

Economic Impact of Ogbomoso Migrant Community in Jos Metropolis, Nigeria, 1940-2000

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Abstract : This paper attempts an in-depth analysis of the economic impact of Ogbomoso migrant community in the Jos metropolis. It discusses the factors that motivated a sizeable number of Ogbomoso people (from southwestern Nigeria) to leave their hometown for a new place/space in Jos (northern Nigeria). It examines the historical antecedent of Ogbomoso migrants in northern Nigeria with emphasis on Jos metropolis. The movement of Ogbomoso migrants to Jos was dictated by the economic and social challenges of colonial and post-colonial periods. The political crisis of the 1960s was a contributory factor to the process of Ogbomoso migration to other parts of Nigeria. In the aftermath, many people migrated from Ogbomoso to different parts of the country and beyond to seek for better economic opportunities. The establishment of Ogbomoso migrant community in Jos was dated back to the colonial era when taxation was introduced by the British. Many people could not pay these taxes from their peasant farming activities, while some embarked on migration to places such as Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Keffi and Bauchi due to the harsh economic situation at home. Their settlement in Jos brought about success in several spheres of human endeavours. Ogbomoso migrants dominated both paid jobs and private business sector such as textile merchants, food stuff sellers, herbalists, printers, transporters, and religious missionaries, as well as clerical officers in the government establishments. Their remittances were invested in different sectors of Ogbomoso economy. The migrants had in one way or the other contributed to the socio-economic development of their host community in Jos as entrepreneurs. Branches of such industries were located in their hometown of Ogbomoso as a clear demonstration of community development. The remittance pattern of the migrants has transformed Ogbomoso to enviable position. Moreover, the economic success of Ogbomoso migrants over the period under review indicates the process of nation building due to peaceful nature of inter-ethnic engagements between Ogbomoso migrants and their host community in Jos. Therefore, the paper makes use of oral, archival and secondary sources to analyse the processes of migration and its economic impact. Oral interviews were conducted in Ogbomoso town with veteran migrants and their family members. Interviews were also conducted in Jos with the indigenous host community as well as other urban residents. Archival materials were obtained from Arewa House Archives and the National Archives, Kaduna and the National Archives, Ibadan.

Keywords : Ogbomoso migrants, Jos metropolis, community development, economic impact

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