means to meet basic needs. It is a state of deprivation manifested in terms of low income, malnutrition, lack of assets, poor health, substandard clothing and housing, vulnerability to events and circumstances which place lives and livelihoods in jeopardy, environmental hazards and insecure habitation. In its mental dimension, it is characterized by low level of reasoning and creativity.

⁸ See George Gmelch "Migration and the Adaptation of Migrants to City Life" in George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner (ed.) *Urban Life: Readings in Urban Anthropology*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980, 71-76.

⁹ M. Haralambos and R. Heald *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, London: University Press, 1980; E.E. Ekong, "Rural Development and the Perspective of Poverty", Inaugural Lecture University of Uyo, Series No, 1, 1991; United Nations, *Human Development Report*. 1998, New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁰ R. Chambers, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1983, 78.

¹¹ R.O. Blanco, "How we Define Poverty", *UN Chronicles*, 39(4), 2002, 18.

¹² United Nations, *The Copenhagen Declaration of Programme of Action: World Summit for Social Development*, 6-12 March, 1995, New York: United Nations Department of Publications.

¹³ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology* 6th Edition, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, 498-501.

¹⁴ World Bank, *Challenge of Development: World Development Report 1991* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Socially, poverty is manifested in terms of social inferiority, low status stigma, lack of dignity or self-esteem, insecurity, marginalization and alienation. Poverty has a political dimension manifesting in terms of powerlessness denial of natural and political rights and exclusion from decision making process.¹⁵

Poverty push factors for migration can be captured in the frames: (i) structural causes which are permanent and depend on a host of factors (exogenous) such as limited resources, lack of skill, location disadvantage and other factors that are inherent in the social and political set-up; (ii) the transitional causes that are mainly due to structural adjustment reforms and changes in domestic economic policies that may result in price change, increased unemployment and so on; (iii) Natural calamities such as war, environmental degradation and so on.¹⁶

3. Post Migration and Structural Entrapment of Nigeria's Urban Poor

In Nigeria, the cities of Lagos, Kano, Port Harcourt and Kaduna, among others are leading in rural-urban migration. These cities are not only disproportionately overcrowded but they continue to receive significant numbers of migrants on daily basis; and thus, making life not only more difficult for already existing inhabitants but also making it extremely difficult for some of the migrants to survive.

From observable facts and figures, migration is seen to empower as well as disempower greater majority of migrants. The increase in the scale of migration presents a paradox; for many, migration does not necessarily make migrants better off. Indeed, some become further impoverished by moving out of their location. Normally, most people adopt migration as a strategy out of poverty, but unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the strategy will be successful. Individuals and groups may remain poor by adopting migration as a livelihood strategy or, alternatively, may benefit from migration and move out of poverty. No doubt, migration has empowered some migrants by increasing livelihood and employment opportunities for them, and consequently increasing their financial security and helping them to move out of poverty. In a similar turn, migration is seen to disempower countless number of Nigerian migrants and throw them into more pitiable and miserable conditions of poverty. Migration occurs in three stages. The first stage is pre-migration puzzles, involving the decision and the preparation to move. The second stage is migration, which is the physical relocation of the individual from one place to another. The third stage is post migration, which is the absorption of the migrant into the social, economic and cultural framework of the new society. The challenge and difficulties associated with the first two stages are incomparable to what is met in the third – the post migration stage. The initial stages have lower rates of stress than the final stage. Individuals who migrate experience multiple stress that impact their mental well being, including the loss of cultural norms, religious customs, and social support systems.¹⁷ The enormity of the challenge and difficulties confronting the post migration stage lead to new level of poverty entrapment. Many migrants end up in exploitation and further impoverishment instead of getting the desired shift or mobility.¹⁸ A number of factors contribute to this and they include:

Break down and fragmentation of traditional networks: Traditional network tie is a fundamental basic social link that people have to survive in their daily lives in Nigeria. Migration leads to a temporary or long term severance from kinship ties/extended family ties. The traditional network (community) offer individuals the psychological, economical, social, and ultimate security they need to survive. In fact, the traditional network connections constitute a social resource that people draw on to gain access to various kinds of security (financial, social, emotional, and psychological). This is particularly feasible in Nigeria and some other parts of Africa where communalism is a fundamental cultural value. In functional traditional Nigerian network, the community may have poor people but it may not have beggars. A beggar in this context is someone who is not accommodated in the elastic means of the community's life and resources. Severance with the traditional social structure is *ipso facto* loss of survival base. The situation is even worse for people who involuntarily migrate, such as refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons. The individual is outside the clan vital. Clan vital means a living clan, and a living clan is a community where real life is assured, where one can suffer neither social nor cultural alienation.

¹⁵ Steve Nkom, Rural Development as a Springboard for Poverty alleviation in Africa: Evolving Guidelines Based on Experience, Washington D.C.: World Bank EDI Human Resources Division, 1993, 26.

¹⁶ A.M. Yahie, The Design and Management of Poverty Alleviation Projects in Africa: Evolving Guidelines Based on Experience, Washington D.C.: World Bank EDI Human Resources Division, 1993, 26.

¹⁷ D. Bhugra and M.A. Becker, "Migration, Cultural Bereavement and Cultural Identity" World Psychiatry, (February 2005); 4(1): 18-24. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, accessed Nov. 10, 2014.

¹⁸ A. de Haan, "Livelihood and Poverty: The Role of Migration – A Critical Review of the Migration Literature" Journal of development Studies, 36, (2), 1999, 7.

This is in contrast to the urban destinations. Urban areas are very sensitive and highly competitive battle fields, where the law of the survival of the fittest reigns. Obviously, urbanization and consequent globalization lead to the rise of individualism. With individualism, traditional frameworks of identity are dissolved and new patterns of identity emerge.¹⁹ consequently, new rural-urban migrants may be unable to find support networks and they become socially, economically and politically vulnerable. In such an arena, individuals suffer different forms of social exclusions more especially new migrants. They are isolated and alienated and thus, they end up replacing old vulnerabilities (pre-migration) with new ones (post-migration). Yet, the migrant develops different types of urban appetites and choices which are expensive for him to attain.¹²⁰

Consequently, most rural-urban migrants are thrown into economic, emotional, psychological, social, and even religious crisis and implicitly into an increased and deepened state of poverty. This is especially true when they are incapable and have no structure of carving a niche in the already partitioned and colonized urban economic and social spaces. They end up becoming not only miserably poor but also psychologically, socially and emotionally frustrated and hopeless. In their misdirected search for survival, majority of them take to crime.

Limited Employment/Educational Opportunities: Originally, rural-urban migration existed to enable excess labour to be taken bit by bit from the rural areas to supply workforce for industries. But with time, the rate of rural-urban migration has ceaselessly outweighed job availability and the rate of job creation in urban areas. Almost on daily basis, large numbers of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled rural inhabitants move to urban cities in search of jobs, businesses or employment opportunities. Several reports put Nigeria's unemployment rate at about 24 percent; and 60 per cent of the country's population are youths, translating to about 80 million Nigerian youths. Youth unemployment rate is over 50 percent; about 64 million Nigeria youths are unemployed.²¹ This number does not include other categories of people of adult who are unemployed.

Drawing from this picture, it is certain that most rural-urban migrants do not have jobs awaiting them in the cities. When they find one, the wages are lower than expected, resulting in lower than expected income.²² Greater majority of migrants spend their time and little resources in endless search for jobs and employment opportunities. The March 15, 2014 Nigeria Immigration Services recruitment exercise in which over 600,000 graduates jostled for 4556 vacancies, underscore the unemployment situation in Nigeria. The stamped of the applicants led to the death of 18 persons while scores were wounded.

Similarly, as it is with employment opportunities, so it is with education opportunities. Majority of the rural-urban youth migrants who search for education opportunities end up frustrated since the schools are not enough, are expensive and/or they are impartially excluded.

Lack of social security: Many Nigeria's internal migrants do not possess income, but rely more on informal, survivalist strategies, they also experience food, housing, medical and social insecurities.²³ Consequently, a significant proportion of the migrants experience difficult living and working conditions, low pay and regular dangers.²⁴ Along with the common difficulties, many of them are plunged into different grades of vulnerabilities. They have no access to basic services or social protection. They neither have access to health care services nor do they have health coverage due to high cost of delivery. They face the challenges of low earnings, infringement of basic human rights and susceptibility to different forms of health risks.²⁵

¹⁹ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 147.

²⁰ A.C. Onyiloha, *God, Thou and I: A Discourse on the Christian Faith and Morals*, Enugu: Snaap, 2004, 65.

²¹ See (http://businessdayonline.com/2014/09/rate-of-job-creation-insufficient-to-tame-unemployment-in-nigeria/#.VGkmhna2_IU).

²² M. Todaro, *Migration and Development*, Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 1976, 230.

²³ J. Vearey et al, "Urban Health in Johannesburg: The Importance of Place in Understanding Intra-Urban Inequalities in a Context of Migration and HIV" *Health and Place*, 16(4), 200, 697.

²⁴ A. Atnafu et al "Poverty, Youth and Rural-Urban Migration in Ethiopia" (2014) www.migrationoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk, accessed Nov. 12, 2014, 13.

²⁵ Ibid.

The World Bank 2010 Report outlines a number of dangers faced by domestic workers globally, as bullying, insults, violence, sexual abuse, rape, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies are common among domestic workers.²⁶

Lack of Housing Facility: Many of Nigeria's internal migrants are homeless, as their financial incapability disenfranchise them from exorbitant house rents in the cities. Homelessness is one of the most extreme forms of exclusion and people lacking permanent residence are often shut out of everyday activities. Most homeless people resort to temporary accommodation in the slumps, make-shift tents and shanties. This informs why there is an increasing expansion of slumps in the cities, and many others sleep rough on the streets.²⁷ This is one of the bizarre variables of poverty.

4. Pentecostal Churches' Strategies towards Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is a social fact in Nigeria. This is why since independent in 1960 Government has been introducing different programmes for alleviation of poverty. But the efforts have not eradicated poverty. However, poverty alleviation or eradication is not the responsibility of the state alone. Civil societies, religious organizations and the churches in particular, share in the responsibility of joining the state in fighting poverty. At this point we turn towards discussing how the strategies and services of the Pentecostal churches contribute to alleviate poverty, especially for the migrant poor. The presence and growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria have proven to be socially relevant. People's poverty has been alleviated through their involvement in Pentecostalism as also observed in some countries.²⁸ The churches drew support for the social services to the poor from God's concern for the poor, (see Ps. 9:13; 22:27; 35:10; 76:10 etc). And that Jesus also showed concern for the poor, (see Mt. 5:3; Lk. 6:20; Gal. 2:10; Rom. 15:26, etc.).

Provision of Access to Education: Next to government in the establishment of schools and provision of educational services in Nigeria are Pentecostal churches. The number of Pentecostal churches is on daily increase. Each new church complements its flourish with opening of school(s) – primary and high school. Some have as well founded mission owned universities. The services and pedagogy offered in such institutions help to alleviate a perspective of people's poverty, especially the urban migrant. The churches argue that educational facilities are to make people know – knowledge is of divine essence (see Jgs. 18:14; Mt. 24:43; Eph. 5:5; Lk. 19:42; 44; Rom. 2:18; Jn. 6:69; 8:31; 10:38; 1 Jn. 4:16).

Successful poverty alleviation strategy requires complete and appropriate development of human capital through equitable education policy and programmes. Education is seen as the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding. It helps people to advance their frontiers of knowledge and choices. However, the schools and institutions in the cities are not enough to accommodate the teeming population. Again, many poor people suffer partial exclusion from the available public schools. Consequently, many of the youth become disenfranchised and frustrated. To save the situation, many religious institutions and the private sector take up the challenge of building schools and running academic programmes. They have joined forces with the government in providing access to education. Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria are influential and dependable players in this regard.

The relationship between education and poverty is clear. Education empowers people and help them to become more proactive, gain control over their lives, and to broaden the range of options available to them.²⁹ Education widens the scope of individuals, improve the productive capacities of individuals and give them social, economic and political advantage. In economic terms, education gives people access to high income potentials, which means access to economic power and social security, and improve quality of lives. The importance of education to poverty alleviation cannot be overemphasized.

²⁶ World Bank, "The future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change" (2010) <http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/wmr2010english.pdf>, accessed Nov. 12, 2014.

²⁷ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 501.

²⁸ See the Pew Forum on religion and Public Life "Spirit and Power – A 10-country Survey of Pentecostals", (2006) <http://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/historical-overview-of-pentecostalism-in-nigeria>, accessed Nov. 12, 2014, 86; R. Marshall, *Political Spiritualities. The Pentecostal revolution in Nigeria*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 2; A.S. Aihokhai, "Pentecostalism and Political Empowerment: The Nigerian Phenomenon" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (2010), <http://www.questia.com/library/journal/IGI-230478991/pentecostalism-and-political-empowerment-the-nigerian>, accessed Nov. 18, 2014, 2. R. Burgess, "Nigerian Pentecostalism and Civic Engagement: Mission in the Midst of Poverty and Violence (2012), www.tenn.org/articles/rb58Burgess.pdf, 30, accessed Nov. 7, 2014.

²⁹ UNESCO, *Adult Education in a Polarizing World*, Paris: UNESCO, 1997.

Provision of Healthcare Facilities and Services: Through the building of hospitals and provision of free healthcare services Pentecostal churches have contributed to poverty alleviation. They establish and manage healthcare facilities such as health centres, dispensaries, hospitals, mobile clinics, etc. The churches have increased the number of hospitals available to Nigerians and make them affordable. Government's effort to ensure affordable and quality healthcare for all Nigerians is boosted by these church facilities. The Pentecostal churches' contribution to healthcare in Nigeria is also seen in the HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. The churches health care services is traced to the healing miracles that formed part of Jesus' ministry – the power of God in controlling and bringing succor to the poor.

Empowerment through the Pentecostal experience: Mariz argues that the Pentecostal experience provide people with tools that help them to fight poverty.³⁰ Sjurup notes that conversion to an ongoing personal experiences with God in the Pentecostal churches give the downtrodden a new identity and not just a new moral code. The dislocated, humiliated and intimidated migrants and the poor people who lost their self dignity and self-esteem regain them through the Pentecostal experience.³¹ They regain self confidence which helps the individual to reconnect with the society, find work and eventually escape poverty.³² Perhaps, women seem to be greater beneficiaries of the Pentecostal experience. Women are empowered as they experience God. Pentecostal churches assist women get out of emotional, social, and psychological poverty, providing assistance and answers where the society fails.

The confidence also fosters personal qualities that help people move out of poverty. Martin notes that the Pentecostal experience inspires astonishing level of self-confidence that supports people against all odds. The confidence energizes them and propels them into ingenuity and creativity, which are principles that conquers poverty.³³ In this social ministry the churches draw inspiration from the Pentecostal experience in Act 2, in which the outpouring of the Holy Spirit empower the disciples to take control of things in their Christian and sundry life.

Enhanced Employment Opportunities: In Nigeria, there is scarcity of employment opportunities both in rural and urban areas. There are so many people, graduates and non-graduates that roam the streets in search of job without hopes of getting one. At the emergence of Pentecostalism, the story changed. The mainline churches have standardized methods of recruiting religious workers, but Pentecostalism with its freedom of structural control liberalizes the space. It has offered the greatest number of job employment to people of different social class in Nigeria. Pentecostalism orients people toward self employment as pastors, bishops, deacons, evangelists, prophets, and what have you. People who would have remained unemployed are now gainfully employed. The Pentecostal clergy earn their living from such churches. This is why many of the churches are managed as business enterprises.

Skills development: Dislocated migrants and other poor people converted to Pentecostal churches have opportunities to learn new skills and develop existing skills through involvement in church activities. Thus, early and majority of the faithfuls of Pentecostal churches are the poor. They see the poor as the corner stone of a living church, citing Christendom as rising from the poor people Christ gathered. Through participatory practices they learn leadership and other skills. These might be practical skills such as administration or relational skills and improved capacities to work as a team through better interpersonal skills. Pentecostals take these skills into their daily lives, potentially enhancing their employment opportunities. Many Pentecostals employ the skills they learnt or the talents they developed in Pentecostal churches to better their lives. Some professional musicians and instrumentalist in Nigeria today emerge through this way. Again, Pentecostal churches periodically organize business seminars to equip their members for successful craving in the diverse sectors of the economy.

Commitment to work: Pentecostalism promote and inculcates values that help people develop unquantifiable degrees of commitment to work. Commitment to work helps individuals to break out the clutches of poverty. Commitment inspires people to create and sustain wealth. Instead of complaining and blaming their fate, migrants learn to change their conditions by engaging in work, no matter how little.

³⁰C.L. Mariz, *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostal and Christian base Communities in Brazil*, Philadelphia: temple University Press, 1994, 110.

³¹ L. Sjurup, "Pentecostals: The Power of the Powerless" *Dialog*, vol. 41, no. 1 (2002), 76.

³² L. Sjurup, "Pentecostals", 18.

³³ B. Martin, "New Mutations of the Pentecostal Ethic Among Latin American Pentecostal" *religion*, Vol, 25, No. 2 (1995), 110.

Here the pedagogy of the social ministry is based on St. Paul's writings on the dignity of labour and as necessary in human life, (see Eph. 4:28; 1 Th. 4:11; 2 Th. 3:10-12).

Religious Network: One of the negative consequences of migration is the severance of traditional networks of family and kinship ties on which individuals find support and security. In urban cities, religious institutions provide social and physical space and social networks that help migrants to reproduce and maintain survival structures.³³ Conversion to Pentecostalism provide migrants and other people a new social network that offer more economically, socially and political benefits than the traditional network. Religious network are geographically and socially wider than traditional networks, and this makes it more promising especially to the poor.³⁴ The network with other believers provides a structure that help the Nigerian poor come out of their social location. With the Columbia experience, Flora underscore this finding thus, that Pentecostal women have widespread social network that assists them in times of need compared to other women generally.³⁵ Also, in Soweto, Pentecostal Churches have been a source of kinship, network and overall support for township people.³⁶ Through the networks, Pentecostals create social bonds that serve as sources of economic and emotional support during difficult times. It helps migrant to develop sustainable relationship ties in the midst of social and economic difficulties. In particular, Pentecostals help one another to find work and house, facilitate business connections, and mentor those starting new jobs and careers, thereby creating reliable pathways out of poverty for its members. Here the driving force is the community spirit of the old church, and the need to be one's brothers' keeper.

Charity and Welfare Schemes: Pentecostal charity department and welfare agencies play central role in the provision of welfare to the poor and needy through a system that offer services and benefits that meet people's basic needs for such things as healthcare, housing, clothing and food. Pentecostal churches in Nigeria pride themselves in this and publicize such programmes through the media. In Port Harcourt for instance, the Omega Power Ministry (OPM) has categories of charity services like free restaurant, free medical outreach, free housing, free school, free boutique. In each of the above categories, people in need can go in to eat, get medical services, get accommodation, get access to education, and free clothing. They anchor these social services on the biblical teaching on almsgiving and care for the needy.

This charity practice of Pentecostal churches play great role in the alleviation of human suffering and difficulties not only for the post migrant poor but for the vulnerable and disadvantaged (elderly people, handicaps, the sick, displaced persons and children). After all, Jesus Christ made it the criteria of final judgment in the gospel of Matthew 25:31-46. Hence, charity has continued to be practiced by virtually all religious groups despite its associated criticisms. It is often hard to see that the burden of debt and continued dependence carried by the poor can be relieved unless there is at least some degree of charity. Thus, against all the logic of capitalism, charity is still relevant. In the words of Nankivell "the Christian cannot ignore the possibility that straightforward charity may be the only way of alleviating the present situation".³⁷ Nigerian Christians believe that charity and care for the poor is part of Christian practice.

Contextual Prosperity messages: Pentecostals preach a variety of prosperity messages which convey a broad message that God desires to bless people not only spiritually but also materially. In Nigeria, prosperity messages intersect with the holistic view of salvation present in African Traditional Religion and worldview. This conception hold that the salvation of the soul and salvation of the body are inseparable. Religion is therefore called upon to help achieve culturally desirable commodities – long life, health, wealth and success. Pentecostal churches provide the platform on which these desires find contemporary meaning. In the words of Nwankwo "African Pentecostals translate the blessing of God into contemporary values such as cars, fat bank accounts, employment, fertility, visa to emigrate, etc".³⁸ Pentecostal churches' prosperity preaching, has indeed lifted many Nigerians out of poverty dungeon.

³³ M. Dillon, Handbook of the Sociology of Religion, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 230.

³⁴ C.L. Mariz, Coping with Poverty, 108.

³⁵ C.B. Flora, "Pentecostal Women in Columbia – religious Change and Status of Working Class Women" Journal of International Studies and World Affairs, vol. 17, No. 4, (1975), 416.

³⁶ A. Anderson, An Introduction to Pentecostalism. Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 67.

³⁷ O. Nankivell, All Good Gifts: A Christian View of the Affluent Society, London: Epworth, 1978, 17.

³⁸ L. Nwankwo, Reviewing the Prosperity Message in the Light of the Theology of Empowerment. Paper prepared for the 10th Conference of the European Pentecostal Research Association, 2001, 16.

In a way, prosperity preaching encourages people to work hard – a key factor in poverty alleviation. Pentecostal churches periodically present crusades and retreat themes on poverty breakthroughs and empowerment. Members are made to believe that wealth acquisition is not the exclusive preserve of some people. People are made to understand that they are children of a rich father (God); so they must possess their father's inheritance.

Pentecostalism and Social Engagement: Often time, migrants and people who are elbowed out and excluded from the wider society take consolation in crimes, prostitution, drug and alcohol addictions. Pentecostals have been socially engaged in rehabilitating and helping people on such margins. In doing so, they demonstrate their ability to be socially inclusive and relevant. Rehabilitating these members of the society and, saving them from lives of dependency becomes a solid building block toward sustainable poverty alleviation. The Pentecostals also demonstrate their capacity for social engagement by providing welfare services to people who are poor, destitute, addicts and other marginalized persons. They also create structures of supportive programmes and care through which marginalized people are reintegrated into the society. Pentecostals help meet the welfare needs of people in their congregations. Many of the Pentecostal churches offer scholarships, give loans, invest in businesses and employ members. They also give members transport vehicles and other investment assets on hire purchase, etc.

5. Conclusion

This paper has gone so far to show how Pentecostal churches assist in creating platforms of alleviating post-migrant poverty situations and help in fighting the scourge of poverty in Nigeria. However, the way out of poverty is challenging. Poverty and the issues that surround it are often intricate, without a clear solution. Religious organizations, especially Pentecostal churches involved in contributing to this fight must come out with proactive measures that will help to fight poverty, work with government agencies to reduce the scourge from its source. They should be focused on determining the role each could play in developing sustainable interventions that address poverty and other poverty-related indignities. This means providing services that are not just based on meeting people's immediate needs for survival, but working out strategies that will bring about human and community transformation.

Religious organizations and government should collaborate to work out plans toward reducing urban-rural disparity and create developmental projects that can enable people become self-reliant. Government and private sectors should develop long term commitment necessary to bring about the needed change. The combination of the elements of social capital will vary from group to group, even within a single tradition. Their effectiveness with respect to poverty alleviation also depends on other factors, such as their analysis of the causes of poverty and their choice of implementation strategies. In all, the Pentecostal churches response to poverty alleviation in Nigeria is plausible.