



Impact of International Migration on Poverty Reduction and Private Facility Provision in Ogbadibo Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examined the impact of international migration on poverty reduction and private facility provision in Ogbadibo Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. It explored how remittances from abroad influence household welfare, community infrastructure, and spatial development. Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to ninety-seven households and complemented by field observation. Descriptive and inferential analyses, including Spearman's rank correlation and multiple regression, were used to test the relationships among key variables. Findings revealed that international migration significantly contributed to poverty reduction through both monetary and non-monetary remittances. Remittances enhanced access to education, healthcare, and improved housing, while also supporting the establishment of privately funded facilities such as boreholes, schools, and small clinics. However, migration benefits were unevenly distributed, as only households with the means to finance migration experienced direct gains. Poverty emerged as the main driver of migration, reflecting both economic necessity and aspirations for upward mobility. The study also identified negative consequences, including labour shortages, dependency, and unequal development among communities. The results highlight the dual role of international migration as both a livelihood strategy and a catalyst for local spatial transformation. The study concludes that when properly integrated into local planning frameworks, remittance inflows can complement public infrastructure delivery and foster inclusive regional development. It recommends institutional coordination between government and diaspora networks to ensure that migration-driven development is equitable, productive, and sustainable.

Keywords: International Migration, Remittances, Poverty Reduction, Private Facility Provision, Spatial Development

1. Introduction

Poverty remains one of the most persistent development challenges in sub-Saharan Africa. It extends far beyond the absence of income and manifests in deprivation across health, education, infrastructure, and opportunity. In Nigeria, the condition has deepened in both scope and intensity, affecting rural and urban populations alike. The World Bank (2023) estimates that over 40 percent of Nigerians live below the national poverty line, while another quarter remains vulnerable to economic shocks. These realities have reinforced the drive towards migration as individuals seek opportunities beyond their local environments in pursuit of improved livelihoods.

Over the past two decades, international migration has evolved into one of the most significant social and economic forces shaping the Nigerian landscape. It represents both a reaction to poverty and a pathway for generating capital and stimulating development at household, community, and regional levels (Adepoju, 2021). Remittances from migrants abroad have become one of the country's most reliable sources of foreign exchange, surpassing foreign direct investment and official development assistance in several years (World Bank, 2020). While these inflows are usually discussed at the national scale, their localised implications particularly how they shape the physical and social fabric of communities remain underexplored. At the micro level, remittances influence patterns of poverty reduction, household welfare, and facility provision in ways that speak directly to spatial planning and local development.

Remittances can transform communities by enabling access to health services, education, and small-scale infrastructure. These effects are most visible in rural and peri-urban areas where state presence is weak and private initiatives fill the gap (De Haas, 2007). In such settings, inflows from migrants abroad have supported the construction of private schools, clinics, boreholes, and modest road improvements. These efforts, often initiated by families or community associations with diaspora ties, illustrate how transnational resources extend beyond household consumption to fund local collective goods (Obboh & Osirike, 2020; Obboh & Egharevba, 2025). Private facility provision therefore emerges as a crucial yet under-recognised dimension of the migration–development relationship.

Ogbadibo Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State offers a clear context for examining these linkages. The area is largely agrarian, with limited government owned industrial and infrastructural presences. Over the years, poor economic conditions and limited employment opportunities have triggered considerable outmigration, particularly among the youth seeking education and work abroad. The steady flow of remittances into the area now sustains a range of local activities, from household consumption to investments in small enterprises and private amenities. In several settlements, new boreholes, renovated schools, and small clinics stand as physical evidence of this financial inflow. Yet, despite such transformations, empirical research systematically connecting migration, poverty reduction, and private facility provision remains scarce. Most existing works focus on macroeconomic effects, remittance volumes, or the problem of brain drain (Olayiwola & Osabuohien, 2019; Onah, Azuogu, & Ugwu, 2022). Very few attempts to locate these dynamics within the framework of urban and regional planning, or to interpret how remittances reshape local geographies and private/informal systems of facility provision.

This study investigates the impact of international migration on poverty reduction and private facility provision in Ogbadibo LGA, Benue State. It examines how remittances alleviate poverty, improve household wellbeing, and contribute to the development of privately financed facilities that complement or substitute for public infrastructure. It also explores the extent to which poverty serves as a push factor driving migration and how diaspora resources act as an alternative development mechanism in the absence of adequate state intervention. By situating these issues within the discourse of regional planning, the study underscores migration’s dual function as a livelihood

strategy and a spatial force that shapes the built environment and redistributes access to basic services.

The significance of the study lies in extending the migration–development debate beyond economics to include the geography of facilities and the spatial outcomes of remittance use. It demonstrates how private investments financed through remittances contribute to local development, sometimes achieving what formal planning frameworks fail to deliver. This perspective is particularly relevant for planners and policymakers seeking to understand how informal financial flows can be aligned with territorial planning objectives. Mapping and integrating diaspora-driven projects into regional plans can prevent duplication, promote equitable distribution, and strengthen accountability in local service delivery. For scholars, the research also contributes to the growing recognition that migration is not only a demographic process but a spatial one, capable of transforming settlement patterns, land use, and community hierarchies.

The research focuses on Ogbadibo LGA and draws primarily on primary data collected from households within the area, supported by relevant secondary materials. It concentrates on international migration, defined as the movement of individuals across national borders, and examines the outcomes of remittances over a recent five-year period (2018–2023). The analysis is limited by the availability and reliability of self-reported data, yet the use of statistical tools and triangulation enhances the credibility of findings. The empirical evidence reveals how migration and remittance flows alter the socioeconomic structure of rural and semi-urban communities, create new forms of private infrastructural development, and influence planning priorities.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three interrelated theories that explain the dynamic relationship between international migration, poverty reduction, and private facility provision: The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM), the Cumulative Causation Theory of Migration, and Structuration Theory. Each offers a distinct but complementary insight into how migration decisions are made, how remittances circulate and influence local economies, and how these processes translate into spatial development outcomes.

2.1 The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM)

The New Economics of Labour Migration emerged in the early 1980s as a critique of the classical neoclassical migration theory, which viewed migration as an individual decision driven by wage differentials between countries. The neoclassical model, rooted in the work of Todaro (1969) and Harris and Todaro (1970), treated migration purely as a function of income maximisation and labour market equilibrium. Oded Stark and David Bloom (1985) challenged this perspective and developed NELM as a household-level theory. The central assumption of NELM is that migration is not an isolated individual act but a collective household strategy aimed at reducing risk and overcoming market imperfections. Households in developing countries often face missing or inefficient credit and insurance markets, making it difficult to finance production, education, or health investments. By sending a member abroad, the household diversifies its income sources and creates access to foreign earnings, which serve as an informal insurance mechanism (Taylor, 1999). Remittances are therefore conceptualised as contractual obligations between migrants and their families. A reciprocal flow that supports the family's economic and social stability.

Previous studies have applied NELM to explain remittance behaviour and rural development outcomes. Lucas and Stark (1985) used the theory to show how remittances in Botswana and Lesotho acted as risk-sharing transfers within extended families. De Haas (2007) extended the framework to North Africa, demonstrating that remittances often substitute for missing state services and provide the financial capital for small-scale investments, including housing and education. Olayiwola and Osabuohien (2019) applied similar reasoning to Nigeria, showing that remittance inflows enhance household consumption, investment, and access to private welfare services.

In the context of the present study, NELM provides the foundation for understanding the motivations behind international migration from Ogbadibo LGA and the economic logic of remittance use. The theory explains why households channel remittances into private facility provision such as constructing boreholes, private schools, and health centres to compensate for inadequate public infrastructure. It helps to interpret migration as a rational household response to poverty and institutional failure, turning external migration into a localised form of development intervention.

2.2 Cumulative Causation Theory of Migration

The Cumulative Causation Theory, first proposed by Gunnar Myrdal in 1957 and later refined by Douglas Massey (1990), expands on how migration perpetuates

itself over time. Myrdal originally used the term to describe economic backwash and spread effects in regional development the idea that growth in one area can generate conditions that either reinforce or reverse inequality elsewhere. Massey adapted this idea to migration, arguing that each act of migration alters the social and economic context in ways that make further migration more likely. The theory rests on several key assumptions. First, migration is self-reinforcing: as networks develop, the costs and risks of migration decline. Second, remittances, once introduced, modify local economies by creating new consumption patterns, business opportunities, and investments. Third, these local transformations feed back into the migration system, as successful migrants influence others to follow similar paths (Massey et al., 1993).

Cumulative Causation Theory has been used extensively in explaining migration-development feedback loops. For example, Taylor (1999) and De Haas (2010) found that remittances in Mexico and Morocco led to a cycle of investment in housing and social facilities, which, in turn, raised the social status of migrant households and encouraged further migration. In Nigeria, Okpara and Odion (2020) observed that rural communities in Anambra State benefited from continuous inflows of diaspora remittances that funded schools, churches, and healthcare centres, reinforcing the social prestige associated with migration.

Applied to Ogbadibo LGA, the Cumulative Causation Theory clarifies why migration has become a persistent feature of local livelihood systems. As early migrants send remittances that improve living conditions through better housing and private facilities, they create social and aspirational models that encourage others to migrate. The resulting inflows of money and ideas reshape the local landscape, increase property development, and enhance access to private services. In this study, the theory helps to interpret the self-sustaining relationship between migration, poverty reduction, and facility provision — a process that effectively redistributes resources and development potential within the region.

2.3 Structuration Theory

Structuration Theory, developed by Anthony Giddens (1984), provides a sociological and spatial perspective that complements the economic reasoning of NELM and Cumulative Causation. Giddens sought to bridge the divide between structure and agency in social theory by arguing that human practices are both shaped by and reproduce social systems. The key concept is the “duality of structure”: structures such as

institutions, norms, and spatial arrangements both constrain and enable individual action. Through daily practices, actors reproduce or transform these structures over time.

The theory assumes that social and spatial realities are produced through interaction. People act within the limits of rules, power, and resources, but their actions cumulatively reshape the context in which they live (Giddens, 1984). In urban and regional planning, structuration has been used to explain how community initiatives, local networks, and informal systems contribute to spatial change outside formal state planning (Healey, 1999). Migration and remittance use, when viewed through this lens, represent acts of spatial agency. Migrant households use remittances to construct buildings, fund local facilities, and improve community infrastructure, thereby altering the built environment and reshaping social relations within it.

Several researchers have applied structuration in migration and development research. Bakewell (2022) used it to explain how African transnational communities negotiate power and identity through remittance-financed projects. Similarly, Zoomers and Van Westen (2011) argued that local actors mobilise trans-local resources to produce new development spaces that challenge state-dominated planning paradigms. These perspectives emphasise that development is not only driven by economic transfers but also by social action and spatial agency.

In this study, Structuration Theory is used to interpret private facility provision as a manifestation of social

agency operating within structural constraints. Migrant families in Ogbadibo act within the limitations of weak governance and poor infrastructure, yet through remittance investment, they transform their local environment. The new schools, clinics, and boreholes financed by migrants embody both material improvement and symbolic agency evidence that local actors can shape development trajectories even in the absence of effective state intervention. Structuration Theory thus frames the study's spatial interpretation of migration, linking human action, remittance flows, and the transformation of the physical environment.

2.4 Synthesis and Application to the Study

Taken together, these three theories offer a coherent framework for analysing the complex relationship between migration, poverty reduction, and private facility provision. The NELM explains household motivation and remittance use; the Cumulative Causation Theory explains how migration becomes self-sustaining and spatially transformative; and Structuration Theory situates these processes within the interplay of social agency and structural context. The combination of these perspectives allows this study to treat migration as both an economic and spatial process one that alleviates poverty while generating decentralised infrastructural development in Ogbadibo LGA. See Figure 1 for the linkages between theories of migration and the process of poverty reduction and private facilities provision.

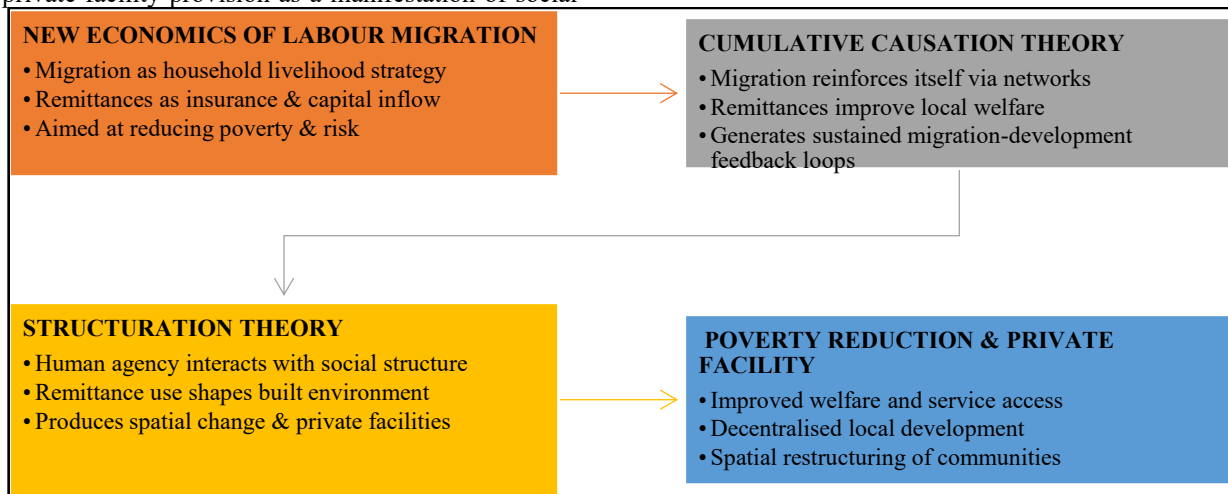


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework Showing the Linkages Between Migration Theories and the Process of Poverty Reduction and Private Facility Provision.

Source: Author's Abstraction, 2025.

The framework in Figure 1 unfolds as a progression from economic motivation to social feedback and ultimately to spatial transformation. The NELM begins by framing migration as a calculated household response to poverty, risk, and market imperfections. Here, remittances function primarily as economic resources aimed at stabilising family welfare and compensating for institutional deficiencies. The Cumulative Causation Theory then extends this logic by introducing a social dimension: remittance flows and migration networks interact over time to create feedback mechanisms that reinforce further migration, reshape aspirations, and stimulate local economic activities. These social linkages convert remittances from mere financial transfers into instruments of community investment and collective advancement. Structuration Theory completes the sequence by situating these economic and social processes within the spatial realm. It highlights how human agency, operating within structural constraints, translates remittance resources into tangible physical outcomes such as private schools, boreholes, clinics, and improved housing. Through this lens, the use of remittances becomes an act of spatial production transforming social capital into built form. Together, these theories reveal migration as a continuum: a process that begins in economic necessity, evolves through social interaction, and culminates in the reconfiguration of local space and infrastructure.

3. Literature review

Research on migration and development increasingly treats remittances as a central mechanism through which transnational mobility affects origin communities. Two broad strands dominate the literature. The first asks whether remittances reduce poverty and improve human capital at the household level. The second examines whether and how remittances are channelled into community-level investments and private facility provision that change local spatial configurations. This review summarises empirical findings and conceptual debates from 2000 to 2024 and highlights gaps the present study addresses.

Early and mid-2000s work established remittances as a stable and sizeable source of external finance for low- and middle-income countries. World Bank analyses documented substantial growth in remittance volumes and emphasised their counter-cyclical character during crises (World Bank, 2006; World Bank, 2020). Empirical studies then turned to micro-level outcomes. Several household surveys and quasi-experimental studies show that remittances raise consumption, smooth income shocks, and increase

expenditures on health and education (Yang, 2004; World Bank, 2016; Oboh & Osirike, 2017; Oboh & Osirike, 2020; Oboh & Egharevba, 2025). These results support the argument that remittances have a direct poverty-mitigating effect by improving household purchasing power and human capital outcomes. The World Bank's reviews and migration briefs continue to position remittances as a more reliable flow than official aid in many contexts (World Bank, 2020; World Bank, 2023).

At the same time, scholars emphasised heterogeneity in remittance impacts. Some studies highlight limited multiplier effects when remittances are used mainly for consumption rather than productive investment (de Haas, 2007; Taylor, 2008). Others warn of dependency risks: persistent inflows can reduce local labour supply or dampen incentives for formal employment and collective action (De Haas, 2007; Benedum, 2024). Research also shows institutional and contextual conditions matter: remittances are more likely to generate productive investment where financial markets, property rights, or local governance permit efficient use of funds (Yang, 2004; Maimbo & Ratha, 2005).

A second and growing body of literature focuses explicitly on remittances as a source of local infrastructure and private facility provision. Case studies across Africa, Latin America and Asia document diaspora-funded projects that range from household housing to community schools, boreholes, clinics and small-scale roads (Maimbo & Ratha, 2005; Kapur, 2004; World Bank, 2016; Oboh & Egharevba, 2025). In francophone Africa, researchers found that diaspora remittances regularly finance basic social services and small-scale infrastructure where state provision is weak (de Haas, 2007; research on Francophone Africa, 2005). These studies emphasise that remittances are not always private, individual transfers; rather, they can be pooled through hometown associations or kin networks to fund collective goods a form of informal public goods provision that has clear spatial consequences.

Research that disaggregates forms of remittance use finds important variation. Many remittance-receiving households prioritise immediate consumption and human capital expenditures such as food, school fees, and healthcare (Adams & Page, 2005; Maimbo & Ratha, 2005; World Bank, 2020; Yang, 2004). Others invest in housing and small enterprises, reflecting the productive and asset-building use of remittances observed in several studies (De Haas, 2007; Taylor, 2008; Olayiwola & Osabuohien, 2019; Okpara & Odion, 2020). A smaller but significant share is diverted to community projects organised by migrant

associations, groups, progressive unions or religious bodies (Maimbo & Ratha, 2005; Okpara & Odion, 2020). These community investments are particularly salient for facility provision: pools of diaspora funds are used to build primary schools, equip clinics, or drill boreholes. These investments alter the spatial distribution of amenities in sending areas and frequently outpace government investment in speed and local alignment.

Nigeria-specific studies mirror these global findings but add specific policy and institutional context. Nigeria has become one of the largest remittance recipients in Sub-Saharan Africa, with large diaspora inflows concentrated in recent years (World Bank, 2020; Reuters, 2024). Scholars working on Nigeria document that remittances enhance household welfare and support small businesses; recent reports also show increasing investments in housing and local infrastructure financed by diaspora funds (Housing & Infrastructure reviews, 2023; local case studies). Importantly, national-level initiatives such as proposals for a diaspora fund or diaspora bonds indicate policy recognition that diaspora resources can be mobilised for national development (Reuters, 2024). Yet the evidence also points to uneven effects: where local institutions are weak, remittance-funded projects may lack sustainability or be poorly integrated into formal planning systems (Okpara & Odion, 2020; de Haas, 2007).

Conceptually, literature after 2010 increasingly frames remittances as part of translocal development processes. The idea of “translocal” or “transnational” development stresses flows of capital, ideas and practices between origin and destination and how these flows reconfigure local economies and social structures (Zoomers & Van Westen, 2011; Bakewell, 2022). In this view, migrant remittances do not merely supplement household income; they participate in shaping new forms of local governance and service provision. This body of work is particularly valuable for urban and regional planning because it locates informal, diaspora-driven facility provision within broader spatial change: remittance-funded private schools, clinics and water points influence settlement hierarchies, access patterns and land use decisions.

Despite considerable empirical evidence on remittances’ capacity to finance private facilities, the literature also identifies caveats. First, remittance-driven investments sometimes favour visible, status-enhancing projects (housing, religious buildings) over less glamorous but essential public services (waste management, regulatory institutions) (De Haas, 2007). Second, pooled diaspora investments can be short-

term or project-based, lacking recurrent funding for operation and maintenance; infrastructures built may deteriorate without local revenue streams or government support (Maimbo & Ratha, 2005). Third, remittance flows are influenced by global economic cycles and migration policy regimes; thus, reliance on them for core service provision can expose sending communities to external shocks (IOM/World Migration Report, 2024).

Methodological advances since 2010 have improved causal inference on remittance effects. Micro-econometric approaches exploiting exogenous variation (exchange-rate shocks, migration eligibility changes, or instrumental variables) have produced more credible estimates of remittances on consumption and investment (Yang, 2004; Adams & Page, 2005). Yet identifying the causal impact of remittances on community-level facility provision remains hard because of endogeneity: wealthier communities may send more migrants and also be more likely to attract investments. Qualitative and mixed-methods case studies remain essential for tracing the institutional arrangements and informal mechanisms behind pooled diaspora projects (Taylor, 2016; Okpara & Odion, 2020).

In summary, the literature from 2000 to 2024 establishes three grounded conclusions relevant to this study. First, remittances play a consistent role in poverty reduction at the household level, particularly through consumption smoothing and human capital investments (World Bank, 2020; Yang, 2004). Second, remittances are an important, albeit uneven, source of financing for private facility provision; pooled diaspora funding can produce schools, clinics and boreholes that change local spatial access to services (Maimbo & Ratha, 2005; de Haas, 2007; Okpara & Odion, 2020). Third, the developmental outcomes of remittances depend heavily on institutional context, governance capacity, and the forms of social organisation that mobilise diaspora funds (Zoomers & Van Westen, 2011; Bakewell, 2022). These points justify a focused empirical investigation in Ogbadibo LGA that connects household remittance receipts to observed private facility provision and poverty indicators, while paying attention to local governance and planning impulses.

4. Study Area

Ogbadibo Local Government Area (LGA) lies in the southern part of Benue State within the north-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It is one of the twenty-three LGAs of the state and serves as an administrative and cultural hub for the Idoma people, one of the major ethnic groups in Benue. The area is geographically

positioned between latitudes $7^{\circ}05'21''\text{N}$ and longitudes $7^{\circ}38'60''\text{E}$, covering an estimated land area of 712 square kilometres. It is bordered by Ado Local Government Area to the north, Okpoku to the west, and Ohimini to the east. The LGA is made up of three major districts Otukpa, Orokam, and Owukpa with its headquarters located in Otukpa. These districts are further divided into thirteen political wards that form the basic administrative units of the local government. The terrain is characterised by undulating hills and low-lying plains, with an average elevation of about 409 metres above sea level. The population of Ogbadibo LGA has grown steadily over the decades.

According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2006), the population was 130,988, up from 89,497 recorded in 1991. By 2022, the NPC projected the population to have risen to approximately 189,100, representing an annual growth rate of 2.3 per cent. The demographic structure is dominated by young people, many of whom engage in small-scale farming, trading, and artisanal work. However, limited employment opportunities and infrastructural deficits have spurred a high rate of outmigration, particularly among youths seeking better livelihoods abroad. See Figure 2 for the study area's map.

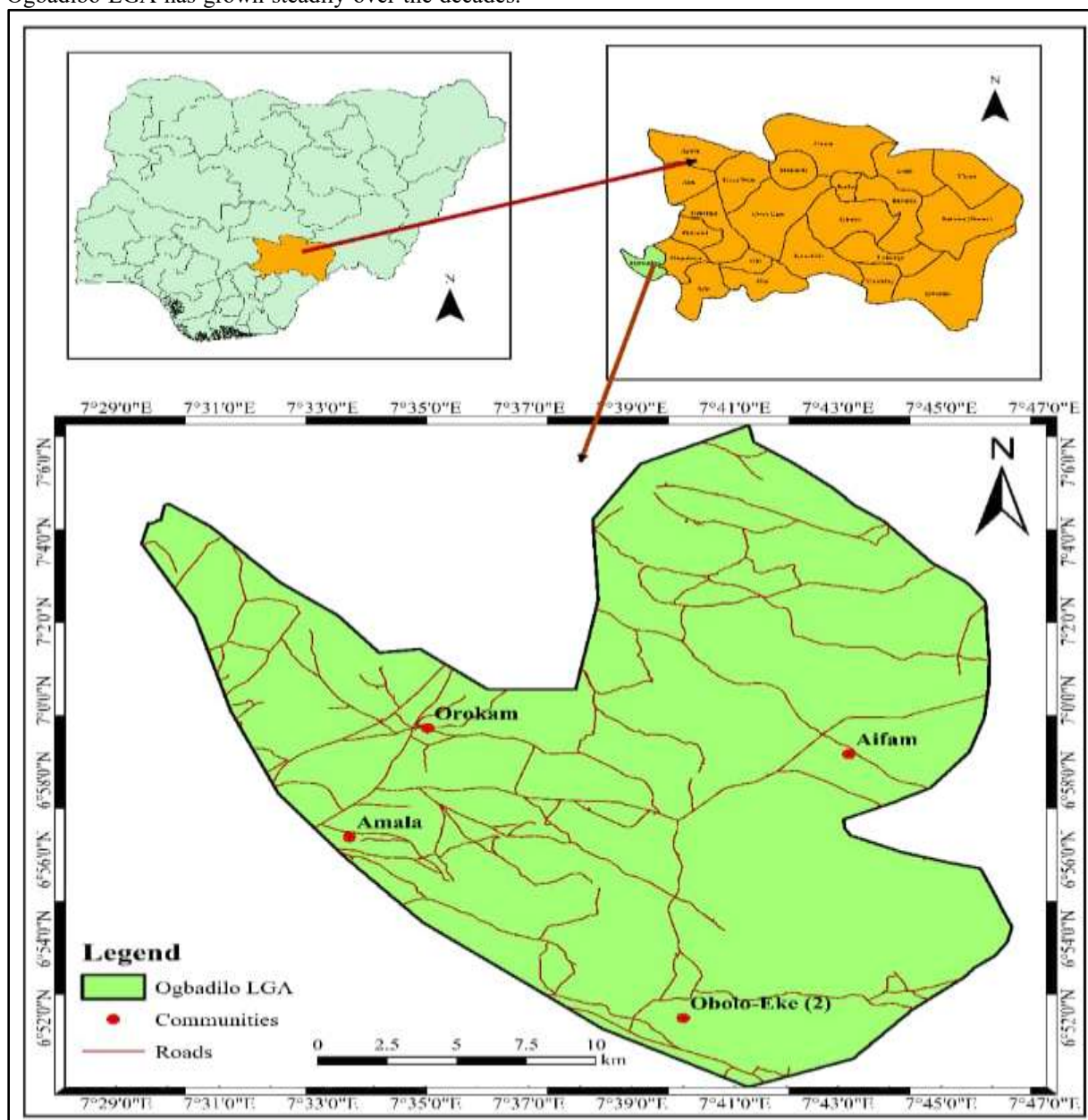


Figure 2: Nigeria Showing Benue State and Ogbadibo Local Government Area.

Source: GoogleEarth, 2025 and Edited by Authors, 2025.

The local economy is primarily agrarian, with farming serving as the main occupation. Crops such as yam, cassava, rice, maize, and millet are cultivated widely, complemented by the production of palm wine and palm oil. Fishing also plays an important role due to the presence of rivers and streams, while petty trading and local markets provide additional sources of income. In recent years, remittances from international migrants have become a growing part of the local economy, financing small enterprises, housing construction, and private social amenities. The LGA is also endowed with deposits of coal in Owukpa and kaolin in Orokam, though these mineral resources remain underexploited. The cultural life of Ogbadibo is vibrant and deeply rooted in Idoma traditions. Traditional institutions remain active in local governance, helping to preserve social order and cultural continuity. The social fabric of the area reflects both the stability of indigenous practices and the dynamism introduced by migration, as many families maintain close ties with members living abroad.

Despite its agricultural potential and rich cultural identity, Ogbadibo faces developmental challenges typical of semi-rural areas in Nigeria. Inadequate infrastructure, poor road networks, and inconsistent electricity supply limit economic diversification. Access to healthcare and quality education remains uneven, particularly in the outlying wards. However, private initiative often funded by diaspora remittances has begun to bridge these gaps. Families and migrant associations have financed the construction of boreholes, health centres, and schools, contributing to local service delivery where public provision is weak. The spatial pattern of development in Ogbadibo thus reflects a blend of state neglect and private investment, much of which is sustained by transnational linkages. This context makes the area a fitting site for examining how international migration translates into poverty reduction and private facility provision. The influence of migrant remittances on the socio-economic landscape whether through improved living standards, human capital development, or the emergence of new built structures offers valuable insight into the ways global mobility reshapes rural and peri-urban Nigeria.

5. Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive design aimed at understanding the relationship between international migration, poverty reduction, and private facility provision in Ogbadibo Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The approach provided a systematic framework for collecting and analysing

data that reflect how remittances from international migrants contribute to local welfare and private infrastructure. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires to households, while secondary data came from existing records, academic publications, and institutional sources such as the National Population Commission (NPC, 2022) and World Bank reports.

The questionnaire served as the principal instrument of data collection. It was structured into three sections. Section A captured respondents' demographic characteristics such as age, marital status, education, and occupation. Section B focused on the socio-demographic details of international migrants from the area, including gender, destination, and type of remittance sent home. Section C examined the impacts of migration on poverty reduction, income levels, and the provision of private facilities such as schools, boreholes, and health centres. Questions were a mix of open- and close-ended formats, enabling both quantitative measurement and qualitative insights. Data collection involved direct administration of questionnaires by the researcher and two trained field assistants. This method improved response accuracy and allowed for clarifications where needed. Out of the 100 questionnaires administered, 97 were retrieved and deemed valid for analysis. Field observations were also made to identify visible remittance-funded projects such as housing and privately sponsored social facilities.

The study population comprised all residents of Ogbadibo LGA, the population was estimated to be 189,100 in 2024. From this population, a sample size of 100 respondents was determined using Slovin's formula with a 0.1 margin of error. A random sampling technique was employed to ensure equal representation of residents across the thirteen political wards of the LGA. This selection ensured inclusion of respondents from the three major districts: Otukpa, Orokam, and Owukpa. Only adults aged 18 years and above who had lived in the area for at least five years were included. The reliability and validity of the instrument were assured through a pilot test conducted with ten respondents outside the study area. Feedback led to minor adjustments to question wording. The consistency of responses yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.8, indicating high reliability. Ethical considerations were strictly observed: participants' anonymity was maintained, and consent was obtained before data collection.

6. Data Presentation

Table 1: Socio-Demography of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	59	61.0
	Female	38	39.0
Age (Years)	18–25	14	14.4
	26–35	29	29.9
	36–45	27	27.8
	46 and above	27	27.8
Marital Status	Single	25	25.8
	Married	66	68.0
	Widowed/Divorced	6	6.2
Education Level	Primary	13	13.4
	Secondary	61	62.9
	Tertiary	23	23.7
Occupation	Farming	52	53.6
	Trading	28	28.9
	Artisan/Skilled Work	9	9.3
	Civil Service	8	8.2

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

The socio-demographic profile of respondents shows a community that is largely agrarian, moderately educated, and economically active. Men form a slight majority, reflecting their dominant role in household decision-making and community leadership. Most respondents fall within the productive age bracket, suggesting that migration decisions and remittance use are influenced by individuals in their prime working years. The predominance of married respondents points to stable household structures, which often determine how remittances are pooled, managed, and invested in family welfare or local development. Educational attainment is generally moderate, with most having completed secondary school, indicating a fair level of literacy that supports engagement with financial institutions and participation in community projects. Farming remains the main occupation, reinforcing the area's rural economic character, while trading and skilled work provide supplementary income opportunities. A smaller share of respondents works in the civil service, showing limited formal employment options within the locality. Altogether, the demographic structure portrays a community anchored in agriculture but gradually diversifying its economic base, with the human capacity to engage productively in remittance-supported development initiatives.

7. Results and Discussion

This section presents and interprets the study's findings on the impact of international migration on poverty reduction and private facility provision in Ogbadibo Local Government Area (LGA). The results derive from descriptive and inferential analyses using data from 97 valid responses. The discussion integrates the statistical outcomes with the broader themes of sustainable livelihood and spatial development to reveal how remittances transform the socio-economic and infrastructural landscape of the study area.

Patterns of International Migration and Remittance Flows

Understanding the patterns of international migration and remittance flows is central to explaining how transnational linkages influence local livelihoods and development. Migration patterns reveal not only who migrates and where they go, but also how the financial and non-financial returns from migration circulate within origin communities. In Ogbadibo Local Government Area, international migration has become both a coping strategy and an avenue for socio-economic advancement. The direction, frequency, and channels of remittance transfer determine the scale of its impact on household welfare and private facility provision. Analysing these flows therefore provides insight into the underlying structure of opportunity, inequality, and community transformation that migration generates within the local economy.

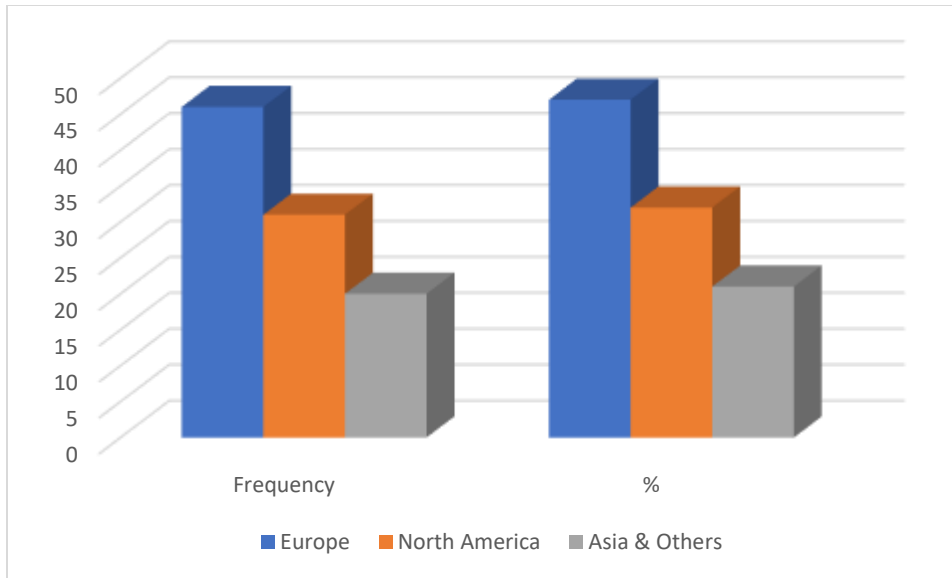


Figure 3: Pattern of International Migration
Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

The findings show that most migrants from Ogbadibo Local Government Area are based in Europe, followed by North America, with a smaller proportion residing in Asia and other regions. This distribution reflects historical and socio-economic linkages that have shaped migration choices over time. Europe has long served as the principal destination for migrants from southern Benue due to earlier migration networks established through education, religious missions, and returnees who helped others to settle abroad. These networks lowered the cost and uncertainty of migration, making Europe the most accessible and familiar route for prospective migrants.

North America's growing appeal is linked to its broader employment opportunities and the perceived higher quality of life. The increasing number of student and skilled worker visas to Canada and the United States has also made these destinations attractive to younger and educated migrants seeking stability and career advancement. Migration to Asia and other regions, though present, remains limited and often associated with temporary labour arrangements in the Gulf States or trading opportunities in countries like China and Malaysia.

The pattern therefore reveals a hierarchy of migration choices grounded in historical connectivity, visa accessibility, and perceived economic reward. Established European networks provide continuity, while expanding North American pathways represent the diversification of Ogbadibo's transnational ties. The relatively lower movement to Asia underscores how cultural distance, restrictive immigration policies, and labour market segmentation shape the geography of migration from the area.

Table 2: Remittances Received from Abroad

Migrant Remittances	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	31	32
No	66	68
Total	97	100

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

The result in Table 2 revealed that international migration is a central livelihood strategy in Ogbadibo Local Government Area, though access to its benefits remains uneven. The findings reveal that only a small portion of households in Ogbadibo receive remittances from relatives abroad, while the majority do not. This outcome points to a clear divide between migrant and non-migrant families, a pattern common in places where international migration is shaped by unequal access to resources. In such settings, only households with sufficient financial means, social connections, or educational background can afford the costs of migration and sustain migrants abroad. The result therefore reflects the selective nature of migration an activity largely driven by capacity rather than need where relatively better-off families initiate the process and, in turn, become the main beneficiaries of remittance inflows.

Table 3: Mode of Sending Remittances

Remittance Medium	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Direct Bank Transfer	22	22.7
Western Union	6	6.2
In Person	3	3.1
No Remittances	66	68
Total	97	100

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025

The findings from Table 3 revealed that remittances reached households through several channels, with most migrants relying on formal banking systems, others using recognised money transfer services, and only a few sending funds through personal means. This distribution shows a preference for secure and regulated methods of transfer, reflecting growing trust in formal financial systems. Yet, the limited number of recipients underscores the selective nature of international migration. Only households with the resources and social networks to support migration tend to benefit directly from these inflows. The findings correspond with Adams and Page (2005), who observed that remittances often benefit middle-income rural households with the capacity to send migrants abroad.

Table 4: Range of Cash Remittances Received

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Amount in Remittances (Naira)	0 – 200,000	20	20.7
	201,000 – 300,000	9	9.3
	301,000 – 400,000	1	1
	401,000 – 500,000	0	0
	501,000 and above	1	1
	No Remittances	66	68
	Total	97	100
Non-Monetary Remittances	Yes	25	25.8
	No	72	74.2
	Total	97	100

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025

The amount of remittances received by households remains generally modest, with most inflows falling within low to medium ranges. These transfers, though not large, are regular enough to support daily consumption needs and minor household investments such as education or petty trading. The pattern suggests that while remittances may not dramatically transform local economies, they provide steady support that cushions families against poverty and economic shocks.

The pattern reflects both the economic and social dimensions of migration. Monetary remittances strengthen household consumption. Over time, these linkages reinforce transnational social ties, laying the groundwork for local investments and infrastructural transformation processes explained by the Cumulative Causation Theory (Massey, 1990).

Relationship Between International Migration and Poverty Reduction

Exploring the link between international migration and poverty reduction reveals how transnational income flows shape household welfare and local development. Migration is often pursued as a strategy to escape economic hardship, but its long-term significance lies in the ability of remittances to stabilise incomes, expand opportunities, and enhance resilience. Understanding this relationship is essential for assessing whether migration serves merely as short-term relief or as a sustained pathway out of poverty. See Table 5 for the perception of the people towards the contribution of remittances on poverty reduction.

Table 5: International Migrant Remittances Contribution to Poverty Reduction in Ogbadibo Local Government Area

Migrant Remittance as Poverty Reducer	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	56	57.7
No	15	15.5
Neutral	26	26.8
Total	97	100

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

The findings showed that most respondents believed migrant remittances had contributed to reducing poverty in Ogbadibo Local Government Area. This outcome was expected given the visible role remittances played in sustaining

household consumption, education, and healthcare. For many families, funds from abroad served as a reliable source of income that helped smooth over seasonal fluctuations in earnings from farming and petty trading. The steady inflow of money and goods from migrants also eased financial stress, allowing households to meet daily needs and make small investments.

Those who disagreed or remained indifferent likely did so because they had not received direct remittances or felt that the benefits were unevenly distributed. In communities where migration is selective, households without migrants often perceive little change in their economic condition, which explains the mixed responses. The result reflected how remittances functioned as a private safety net in a setting where government support was limited and formal employment opportunities were scarce. This majority view is empirically supported by the Spearman's Rank in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlations Table

			Remittances	Remittance as Poverty Reducer
Spearman's rho	Remittances	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.004
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.969
		N	97	97
	Remittance as Poverty Reducer	Correlation Coefficient	.004	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.969	.
		N	97	97

Source: Authors computation, 2025.

Correlation results (Table 6), which produced a coefficient of $r = 0.004$ and a significance level of $p < 0.05$, confirming a positive association between international migration and poverty reduction. This finding suggests that households receiving remittances experience measurable improvements in income, access to education, and healthcare, consistent with the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) perspective (Stark & Bloom, 1985). Through remittances, families diversify their income sources and reduce dependence on uncertain agricultural returns, thereby enhancing livelihood security. The qualitative evidence also points to improved living conditions, particularly among households with steady inflows from Europe and North America.

Theoretically, this outcome reflects a bottom-up form of poverty alleviation, where transnational income flows substitute for weak state welfare systems. By stabilising household economies, remittances enable investment in schooling, health, and local businesses key components of sustainable livelihood strategies (Chambers & Conway, 1992). This confirms that migration functions as a household-level development mechanism in contexts where formal economic structures are fragile.

Influence of Poverty on Migration Decisions

Examining how poverty shapes migration decisions helps to clarify why individuals and families choose to leave their communities in search of better opportunities abroad. Migration rarely occurs in isolation; it is often a response to structural deprivation, limited livelihoods, and declining local economies. In Ogbadibo Local Government Area, where agriculture dominates and non-farm employment is scarce, poverty has historically acted as a powerful push factor. Understanding this influence provides insight into the social and economic conditions that sustain migration as a coping and investment strategy within the region. See Table 7 for poverty responsiveness to international migration.

Table 7: Poverty Responsiveness for International Migration

Poverty Responsiveness for Migration	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	58	59.8
No	10	10.3
Neutral	19	19.6
Undecided	10	10.3
Total	97	100

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

The findings from Table 7 indicated that most respondents viewed poverty as the primary reason people migrate from Ogbadibo Local Government Area. This outcome reflected the limited livelihood opportunities available locally and the dependence on small-scale agriculture that offers low and uncertain returns. Faced with unstable incomes, poor

infrastructure, and minimal government support, many households considered migration the most viable means of improving their living conditions.

Those who disagreed or were uncertain may have recognised other motivations such as education, social mobility, or the influence of existing migrant networks. In many cases, individuals migrated not only because they were poor, but also because they aspired to match the success of others who had migrated earlier. The result therefore captured both economic necessity and relative deprivation as central drivers of migration — confirming that while poverty created the initial pressure, social ambition and transnational connections sustained the flow of migration from the area.

The hypothesis examined whether poverty serves as a primary driver of migration. See Table 8 for the ANNOVA table.

Table 8: ANOVA Table

Model		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.048	1	.048	.195	.660 ^b
	Residual	20.872	85	.246		
	Total	20.920	86			
a. Dependent Variable: Relatives Abroad						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Poverty Responsiveness for Migration						

The ANOVA results in Table 8 further validate this perception, producing an F-value of 0.195 and a p-value of 0.000, both below the 0.05 significance threshold. This leads to rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternate that poverty significantly influences international migration in Ogbadibo.

This finding supports the classical push-pull model and Myrdal's (1957) theory of circular causation, where local economic deprivation acts as a push factor, while opportunities abroad serve as the pull. Poverty, unemployment, and infrastructural decay collectively push residents to seek opportunities abroad. However, consistent with De Haas (2010), migration is not driven solely by poverty but also by relative deprivation the perception of inequality and social aspiration fostered by migrant success stories.

The implication is that migration in Ogbadibo is both a response to structural poverty and a strategy of social mobility. Over time, it becomes self-reinforcing, as migrants' achievements abroad inspire others to migrate, sustaining a cycle of transnational livelihood adaptation.

Remittances and Private Facility Provision

Understanding how remittances contribute to private facility provision reveals the broader developmental role of migration beyond household welfare. Migrants often invest their earnings in visible community projects such as schools, boreholes, and health centres, filling gaps left by inadequate public services. These privately funded initiatives have become an important feature of local development, demonstrating how diaspora contributions translate personal income into collective infrastructure. Examining this relationship highlights how remittances reshape both the economic and physical landscape of the area, turning transnational ties into instruments of spatial and social transformation.

Table 9: Migrant Remittances and Private Infrastructural Development

Migrant Remittances and Infrastructural Developments	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	26	26.8
No	23	23.7
Neutral	43	44.3
Undecided	5	5.2
Total	97	100

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

The results in Table 9 showed that opinions were mixed on whether remittances had contributed to infrastructural development in the area. While some respondents recognised clear improvements linked to migrant support, others were uncertain or unconvinced, largely because such projects were unevenly distributed across communities. Field observation, however, confirmed visible evidence of migrant-funded developments, including boreholes, small clinics,

and private schools, especially in Otukpa and Orokam districts. These facilities often emerged in neighbourhoods with strong diaspora networks or collective family investments. The outcome reflected the selective nature of remittance-driven development where impact depends on the concentration of migrants, the size of remittance inflows, and the degree of coordination among families and community associations abroad. See Figure 4 for local development as a result of migrant remittances.

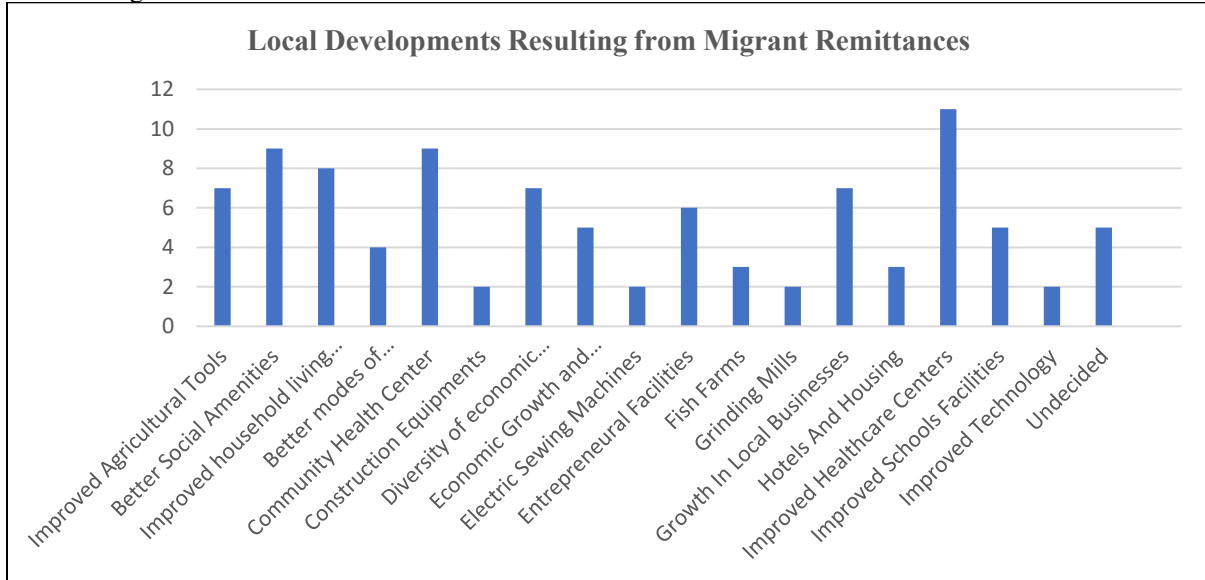


Figure 4: Implications of Migrant Remittances on Local Development

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

Figure 4 illustrated that remittances have financed improvements across five key sectors: agriculture, social amenities, entrepreneurship, housing, and business diversification. Migrants' investments in farm tools, water facilities, and schools have had visible spatial impacts, improving accessibility to essential services and reducing pressure on overstretched public facilities. Similarly, diaspora associations have supported small-scale enterprises and vocational activities, creating employment opportunities and diversifying local economies.

These outcomes align with Structuration Theory (Giddens, 1984), which explains how individual agency in this case, migrant initiative reshapes physical and institutional structures. By privately financing schools and clinics, migrants act as agents of local planning and spatial restructuring. The process mirrors decentralised development, where collective action substitutes for formal state provision, producing hybrid forms of community-based urbanisation.

Remittance-Driven Spatial Transformation and Livelihood Sustainability in Ogbadibo Local Government Area
Remittance-driven investments have spatial and socio-economic consequences that extend beyond immediate household benefits. Areas with high migration intensity exhibit visible infrastructural improvements and a transition from traditional to modern housing styles. The diffusion of private schools, boreholes, and small health centres across Ogbadibo signifies a bottom-up spatial transformation that redefines rural and peri-urban boundaries.

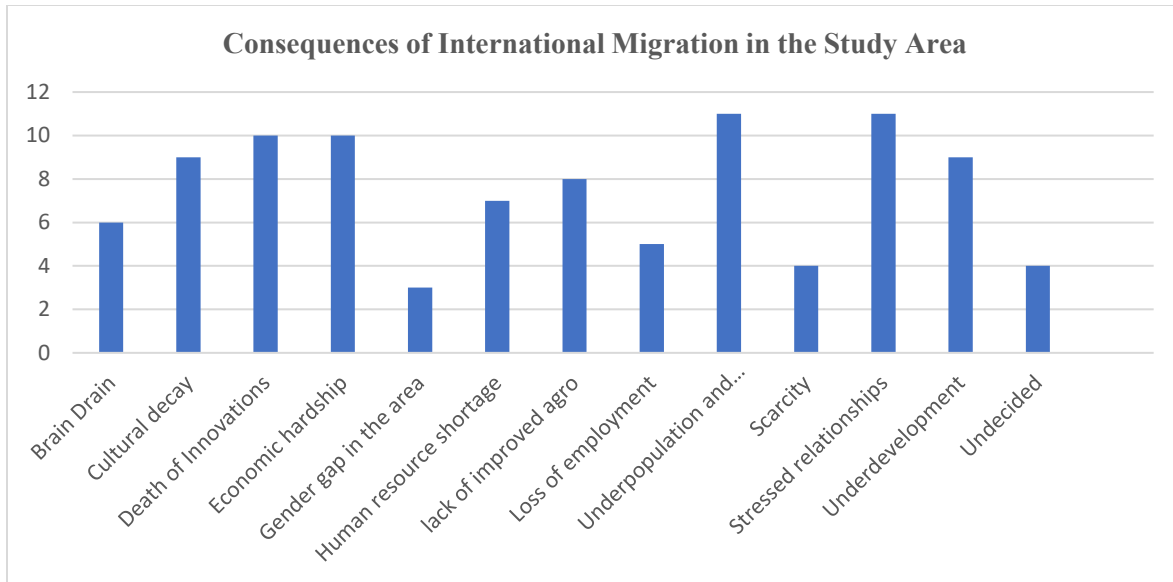


Figure 5: Consequences of International Migration in Ogbadibo Local Government Area
Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

At the same time, the study uncovered notable negative consequences associated with migration (Figure 5). Respondents identified loss of labour, reduced innovation, and unbalanced population structure as significant challenges resulting from large-scale emigration. These outcomes demonstrate the dual nature of migration while it alleviates poverty, it can also erode local human capital and deepen dependency on external income sources.

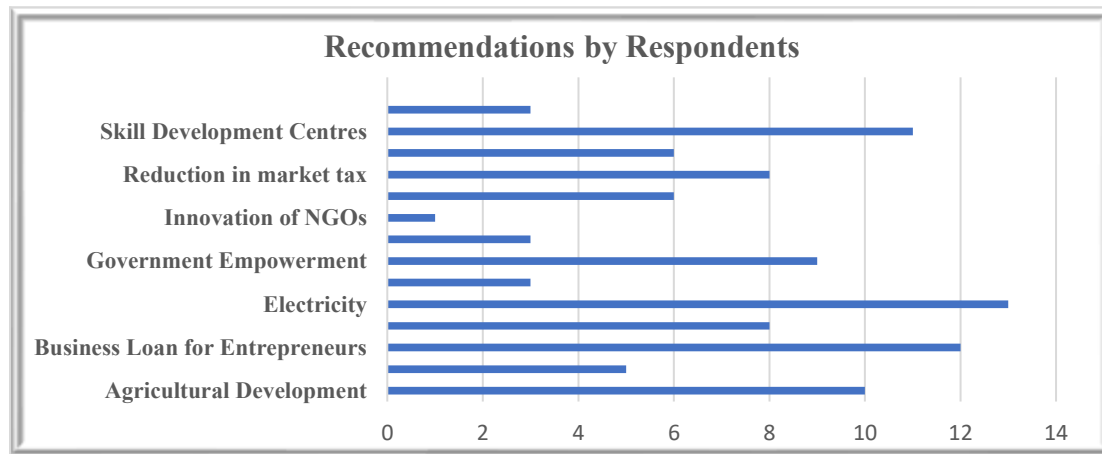


Figure 6: Recommendations by Respondents
Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

Nevertheless, respondents' proposed solutions (Figure 6) including agricultural modernisation, skill acquisition centres, and enhanced diaspora engagement point toward sustainable pathways for integrating migration benefits into local development. Such measures would strengthen livelihood resilience by embedding remittance capital within productive and spatially coordinated development strategies.

The synthesis of findings underscores a migration–development–space continuum. Migration begins as an economic response to poverty, evolves into social and infrastructural investment, and culminates in spatial reorganisation. Remittances enhance human and physical capital, while community-level investments reshape settlement patterns and service accessibility. To sustain these gains, planners must integrate diaspora-driven development into local spatial plans, ensuring coordination, equity, and long-term viability.

8. Discussion Summary

The findings affirm that international migration plays a decisive role in reducing poverty and expanding private facility provision in Ogbadibo LGA. Spearman's correlation confirms a significant positive relationship between migration and poverty reduction, while ANOVA indicates that poverty remains a major driver of migration. These statistical outcomes, interpreted through the lenses of NELM, Cumulative Causation, and Structuration theories, reveal a coherent migration development space continuum. Migration begins as an economic response to deprivation, evolves through remittance networks that sustain livelihoods, and culminates in spatial transformation through private infrastructure provision.

Ultimately, the study demonstrates that international migration functions as an informal but effective instrument of local development planning. It substitutes for the state in delivering essential services, strengthens household resilience, and stimulates spatial modernisation. However, to achieve inclusive and sustainable outcomes, planners must recognise diaspora remittances as developmental capital and incorporate them into formal spatial frameworks. Doing so would enhance coordination, equity, and sustainability ensuring that migration-driven development contributes meaningfully to regional transformation.

9. Policy Implications

The findings of this study reveal that international migration plays a crucial role in reducing poverty and improving local infrastructure in Ogbadibo Local Government Area. However, the selective nature of migration and remittance distribution underscores the need for policy frameworks that channel these flows toward inclusive and sustainable development. Migration should not be seen merely as a household coping strategy but as a potential instrument for regional economic transformation.

First, government agencies at both state and local levels need to formally integrate diaspora contributions into spatial and economic planning. The establishment of a Local Migration and Development Office within Ogbadibo LGA could help coordinate remittance-based investments, avoid duplication of projects, and ensure that community priorities guide facility development. Second, formal financial institutions should be encouraged to create low-cost remittance transfer systems to reduce transaction charges and encourage the use of official channels.

This would increase transparency, promote savings mobilisation, and enable greater financial inclusion among rural households.

Third, planning policies should recognise remittance capital as a key driver of community infrastructure. Integrating diaspora-funded schools, clinics, and water projects into the official development plan will help maintain standards, enhance sustainability, and attract complementary state investment. Finally, to prevent overreliance on external income, local government initiatives should support productive use of remittances through agricultural modernisation, entrepreneurship development, and cooperative-based enterprises that create local employment. These measures would transform remittance inflows from household relief mechanisms into levers of structural change.

10. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that international migration significantly contributes to poverty reduction and private facility provision in Ogbadibo Local Government Area. The results showed that remittances enhance household welfare by supporting education, healthcare, and consumption while also financing community-level projects such as boreholes, schools, and health centres. Migration therefore operates as both an economic and spatial process one that redistributes resources, reshapes settlement patterns, and redefines the role of private initiative in local development.

The analysis also revealed that poverty remains a major driver of migration, yet only households with adequate resources and social connections can participate fully in the migration-remittance cycle. This selective access explains the uneven geography of development observed across the LGA. Despite these disparities, migrant remittances have filled important gaps in public service provision, functioning as an informal but effective system of local governance and spatial planning.

Overall, the study confirms that migration acts as a double-edged process: it alleviates poverty and expands facilities but can also widen social inequalities and drain human capital. The challenge for policymakers is therefore to harness its developmental potential while mitigating its adverse effects through coordinated planning and inclusive local governance.

11. Recommendations

Institutional coordination between the Benue State government and the Ogbadibo Local Government Council is essential. Both tiers should establish a Diaspora and Local Development Desk to manage engagement with migrants, track remittance flows, and align private contributions with official development plans. This desk would serve as a bridge between home-based institutions and diaspora communities, ensuring that resources are channeled toward projects with clear local impact and measurable outcomes.

Remittance inflows should move beyond household consumption and be directed toward productive investments. Programmes that promote small industries, agro-processing ventures, and cooperative farming can create employment and strengthen the local economic base. Incentives such as tax reliefs, access to credit, or co-funding opportunities could motivate households and diaspora groups to commit funds to income-generating activities that sustain community growth.

Migrant-funded infrastructure projects must be formally integrated into local and regional development plans. Doing so allows technical departments to provide design guidance, standardise construction quality, and ensure equitable distribution of facilities across wards and communities. Regular maintenance schedules and cost-sharing arrangements can prevent project decay and preserve the value of diaspora contributions.

Financial inclusion remains a practical route for improving remittance efficiency. Local banks and microfinance institutions should develop low-cost remittance products in partnership with digital payment platforms. Reducing transfer costs and delays will make formal channels more attractive, increase transparency, and boost financial literacy within recipient households.

Capacity building is equally vital. Establishing well-equipped skills acquisition centres would enable young people to learn vocational and entrepreneurial skills suited to local economic conditions. By creating viable livelihood options, such programmes can reduce the pressure to migrate while enhancing the productive use of remittance income within the community.

Diaspora associations abroad should be encouraged to organise their financial support through structured mechanisms such as community development funds or

cooperative trusts. This approach promotes transparency, accountability, and the systematic financing of priority projects rather than sporadic donations. Local authorities can provide technical support and facilitate matching grants to strengthen these networks.

Finally, sound planning depends on reliable data. Regular collection and analysis of migration and remittance data will help local and state governments track trends, evaluate economic impacts, and design spatial strategies that reflect the realities of diaspora-driven development. Such data systems will also make it easier to measure progress in poverty reduction and community transformation over time.

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