

**Igbo Migrants and Economic Activities in Southern Tivland, C.1922-2019**

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**Abstract**

*There is a harvest of literature on ethnic migration and migrant communities in Nigeria. These studies touched on virtually all ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, the available literature depicts a lack of research work on Igbo migrants with a specific focus on the Southern Tivland of Central Nigeria. This study therefore, serves as an intervention by filling the gap that exists in extant literature. It analyses the economic activities of Igbo migrants. The paper traces the historical trajectories of Igbo migration to the area under consideration. It identifies the economic activities engaged in by the migrants. These ranged from welding and fabrications, automobile repairs, provision stores, building materials, and pharmaceuticals, among others. The paper identifies diverse challenges that accompanied these economic activities from the lenses of lack/unstable power supply, double taxation, poor road and transport infrastructure, theft, and low patronage, et cetera. It adopts interdisciplinary and qualitative methodology making use of bibliographical materials, internet resources, and oral interviews to enhance corroborative evidence and objectivity. It concludes that Igbo migrants were constrained by diverse factors that impeded their economic activities. The paper recommends inter alia, the stoppage of double taxation and criminal activities.*

**Keywords:** Igbo, Migrants, Southern Tivland, Economic Activities, and Challenges

**Introduction**

This study centres on the Igbo migrants and economic activities in Southern Tivland of Central Nigeria between C.1922 and 2019. It is an aspect of the people's Economic History. Economic History is one of the youngest among the historical sciences and an adjunct to the history of economic thought and man's daily activities. However, economic history of all societies globally has been given due academic attention. In Africa and Nigeria in particular, the economic history of all peoples has been treated whether partially or in detail by scholars of various disciplinary orientations. In doing this, issues of migrations, migrants



and their contributions to their host communities and societies are also captured. For example, P. Obiwu studies 'Igbos of Northern Nigeria' while O.A. Olutayo discusses 'The Igbo Entrepreneur in the Political Economy of Nigeria'. W.T. Uji hinges his research work on 'The Impact of the Nigerian Civil War on Igbo Enterprise in Makurdi Town, 1960-1980'. P.E. Onugwu traces 'A History of the Igbo Migrant Group in Otukpo Town, 1900-2010' while K.T. Azaigba investigates 'The Igbo Factor in the Development of Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, 1976-2017'. The aforementioned works have shown that as at the time of this study, there is none or near absence of historical research work on Igbo migrants and economic activities with a specific focus on Southern Tiv area of Central Nigeria. Given the above, this study is set out to fill the *lacuna* that exists in the extant literature on the subject matter under consideration. The paper discusses the efforts made by the Igbo migrant groups to the economic development of Southern Tivland. It argues that the Igbo migrants in Southern Tivland played leading and catalytic roles in economic activities like trading in the motor vehicle and motorcycle-spare parts, building materials, pharmaceuticals, welding and fabrications, and automobile repairs, among other economic activities.

The general aim of this study is to trace the historical trajectories of Igbo migration to Southern Tivland. The specific objectives are to discuss their economic activities and to identify the challenges associated with (each activity) and proffer solutions. This paper adopts interdisciplinary and qualitative methodology. Oral interviews were held with key informants such as Igbo migrants, other settlers in Southern Tivland, members of the host communities, and businessmen and women in the study area. Secondary data was also used to obtain information on the historical trajectories of Igbo migration to Southern Tivland. The secondary materials are books, book chapters, and journal articles to enhance corroborative evidence and objectivity.

This paper has been divided into different sub-headings. The first part introduces the work, while the second part deals with the conceptual pathway. The next part attempts a geographical survey of the Southern Tivland. The fourth part gives a historical foundation of Igbo migrants in southern Tivland. The fifth part analyses the nature and challenges of the economic activities of Igbo migrants in the study area. The last part provides the kernel of the paper's argument.

### **Migrant, Migration and Economic Activities Conceptualised**

The concepts of migrant and migration complement each other. This is because without migration, there will be nothing like migrants and vice versa. On the premise of this succinct knowledge, a migrant could be defined as a person who moves from one place to another, especially to find work, business, or better living conditions. The United Nation Migration Agency, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), provides an encompassing definition of a migrant when they assert that:

A migrant is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of the person's legal

status; whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; what the causes for the movement are; or what the length of the stay is.<sup>1</sup>

The IOM's definition of the migrant is all-encompassing because of its breadth and depth. Migrants could embark on local or international migration, legal or illegal migration, voluntary or involuntary migration among others. All these depend on the prevailing circumstances. Relatedly the conceptualisation of migration is the movement of people from one geographical area to the other. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* reinforces that: "Human migration is the permanent change of residence by an individual or group; it excludes such movements as nomadism, migrant labour, commuting, and tourism, all of which are transitory in nature".<sup>2</sup> In a similar direction Hopkins asserts that: "Migration is the geographic movement of people across a specified boundary to establish a new permanent or semi-permanent residence (refugees are not considered as migrants!)".<sup>3</sup>

The above definitions underscored the fact that refugees, nomads, labour migrants, commuters *centre* do not belong to the migrant group. The definition introduces new arguments in the conceptualisation of migration. For example, the IOM , included refugees, displaced persons, among others as a migrant group. IOM contends that:

The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border or within a state. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition, and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and people moving for other purposes, including family reunification.<sup>4</sup>

The above definitions clearly show a great dearth of consensus among scholars on who becomes a migrant. The definitions point to the fact that are numerous views on this subject matter in contemporary scholarship. This has also enhanced our curiosity to ascertain the duration which an individual or groups could reside in a new geographical environment to become a migrant. Because of all these circumstances, an appraisal of duration as a yardstick for justification of a migrant is examined at this point.

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nation Migration Agency, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), provides a lucid definition of migration, available at; <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/migration/index.html>. Accessed, 06-10-2022.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, available at; (<https://www.britannica.com/science/science>). Accessed, 06-10-2022.

<sup>3</sup> J. Hopkins, 'Migration Definitions and Measurements', Johns Hopkins University, 2006, p.4. available at; <http://ocw.jhsph.edu/courses/PopulationChange/PDFs/Lecture8.pdf>. 17-04-2020. Accessed, 06-10-2022.

<sup>4</sup> The International Organisation for Migration... p.6.

In 2002 and beyond, any person who stays in Australia, Belgium, and Slovenia for 90 days has been termed a migrant.<sup>5</sup> In Iceland and Ukraine, the criteria were six months.<sup>6</sup> In Estonia, France, and Italy one year was the duration.<sup>7</sup> In Canada, Bulgaria, Belarus, and Croatia, migrants refer to people who stayed permanently in those countries.<sup>8</sup> Coming back to African countries, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Nigeria for example tagged any individual who stays 90 days duration in these countries as a migrant. Senegal gave priority for 90 to 180 days.<sup>9</sup> Although emphasis from these examples is on external migrants, that is, those who migrated from outside into one's country. However, the application of this knowledge to the internal migrant is also relevant. This is because it underscored the time duration that justifies both internal and external migration.

There is a good number of factors that compelled people to migrate. These factors are broadly grouped into push and pull factors. For example, push factors occur where someone currently lives becomes less attractive for various reasons, be its political unrest, lack of job opportunities, or overcrowding, among others.<sup>10</sup> Pull factors occur in a potential destination and make it an attractive place to migrate to. A pull factor could be better job opportunities or having relatives or friends who have already moved to this location.<sup>11</sup> In Nigeria, the searches for better economic opportunities have compelled a lot of people to migrate to the most favourable areas. The Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa are found all over the landscape of Nigeria for available business opportunities found in such areas. Other reasons why people migrate to Nigeria are transfers in the public and civil service, labour migrants, and prostitution, among others. Unfavourable conditions like the Sahara encroachment have compelled most groups from Northern Nigeria to migrate to favourable areas including the Lower Benue and Niger Valley. These fertile and water-rich areas have become a hotbed for farmers-herders conflicts in contemporary times.

Lastly, economic activities as a concept encompass making, providing, purchasing, or selling goods and services. It also involves the production, distribution, or consumption of products or services. The Department of Economics, University of Toronto was more forthcoming when it contends that:

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<sup>5</sup> UN International Migration Flows to and from Selected Countries: The 2015 Revision CD-Rom Documentation, available at; <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/empirical2/docs/migflows2015documentation.pdf>. 11-03-2020. accessed, 06-10-2022.

<sup>6</sup> UN International Migration Flows ... p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> UN International Migration Flows ... p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> UN International Migration Flows ... p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> L. Jumoke, & D. Kunle, *The Migrant E-Registration Guidelines 2019 Issued by the Nigeria Immigration Service – Key Highlights*, Lagos, UUBO Corporate Immigration Team, 2019, P.2.

<sup>10</sup> P. Natasha, Push and Pull Factors of Migration, American Review of Political Economy, 2010, available at [https://www.academia.edu/1812793/Push\\_and\\_Pull\\_factors\\_of\\_Migration](https://www.academia.edu/1812793/Push_and_Pull_factors_of_Migration). Accessed, 06-10-2022.

<sup>11</sup> P. Natasha, Push and Pull Factors of Migration... p. 16.

Economic activity is the process by which the stock of resources or stock of capital produces a flow of output of goods and services that people utilize in partial satisfaction of their unlimited wants. This process involves not only the production of goods and services but their distribution among the various members of the community.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most important goals of economic activities is to produce goods and services so that they can be available to consumers. Economic activities also aim at profit-making or maximisation. Put simply; economic activities are those which we undertake to earn income, money, or wealth. It is on this premise that the European Centre for Not-For-Profit Law (ECNPL), succinctly defines economic activity as: 'active sale of goods or services that is pursued with the frequency or continuity'.<sup>13</sup> Economic activities can be grouped into the Primary Sector (i.e. raw materials), the Secondary Sector (which includes industry and manufacturing), the Tertiary Sector (i.e. Services), and the Quaternary Sector (also known as the Knowledge Sector).<sup>14</sup> The Igbo who are better described as entrepreneurs migrated to other parts of Nigeria to make use of the available economic opportunities. Southern Tivland being an area with numerous market centres, and a teeming population attracted the attention of the Igbo business class since the colonial period. The proceeding part of this chapter situates the geographical landscape of the study area.

### Geographical Survey of Southern Tivland

The geographical terrain of Southern Tivland is a consummation of four Local Government Areas (LGAs) in contemporary Tiv society, namely: Kwande, Vandeikya, Konshisha, and Ushongo. The area is peopled by the Turan, Ikyurav-Ya, Shangev-Ya, Nanev, Usar, Lyon, and Ugbe of Kwande LGA who are grouped into four clans and 15 council wards.<sup>15</sup> The Kunav people of Vandeikya are genealogically composed of Kyan and Tiev. They are genealogically grouped into eight groups or *akuranieni* which are politically structured into 12 district and council wards, namely: Mbaduku, Mbayongo, Mbagbera, Mbakaange, Ningev, Mbagbam, Mbakyaha, Tsambe, Mbajor, Nyimangbah, Mbadedeand Vandeikya Township.<sup>16</sup> The Gaav and Ishangev-Tiev of Konshisha LGA are subdivided into Mbake, Mbagben, Mbanor, Mbayegh, Mbaikyase, Mbatwer, Mbavaa,

<sup>12</sup>Department of Economics, University of Toronto, available at; <https://www.economics.utoronto.ca/jfloyd/modules/nearestkf.html>. accessed, 06-10-2022.

<sup>13</sup> European Centre for Not-For-Profit Law [ECNPL], *Legal Regulation of Economic Activities of Civil Society Organizations*, Hungary: Budapest, ApáczaiCserejános u, 2015, P. 5.

<sup>14</sup> <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/economic-activity/>. Accessed, 06-10-2022.

<sup>15</sup> A. Lyam, 'Kwande Crisis: a Community Conflict of Many Interests'. In Gyuse, T. & Ajene, O. *Conflicts in the Benue Valley*, Makurdi: Benue State University Press, 2006, P. 4

<sup>16</sup> T.T. Ityonzughul, "A History of Co-operative soc in the Socio-Economic of Southern Tivland, 1960-2010". M.A. Dissertation, Submitted to The Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, 2013.

Mbagusa, and Mbatser.<sup>17</sup> While the Ushongois made up of Ukan (Ikov, Mbagwa, & Mbaikyaa), Mbagba, and Utange.<sup>18</sup>

Spatially, Southern Tivland shares boundaries with Gboko, Buruku, and Katsina-Ala LGAs in the North. Gwer-East, Obi, and Oju LGAs in the West. While in the South, the area shares a boundary with the Northern Cross River Basin inhabited by ethnic groups collectively known by the Tiv people as Udam with whom the Shangev-Ya, Kunav, Gaav, and Ishangev-Tiev shares common frontiers.<sup>19</sup> In the East, Southern Tivland shares a boundary with the Republic of Cameroon, characterised by the foothills of the Cameroon highlands and the Sonkwalla or Sankwura hills of the Obudu territory.<sup>20</sup>

### Migration of Igbo to Southern Tivland

The Igbo are occupants of a geographical terrain between the Benin Empire and the Igala Kingdom, the city-states of Cross-River and Niger Delta.<sup>21</sup> The craft of state creation gave contemporary Igbo society five states namely: Anambra, Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, and Enugu. About 25 percent of Igbo are also found in Delta and Rivers states.<sup>22</sup> Historically, the Igbo are grouped into five cultural components, namely: the western or riverine Igbo, northern or Awka Igbo, Owerri Igbo, Cross-River Igbo, and Ogoja Igbo.<sup>23</sup> Two contending historical arguments emerged among scholars on the origin and migration of Igbo ethnic stock in their present abode. For example, R. Horton, A.G. Leonard, G.T. Basden among others have seeded the Igbo as the 'Lost Sheep of Israel'.<sup>24</sup> Their polemic is premised on the basis that Igbo settled in North Africa at the time of Moses around 2000 BC and migrated out of that area as a result of Islamic Jihad.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, G.I. Jones, P.A. Talbot, and K.O. Dike, among others countered this argument that the Igbo originated around the areas of the Akwa-Nri-Orlu complex. They contended that due to population expulsion in this area and competition over farmland, some of the Igbos migrated to Nsukka-Udi highlands, while another wave moved southwards towards the coast.<sup>26</sup> The descendants of this group are Asa, Ndoki, Etche, Ikwerre and so on and so forth. The other group of Igbo according to these elucidate scholars moved to the

<sup>17</sup> T.T. Ityonzughul, "A History of Co-operative soc in the Socio-Economic of Southern Tivland, 1960-2010..."

<sup>18</sup> Oral Interview with Kosom Boniface Shior, Age 39 years, Interviewed in His Residence in Katsina-Ala, 14-03-2020.

<sup>19</sup> E.C. Ayangaor, *Tiv and Their Southern Neighbours, 1890-1990*. North Carolina: Carolina academic press, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> P. Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, London, 1969.

<sup>21</sup> R. Olaniyi, *History for Senior Secondary Schools*, Ibadan: Bounty Press Limited, 2017, p.84.

<sup>22</sup> <https://faculty.ucr.edu/~legnerref/igbo/igbo2.htm>. Accessed, 06-10-2022.

<sup>23</sup> R. Olaniyi, *History for Senior...* p.83.

<sup>24</sup> G.I.C. Eluwa, et al, *A History of Nigeria for Schools and Colleges*. Onitsha: Africana First Publishers Plc, 2016, p.66.

<sup>25</sup> G.I.C. Eluwa, et al, *A History of Nigeria ...* p. 66.

<sup>26</sup> G.I.C. Eluwa, et al, *A History of Nigeria ...* p. 66.

south-east and east. They include Arochukwu, Ohafia, and Umuahia, among others. Reinforcing this debate Olaniyi asserted that:

Owerri, Okigwe, Orlu, and Awka were the core Igbo heartland. The Igbo people of this area claimed to have lived there since antiquity, without any tradition of migration. Nri, the Igbo holy centre developed in this area. The influence of Nri covered much of the Igboland. It was at Nri that the Igbo-Ukwu civilisation thrived. Among the Igbo, EzeNri was regarded as a ritual figure rather than a king... therefore, the Igbo myth of the creation of the world claimed Aguleri, where all the first things happened.<sup>27</sup>

What has been observed from the above argument is that the Nri-Akwa-Orlu complex was the 'core centre' of Igbo people from where internal and external migration took place. This area according to G.I. Jones cited in Ukagwu, Nwachukwu, and Nwaubani, was occupied by the Igbo's about 2, 500 B.C.<sup>28</sup>

Discussing some of the factors that accentuated migration of Igbo within and outside their territory during the era of colonialism according to Isichei, Bako, Coleman and so forth mentioned population density. This argument has been better captured by Jeje and Azaigba, thus:

The high population density of the South-East ... was responsible for the movement of the Igbos to areas of lower population density and less economic competition. In Owerri and Onitsha as well as other towns in the south-east it has a population of an averagely 346 persons per square mile against that of Northern Nigeria which is as high as 60 and as low as 25 persons per square mile. Meanwhile, other places in Igbo land could record as high as 800 persons and as low as 143 persons per square mile.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from population density which led to soil exploitation, hunger, and searches for greener pastures to other parts of the country by the Igbos, Coleman, Bako, and other scholars were emphatic that there was a lack of cash crop production, absence of industrial, commercial and government establishments in most parts of Igboland.<sup>30</sup> Thus, uneducated Igbo's opted for trading in spare parts, tires, batteries, electronics, cosmetics, beer parlours, hotel businesses, and building materials, among numerous others.

Apart from the aforementioned factors, the missionaries contributed immensely to the migration of Igbo to other places of Nigeria including Tivland.

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<sup>27</sup> R. Olaniyi, *History for Senior...* p.83.

<sup>28</sup> G.I.C., Eluwa, et al, *A History of Nigeria ...* p. 68.

<sup>29</sup> E.S.A. Jeje, & K.T. Azaigba, 'Inter-Group Relations in Zaria: The Case of the Yoruba and Igbo-Migrant Groups, 1800-2015', in Kaduna Journal of Historical Studies (KJHS), Vol. 9, No. 2, 2017, p. 137.

<sup>30</sup> B. Tyubee, "Influence of Extreme Climate on Communal Disputes and Violence in Tiv Area of Benue State". In Gyuse, T. (eds) at al, *Conflicts in the Benue Valley*, Benue State University Press, Makurdi, 2006.

Uji identifies the first set of Igbo migrants into Tivland as a missionary group when he posited that:

Most of these Igbo who were missionaries came up with the white man into the region to penetrate the far north. One of the notable among them was a Roman Catholic Catechist from Abatete named Mr. Allobiwho trekked to Makurdi from Enugu in 1922. From this account, the genesis of Igbo migration into Tivland can be traced to Christian missionary enterprise.<sup>31</sup>

The era of white missionary activities in Tivland witnessed the migration of Igbo missionaries and traders who sailed through River Benue into Makurdi. When the Eastern railway line arrived Makurdi in the 1900's the population of Igbos became astronomical. Ugbegili showed that:

Colonial reports have it that the coming of the railway brought many Nigerians from southern provinces, notably the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups into Makurdi. These groups for the most part were well-paid workmen of the artisan class. Their arrival brought more business and money into Tivland (emphasis is mine).<sup>32</sup>

Buttressing this point further, Agaba asserted that:

The construction of the railway line from the southeastern part via Idomaland to the north. It is no longer a disputed fact that the opening of the Eastern railway from Port-Harcourt to Kaduna in 1927 marked the turning point in the movement of population from Southern Provinces into Idoma Division and even beyond.<sup>33</sup>

From the avalanche of these testimonies, it would not contradict the fact that the small scale Igbo entrepreneurs took their commercial skills into other parts of Tivland including Southern Tivland. Isichel (1976) cited in Uji gave a picture of how the Kunav people of Mbaduku resented Igbo settlers in their Tsar Market, thus:

When the Tsar market was developing at this time, the Tiv welcomed Hausa traders but insisted on the exclusion of the Igbo. But the Hausas themselves came to demand the admission of the Igbo traders... they remembered no larger

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<sup>31</sup> W.T. Uji, 'The Impact of the Nigerian Civil War on Igbo Enterprise in Makurdi Town: 1960-1980'. In Adejo, A.M. (eds). *The Nigerian Civil War Forty Years After What Lessons*, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2008, p. 229.

<sup>32</sup> S.I. Ugbegili, 'Makurdi Town: From Colonial Period to the Second Republic'. In Adejo, A.M. (ed.). *Makurdi A History of Its Rise and Development Up To 2010*, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2013, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> J.E. Agaba, 'The Nigerian Civil War and the Changing Migration Patterns of the Igbo into Idomaland: 1967-2007', In Adejo, A.M. (ed.). *The Nigerian Civil War Forty Years after What Lessons*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2008, pp. 191-192.



Nigerian market could be fully effective without the Igbo contingent. Igbo had access to certain types of trade goods – especially European cloth and hardware ... Igbo were also good carpenters and blacksmiths. Finally, there was the vast kinship-like network of Igbo between the trading outpost (such as Obudu), and the large market-centres (such as Onitsha). If a market is to be fully successful the Hausa said, it must have Igbo.<sup>34</sup>

Isichel's work illuminates the fact that the Igbo migrant group were settlers in Tsar, one of the earliest market centres in Southern Tivland. Effah-Attoe (2007:186 ) gives a south-eastern route that might link Southern Tivland with their Igbo settlers as passing through the Ikom and extended by land to Ogoja, Yala, Obudu up to the Benue Valley probably through Tsar.<sup>35</sup> Because of the existing trade routes, Igbo traders were found in all important market centres in Southern Tivland including: Adikpo is otherwise known as 'London Kwande', Ushongo, Ihugh, Agbo, and Korinya, among others. The British colonial administrative policy on the security of traders through Section 41 of the Native Authority Law No.4 of 1954 complemented traditional efforts put in place by market founders. The law specifically dealt with issues relating to the market rules and operations thereby enhancing the settlement of Igbo migrants in Southern Tivland. Furthermore, with the construction of selling stores, and also the buying station of the Royal Niger Company, the important market centres in Southern Tiv witnessed an influx of Igbo in large numbers. Thus, Ihugh, Adikpo, Agbo, and Lessel markets became places where groundnuts, benni seed, tobacco, cotton, and rice were highly exchanged and Igbo's also served as buying agents for the UAC. Igbo traders also sold European goods and established their abode in Southern Tivland together with their families.

#### **Nature and challenges of the Economic Activities of Igbo Migrants in Southern Tivland**

The nature of Igbo migrant's economic activities is the same as the types of economic activities engaged in by the said migrants. It is common knowledge that Igbo dominated trading activities in Nigeria including Southern Tivland. They engaged in different economic activities to earn a living. These economic activities ranged from welding and fabrications, motorcycle spare parts marketing, building materials, pharmaceuticals, automobile repairs, provision store, selling of mattresses (including pillows, curtains, carpets, and rugs) *et cetera*. For clarity, the paper discusses these economic activities one after the other.

First and foremost are welding and fabrications. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus states in *Histories of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC that Glaucus of Chios* "was the man who single-handedly invented iron welding". Welding was used in the

<sup>34</sup> W.T. Uji, "The Impact of the Nigerian ...p. 232.

<sup>35</sup> S.A. Effah-Attoe, "Pre-Colonial Trade Relations between the Cross-River Basin and the Middle Benue Region of Nigeria". In Ochefu, Y.A., Iyo, J. & Varvar, T. A. (eds.) *A History of the Peoples of Benue State*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2007.

construction of the iron pillar of Delhi, erected in Delhi, India about 310 AD and weighing 5.4 metric tons.<sup>36</sup> Since then knowledge of welding and fabrications had spread to all parts of the world including Africa. The Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria also acquired the said knowledge. Some migrated to Southern Tivland and continued with welding and fabrications as their way of life. It is in this connection an Igbo migrant Mr. Simon Uba, who migrated to Southern Tivland in 1981 recollected his memories saying:

I was gingered to migrate to the area under consideration as a result of a lack of funds to further my education. This was because of the death of my father. On my arrival I first all settled at Ihugh that was in 1981, I then proceeded to Korinya city in 1996 where I settled and trained other people in the welding and fabrications profession. Some of the migrants on the completion of their apprenticeship I established their workshop and settled them and they became independent.<sup>37</sup>

Through the culture of Igbo apprenticeship, the migrants were able to transfer the necessary skills to different people including indigenous artisans. The major challenges that accompanied this business were the paucity of funds to start the business and to purchase standard workshop tools. There was also a challenge of the high cost of purchasing gas for welding. Welders that use electricity welding faced the challenge of unstable power supply. This is because their system necessarily needs power, without power supply from the Electricity Distribution Company; they had no option than to buy petrol at a higher rate.<sup>38</sup>

The migrant groups also engaged in motorcycle spear parts marketing thereby making significant contributions to the transport sector. Ejiofor and Ayaka in an oral interview disclosed that before Igbo migrants began selling motorcycle spear parts in Southern Tivland, motorcycle owners used to travel outside Southern Tivland to buy the parts.<sup>39</sup> Collaborating on the above, a cyclist, Aondongu Nyihar stated that:

We (Tiv people) specialised in farming, buying and selling of agricultural produce (*beranda*) for a very long period without paying attention to other businesses. In fact, up to date, the Igbo enjoy a monopoly in the motorcycle-spear parts business in Southern Tivland.<sup>40</sup>

The above depicts the dominance of Igbo in the business under consideration. It also shows that the migration of Igbo and their involvement in economic activities has lessened the burden of the locals in travelling to major towns of the state to buy motorcycle parts.

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<sup>36</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1878, p.25.

<sup>37</sup> Oral Interview with Simon Uba at Korinya City, April 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Oral Interview with Simon Uba at Korinya City, April 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Oral Interview with Ejiofor Eze & Ayaka, Celestine at Korinya, April 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Oral Interview with Nyihar Andongu at Korinya, May 2020.

The migrants were also involved in automobile repairs and selling of spare parts; with their skills in automobile repairs, these migrants trained some natives in the act of repairing automobiles. For example, an informant, Valentine Okere disclosed in a conversation that, he had trained a lot of Tiv People who have graduated and established their independent automobile mechanic shops. He particularly mentioned Toryima Utogh, Terlumun Ahile, Agema Terver, and Tertese. During the time of this study Mr. Okere was training five children in automobile repairs.<sup>41</sup> In the course of doing the work, he encountered daunting challenges of taxation and the menace of area boys, yet he continued with his work.

Before the building of corrugated houses, Tiv specialised in constructing thatched huts. However, with colonialism and modernization, they changed their architectural design and pattern of housing to corrugated houses. This compelled the Southern Tiv people to travel to Makurdi and Gboko respectively to purchase building materials. The implication was that people spent more than what they should have spent on purchasing building materials. Igbo migrants in the area under consideration brought in building materials near to the people. In the course of trading, the migrants experienced some challenges which have impeded the progress of their businesses. Articulating on this matter, a dealer in building materials, Friday Ani lamented that:

The roads in Southern Tivland were of poor quality and as a result of this, drivers were usually overcharged for transporting goods to different settlements in the Southern Tiv area. This has compelled the dealers to increase the prices of materials. Apart from this; the challenge of double taxation and the menace of area boys who in the name of indigenes extort migrant traders to earn their living.<sup>42</sup>

The above data imply that Igbo migrants dealers in building materials operate in the atmosphere of challenges yet they persisted in their businesses. Trading in mattresses is also an economic activity of Igbo migrants in the Southern Tiv area. Before the modern era, the Southern Tiv and Tiv people at large used to sleep on traditionally carved wooden beds known as *kpande* and *butu* (mat). With modernization, mattresses were introduced in Nigeria including Tivland, and also became an article of the trade including Southern Tivland. The migrants under review introduced mattresses business in Southern Tivland. Some of these migrants sold them alongside pillows, carpets, curtains, and rugs. In the process of doing this business, these migrants suffered low patronage, high transportation cost, and double taxation, among others.<sup>43</sup>

The migrants also dominated the provision business in the study area. Man needs a lot of material resources to survive. As a result of this, provisions stores were established everywhere in the country for selling such items. In this business, Igbo people were the leading traders. An Igbo migrant trader at Vandeikya, Uche Emmanuel noted that “in Southern Tivland and elsewhere in

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<sup>41</sup> Oral Interview with Okere Valentine at Korinya, May 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Oral Interview with Okere Valentine at Korinya, May 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Oral Interview with Emeka Benard, at Vandeikya, May 2020.

the country, Igbo are in charge of trade, hence they own the major provision stores and determine the prices of goods".<sup>44</sup>

Additionally, Igbo migrants in the area under review were into the pharmaceutical business. Even though the people of Southern Tiv practised traditional medicine, they did it alongside modern medicine. In this regard, the migrants settled in Southern Tivland and some of them established their pharmaceutical businesses. Before this, the inhabitants of the area (especially health practitioners) used to go to far places to purchase pharmaceuticals but the migrant's traders have brought these materials to all and sundry in the study area. It is in line with the above that informants: Ikene and Chinedu emphasized that "Igbo migrant traders dominated pharmaceutical business in the Korinya, Vandeikya, Adikpo, and Lessel which are the major settlements in Southern Tivland".<sup>45</sup> This is a clear indication that before the migration of the Igbo, the Southern Tiv people used to go to far places outside the study area to get the needed pharmaceuticals. The pharmaceutical businessmen in the area faced the challenge of low patronage leading to the expiration of some pharmaceutical materials. There is also a challenge of double taxation; this compelled the owners of pharmacies to overstretched their finances and sometimes leading to their deficit budget.<sup>46</sup>

**Table:** Igbo Migrants in Tivland and their Businesses and specific locations

S/N	Year of migration	Name of migrant	Types/Items of Business	Location of Business	Local Government Area
1.	1981	Simon Uba	Welding and Fabrications	Korinya	Konshisha
2.	1984	Valentine Ezewan	Welding and Fabrications	Korinya	Konshisha
3.	2000	Chikwu Ude	Pharmaceuticals	Korinya	Konshisha
4.	1999	Valentine Okere	Automobile Mechanic	Korinya	Konshisha
5.	1981	Celestine Ayaka	Motorcycle spear parts	Korinya	Konshisha
6.	2015	Eze Ejiofor	Motorcycle spear parts	Korinya	Konshisha
7.	1998	Florence Okere	Provision Store	Korinya	Konshisha
8.	2017	Austine Eze	Electronics/Electrical Shop	Korinya	Konshisha
9.	1998	Friday Ani	Building Materials	Korinya	Konshisha
10.	2000	Franklin Udoh	Building	Korinya	Konshisha

<sup>44</sup> Oral Interview with Uche Emmanuel, at Vandeikya, May 2020.

<sup>45</sup> Oral Interview with Okene & Chinedu, at Korinya, May 2020.

<sup>46</sup> Oral Interview with Omeje Joyce, at Vandeikya, May 2020.

			Materials		
11.	2007	Ikechukwu Nwanchukwu	Botique	Kornya	Konshisha
12	1987	Isaac Ugochukwu	Denco Mattress	Vandeikya Township	Vandeikya
13	1990s	Chikoso Stephen	Motorcycle spear parts	Vandeikya Township	Vandeikya
14.	2005	Emeka Benard	Mattresses, Pillows, Curtains, Carpets, and Rugs	Vandeikya Township	Vandeikya
15.	2011	Joyce Omeje	Pharmaceuticals	Vandeikya Township	Vandeikya
16.	2001	Uche Emmaneul	Provision Store	Vandeikya Township	Vandeikya
17.	1991	Chukwu Jindu	Motorcycle spear parts	Adikpo Township	Kwande
18.	1984	Maduka Vincent	Motorcycle spear parts	Adikpo Township	Kwande
19.	NA	Okoli Sylvester	Engine Oil Vendor	Adikpo Township	Kwande
20.	2005	Obinna Kalu	Boutique	Adikpo Township	Kwande
21.	1980	Chiowa George	Mattresses vendor	Adikpo Township	Kwande
22.	1997	Onyeguili Eze	Motorcycle spear parts	Adikpo Township	Kwande
23.	1990	Ifeanyi Chibuike	Sleepers Vendor	Adikpo Township	Kwande
24.	1978	Idubisi Ekene	Pharmacy	Adikpo Township	Kwande
25.	2002	Chukwuemeka Chibuzor	Food Vendor	Adikpo Township	Kwande
26.	2004	Chisolo Nwabueze	Motorcycle spear parts	Adikpo Township	Kwande
27.	1985	Nnamdi Okoben-Obasi	Oil Dealer`	Adikpo Township	Kwande
28.	1975	Onyeka Uche	Assorted Trader	Adikpo Township	Kwande

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The above table shows that Igbo migrants dominated the most viable economic activities in Southern Tivland. These migrants settled in Southern Tivland at different points in time in different major settlements of the study area; they have engaged in economic activities such as selling automobiles and

motorcycles spear parts, pharmaceuticals, boutique, and provision stores, among others.

### Conclusion

The foregoing discourse shows that Igbo are not indigeneous people of Southern Tivland; they originated from somewhere before migrating to Southern Tivland. Their migration was prompted by the desire to search for better business opportunities to earn their living. This study further demonstrated that Igbo migrants dominated virtually all the viable economic activities in Southern Tivland and elsewhere in the country. It has identified and discussed the economic activities engaged in by the migrants. These has cut-across welding and fabrications, marketing of motorcycle spear parts, building materials, pharmaceuticals, and automobile repairs, among others. In discussing the aforementioned economic activities, the paper highlighted the basic challenges encountered by the business owners. Prominent among these challenges were double taxation, the menace of street urchins (area boys) and poor road network, among others.

Given the foregoing dismal scenario, it would be advisable for a solution to this problem to take the following lines: Government should harmonise taxation to do away with double taxation. The government should liaise with host communities to strengthen security in the area. If this is done, the menace of "area boys" will be done away with or at least reduced to its barest minimum. Government officials and the well-to-do sons of the host communities should rehabilitate and create rural roads in Southern Tivland. If the preceding policy options are taking into consideration, the Igbo migrants would have a better atmosphere to contribute more meaningfully to the development of economic activities in Southern Tivland thereby making life more meaningful to the inhabitants.

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