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Migration and Development in Africa: Lessons from *Omenụkọ* and *Ije Odumodu Jere*

By Nkoli Mercy Nnyigide

Abstract

The threats, persecution, discrimination, hostilities and challenges some African migrants, especially the Igbo encounter in their host communities, just like the negative impact of migration on other African societies, etc. have been topical issues among African scholars and also engage the attention of some creative writers. The paper reviews some issues relating to African migration such as: circumstances or reasons for migration, activities, challenges and experiences of migrants in their host communities as well as the impact of migration on the development of African society. It proceeds to examine how the theme of migration is handled in the first two novels published in Igbo language - *Omenụkọ* and *Ije Odumodu Jere*. The study adopted qualitative research designs. Data were analyzed descriptively. The paper stresses the need for the Igbo who have migrated to various parts of the world to think home and be conscious of their homeland; promote and perpetuate their cultural values, especially their language; invest meaningfully and develop their homeland. It concludes by re-echoing Azodo's view, which agrees with that of one of the two novelists, that "the traveller and the sojourner will inevitably go back home, no matter his fortune and success in foreign land." It is hoped that this study would help to unveil the lessons intended by the writers and also raise the consciousness of Africans, especially the Igbo, on the implications of migration and the need to develop their homeland.

Keywords: Migration, migrants, hostility, discrimination, homeland

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Introduction

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. It can be permanent, temporary, voluntary or forced, internal or international. It happens for various reasons. Migration has remained a persistent phenomenon among the Igbo of South-east Nigeria. Some factors have been identified which encourage migration among the Igbo. A number of factors, including the acquisition of western education, the quest for economic empowerment and improved means of livelihood have, over the years, encouraged migration and rural-urban drift. The Igbo have settled in the cities outside their homeland either as private businessmen, artisans or civil servants as a result of migration (Ikwubuzo, 2012: 65). Besides, other factors such as European colonialism, civil war, political instability in Nigeria, social, environmental issues among others have contributed to the substantial increase in Igbo migration and mobility in Nigerian and beyond.

It has been observed that opportunities in major cities in Nigeria like Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, Kano, etc. have also propelled the Igbo to migrate to these cities. Many Igbo migrated out of the traditional Igbo homeland in the south-eastern Nigeria due to an absence federal presence, lack of jobs and infrastructure. The Igbo moved to such cities as Lagos, Ibadan and Abuja. The majority of Igbo internal migrants are traders who leave the south-eastern part of Nigeria to other parts of the country to engage in business ventures, involving petty trading and importation of goods (Axel as cited in Ajani and Onah, 2016).

The Igbo of Nigeria are known, among others for their migratory prowess and are found in various parts of Nigeria. This is so because the Igbo believe that travelling bestows more knowledge on an individual than old age. Unlike other ethnic groups in Nigeria, the migratory tendency of the Igbo is very much pronounced. Ohia as cited in Azodo (2017: 63) affirms to the above observation thus,

...of all the ethnic groups in Nigeria, only the Igbo have demonstrated such feisty commitment to integration. Even before the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme compelled young men and women from all nooks and crannies of Nigeria to live and work for a mandatory one year in another part of the country different from their own, Igbo families had sojourned to virtually every hamlet in Nigeria. Efforts of Ndigbo (sic.) to integrate into their places of sojourn have remained a mirage.

From Ohia's observation above, one can understand that various efforts the Igbo have made to integrate in their places of sojourn have been fruitless. Some unfavourable experiences they encounter in their host communities usually remind them of their status as strangers and inevitability of return.

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The migratory nature of the Igbo has attracted and continues to attract the interest of literary writers especially those of Igbo extraction. These writers have made reasonable attempts in representing the experiences of migrants in their creative works, with the aim of teaching one moral lesson or the other to the readers. This paper examines the extent to which Pita Nwana and Leopold Bell-Gam have addressed the theme of sojourn and return in *Omenụkọ* and *Ije Odumodu Jere* respectively and the possible lessons the Igbo especially those in diaspora could learn from the literary texts under review. It is important to state that diaspora in the context of this study constitutes internal and external. That is, Igbo people in various parts of Nigerian and beyond.

Pita Nwana's only work, *Omenụkọ*, was published in 1933, after winning a prize in All-African literary contest in indigenous African languages by the International Institute for African Languages and Culture in the same year. It is a pioneer modern Igbo prose fiction and a biographical novel. In other words, it is the first concrete work in Igbo creative literature. In March 2010, a national seminar was organized in honour and celebration of 75 years of existence of *Omenụkọ*. The novel tells a story of the hero, Omenụkọ, a prosperous trader who goes on a mandatory self-exile after committing a heinous crime against the people and the gods of his land, and later returns home not necessarily because he has completed a mandatory expiation for the atonement of the crime but because he is compelled by circumstances beyond his control.

On the other hand, *Ije Odumodu Jere* was the only work written by Leopold Bell-Gam. It was published in 1952. *Ije Odumodu Jere* tells the story of adventures and civilizing mission of Odumodu, the principal character of the novel. The shipwreck which occurs on their way (from Eko) to St. Helena exposes Odumodu to all sorts of dangers and adventures, as he searches for something to eat, where to take shelter and something to wear (pp. 4-12). The urge and curiosity to find out the terminus of the jungle in which he finds himself, after the shipwreck, leads him into the land of Finda (pp. 12-14). In Finda, after receiving some initial maltreatments and threats (usually meted to a suspicious stranger), Odumodu is given a place of honour. He learns the language of the people and is made the secretary of the state. He later marries the daughter of the King of the land with whom he gets three sons. He and his children (who are now well educated) help to civilize the people of Finda by stopping them from practicing cannibalism and by revolutionizing their agricultural and legal systems.

Sequel to a tussle that erupts between him and the son of the king of the land over succession issue, he escapes to Mimba, a neighbouring town. There, he gets the king of the land to build schools and churches in which their children are educated and baptized respectively. Ritual killings and cannibalism are also stopped. With the unexpected death of his wife and three sons in Mimba, Odumodu feels that he has completely lost the game. It is this sense of loss that forces him back to his home town, Ahaba, just as sense of insecurity forces Omenụkọ out of Ikpa Oyi and back to his home town.

Obviously, these novels represent the present socio-political realities in Igbo society in particular and Nigerian society in general. They illustrate the spirit of enterprise and hard work which the Igbo are known for and identified with. The protagonists in the novels, Omenụkọ and Odumodu left their homeland poor. In their places of sojourn, each got himself entangled in the tussle for the crown and each lost out in the end. Eventually, they returned home rich and were appointed by their people to rule over them. However, this paper validates the theme of sojourn

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and return as represented in the selected Igbo novels. It discusses the contributions of the sojourners in their places of sojourn as represented in the novels, their experiences, the extent to which migration has impacted on Igbo homeland, lessons from the selected Igbo literary texts among others.

The Synopses of the selected Igbo Novels

In the novel *Omenụkọ*, Pita Nwana has attempted to x-ray the life and achievements of the protagonist, Omenụkọ against the background of an Igbo adage which states that “Ọ bịara ije nwe ụla”, meaning that a sojourner is bound to go home and this forms the theme of the work, *Omenụkọ*. Coincidentally, this theme is clearly stated by Pita Nwana himself in his introduction on the first page of the book, where it is stated that:

N’akụkụ obodo anyị n’ime Afrịca okwu a dị ka iwu e nyere enye; a na-asị na ọ bụrụ na onye ọ bụla agaa n’obodo ọzọ biri n’ebe ahụ dị ka ọbịa ma ọ dị mma, ma ọ bụ onye ebere, ma ọ bụ onye amara, ma ọ bụ onye na-ekpe ikpe n’uzo ziri ezi, mgbe dum ihe ụfọdụ ga na-echetara ya na ya onwe ya bụ ọbịa, n’ala ahụ, ọ ga na-ejikere onwe ya na ọ ghaghị ịla obodo ebe a mụrụ ya. Mgbe ọ bụla a tūrụ ya n’ilu, ma a gwawara ya agwa na ọ bụ ọbịa, ọ ghaghị ịla.

(In parts of our country in Africa, this saying is tenaciously held, that if anybody leaves his own land to go and settle in a foreign land, as long as he remains a stranger, no matter his goodness, and kindness to his hosts and no matter that he is held in high esteem as a righteous judge, certain events will constantly remind him that he is a stranger in that land and so he must be prepared to face the hard fact that home-going is inevitable. From time to time, he is reminded either through allusions or direct statements that he is a stranger and that he must go back to his home).

It is around this assertion that the entire story is woven and the character and activities of the hero of the story, Omenụkọ highlighted. Omenụkọ conducts his business activities between his home town and Bende. In one of his regular trade trips to Bende in company of his servants and porters he meets a calamity on the way. On getting to river Igwu, a dilapidated bridge they are crossing gives way under them and they fell into the rapid flowing river and all Omenụkọ’s articles of trade get swept off by the current and none is recovered. But Omenụkọ and his men survive the unfortunate incident. This is the turning point in Omenụkọ’s life. To make up for his loss, he sells off his servants and porters into slavery. He thus commits a crime against the people and gods of his land. The only immediate choice left to him according to the law of the land is to go on exile. He thus goes on a compulsory self-exile to Mgborogwu.

His stay in Mgborogwu is marked with success and prosperity from the earliest time of his arrival there to almost the time of his departure from there. A catalogue of Omenụkọ’s successes and progress include the heroic welcome accorded him by Mgborogwu people (p. 16); he becomes the successor to the throne of Mgborogwu, following the king’s will before he died (p. 17); his role as a warrant chief and the spokesman of Mgborogwu people (p. 24-25); the

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progressive expansion of his family to the point of acquiring a personal empire – Ịkpa Oyi – for the family (pp. 32-36).

Above all, he enjoys the good-will and respect of people as a result of his demonstrable wisdom, generosity and kindness (pp. 24-26). But in spite of all these, later events and developments keep reminding Omenụkọ that he is a stranger both in the land of Mgborogwu and Ịkpa Oyi. Envious of his political and economic prosperity, the chiefs and elders of the land protest against his continued leadership over them and stay in Mgborogwu and environs (pp. 76-88). It is this incident and the resultant bitter struggle and fight carried by these chiefs against Omenụkọ, coupled with the District Commissioner’s friendly advice and warning (pp. 82) that send Omenụkọ packing for his home.

It is true that Bell-Gam’s *Ije Odumodu Jere* is revolutionary partly because it is more or less detached from the Igbo cultural milieu both in background and texture, in presenting the story which treats “Odumodu’s civilizing mission”, the author could not resist the influence of *Omenụkọ* both thematically and in plot just as he could not resist the use of supernaturalism and quest adventures of the oral narrative.

When Odumodu sets out in a ship bound for St. Helena, we are not told that he has a particular mission at St. Helena or elsewhere. But with the shipwreck and the circumstances in which Odumodu finds himself after that, adventure becomes inevitable. It is not a quest for getting to Finda but a quest for determining the terminus of the forest in which he finds himself that eventually leads Odumodu into Finda. The main supernatural incident in the story comes with Odumodu’s encounter with some tiny men who live in holes.

From this point, the setting and texture of the story start to have some foreign overtones. Finda and Mimba are populated by the white people but contrary to expectation, their culture is primitive, mundane, and uncivilized. Here lies the irony of the story, for a white people, it is expected that Odumodu, a black man should be further civilized through his contact with them but paradoxically it is Odumodu who goes to remodel their legal system, revolutionized their agricultural system, build schools for them, educate their children and stop them from practicing cannibalism. Here, Bell-Gam indeed tried his hand in satire writing.

Like in the theme of “stranger and home-going” as illustrated by *Omenụkọ*, Odumodu encounters some bitter experiences that go to remind him from time to time that he is a stranger in the land. It is true that the good-will enjoyed by Odumodu in Finda and Mimba is second only to that enjoyed by the king, of the lands, for instance, he is the Secretary of the State in Finda, he is given the king’s daughter in marriage, the throne of Finda is willed to him on the death of the king of the land, his marriage is blessed with three male issues who later become very well educated, he enjoys an unmitigated freedom and respect, yet he very narrowly escapes with his life the day he leaves Finda for Mimba. Nor is his stay in Mimba free from bitter experiences. But the climax of them all is the death of his wife and three children. When he discovers, as Omenụkọ does in Ịkpa Oyi, that he has lost the game, he is left with no other choices than to go back to his home Ahaba.

The influence of *Omenụkọ* in the work is evidenced by the fact that there are common incidents in the plot and structuring of the two works especially as they affect the two main characters of the work-Omenụkọ and Odumodu. Both men are involved in dispute over

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succession in their lands of sojourn. The dying king in each case bequeaths his throne to these strangers. Both experience loss in water- Odumodu in a shipwreck and Omenụkọ in a river when the bridge collapses. They are both forced out of their lands of sojourn by circumstances beyond their control. They both experience movement from one place to the other- Omenụkọ, from Mgborogwu to Ikpa Oyi and Odumodu, from Finda to Mimba.

But the circumstances that force Omenụkọ out of his home land differ from that under which Odumodu leaves his home land, just as the condition in which the two men get back home vary- Omenụkọ goes home with all his wealth, personal effects and family, but Odumodu goes home virtually empty handed.

Critical studies on the selected novels

Some literary scholars have examined *Omenụkọ* and *Ije Odumodu Jere* from the various perspectives. At this juncture, it is very pertinent to highlight their observations so as to give the present study a better focus. *Omenụkọ* is a biographical novel as said earlier. Pita Nwana artistically wrote about his friend, Maazi Igweegbe Odum, a native of Arondizuogu without his knowledge. Nwadike (2008: 110) confirms;

Omenụkọ, which is the biography of Maazi Igweegbe Odum is a true story even though it is fictionalized in some places for purpose of camouflage. The name Omenụkọ is also the praise or heroic name of Igweegbe, a native of Arondizuogu; a close relation of late Dr. K. O. Mbadiwe Odum. Omenụkọ was an astute business man during the colonial era, and got into slave trade with his friend Chief Onyeama of Eke (the African God). Pita Nwana wrote about his friend without letting him know of his action...

Unlike *Omenụkọ*, *Ije Odumodu Jere* is partly romantic and auto-biographical novel. Bell-Gam tells the story of the civilizing mission of the protagonist, Odumodu. Onyekaonwu(1986: 174) asserts, “*Ije Odumodu Jere* ... a novel that is part realistic and autobiographical and part romantic. *Ije Odumodu jere* tells the story of adventures and civilizing mission of Odumodu, the principal character in the novel.”

Obviously, *Omenụkọ* portrayed through the protagonist, Omenụkọ, a typical life of an Igbo man, who is courageous, innovative and enterprising. Emenyonu (1978: 55) shares the same view above thus, “... Pita Nwana’s Omenụkọ was truly a work of art conceived by an Igbo for the Igbo about the Igbo”. In spite of the fact that this was a pioneer work and in spite of its age, Omenụkọ has proved to be timeless. In its theme, its language and its meaning, Omenụkọ has continued to appeal to people of all ages and callings. It is a work of all seasons. In popularity, it stands to challenge even the most modern novel in Igbo (Onyekaonwu, 1986: 82).

Similarly, Ohia as cited in Azodo (2017: 62) opines, “The story of Omenụkọ is timeless epic. It depicts the life of the typical Igbo man-a resourceful and courageous man who takes great risks, migrates to strange lands, suffers discriminations and deprivations but bounces back at the end of every misfortune”. Additionally, Nmezi (2010) asserts, “Peter (sic) Nwana’s Omenụkọ expressed the distinct ways in which the Igbo establish their identity. This is portrayed in the

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chief character's life Omenụkọ- a typical Igbo traditional man who is regarded for his strength, courage and outstanding achievements”.

The above views show the outstanding position *Omenụkọ* has occupied in Igbo literary studies. It is very glaring that Leopold Bell-Gam borrowed extensively from Omenụkọ. Nnyigide (2016: 155) states, “It could be seen that *Omenụkọ* has a great influence on *Ije Odumodu Jere*. The influence of Omenụkọ in the work is evidenced by the fact that there are common incidents in the plot and structuring of the two works especially as they affect the two main characters of the work – Omenụkọ and Odumodu”.

In addition, the storyline of *Omenụkọ* did not only influence Bell-Gam's *Ije Odumodu Jere*, it can also be seen that there is a clear similarity between the storyline of the protagonist of *Omenụkọ* and that of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Azodo (2017: 71) confirms thus, “There appears to be a close intertextuality between Chinua Achebe and Pita Nwana's novels. The storyline of the protagonist of Pita Nwana's Omenuko (sic) (1933), Omenuko (sic) and that of Chinua Achebe's Okonkwo in *Things Fall Part* (1958) shows the protagonist build himself up from a beginning in poverty through servitude to a mentor and on to remarkable business astuteness and wealth ...”

The observations above can explain the choice of these two outstanding Igbo novels for the present study. Furthermore, the two novels under review project historical information about the Igbo people. Anyanwu (2010) states, “Omenụkọ like the other novels are important source of Igbo history. Above all, *Omenụkọ* and *Ije Odumodu Jere* are invaluable to Igbo literary studies. They have contributed and continue to contribute immensely to the development of Igbo literature in particular and African literature in general. Some Igbo scholars like Onyekaonwu (1986), Nwadike (2008), Okonkwo (2010) among others agree to the above observation. Although these novels have the same theme which is sojourn and return as could be seen in the review above, Igbo literary scholars have studied them independently. Little or no attention has been paid to examine and validate the theme of the selected novels and how they have reflected and continue to reflect the experience(s) of the Igbo in diaspora. It is against this backdrop that the present study has selected the novels to examine the extent to which the writers have addressed the theme of migration or sojourn and return in them, the experiences of the traveller in the places of sojourn as well as the lesson(s) the Igbo could learn from them.

Textual Analyses/Discussion

The analyses of the selected novels and discussion of the subject matter would be based on the following; validation of the theme of sojourn and return in the novels, contributions of the travellers in their places of sojourn, experiences of the traveller in their host communities, impact of migration on Igbo homeland, and lessons from the selected novels.

On the validation of the theme of sojourn and return in the novels; the present study affirms that the prominent theme in the novels is that a sojourner is bound to go home. This theme is derived from the actions of the protagonists, Omenụkọ and Odumodu. Unlike *Ije Odumodu Jere*, some scholars like Emenyonu (1978) and Alua (1977), Nwadike (2010), Agbedo (2007) among others are of the view that the major theme in Omenụkọ is crime and expiation. It is true that this is projected in Omenụkọ but it should be seen as the influence of Igbo oral

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didactic motif of crime and punishment which can best serve as one of the sub-themes. For instance, the writer successfully represented the life and achievements of *Omenụkọ* against the background of the Igbo adage that states that “O b́ara ije nwe ụ́la”, which means that a sojourner is bound to go home. This is the major theme of the novel. Pita Nwana himself clearly stated this theme on the introductory page of the novel as highlighted above. The above statement is a justification that the theme of *Omenụkọ* is that a sojourner in a place is bound to go home.

Contributions of the sojourners to their host communities

From the analyses above, it could be seen that the sojourners, *Omenụkọ* and *Odumodu* contributed immensely to their host communities. *Omenụkọ*'s stay in *Mgborogwu* was marked with huge success and prosperity from the earliest time of his arrival there to almost the time of departure from there. He became the successor to the throne of *Mgborogwu*, according to the king's will before he died (p. 17). He served as their warrant chief and spokesman of *Mgborogwu* people (p. 24 – 25). He was very wise and upright in judging cases in court. *Omenụkọ* made outstanding contribution to the socio-political development in the land of *Mgborogwu*. Likewise, *Odumodu* contributed a great deal to the people of *Finda* and *Mimba*. When he got to *Finda*, he realized that they were uncivilized and primitive. He was appointed the Secretary of the state in *Finda*. Through his position, he remodelled their legal system, built schools for them, educated their children and stop them from practicing cannibalism.

Obviously, the writers of these novels have succeeded in using their protagonists to showcase the contributions of numerous Igbo migrants in different places they have sojourned to. Many Igbo migrants have made and continue to make outstanding achievements in various places they reside. The extent of socio-political development they have achieved in their places of sojourn cannot be compared to what is obtainable in Igbo homeland. Ohia as cited in Azodo (2017: 63) observes, “... still, Igbo entrepreneurs continue to build industries and skyscrapers wherever they reside”. Ohia is right because findings show that many Igbo internal migrants have contributed immeasurably in infrastructural developments in the major cities in Nigeria like *Lagos*, *Ibadan*, *Kano* and *Abuja*.

Experiences of the Sojourners in their Places of Sojourn

A sojourner can encounter good or bad experience. In the case of *Omenụkọ* and *Odumodu* as highlighted above, both of them had good and bad experiences in their places of sojourn. For *Omenụkọ*, he was very successful and prosperous in the land of *Mgborogwu*. He was well received and accorded a heroic welcome in that land. He was the successor of the throne of *Mgborogwu*. He enjoyed the good-will and respect of the people as a result of his demonstrable wisdom, generosity and kindness. *Omenụkọ* later had bad experiences. These bad experiences reminded him that he was a stranger in both the land of *Mgborogwu* and *Ikpa Oyi* who must go back to his homeland. The chiefs and elders of these land became envious of *Omenụkọ*'s political and economic prosperity and protested against his continued leadership and stay in *Mgborogwu* and environs.

As in the case of *Omenụkọ*, *Odumodu* also had good and bad experiences in the lands of *Finda* and *Mimba* he sojourned to. For example, he was made the Secretary of the state in *Finda*.

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He married the king's daughter. He became the successor of the king's throne on the death of the king of the land. His marriage was blessed with three male children who later became very well educated. Odumodu really enjoyed unmitigated freedom and respect. He also had bad experiences. He narrowly escaped with his wife the day he left Finda for Mimba. The son of the king of Finda threatened to kill him. While in Mimba he encountered bitter experiences. He lost his wife and three children. When he discovered, as Omenụkọ did in Ikpa Oyi, that he has lost the game, he was left with no other choices than to go back to his home, Ahaba.

The experiences (good and bad) of these protagonists represent that of many Igbo migrants in their host communities. Undoubtedly, many of these migrants are very comfortable, successful and prosperous in the places they reside. But some circumstances continue to remind them that they are strangers in those communities that they must go home. For instance, in Nigeria today, many Igbo migrants in the northern part of the country have encountered bitter experiences there. Some have lost their lives, lost their loved ones as well as their properties to socio-political and religious tensions and crises that usually occur in this part of the country. These challenges do remind the Igbo migrant there that they are strangers who must go back to their home which is Igboland. The quit notice issued in June, 2017 by the Arewa youths of northern States of Nigeria is a good example.

Impact of Migration on Igbo Homeland and Culture

It is obvious that migration has impacted negatively on Igbo homeland and Igbo culture. Due to the apathetic attitude and negligence of some Igbo in diaspora (internal and external), they tend to forget and abandon their homeland. They invest heavily and contribute meaningfully to infrastructural development in their host communities but pay little or no attention to their home. Their numerous achievements outside their homeland have continued to encourage them to sustain and perpetuate Igbo diasporic communities in the places they reside. As pointed out earlier, this is very detrimental to Igbo homeland.

Migration has not only impacted negatively on infrastructural development in Igbo, it has been revealed that some Igbo cultural aspects like language, moral values among others are highly influenced. Many forms of Igbo oral literature and traditional narratives especially folktales are seriously on the verge of extinction due to rural-urban drift prevalent in Igbo society today. Based on the negative impact of migration on Igbo culture, Okwuchi as cited in Ajani and Onah observed:

The process of migration involves culture contact resulting in cultural diffusion, assimilation and adaptation among different ethnic groups especially in cities where social interaction is more complex and dynamic than the (sic) in rural areas. In many instances, certain cultural elements of the host communities are assimilated while some aspects of the migrant's culture are lost over time and younger generation may be ignorant about the existence of such cultural values and beliefs.

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Okwuchi's observation above is correct because in Igbo society today, communal life and activities that projected the Igbo culture in the traditional Igbo society are really influenced by migration. Therefore, this study reminds the Igbo migrants who have not shown serious concern to their homelands that a sojourner in a foreign land is bound to go home.

Lessons from the selected novels

From the analyses of the selected novels above, it could be seen that the lives and activities of the protagonists in their places of sojourn have presented wonderful lessons not only to the readers or Igbo migrants but to the entire people of Africa. Their lives represented that of a typical traditional Igbo man who would never accept defeat, adapts to any situation he finds himself and struggles to the end to become victorious. The level of determination, humility, honesty, passion for hard work among others, seen in the characters of *Omenụkọ* and *Odumodu* should be emulated by the Igbo especially some youths who have accepted the idea of wealth without work which is very common among some Igbo today. The two characters worked very hard and made outstanding achievements in the places they sojourned to.

Above all, the bitter experiences and circumstances that made them to go home should be a reminder to many Igbo migrants that they are strangers in their host communities who are bound to go home. Therefore, it is very pertinent for the Igbo migrants to begin now to think home and invest reasonably in their homelands for their eventual return because and Igbo adage says that "Taa bụ gboo" meaning that it is still early today.

Conclusion

This study has been able to validate that the two novels have the same major theme which is sojourn and return. From the analyses above, it could be seen that the writers meaningfully addressed the migratory nature of the Igbo and their experiences negative and positive in their places of sojourn in their novels. The novels have revealed that a stranger in a place must eventually go home. They have shown that no matter how long a stranger may remain in a place of his sojourn, some circumstances would continue to remind him that he is a stranger who must go home. From the lives of the protagonists of the novels, *Omenụkọ* and *Odumodu*, it is obvious that migration among the Igbo can be involuntary as in the case of *Omenụkọ* and voluntary as in the case of *Odumodu*. The novels also represented through the lives of the protagonists the typical life of an Igbo traditional man who is usually resourceful, hard work, courageous, innovative, and enterprising among others. The good qualities of *Omenụkọ* and *Odumodu* as discussed above should be emulated by the Igbo especially the youths. However, this study stresses the need for the Igbo in diaspora to begin to think home and make their homeland very comfortable and habitable for their eventual because Igbo people believe that "E mee ngwa ngwa, e meghara ọdachi" meaning that a stitch in time saves nine. It is also the belief of the Igbo that "Nwa eze anaghị atọ na mba" meaning that the son of a king cannot remain in a foreign land. Therefore, it is very pertinent that the Igbo in various parts of Nigeria especially in the northern part, where there has been tension, threats and discrimination against the Igbo should also home. Finally, this paper beckons on many Igbo in diaspora (internal and external) inclusive, who have made outstanding achievements in their endeavours to also think home and

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contribute immensely in the infrastructural developments in their Igbo homeland. Undoubtedly, if there are adequate basic amenities, especially electricity, infrastructural developments, employment opportunities, security, favourable environment among others in Igbo homeland, many Igbo youths who are interested in migrating to various parts of Nigeria and beyond would prefer to stay back and explore their potentials.

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