**Migration and Cultural Evolution in Nigeria: Patterns, Impact, and Future Trajectories**

Contributions

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**Abstract**

Migration has profoundly shaped Nigeria’s cultural landscape, influencing societal structures, economic activities, and national identity. This study examines the patterns, drivers, and consequences of migration, focusing on how internal and external movements have fostered cultural development, transformation, and hybridization. It explores historical migration waves and contemporary trends driven by globalization, economic opportunities, and socio-political factors. By assessing inter-ethnic interactions, language evolution, artistic expressions, and religious transformations, this research underscores the dynamic relationship between migration and cultural adaptation. Additionally, it evaluates the role of policy frameworks in managing migration and cultural integration, identifying gaps and areas for improvement. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this study presents a forward-looking analysis on migration’s future impact on national unity, social cohesion, and sustainable development. It contributes to scholarly discourse by offering fresh perspectives on how migration continues to redefine Nigeria’s cultural identity in an increasingly interconnected world.

**Key words:** Assimilation, Culture, Development, Globalization, Migration, Integration.

**Introduction**

Migration has been a fundamental force in shaping Nigeria’s cultural, economic, and social landscape, profoundly influencing the identity and interactions of its diverse populations. From ancient times to the present, the movement of people, whether driven by necessity, opportunity, or compulsion, has played a crucial role in forging inter-ethnic relationships, enriching traditions, and facilitating cultural exchanges that have contributed to the nation’s development. As a multi-ethnic society with a complex historical trajectory, Nigeria has experienced waves of migration that have continuously reshaped its socio-political structures and cultural dynamics.

Historically, migration within Nigeria was influenced by factors such as trade, conquest, religious expansion, and environmental conditions.1 Pre-colonial migrations saw large-scale population movements that established ethnic territories, shaped linguistic groups, and facilitated interactions between distinct communities. The trans-Saharan trade route fostered exchanges between West African and North African societies, introducing new ideas, religious beliefs, and economic systems that would later integrate into Nigerian cultural practices. Similarly, movements spurred by the need for fertile land or better economic prospects led to the intermingling of groups, promoting cultural hybridization that remains evident today2.

During the colonial era, migration patterns were significantly altered due to administrative policies, forced labor systems, and economic restructuring imposed by European colonial powers. The introduction of wage labor and the establishment of cities such as Lagos, Kano, and Port Harcourt as economic hubs intensified internal migration as people sought employment opportunities outside their traditional homelands. The legacy of colonial migration policies continues to shape urban demographics, economic disparities, and cultural identities in post-colonial Nigeria.

In contemporary times, migration in Nigeria is driven by numerous factors, including urbanization, education, employment, socio-political instability, and globalization. The rapid expansion of cities has led to significant rural-to-urban migration, with people seeking better living standards and economic opportunities in metropolitan centres3. However, this movement has also resulted in challenges such as overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural tensions between indigenous populations and migrant communities. Additionally, political conflicts, insurgencies, and economic downturns have prompted waves of internal displacement, forcing communities to adapt to new cultural environments while grappling with identity crises and integration difficulties.

Moreover, Nigeria’s position within global migration networks highlights the interconnected nature of cultural development. Many Nigerians migrate internationally in pursuit of education, employment, and better living conditions, contributing to transnational cultural exchanges that shape perceptions of Nigerian identity abroad. The diaspora is critical in sustaining cultural heritage through artistic expressions, language preservation, and global networks that reinforce national identity while embracing multicultural influences4.

This study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of migration’s impact on Nigeria’s cultural development, examining the patterns, causes, consequences, and future trajectories of human mobility. By exploring the intersections between migration and identity formation, linguistic evolution, artistic creativity, and religious transformation, this research aims to highlight the dynamic relationship between population movements and cultural adaptation. Additionally, it critically assesses governmental policies on migration and cultural integration, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in fostering inclusive national development.

In an era of increasing globalization and mobility, understanding the complexities of migration is essential for policymakers, researchers, and cultural historians. This study contributes to the growing discourse on how migration continues to shape Nigeria’s evolving identity and offers insights into strategies that can promote cultural harmony, national cohesion, and sustainable development in the face of demographic shifts.

**Conceptualizing Migration and Culture**

Migration is a crucial force in shaping a nation’s economic and social development. It refers to the movement of people and goods from one place to another, occurring either within national borders or across international boundaries. Migration can be classified as internal or international, documented or undocumented, regular or irregular—the latter also referred to as unauthorized, illegal, or clandestine migration. Different forms of migration include counter-urbanization, emigration, immigration, internal migration, international migration, and rural-urban migration. Internal migration happens within a country, often involving movement from rural to rural areas or, more commonly, from rural communities to urban centers in search of better economic prospects and improved living conditions. International migration, on the other hand, involves relocating to a different country, driven by various social, political, or economic factors.

Irregular migration encompasses a broad spectrum of individuals moving for different reasons. An individual classified as an irregular migrant may simultaneously be an asylum seeker, a de facto refugee, or an economic migrant, reflecting the complex nature of migration dynamics. Understanding these migration patterns is essential for formulating policies that address population movement and its impact on national development. The overlap demonstrates the complexity and informality prevalent in the migratory corridor.5

Migration and cultural evolution are closely intertwined, shaping societies and identities across generations. Migration involves the movement of people from one location to another, driven by economic opportunities, conflict, environmental factors, education, or social aspirations. As individuals and communities relocate, they engage in cultural exchanges that lead to transformation, adaptation, and hybridization, ultimately contributing to the evolution of traditions, languages, artistic expressions, religions, and collective identities.

**Theoretical Argument**

For the proper understanding of the topic, the study adopted a robust theoretical foundation to analyze the relationship between human mobility and cultural transformation. Various migration theories and cultural change models provide a lens through which the dynamics of migration in Nigeria can be understood. The evolution theory of social change by some prominent scholars,6,7 was adopted in this study. The characteristic feature of this theory is change, which is the differentiation and integration of culture in any human society.

Moreover, the Push-Pull Theory, first introduced by Lee8, remains a fundamental model for understanding migration dynamics. This theory suggests that migration is influenced by push factors (forces driving people away from their place of origin) and pull factors (attractions drawing migrants to new destinations). In Nigeria, push factors such as economic hardship, political instability, environmental degradation, and ethnic conflicts have historically contributed to mass movements. Simultaneously, pull factors such as employment opportunities, better living conditions, educational prospects, and urbanization attract people to new locations. This interplay of forces explains both internal and international migration trends shaping Nigeria’s demographic and cultural landscape.9

Again, the Cultural Diffusion Theory, rooted in the work of Alfred L. Kroeber10, explains how cultures spread and transform through interactions between societies. Migration plays a crucial role in transmitting cultural elements such as language, traditions, artistic expressions, religious beliefs, and social norms between different communities. In Nigeria, migration has facilitated cultural hybridization, as ethnic groups interact and influence one another. For example, the diffusion of languages such as Pidgin English, the fusion of indigenous music with foreign genres like Afrobeats, and the blending of religious practices all exemplify how migration reshapes cultural identities11.

Acculturation Theory, developed by Berry12, describes how individuals and groups adjust to new cultural environments through assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization. As people migrate, they adopt elements of their host society’s culture while retaining aspects of their original identity. In Nigeria, urban migrants often experience acculturation as they encounter different ethnic and linguistic groups. Over time, individuals integrate into new communities by adapting their speech, dress, cuisine, and social practices while maintaining their ancestral heritage. This results in blended cultural identities and a more interconnected national culture.13

The Globalization Theory, as discussed by Giddens14, explains how increasing global interconnectedness influences migration and cultural evolution. Nigeria’s migration patterns are shaped by global forces such as technological advancements, trade networks, and international diplomacy, leading to transnational cultural exchanges. Nigerians who migrate abroad contribute to the diaspora effect, influencing perceptions of Nigerian culture worldwide. Additionally, foreign influences—through education, media, fashion, and politics—impact Nigerian identity formation. Migration, therefore, serves as a bridge between local traditions and global cultures, reinforcing Nigeria’s role in the modern interconnected world.15

**The Historical Context of Migration in Nigeria**

At the early stage of Nigeria's migration history, the colonial state saw migration primarily as a means to an end: to extract labor, not to support development. This was well captured by Frederick Cooper when he stated that “British colonial policy never treated rural-urban migration as a tool for socioeconomic development; rather, it was structured to meet the labor needs of railways, mining companies, and administrative institutions.”16 While male labor migration was widespread, women also increasingly moved to urban centers where they engaged in trade, domestic work, and service provision. This trend challenged traditional gender roles and gradually contributed to a transformation of family structures and rural economies.17 Such migrations were not only internal; thousands of Nigerians were exported as laborers to other British colonies in West Africa, most notably the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Cameroon, and Sierra Leone, where they worked on cocoa farms, in mines, or as clerks.18 This labor export system was institutionalized through formal agreements between colonial administrations. By the late 1930s, Nigerians constituted over 60 percent of the labor force in Ghana's cocoa-producing regions, a clear indicator of the regional scope and intensity of colonial labor migration.19 These laborers were typically young men from the eastern and western regions of Nigeria who sought seasonal or long-term employment to escape rural poverty and taxation.

Colonial powers, with little consideration for Africa's socioeconomic realities, imposed arbitrary borders that divided numerous ethnic groups across neighboring countries. This is evident in the case of the Yoruba, split between Nigeria and Benin, and the Hausa-Fulani, divided between Nigeria and Niger. Despite these artificial separations, these ethnic groups continued to view cross-border movement as a natural extension of internal migration, rooted in deep historical and cultural ties.20 Cultural affinity played a crucial role in facilitating these migrations, as shared language, religion, customs, and traditions fostered seamless integration between migrants and the host communities. Given the longstanding ethnic solidarity, many of these movements remained undocumented, further enabled by vast, porous borders that remain largely unpoliced.21

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) highlights that intra-African migration remains a dominant trend, with 53% of Africa’s international migrants in 2017 staying within the continent, with Nigeria at the top of the chart. Notably, beyond Northern Africa, over 80% of Nigerian migrants moved within Eastern, Central, and Western Africa, reinforcing the role of Nigerian’s regional migration in shaping economic and social landscapes.22 UNCTAD’s findings suggest that cultural and historical ties significantly influence Nigeria's migration decisions, making integration and assimilation easier in destination countries. This highlights the importance of shared languages, traditions, and identities in facilitating movement across African borders. Furthermore, projections indicate that continued migration could positively impact cultural/structural transformation and economic growth, with forecasts suggesting that Africa’s GDP per capita could rise to $3,249 by 2030, growing at an annual rate of 3.5% from 2016, when it stood at $2,008.23

Beyond formal migration channels, the informal sector is a critical component of African economies, accounting for at least 50% of the continent’s economic activity and 90% of employment in West Africa.24 This sector, characterized by unregulated, untaxed, and loosely organized economic activities, plays a vital role in sustaining livelihoods, particularly in regions with weak institutional oversight. Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) is especially prevalent due to Africa’s artificially drawn borders, historical trade networks, weak enforcement mechanisms, corruption, and lack of policy coordination among neighboring states.25 The persistence of informal migration and trade underscores the need for comprehensive migration policies, better economic governance, and enhanced border regulation to optimize benefits while addressing challenges associated with undocumented movement and economic disparities.26

Nigerian women play a significant role in the informal sector, with studies indicating that they contribute approximately 70% of informal cross-border trade (ICBT) across the continent.27 Many Nigerian women turn to informal migration trading across the borders as a means of escaping poverty and unemployment, especially in the face of inadequate infrastructure and economic instability. For many, informal cross-border trade is not just a survival strategy but a way to sustain their families at various economic levels. However, systemic challenges—including difficulty accessing formal trade networks, financial constraints, and the complexity of regulatory processes—push many women into informal economic activities.

Migration is deeply embedded in Nigerian societies, driven not only by economic necessity but also by cultural and ethnic affiliations. Despite its fundamental role in trade and labor mobility, the informal economy remains largely undocumented in official trade statistics, even though it helps mitigate poverty and unemployment. Informal cross-border migration allows communities to maintain trade networks, ensuring a continuous flow of goods and resources, often filling gaps left by weak formal economic structures. However, political corruption significantly hinders development, erodes governmental legitimacy, and limits the state’s ability to provide essential social services and infrastructure that improve people’s quality of life.28 Without transparent and accountable governance, the impact of informal trade may remain undermined, preventing economic prosperity from being fully realized. For example, countries like Benin and Niger have historically exploited Nigeria’s porous borders for both legal and illicit trade activities, highlighting gaps in border enforcement, policy coordination, and regional trade governance.

Colonial-era border divisions continue to influence migration trends in Africa. Many border communities, despite being separated by national boundaries, share language, religion, and cultural traditions, reinforcing interconnected identities. For these communities, movement across borders is often seen as a natural extension of internal migration rather than an international process governed by formal regulations.29 Limited literacy levels among some populations further contribute to unregulated border crossings, as many individuals remain unaware of official migration laws and trade policies. This reality accounts for the high percentage of intra-African migration, as people maintain historical trade networks and familial connections across arbitrarily drawn borders. Strengthening regional migration policies and addressing informal trade challenges through inclusive governance can help African economies maximize the benefits of migration while addressing its complexities.30

**Migration and Cultural Evolution: An Exploration**

Migration has long been a defining factor in Nigeria’s cultural evolution, shaping languages, artistic expressions, religious transformations, and social identities. Migration involves the movement of people from one location to another, driven by economic opportunities, conflict, environmental factors, education, or social aspirations.31 As people move across regions, they engage in cultural exchanges that lead to transformation, adaptation, and hybridization, ultimately contributing to the evolution of traditions, languages, artistic expressions, religions, and collective identities.32

Migration fosters linguistic diversity and adaptation, leading to the evolution of languages and the emergence of hybrid dialects. Nigeria, with its over 500 ethnic groups, has experienced significant linguistic exchanges through migration. When different communities interact, they often borrow words, phrases, and linguistic structures from each other, enriching communication. For instance, the Hausa language, widely spoken in northern Nigeria, has absorbed influences from Arabic due to trans-Saharan trade and Islamic migration. Similarly, Pidgin English, a widely spoken lingua franca in Nigeria, emerged as a hybrid language, incorporating elements from English, Portuguese, and local indigenous languages.33 This linguistic hybridization enables diverse groups to communicate effectively, fostering cultural integration and social cohesion. Beyond spoken languages, migration has also influenced naming conventions, storytelling traditions, and indigenous communication systems, ensuring a continuous cycle of linguistic adaptation across generations.

The movement of people has significantly impacted Nigeria’s artistic and cultural traditions. Migration introduces communities to new artistic techniques, materials, and forms of expression, leading to cultural innovation and expansion. Music, dance, and visual arts have been influenced by cross-cultural exchanges.34 For example, Afrobeats, Nigeria’s globally recognized music genre, blends traditional African rhythms with Western influences, demonstrating how migration has shaped contemporary artistic expression.35 Similarly, Nigerian visual artists integrate elements of indigenous and foreign artistic styles, producing works that reflect diverse cultural influences. Traditional festivals and ceremonies have also evolved due to migration.36 The Igbo New Yam Festival, widely celebrated across southeastern Nigeria, has been influenced by interactions with neighboring ethnic groups, leading to variations in how it is observed in different locations. Migration ensures that cultural traditions are preserved, adapted, and enriched by new influences, keeping them relevant in a changing society.

Religion is another aspect of culture deeply affected by migration. Over centuries, religious movements have introduced new belief systems, rituals, and practices that have blended with existing traditions, creating religious syncretism. Nigeria’s religious landscape is a product of both internal and external migrations.37 The introduction of Islam in northern Nigeria through trans-Saharan trade routes led to the fusion of indigenous religious beliefs with Islamic customs. Likewise, the spread of Christianity through missionary activities in southern Nigeria integrated traditional African spiritual practices, producing unique forms of Christian worship that incorporate drumming, dancing, and ancestral reverence. Beyond major religions, migration has enabled the coexistence of multiple belief systems within the same communities. Many Nigerians embrace elements of indigenous religions while practicing Islam or Christianity, demonstrating how migration fosters religious plurality and transformation.

As people migrate and settle in new environments, they experience shifts in identity and social belonging. Migration provides opportunities for cultural exchanges, creating blended identities that reflect multiple traditions. Inter-ethnic marriages, communal interactions, and shared experiences contribute to the reconstruction of identity.38 For example, Nigerians born and raised in cities often develop mixed cultural identities, adopting languages, cuisines, and lifestyles from various ethnic backgrounds. Migration has also led to the emergence of pan-African and nationalist identities, as people seek common ground amid diversity. Despite challenges such as cultural tensions and discrimination against migrant communities, migration ultimately enhances Nigeria’s cultural richness by fostering inclusivity and mutual respect. Identity is continuously redefined through interactions, ensuring that Nigerian society remains adaptable and resilient in the face of change.39

**Drivers of Migration in Nigeria**

Nigeria, known as the giant of Africa, has one of the lowest standards of living in Africa. In recent times, Nigeria was nicknamed the capital of poverty in the world despite the enormous endowment of natural resources. Economic disparity, unchecked population expansion, and rapid, unregulated urbanization, coupled with weak border controls, are prevalent across the country, which form the factors that collectively drive a significant surge in migration as individuals seek opportunities to escape poverty. Nigeria's growing youth population often migrates in pursuit of better education and training opportunities. Many students seek higher-quality education abroad, with the hope of gaining internationally recognized qualifications and improving their employment prospects.

Another major driver of migration in Nigeria is the patrimonial nature of governance, where political elites retain control over natural and financial resources. The exploitation of state assets fosters an environment of lawlessness, where institutional power is wielded for private gain, often seen as both justified and a mark of influence.40 Flahaux and Haas contend that colonial rule, along with the slave trade and forced labor practices, have deeply influenced modern migration trends both within Nigeria and beyond. This legacy continues to shape governance structures across the country.41 In addition, high unemployment rates and limited economic opportunities significantly drive migration, as many seek better prospects abroad. Wealth disparities, misallocation of state resources, and inadequate infrastructure further exacerbate migration pressures. Corruption, which has led to deteriorating public services and inefficiencies among government officials, law enforcement, and border authorities, has become a powerful motivator for individuals seeking a more stable environment.

According to a UNHCR report, approximately 14 percent—or 2.4 million—of Africa’s international migrants are refugees or individuals in refugee-like situations, with Nigeria constituting a greater number of this.42 Despite this high number, most Nigerian migrants today move for reasons unrelated to conflict, with education and economic opportunities being primary factors. Flahaux and Haas reinforce this view, noting that 86 percent of international migration within Africa is not primarily driven by conflict.43 While instability and uncertainty may prompt some to leave, they can also compel others to stay to safeguard their families. Consequently, a nation's political security heavily influences migration patterns. For an authoritarian state, it is most likely that migration would be restricted as …*political instability and military conflict push many countries to seal off their mutual borders*.44 As a result, insecurity, marked by insurgency, terrorism, banditry, and ethnic conflicts, has led to the displacement of thousands of Nigerians. Many migrate internally to safer regions or leave the country entirely due to concerns about personal safety and stability.

Nigerian migration has assumed different dimensions in recent years (unlike the old assumption that it was borne out of irregularities solely because of poverty and conflict within the region), recent reviews have started to deviate from the assumption that Nigerian migration is purely economic, evidences abound that Nigerians migrate as a result of environmental and climate factors such as desertification, flooding, and other environmental challenges threaten livelihoods, especially in agricultural communities. Many people migrate from rural areas to urban centers or other countries to escape the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

**Implications of Migration for Cultural Evolution in Nigeria**

Migration has played a significant role in shaping cultural evolution in Nigeria, influencing various aspects of social interactions, traditions, and identity. As people move within and beyond the country, they bring with them their customs, languages, and lifestyles, leading to both cultural adaptation and transformation. Below are some key implications of migration on Nigeria’s cultural landscape. Migration fosters a blending of cultures, as Nigerians living abroad integrate elements of foreign traditions into their own while maintaining core aspects of their heritage. Similarly, internal migration within Nigeria encourages cross-cultural exchanges between ethnic groups, leading to new cultural practices that reflect a fusion of diverse identities.

Cultural ties, particularly language, significantly influence the choice of destination when individuals consider migration. Familiarity with a language fosters smoother integration, access to opportunities, and a sense of belonging, making certain regions or countries more attractive to migrants. “If the linguistic and cultural differences are large, migrants may react by selecting destinations with closer ties with their own culture, even if potential economic gains are greater elsewhere, thus reducing the economic gains from migration”.45 When language influences the economic outcomes of migration, it can limit a migrant's ability to reach their full potential. Culture and identity are central to understanding migration as both an economic process and a driver of development.

Most Nigerian migrants gravitate toward countries with similar cultural backgrounds to ease integration and assimilation. This explains why English-speaking migrants often prefer Anglophone destinations, while their Francophone counterparts tend to settle in French-speaking regions. Cultural and historical ties are crucial in migration decisions, as migrants are generally expected to integrate more smoothly and develop faster in destinations with shared histories. Integration into host societies typically happens through interactions with locals, but migrant-host relationships vary. While many migrants maintain strong national identities and view the host culture as unfamiliar, others blend both their home and host cultures. Conversely, host communities may perceive migrants as outsiders, reinforcing cultural superiority. This dynamic could explain why African migration has predominantly remained within the continent.

With increased migration, Nigerian languages have encountered influences from international and regional dialects. While English remains Nigeria’s official language, exposure to different linguistic environments has contributed to the incorporation of foreign expressions into local speech, particularly among the diaspora and urban dwellers. According to Adsera, large migrant communities with shared language and culture in destination countries encourage migration by lowering costs and easing the integration process. Historical ties, particularly when colonial languages remain official in migrants' home countries, further reduce migration barriers and facilitate adaptation by Nigerian migrants.46 Given Nigeria’s rich cultural diversity, scholars continue to debate whether this heterogeneity presents economic advantages or challenges. Bove and Elia argue that economic growth and development should be assessed based on immigrant nationality, alongside other relevant variables. They caution against using ethnicity and language as sole determinants, as Nigerian society has undergone significant transformation due to mass migration in recent decades. This evolution underscores the need for broader analytical frameworks when evaluating economic trends and migration impacts.47

In Nigeria, as in many other parts of the world, migration and globalization have not resulted in a unified set of values. Instead, they often lead to a stronger assertion of national identities and a rise in anti-immigrant sentiments, reflecting a paradoxical global response to migration trends. Rather than fostering a singular cultural framework, migration encourages the formation and reinforcement of distinct national identities and social boundaries. However, these boundaries are not established through complete separation; rather, they emerge and solidify through interactions between different groups, shaping societal perceptions and relations over time. Contact with the “other” makes you realise what you are and what you are not.48

Migration acts as a powerful force in reshaping cultures by facilitating interactions among diverse communities. As migrants settle in new environments, they bring along their customs, beliefs, and social practices, leading to cultural fusion. Over time, migrant and host populations undergo mutual adaptation, integrating new traditions into their ways of life. This process fosters diversity, creativity, and dynamic change within societies. The lack of a dominant mainstream culture in Africa has made integration and assimilation more challenging for Nigerian migrants living in urban areas. Most Nigerian immigrants reside in urban and peri-urban centres, where cultural diversity is high, but there is no singular cultural framework to integrate into, even if they wish to do so. Instead, they often interact with local populations who themselves were historically excluded from these urban spaces due to colonial policies. In these “cities of strangers,” both foreign and residents frequently live in ethnic enclaves, forming communities based on shared cultural backgrounds. While interaction between different groups is inevitable, these exchanges tend to be largely functional rather than aimed at fostering deeper social connections or a collective sense of identity and shared future. This dynamic further reinforces segmented social structures, rather than promoting full integration.49

Migration has led to changes in traditional family structures, as many Nigerians who settle abroad raise children in societies with differing values. This sometimes results in conflicts over cultural preservation versus adaptation to new environments. Additionally, gender roles and societal expectations evolve as migrants interact with diverse perspectives abroad. Nigerians in the diaspora often strive to instil their cultural heritage in their children. While they adapt to host cultures in public and professional spaces, they tend to revert to their national identities within the home. However, this process of cultural transmission can sometimes lead to tensions within families as they navigate differing perspectives on tradition and modernity. While migration challenges traditional ways of life, it also encourages efforts to preserve Nigerian culture. Many Nigerians in the diaspora actively engage in cultural festivals, language teaching, and community events to retain their identity while also adapting to their host countries’ lifestyles.

Nigerian culture has also gained global recognition through migration, particularly in areas such as cuisine, fashion, music, and film. Nigerian restaurants are increasingly common worldwide, and various international stores, including Arabian, Caribbean, and Indian markets, now source goods from African suppliers. Additionally, Nigerian fashion is gaining international recognition, with traditional styles evolving through the influence of global trends.

Globalisation and migration have undeniably contributed to the evolution and spread of Nigerian cultural expressions. Although debates persist regarding cultural identity among Africans both on the continent and abroad, migration continues to play a significant role in the visibility and development of African heritage. Entertainment sectors such as Nollywood, Afrobeats music, and Nigerian literature have expanded globally, largely due to migration and increased cultural exchange. Many Nigerian artists, actors, and writers based abroad contribute to promoting Nigerian heritage while embracing international influences in their work.

Religion often undergoes modifications through migration, leading to syncretic practices that blend spiritual beliefs from different traditions. Islam and Christianity, dominant faiths in Nigeria, have integrated elements of indigenous spirituality due to migration-driven cultural encounters. Many religious practices include ritual performances, ancestral veneration, and music traditions that reflect a fusion of local and external influences. Migration promotes religious diversity and fosters new expressions of faith that accommodate evolving identities.

Migration presents both opportunities and challenges for national development. On the positive side, it fosters innovation, cultural diversity, economic expansion, and diplomatic ties. Societies benefit from cultural cross-pollination, leading to enriched traditions and global interconnectedness. However, migration also introduces challenges such as socio-economic disparities, identity crises, and ethnic tensions that require effective governance and inclusive policy measures. Understanding migration’s influence on cultural evolution allows policymakers, historians, and educators to develop strategies that preserve heritage while embracing diversity. By recognizing migration’s role in shaping societies, nations can harness its transformative power for sustainable development, social cohesion, and international collaborations.

**Conclusion**

Migration has been a defining force in shaping Nigeria’s cultural landscape, influencing social structures, traditions, and national identity. As people move within and beyond the country, they engage in cultural exchanges that lead to adaptation, hybridization, and transformation. While migration presents challenges related to integration and identity preservation, it also fosters the global expansion of Nigerian cultural expressions, enriching the nation’s artistic, linguistic, and social diversity. The impact of migration on Nigeria’s cultural evolution is evident in various spheres, from the spread of Nigerian cuisine and fashion to the growing influence of Nollywood and Afrobeats on the global stage. However, migration also reinforces social boundaries, shaping interactions between migrants and host communities. The absence of a dominant mainstream culture in urban centers, combined with historical factors, has contributed to segmented social structures rather than seamless integration.

Migration has significantly shaped Nigeria’s cultural evolution, fostering a dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity. While it presents challenges in terms of cultural assimilation, it also enhances global recognition of Nigerian heritage and drives the transformation of various cultural expressions. The continuous exchange of ideas through migration will likely further refine and enrich Nigeria’s cultural identity in the years to come.

Looking ahead, Nigeria’s cultural evolution will continue to be shaped by migration, globalization, and the interplay of tradition and modernity. Policies aimed at embracing multiculturalism and fostering cultural exchange can enhance national cohesion while leveraging migration’s transformative potential. As migration patterns shift and new global dynamics emerge, Nigeria’s cultural identity will likely evolve further, presenting both opportunities and challenges for cultural preservation and adaptation.

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