

## Spousal Labour Migration and Patterns of School Enrolment of Left-Behind Children in Oyo State, Nigeria

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### abstract

The incidence of spousal labour migration and its negative consequences on various aspects of life among left-behind households have been on the increase in Nigeria in recent times. This study examines the spatial variation of spousal migration and its consequences on school enrolment pattern of left -behind children. The New Economics of Labour Migration was used as the framework, while a cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Oyo State was purposively selected because it is among the states suggested to be experiencing relatively high migration. Four settlements were randomly selected from two Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Oyo Central Senatorial District. Non-probability sampling technique was used to select 1,613 respondents (Migrants – 447, Non-migrants – 1,166) after saturation was ensured based on the Oyo State household population from the senatorial district. Data were collected using structured questionnaire with experts-certified content validity and ethical standard. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed, and analysis were carried out at 0.05 significance level. First results showed that spousal migration in the study areas contributed to the menace of out-of-school children in households. The empirical findings also revealed significant variation in the number of children enrolled in the settlements ( $F=21.354$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Furthermore, the analysis showed that the factors contributing to the volume and direction of flow among migrants varies significantly ( $F=66.296$ ;  $p=0.001$ ). The study recommended the need to design a social welfare scheme for the left-behind children to minimise the effects of spousal migration on them especially on children's education.

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### 1.0 Introduction

The movement of people within a country or across regions has increased globally with significant effects on individuals such as spouses, children and parents that are left behind (UN Woman, 2013; Demurger, 2015). This migration episodes have led to the separation of family members from their households and have significant consequences on those left-behind. Some studies in migration literature have focused on the economic benefits of migration on the left-behind household members through remittances (Morphosa, 2005; De Haas and Rooij, 2010; McKay and Deshingkar, 2014; Thonge and Ncube, 2014; Alenkhe and Longe, 2012). However, the consequences of migration are beyond economic alone (Carrington, Allison and Walimsley, 2007; Nanete, Jampaklay, De Dious, Raharto, and Reyes, 2013; Kousar and Rehman, 2014; Yanovich, 2015). Nevertheless, this acknowledgement is apparently new, considered less and not given much consideration particularly in developing countries (Scalabrino Migration Center, 2014; Demurgur, 2015).

A review of migration streams across various continents shows a change in the flow of destinations from one country to another or within regions. In 2019, Asia had an estimate of 4% of the world's international migrants (111 million). Out of this total, 66 million (more than half) were living in other

countries. This shows an increase of 5 million from 61 million recorded for 2015. Similarly, in Europe, over 82 million international migrants were recorded in the continent for 2019. This shows an increase of 10% since 2015 when 75 million international migrants were recorded (International Organization for Migration-IOM, 2020).

Migration patterns in Africa have varied dynamically with a history of both intra-regional and inter-regional migratory flows (Adepoju, 2016; IOM, 2016, 2019). In 2019, 21 million Africans were living within Africa compared to 18.5 million estimates for 2015 (IOM, 2020). Moreover, the number of Africans living in different regions grows with 2 million from 17 million in 2015 to 19 million in 2019. Moreover, international migration within the African region has increased since 2000 (IOM, 2019). Estimate shows that, majority of African reside in Europe (10.6 million), followed by Asia and North America with 4.6 million and 3.2 million respectively (IOM, 2019). Also, it was reported that, from a total of 23.2 million migrants whose origin is Sub-Saharan Africa, 65.6% still reside within the region (World Bank, 2015). This report was corroborated by the United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA, 2015) and International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019), which posited that most migrants in Africa still reside in the region where they were born.

Nigeria has a long tradition of mobility which is evident in the movement of inhabitants because of the slave trade, inter-ethnic conflicts, nomadic herding, warfare and pilgrimage (Afolayan, Ikwuyatum and Abejide, 2008). Nigeria is an important source and destination for migration flows, though, large percentages of these take place in the West African Sub-Region. Although records show that net migration is negative, many people are moving out of the country (Afolayan and IOM Research Division, 2009). Recently,

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migration from Nigeria has apparently attracted more attention in the country. The reason is that the number of skilled professionals leaving the country has been on the increase (Fadayomi, 2013). Moreover, in 2009, it was estimated that over 5 million Nigerians lived abroad (National Policy on Labour Migration, 2014 cited in IOM, 2015). Across different continents in 2013, Nigerians living in African countries were estimated to be 35.6%, 34.2% in Europe, 26.4% in North Africa, and the remaining lived in Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean's and Oceania (Isiugo-Abanihe and IOM, 2016). However, as of 2013, the most important destination of Nigerians is the United States of America with 252,172 or about 25% of Nigerian emigrants (Isiugo-Abanihe and IOM, 2016).

On the other hand, statistics show that 23% of Nigerians are on the move internally for the past ten years with all the states of the federation having less than 10% return migrants (National Population Commission, 2010). The dominant form of migration in the country remains Labour migration (NPC, 2010). In the south-west, the movement of individuals or groups within and outside the region, due to migration of inhabitants has been viewed as a reflection of the colonization of the area. This movement accounts for the large presence of Yoruba immigrants in neighbouring West African countries of the Republic of Benin, Togo, Cote D' Ivoire and Liberia (Afolayan, Ikwuyatum and Abejide, 2008).

IOM (2016, 2019) noted that these realities of the increasing scale of migration globally to a more convenient and promising region have far-reaching effects on left-behind household members who must make up for the absence of a member of the household (Naneta and Ratha, 2013) as noted earlier. These effects are multi-dimensional (Demurger, 2015) and vary according to the specific geographic, demographic, historical and cultural characteristics of the community or households (Kuln, 2006). Similarly, Zentgraf and Chinchilla (2012) assert that the context in which they occur, the duration of stay, the origin and destination and distances influence their variation among the left- behind household members.

Diverse documented works on the consequences of migration on left-behind household members are mostly from case studies in Latin America and Asia with focus on children left behind by international migrations. For instance, previous studies such as Kuln (2006); Jampaklay (2006); Save the Children (2006); Lu (2015) and Kendel (2013); Bouoiyour and Miftah (2015); and Hu (2018) were carried out on left behind children's education outcome in Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Mexico, Philippines and China respectively. Other works conducted by Graham and Jordan, (2011) in Indonesia and Thailand, Lu (2012) in Indonesia; Kuepie (2018) in Cameroun; Cebotari, Mazzucato, Wrigley-Asante & Agandin (2015) and Appiah (2018) in Ghana and Lu and Yeng (2019) in China were on the psychological wellbeing of children left behind. In addition, Lu (2015) did a comparison of the internal and international consequences of migration between Mexico and Indonesia using family life survey whereas Bouryour and Miftah (2015) work was an observational study on international migration in rural Morocco. A few other literatures such as (De Brauw and Mu, 2015; Zhao, et al., 2016; Yu, 2016; Wen and Li, 2016 and Tang, 2018) examined the mental and nutritional health of left -behind children in China and Guatemala. Wrigley-Asante & Agandin (2015) also examined male outmigration and its effect on left-behind women in the Builsa District of Ghana.

Similarly, researches in Nigeria on the consequences of migration on left behind household members are still developing even though some advances have been made in some areas such as on wives left-behind (Ikuomola, 2015); well-being of children left behind in Nigeria, Ghana and Angola (Mazzucato, Cebotari and Angela, 2015); and Cebotari, Mazzucato and Siegel, 2017) on the health of children who stayed behind in Ghana and Nigeria. However, various data and knowledge gaps persist such as on the number of left-behind members in the households, the volume and trajectory of movement and the variation in the consequences as it affects left-behind children in the household among settlements due to migration. It is against this background that this study aimed to examine the volume and pattern of spousal movement in households with a view of establishing the spatial variation in the consequences on children between settlements.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Household heads and/or breadwinners are increasingly being separated from their families across space and in time (Tanle, 2023; Magnussen, 2020; Asis,

2004). This has taken many forms, whether it is whole nuclear family separated from extended family in the area of origin or a parent/ household head or breadwinner migrating alone with dependents left behind (Reyes, 1997 in Antman, 2012). This type of migration is described as circular or repetitive (Acosta, 2015; Antman, 2012); and it often remains unknown migrants accompanied by family members and those left behind in the households (Ullah, 2017).

The apparent rise in migration (Afolayan *et al.*, 2008; Aremu, 2014; Isiugo-Abanihe and IOM, 2016) and the consequent increase in left-behind household members raise questions on the consequences of migration on left-behind household members which varies among the population, space and through time. However, several researches, in Sub-saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America, have, overtime, focused on investigating these consequences as it relates to children, especially in the area of education, welfare, health, nutrition status, psychological wellbeing and cognitive ability (Agadjanian, Yakibu and Cau, 2011; Lee, 2011; Mishi and Mudziwapasi, 2014; Cebotari, Mazzucato and Appiah, 2018; Kupie, 2018; Lu and Yang, 2019, West, *et al.*, 2025; Cotton, 2025).

Also, studies on the consequences of migration on left-behind household members in Nigeria are still largely growing especially with few works carried out in this area of migration research adopting a methodological approach based on qualitative methods with a focus on wives left behind as a result of international migration (Ikuomola, 2015); children's health (Mazzucato, Cebotari and Angela, 2015; Cebotari, Mazzucato and Siegel, 2017). Notably, the foregoing works have shown negligible consideration for the volume and pattern of spousal movement (be it internal or international) and the variations in the pattern of children school enrolment before and after migration episode among settlements. This study, therefore, analysed the spatial variation of spousal migration and its consequences on children's school enrolment among left-behind households.

### 1.2 Research Questions

**The following research questions shall guide the study:**

1. What are the patterns of migration, in terms of volume and trajectory in the settlements?
2. What are the variations in the socio-demographic characteristics of left-behind household members?
3. In what ways does the pattern of spousal movement determine the variations in the number of children enrolment?

### 1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to analyse the spatial variation of spousal migration on left-behind members of households in Oyo Central Senatorial District of Oyo State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the volume and direction of flows among migrants in the settlements.
2. Examine the socio-demographic characteristics of left-behind members of household.
3. Determine the variations in the number of children's school enrolment in the settlements.

### 1.4 Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant variation in the number of children's school enrolment in the settlements.
2. There is a significant variation in the factors contributing to the volume and direction of flow among migrants in the settlements.

### 2.0 Literature Review

Migration, which is found in all societies across the world is an ancient phenomenon (Asis, 2006). Migration has been traced to the existence of human beings on earth (Iheanacho and Ughaerumba, 2015; World Migration Report, 2018). It is a multidimensional and dynamic process hence it varies in definitions by different scholars although with similar themes. Anarfi and Kwarkye (2009) defined migration as the movement within a specific period and space of people from one geographical region to another. It ordinarily involves the origin or source region and destination or receiving region. Moreover, migrants usually give less thought to the problems that may emerge both at the source and destinations regions because they are usually

preoccupied with the benefits they hope to gain by changing their place of usual residence (Ogunmakinde, Oladokun & Oke, 2015).

Nigeria has an age-long history of migration that has existed from the pre-colonial period with trade relationship among settlements within the country. This later metamorphosed into migration across the national borders. According to IOM (2015) in National Policy on Labour Migration, five different patterns of migration were distinguished within this history. These are the pilgrimage to mecca through the Hausa-Transnational link; the slave trade across the trans-Atlantic routes; the migration which occurred during the colonial period due to the pull-push factors of better wages and living condition; the intra-regional migration characterized by movement to African countries with a thriving economy and the south-north migration of Nigerian professionals especially to countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain, United States of America and the United Kingdom due to the downturn the Nigerian economy in the 1980s.

Traditionally, it was reported that men mostly migrated leaving behind their wives and children (Adepoju, 1995 in Oyeniyi, 2013). Similarly, in the colonial era, entire families seldom migrated. However, depending on the condition of the destination, men leave the household while the left-behind household members may join later (Adepoju, 1995 in Oyeniyi, 2013) or women and children were left-behind while the men migrated to a new destination (Oyeniyi, 2013).

Migration in Nigeria is either internal or international in nature. Internal migration in Nigeria which is defined as the movement of people from one area of the country to another area within the same country to establish new residence (IOM, 2011) occurs in the form of rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural and urban-urban movement (Oyeniyi, 2013). Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2017), while distinguishing between internal and international migration flows among households in rural areas reveals that internal migration flows are common than international migration. The reason for this is the high cost involved in international migration.

The changing pattern and volume of migration be it internal or international in literature are significant, as they indicate not only the sex selective nature of migration, but also the condition in the origin and destination, which determines who leaves first and those left behind among the households' members.

### 2.1 Migration and Gender

While some studies report an increase in the migration of men of all strata to urban areas in search of jobs (Zhao, 2002), others (Fan, 2003; De Brauw, 2008) reported that particularly in China, there was an increase in women participation in rural-urban migration. However, the findings show a lag in their overall participation as regards migrant labour markets. Fan (2003) and De Brauw, (2008) further asserted that the termination of migrants works and the subsequent return to villages is mostly due to marriage among these rural women. From a gender angle, earlier findings reveal that in most developing countries, women migrate less for work compared to men (Amuedo, Dorantees and Pizo, 2008; Mendola and Carlette, 2009; Lokeshin and Glinskaya, 2008 and Rodriguez and Tionson, 2001). However, recent findings have also shown that more women are migrating independent of their spouses (Wrigley-Asante, & Zaami, 2023; Awumbila *et al*, 2019).

The evidence from West Africa shows that men tend to migrate than women, although the report revealed that it varies based on religion. Similarly, in Nigeria, it has been reported that the desire to migrate by women and men are proportionally equal (Kirwin & Anderson, 2018). Meanwhile, the evidence from Nigeria is mixed. While Mberu (2005) asserts that in southern Nigeria, labour migration is more of a female phenomenon, on the other hand, Ghebru, *et al*. (2018) in their evidence from rural Nigeria asserts that migration is a male phenomenon.

### 2.2 Factors Influencing the Consequences of Migration

United Nations (2016) identified the demographic characteristics of migrants and those left-behind in the household as one of the factors that influence the social cost experienced by left-behind household members. The study further emphasized that the left-behind children's vulnerability is mostly due to the age-related stages of emotional, psychological and physical development of children. It was further stated that the type of care and support given to the children by the carers as well as the presence or absence of a protective factor

that adds to the child's resilience will inform the variation in the effects of separation from their mother.

Also, the UNICEF (2011) commissioned study on the impact of labour migration on children in Tajikistan, identified the characteristics of individuals (age, gender), household characteristics and structure and the broader social context (livelihood options), societal values and services as the key factors influencing the consequences of migration. Other variables identified by the study are remittances level, duration and frequency of migration and levels of communication with the parents.

Gibson, Mckenzie and Stillman (2013) affirmed that the relationship between migration and left-behind households are significantly influenced by the duration of migration. Demurger (2015) further stated that, in the short term, household members' migration is costly because immediate employment is not necessarily guaranteed at the destination for the migrants. Therefore, for the left-behind household, it may mean reduced income, thus creating negative effects in the household such as a general effect of reduced inputs to market and household productivity. Conversely, in the long term, the reduced income may be compensated for by a re-allocation of labour among the left-behind. However, the rise and fall of remittances with the duration of migration is uncertain. Moreover, the study concluded that long term migrants have the possibility of earning a higher income thereby sending higher remittances. Though, there may be a reduction in the financial transfer as a result of a weakened commitment to sending remittances over time (Demurger, 2015). However, in another study, age, gender of migrants, duration of movement and the left-behind household assets significantly determine the variation in the impact of migration on left-behind households (Demurger and Li, 2013).

### 2.3 Migration and Its Consequences on Children

The study of Siddiqui and Ansar (2020) on the social cost of migration on children and spouse left behind in twelve districts of Bangladesh revealed that challenges faced vary according to child's gender, type of migration and gender of the migrant parents. They identify challenges such as feeling of insecurity, loneliness and unnecessary disciplinary action by many guardians or extended family. Also, 13% of migrant children perceived that their education has suffered to some extent due to migration of parents. Similarly, 90% of children of school age are enrolled in school compared to 86% of non-migrant household children.

While examining the effect of parents' internal migration on the educational outcome of left-behind children in Fkih Ben Salah in Morocco; Alaoui and Aheala (2024) found out that children are at risk of social exclusion especially in public schools while 36.34% of the difference in student performance can be explained by factors such as student- teacher ratio, class size and socio-economic index of class.

According to Vikram (2021) on the relationship between parental migration and children arithmetic and reading achievement, a fathers' long-term migration is positively associated with children's education. However, the study revealed that the benefits are experienced more by sons than by daughters. Similarly, the study by Hue (2022) on the effect of parental migration on education of children left behind did not report a significant relationship due to factors such as technology that have made parenting less limited to geographical distance.

Furthermore, Scleemi (2021) while analyzing the effect of migration on left-behind children in rural areas of Pakistan showed no significant relationship between experiences on children schooling and education. The study carried out in Ethiopia by Tasfaw and Minaye (2022) on the impact of parental migration on education using Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) revealed that students of migrating parents show lack of motivation in schooling. Kunwar (2022) identified the negative impact of parental migration on children left behind to include expression of depression, feeling of abandonment at different stages, differences in social relation, feeling of anxiety, and loneliness whereas positive impact identified are better lifestyle through remittances, improved living standard and decrease in child labour.

### 2.4 Migration History in Oyo State

Migration in Oyo state predates the colonization of Nigeria and even assumes greater dimension after independence. During this era, the Oyo Empire occupied a vast expanse of land, part of which is the present Oyo State.

Migration was evident in the movement of inhabitants of this empire that were involved or were victims of inter-ethnic conflicts, slave trade and warfare. Also, legitimate trading, nomadic herding of livestock and pilgrimage to religious places in the Arabian Peninsula brought about diverse human mobility within and across the borders of the empire (Afolayan, Ikwuyatun and Abejide, 2008). Furthermore, the colonization of other areas by the Oyo Empire led to subsequent movements, which led to formation of other settlements and the establishment of trading activities.

This movement accounts for the significant presence of Yoruba immigrants from Old Oyo Empire to neighbouring empires in former Francophone and Anglophone countries of West Africa such as the present Republic of Benin, Togo, Cote D' Ivoire and Liberia (Afolayan, et al., 2008). Absence of well-defined boundaries was also a motivating factor to the unhindered spatial movement of people during this period. However, the international migration of inhabitants of the empire was spurred by the cross Atlantic slave trade which split the large population in the Yoruba kingdom into different groups (Afolayan, et al., 2008).

Oyo is among the states in Nigeria with high migration rate with a predominance of male return migrants (55.8%) compared to 44.2% of female (IOM and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2016) and a higher male migrant population of 56 per cent to female with 43 per cent (NPC, 2010). The high level of migration in Oyo State is due to several reasons. One important factor is the combination of a strong network, cultural and historical ties with settlements within the states and other countries close to the state. Oyo state being a patriarchal state, return migration of men are common because of the cultural roles being performed in the households (IOM and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2016). Furthermore, the percentage of migrants residing in Oyo state is 84% and 16% for urban and rural areas respectively (NPC, 2012). Thus, the Southwest of Nigeria having a long history of migration favours Oyo state being part of the region (Olowa, Awoyemi, Olowa, and Shittu 2013).

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework

The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) as postulated by Spear (1971) emphasized the collective choice on the process of migration. It sees migration as a collective decision by larger units of related individuals. According to NELM, income differential between and within countries encourages migration. Migration is spurred in the household by the relative decrease in economic status. (Stark and Taylor, 1986; 1991; Massey, 1993 and Abreu, 2012). NELM model analysis focused on addressing familial strategies, income changes and their corresponding consequences on members left behind. Its theme links the consequences of migration with remittances and household left behind and migration decisions (Stark and Bloom, 1985; Withers and Hill, 2022).

In the NELM model, risks are minimized, while joint income and status are maximized in the household. To minimize risk, the cost of migration is shared between household members. That is, the migrants are supported by the family in times of need and the migrants reciprocate this gesture by sending remittances to augment consumption and investment. The theory argues that migrants are sent out not absolutely to increase income but to reduce deprivation of those left behind in the household. First, it assumes that households have a strong motivation to diversify risks through migration and not necessarily due to differences in wages. Secondly, it assumes a reduction in the cost experienced in the origin by the left-behind household members particularly spouses, children and other extended family members.

In this model, migration is seen as a livelihood strategy to minimize the risk of migration on left-behind household members and not from individual perspectives. This theory enables us to examine the changes observed in the household and how decisions are made on whom to migrate in the household to improve their livelihood and household being an active actor as regards the migration of a household member. The NELM model thus helps us to understand among other variables, the reasons for migration, the coping strategies of household, the investment decision on remittances and how the spending pattern of remittances helps the household members left behind.

This theory is still valuable in explaining the present study. The migration of a household member can be assumed as a collective decision on who and where

to migrate. Consequently, with the fact that the left-behind members of household will bear both the benefits and the cost of migration after a household member migrates. It can be theorized, therefore, that migration decision by households in the study area is an apparent collective decision and its attendant consequences on the left-behind members of household are shared.

## 3.0 The Study Area

The study was carried out in Oyo state, Southwestern part of Nigeria. It lies between Latitude 7° 30'N and 9° N of the Equator and Longitude 3° 00' and 4° 30' E of the Greenwich Meridian (Fig 1). The state shares boundary with Ogun state in the south, in the North by Kwara State, in the West, it is partly bounded by Ogun State and partly by the Republic of Benin, while in the East by Osun State (Fig 1). Oyo State has thirty-three (33) Local Government Areas (LGAs) clustered into three (3) Senatorial Districts of Oyo South, Oyo North and Oyo Central with 9, 13 and 11 Local Governments Areas respectively. Specifically, however, the study was conducted in four settlements namely Imini and Awe in Afijio LGA and Oko and Iresaadu in Surulere LGA of Oyo State.

## 3.1 Methodology

### Study Design and Population

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. This was used because it allows the researcher to gather data from a number of participants at a particular time. A household with either of the spouse, breadwinner or household head who have migrated in the study areas constitute different individuals who are the left-behind household members.

Primary source of data collection technique was mainly used for this study. This was obtained by administering a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed, and trial tested by the researcher on a smaller sample to ascertain validity and reliability of the instrument. Questionnaire was used to obtain information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (left-behind households) such as locality, educational status, occupation, pattern of migration flows, household members currently in school after and before migration episode.

The sampling frame used for the study is the total household population in Oyo state by the National Population Commission (NPC, 2010). Although the 2006 housing population in Oyo state did not provide the number of household population with migrants, total household estimates were published for all the 33 LGAs that constitute Oyo state. From a total of 57,313, being total household population of the purposively selected LGA (Afijio - 27,910; and Surulere - 29,403), 573 form the basis for the proportional selection of household in the settlement. This represents 1% of the total household population for the study area. Before the actual sample selection, a combination of information from cartographic material demarcating each ward, population estimates from the 1991 census was used to identify the list of settlements for the survey and referrals by indigenes in the LGA/settlement was used to identify the lists of households with either of the spouses as migrants (similar approach were used by McKenzie and Mistiaen, 2007 in Plaza, Navrrete and Ratha, 2011; Popoola, 2016; Save the Children, 2017; NPC and ICF, 2019) to capture household. Thus, a total of 1613 households were sampled and analysed after attaining data saturation

## 3.2 Sampling Techniques and Data Collecting Procedure

The sample for the study was collected by the adoption of a multi-stage sampling technique through the following stages. First, Oyo state was purposively selected for the survey, with prior knowledge of the apparent high population migration of either of the spouses because of the need for livelihood sustenance. In the second stage, the state was clustered into Senatorial Districts namely, Oyo Central, Oyo South and Oyo North with a total of 33 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The third stage involved the random selection of a Senatorial district (Oyo Central), followed by two LGAs with two settlements each selected for the study. These are Afijio LGA (Awe and Imini) and Surulere LGA (Okoko and Iresa-adu) were randomly selected.

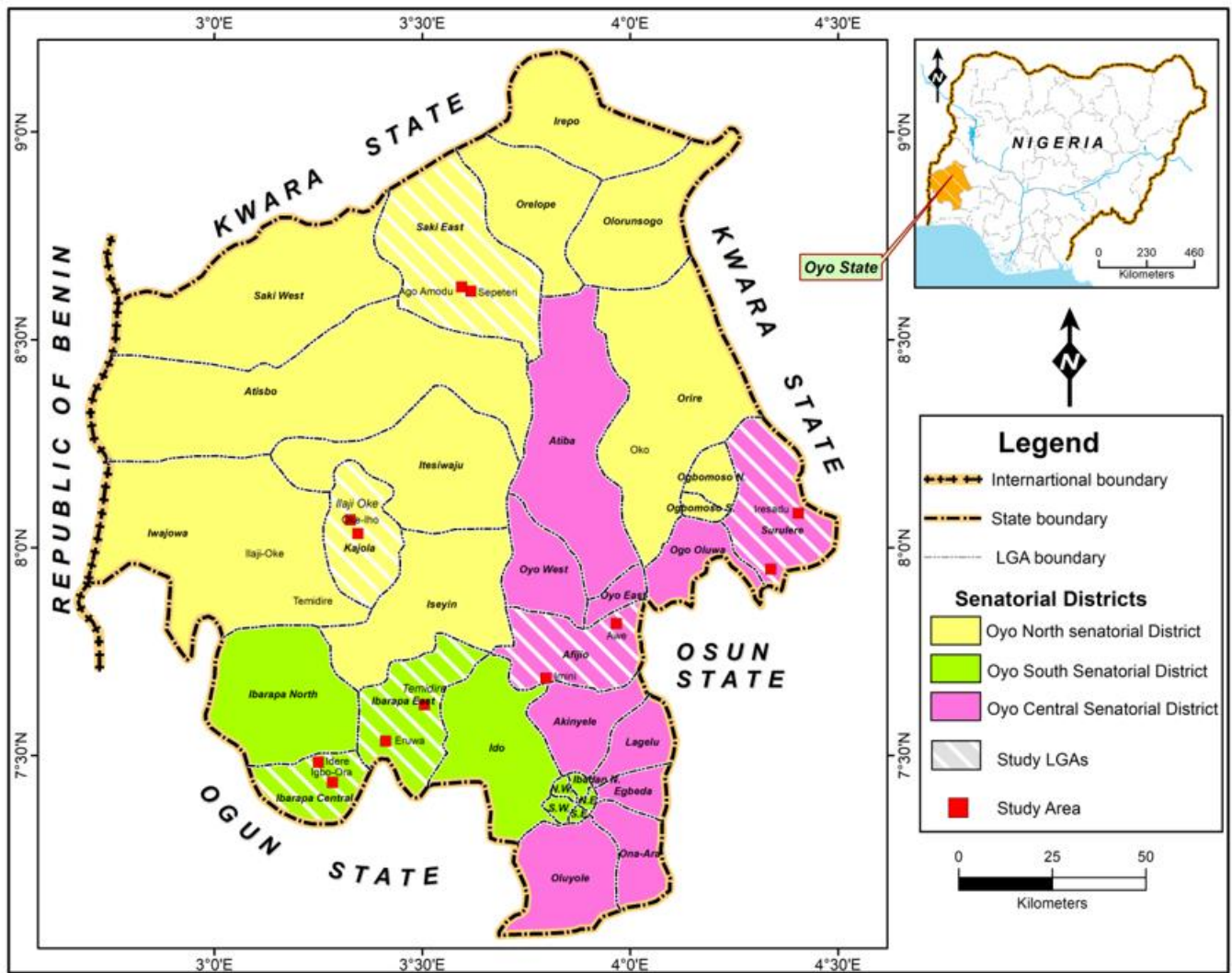


Fig 1: Study Area: Oyo state showing the Settlements

Table 1: Summary of Sample Size for the Study

S/No	Senatorial Zone	LGA	Household Size	Settlements	Proportional Allocation	Sample size	Actual Sample
1	Oyo Central	Afijio	27910	Urban/Awe	134	279	105 234
				Rural/Imini	145		129
		Surulere	29203	Urban/Okoko	142	294	113 213
				Rural/Iresaadu	152		100

Furthermore, to locate the household since there is no national data on the households with a migrant spouse in the country, the household listing procedures were carried out in order to capture the number of households. This was followed by a snowballing sampling technique to identify respondents that fit into the selection criteria. This was used because it was not possible to use any form of a random sampling method in the selection of the left-behind households with the criteria because there was no comprehensive sampling frame to identify the households with either of the spouses as a migrant. Moreover, this was used because it enabled the researchers to identify and select appropriate respondents/households needed for the research. The resulting lists of households served as the sample size in the settlements.

About 57,313 households were selected for the survey and proportionately allocated questionnaire forms based on 52% and 48% to each of the sampled rural and urban settlements respectively in the Local Government Areas. This proportion was used because this is the percentages of residents living in rural and urban areas in Nigeria as at 2016 (Population Reference Bureau, 2016). For this study, the analysis was limited to family members within the

household having a migrant who is a spouse. The inclusion criterion for the respondents adopted was based on Adepoju and Van der Wiel (2010); and IOM (2012) criteria. A household with either of the spouse as a migrant and have left for up to a year before the survey. Also, the left-behind household members must have been living at the same residential address for a period of at least 6 months before the time of data collection.

#### 4.0 Results and Discussion

Table 2: Migration Status of Household Members

Migration Status	Number	Percentage (%)
Migrant	447	27.71
Non-Migrant	1166	72.29
Total	1613	100

The migration status of the household members left behind indicates that 27.71% per cent of the respondents were migrants while the remaining 72.27% are left behind. From the total sampled household consisting of 1613 members of the household gives an average size of 4 people per household. Although 447 of the respondents were reported as migrants, recent studies showed that there is an increasing hunger for migration in Nigeria (Ogbu, 2019; Alabi, 2024).

#### 4.1 Age-Sex Pattern of Left-behind Household Members

The age-sex pattern of left-behind household members and the distribution of male-female household members showed that the proportion of females are the majority (52.7%), and the rest consisting of 47.3 per cent being males. In addition, majority (14.6%) of the left-behind females are in age group 15-34 years while majority (14.4%) of the males that are left-behind are in the ageing age group of 50+ years. Overall, females formed the dominant

population that are left behind in the entire settlements. This finding is consistent with migration literature's report on some African countries (Nigeria inclusive) which indicate that migrants in Africa are more of males than females and their drives are in the search for employment opportunities and better livelihood options (FAO, 2017; Gbebru, 2018).

#### 4.2 Marital Status of Left-behind Household Members

The pattern of the marital status of the left-behind household members in Awe, Imini, Iresaadu and Oko is as shown in Table 3. Out of the total number of respondents, 42.5 per cent of them are singles while 45.1 per cent are married. Those that were divorced/separated and widowed among the left-behind household members are 5.3 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.

#### 4.3 Educational Status of Left-behind Household Members

The pattern below in Fig 2 shows that for the left-behind household that secured non-formal education, it ranges from 2.5 per cent in Iresaadu to as high as 5.7 per cent at Imini settlement. Similarly, for left-behind household with primary education, it ranges from 3.4 per cent in Iresaadu to as high as 14.5 per cent at Imini. One important thing about this pattern is that both settlements with the least and highest number of left-behind members with non-formal and primary education are in the suburbs. Further disaggregation

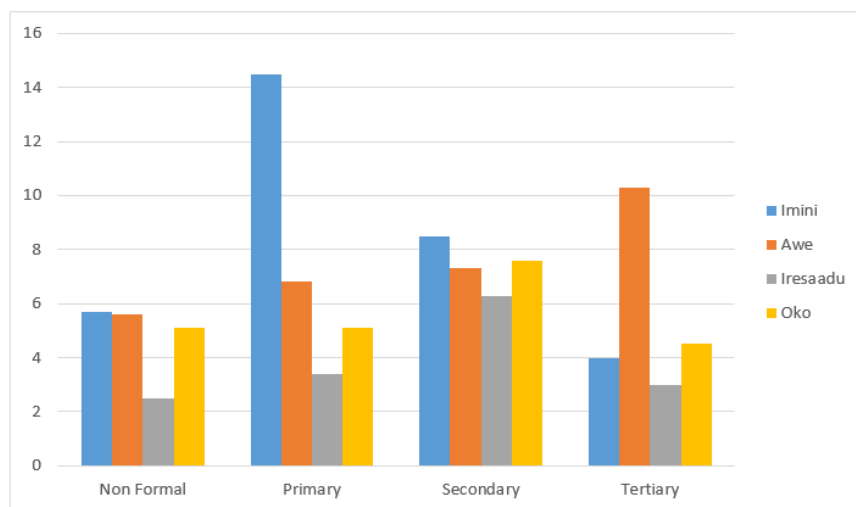
showed that the majority (10.3%) of left-behind members with tertiary education are found in Awe while the least (3%) are recorded in Iresaadu. The possible explanation for this pattern could be attributed to the presence of a tertiary institution close to Awe settlement. In summary, the above pattern shows that left-behind household members have more of their population having primary education (29.8%), closely followed by those with secondary education (29.7%).

#### 4.4 Spatial Variation in Occupational Status of Left-behind Household

The occupational pattern in the sampled settlements is as presented graphically in Fig 3. One major feature of the pattern is that those employed in the Agricultural sector are the majority (24%), while the construction and manufacturing sectors are the least with 7.5 per cent each of the total population in the sampled. Similarly, 16.7 per cent and 14.6 per cent are employed in the others and professional respectively. Disaggregating the pattern based on settlements shows that majority (13.5%) that are employed in the Agricultural sector are found in Imini settlement. This is particularly so because the settlement is agrarian with more people engaging in primary occupation. Similarly, from all the total settlements, the least number of left-behind are employed in the construction and manufacturing sector (1.3% each) and are found in Iresaadu settlement.

**Table 3: Marital Status of Left-behind Household Members**

Settlement	Single		Married		Divorced/Separated		Widow/Widower	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Imini	145	12.4	205	17.6	5	0.4	26	2.2
Awe	156	13.4	139	11.9	30	2.6	24	2.1
Iresaadu	60	5.1	70	6	18	1.5	29	2.5
Oko	135	11.6	112	9.6	9	0.8	3	0.3
Total	496	42.5	526	45.1	62	5.3	82	7



**Fig 2: Educational Status of Left-behind Members of Households**

#### 4.5 Duration of Absence of Migrants

It has been well documented that duration of absence of migrants is a contributory factor to the negative experienced by the left-behind (Demurger and Li, 2013; Demurger, 2015). Table 4 present the variation in the duration of absence of spouses. The results indicates that, majority of the migrants (35.1%) have left home for 18 years or less while the remaining proportion of 34.5 per cent, 20.1 per cent, 9.6 per cent and 0.7 per cent have been absent for between 18-20 years, 21-29 years, 30-39 years and 40 years and above respectively. Graphically, the pattern indicates a decreased volume of migration with increased duration of absence. This reflects a downward sloping trend as a result of the increases in the duration of absence of the migrants for all the settlements.

Generally, from the whole settlements, greater proportion of the migrants from Oko (11.2%) have been absent from home for 18 years or less. The least number of durations of absence was found in Imini (2%) and Oko (1.3%) for those that have left for 30-39 years. However, for the duration of absence of the migrants for 40 years and above, only Imini (0.7%) had migrants who have been absent for that duration. The probability of the migrants from this settlement (Imini) permanently residing for the rest of their life in the destination area is, therefore, high. Other settlements (such as Awe, Iresaadu and Oko) have no record of spousal migration who have left the settlement for a period of 40 + years from the survey.



#### 4.6 Pattern of Migration flows by Settlement

##### Volume and Direction of Internal Migration Flows

The graphical illustration in figure 4 showed the volume and direction of flows of migrants (spouse) from the settlement (internal). About 30.1 per cent of the total internal migrants from Imini changed residence prior to the time of the survey. This was followed by migrants from Oko (25.5%). The remaining proportion of 23.4 per cent and 21 per cent constitutes the internal migrants from Awe and Iresaadu settlements respectively.

The volume of flows across the four settlements shows that majority of the migrants moved to Lagos (21%) and Oyo states (21.8%). Also, the volume of flows from Imini settlement indicates that the majority (8.1%) of the total migrants' flows are within Oyo state. Other significant flows from Imini are to Lagos state (6%). The least proportion of migrants from Imini of 0.7 per cent are found in Ekiti and Kano states. The implication of the high volume of flows within Oyo state from Imini showed that there is a possibility of migrants returning or paying frequent visits compared to migrants in other states.

Furthermore, the volume of movement from Awe settlements to Lagos state is most significant (8.9%) when compared with other movements that take place

to other states within the country. This pattern of high volume of migration from Awe to Lagos state further confirms earlier findings conducted by Afolayan (2008). The most popular destination for the migrants from Iresaadu within the country is Oyo state (7%) and Lagos State (4.1%). The same volume of 1 per cent each was recorded for Enugu, Ogun and Osun states. The volume is the same for migrants moving to Delta, Kano and Ondo states with 1.2 per cent each out of the total migrants of 21 per cent. The total volume of inter-state movement from Oko settlement is 25.5 per cent, with the highest being Oyo state (4.3%), and was followed by Lagos state (2%). The Southeastern states of Abia and Enugu had an inflow of 1.4 per cent and 1.7 per cent respectively. Generally, from all the settlements, the main cluster of migration is within the Southwest geopolitical zone mainly Oyo and Lagos states (42.8%).

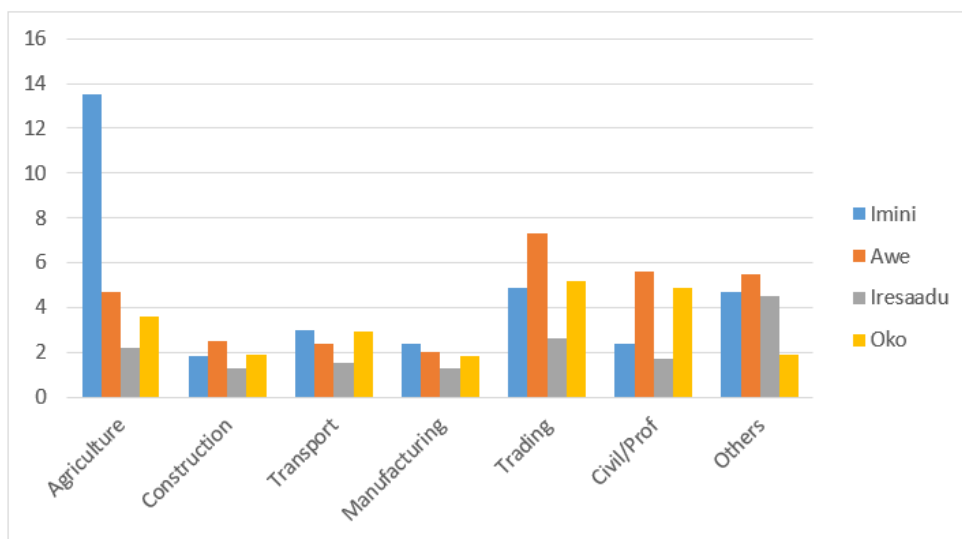
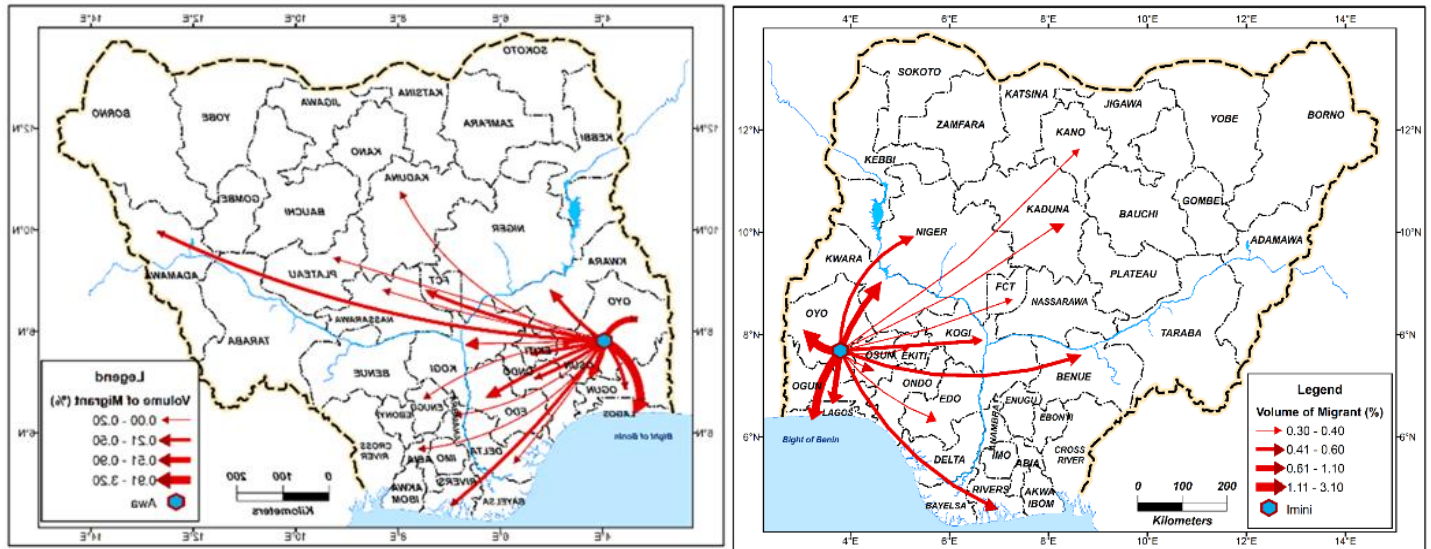


Fig 3: Occupational Status of Left-behind Households

Table 4: Duration of Absence of Migrants

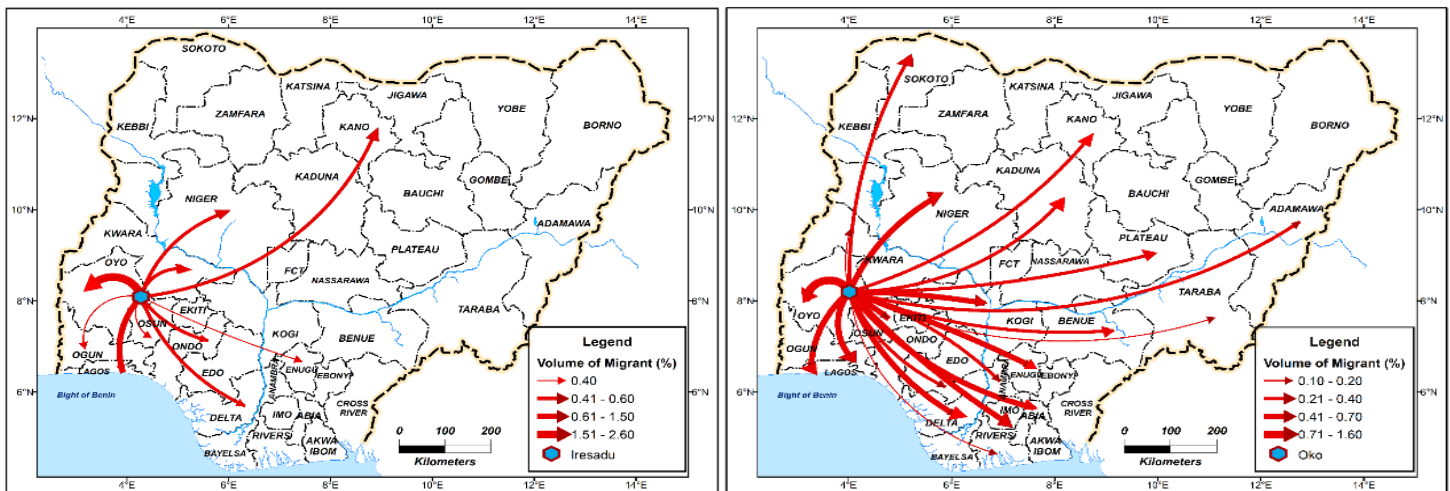
Duration of Absence (years)/Settlements	Less than 18 years	18-20 years	21-29 years	30-39 years	40+ years
Imini	(45)10.1	(40)10	(32)7.2	(9)2	(3)0.7
Awe	(30)6.7	(30)6.7	(30)6.7	(15)3.4	
Iresaadu	(32)7.2	(38)8.5	(17)3.8	(13)2.9	
Oko	(50)11.2	(46)10.3	(11)2.5	(6)1.3	
Total	(157)35.1	(154)34.5	(90)20.1	(43)9.6	(3)0.7

Fig 4: Volume and Direction of Flow of Migrants



Flow of migrants from Awe

Flow of migrants from Imini



Flow of migrants from Iresaadu

Flow of migrants from Oko

Table 5: Results of ANOVA Analysis

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F	P-Value
Settlement	274.242	3	91.414	66.296	0.001
Error	609.462	442	1.379		
Total	883.704	445			

Table 5 below shows the results of ANOVA on the difference in factors contributing to the volume and direction of flow among migrants. The overall test showed significant statistical variation in the factors contributing to the volume and direction of flow among migrants in the settlements of Awe, Imini, Oko and Iresaadu ( $F=66.296$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Hence, factors contributing to the volume and direction of flow among migrants in the settlements varied in the study. Generally, the driver of migration includes unemployment, uneven development, remittances, social transformation, interplay of socio-demographic factors, push and pull variables, distance, place disparities, and psychological factors (Dobriban, & Fan, 2016; Onwuka, & Aniebo, 2025; Dias, Cruz, Luis, *et al.*, 2025).

#### 4.7 Variation of Household Members Currently in School (Before and after Migration Episode)

The migration of household members and the subsequent left-behind of household members has implications for school attendance, especially among children. Documented evidence have shown that children left-behind because

of the migration of parents constitutes a vulnerable group with incidences of interruption in schooling, child labour (Bakker, Eligs-Rel and Reis, 2009); increased absenteeism (Yeoh and Lam, 2006); and negative impact on children's long term educational prospects (Gianelli and Margiavachi, 2000). Moreover, it was also posited that children in developing countries have been increasingly affected by migration (UNICEF, 2008) and being out of school (Save the Children, 2016). The patterns of the numbers of children currently in school before and after the migration of either of the spouses were therefore examined in this study. This was explored in order to identify the number of children that are out of school after the migration of a spouse.

The survey findings show that the total number of children in the household who are in school before and after migration are 480 and 360 respectively. That is, there is a 25 percent decrease in enrolment of children in schools in the studies areas. This reduction in the number of children in school enrolment after migration showed the migration-time effect on children enrolment among the surveyed settlements. The distribution according to gender shows that 53 per cent and 47 per cent are females and males respectively for those



in school before migration while 56.4 per cent and 43.6 per cent are females and males respectively for those in school after migration.

A comparative in-depth analysis of each of the settlements before and after migration show that, more females are in school after migration of parents in Imini (15.3%), Awe (20%), and Iresaadu (12.8%) than their male counterpart for Imini, Awe and Iresaadu with 12.3 per cent, 14.8 per cent and 9.4 per cent respectively before migration.

Generally, in all the sampled settlements, there are some differences in the number of children in school between those before and after migration for different ages. For instance, before migration, the majority (28.8%) of children in school are in age 5 years, followed by children aged 6 years (24%). In contrast, for children in school after the migration of a spouse, most of the children are aged 2 years and 5 years with 19.7 per cent and 18.6 per cent respectively. That is, for children aged 5 years, it negatively changed by 10.2 per cent after migration. Similarly, across the settlements, for those children in ages 6 years and 7 years, there was a reduction (a positive change) of 13.5 per cent and 1.7 per cent was observed respectively in the number of children in school after the migration of a parent from the household. Conversely, for children in ages 1 year, 3 years, 4 years and 8+ years, there was an increase (positive change) of 1.3 per cent, 3.1 per cent, 8.1 per cent and 0.4 per cent respectively in the number of children in schools after the migration of a parent from the households. The general pattern above is indicative of the fact that more children are in school enrolment in ages 1 year, 3 years, 4 years and 8+ years after migration has taken place compared with ages 6 years and 7 years. Furthermore, the statistical test showed that there is a significant variation in the number of children enrolment in the settlements of Awe, Imini, Oko and Iresaadu ( $F = 21.354$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ).

Overall, the survey data reveals that migration has an impact on school attendance in all settlements for both genders. However, majority of the females are in school than the males after spousal migration. The emerging trend showed more cases of male household members not in school throughout the sampled settlements. This finding contrasts with the earlier finding of Akinbi and Akinbi (2015) that pointed to inequality in access to formal education in Nigeria in favour of the male; despite the nation's commitment to equality for all (Adepoju *et al.*, 2020).

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Migration, which involves the movement of people from one place to another leads to a change of usual residences over some distances and space has its attendant consequences on left-behind household members. This study has

been able to establish the existence of a spatial variation in the socio-demographic characteristics and the pattern of migration flow among settlements in the left-behind households in Oyo Central Senatorial District. Oyo State with a history of migration has reflected a variation in the volume and direction of flows of migrants (either of the spouse) among the settlements. Moreover, the volume and direction of flows have given rise to a spatial pattern as migrants have been redistributed within and outside the country. However, these migrants mostly engage in internal migration predominantly intra-Oyo state. The main inference drawn from this study is that there is a nexus between spousal migration in the households and number of children enrolment in schools. It could be concluded therefore, that spousal migration in the households contributed to the menace of out-of-school children in Oyo Central Senatorial District of Oyo State.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that policy initiatives that will link the social dimension of migration most especially as it affects household members left behind in various settlements should be entrenched. There is a need for the implementation of appropriate strategies that will minimise the effects of spousal migration on the left-behind households. Therefore, government and all stakeholders should develop laws and policy in the field of migration with a focus on left-behind household members, to ensure sustainable coping strategies for them. The government should, as a matter of priority, address the observation on the number of out-of-school children among the settlements due to spousal migration. Through advocacy programmes, government should ensure the facilitation of continuous linkages of migrants and left-behind household members, especially children. Other measures at community level should be the spreading of development and the entrenchment of social welfare schemes for left-behind children that will ensure their continuous education even after the migration of either of their parents. Finally, establishing a national database on left-behind household members and the migrants' spouse destination will provide a platform for implementing various programmes as it affects the left-behind household members. Knowledge of the number of migrants, current place of residence and the number of left-behind household members as a result of migration will help the government in implementing localized strategic plans that could address the concern of the left-behind household members especially in the area of education.

**Declaration:** The manuscript submitted is an original work, it does not infringe on any rights and is devoid of any competing interest.

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