

## Impact of Brain Drain Immigration on the Economic Development in Sudan 1973 to 2005

**Haga Abdelrahman Ibrahim El-Imam and Nadia Yusuf**  
King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arab

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### Keywords

Immigration, population, Sudan, manpower, labour

### Abstract

*Over the past few decades, Sudan has witnessed more involuntary movement of its population, to Arab oil-rich countries since 1973. The movement of the most qualified and trained personnel from Sudan can be best described as (selective migration) made Sudan loose a great number of highly equipped and trained manpower, which in turn the successive governments of Sudan exhausted generously huge sums on their education, qualification and training. What is more unfortunate is that the substitute manpower lacks due experience and is characterizes by incompetency, and that the country remains in dire need of the influential manpower that immigrated for the construction of giant projects. This study tackles a number of questions such as: What are the problems and incentives that make this academically qualified and experienced manpower to prefer immigration to work abroad despite the fact that they know the country is in dire need of their service? Did the policies followed by the state play a role in encouraging such qualified sector of manpower to immigrate? What is the future of the economic development in Sudan within the framework of the incessantly growing immigration wave?*

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### Introduction:

Following the country's independence, Sudan was characterized by several conflicts, political instability economic and environmental degradation, lack of sustainable forms of livelihood, famine and population displacement, in particular in the South. Neighboring countries also experienced similar challenges and development problems. These factors resulted in significant waves of internal and international displacement and made Sudan an important emigration, transit and immigration country, both for economic and forced migrants. The remarkably growing immigration of manpower to the Arab oil-rich countries has been continually astonishing since the beginning of the seventies, made Sudan lose a great number of highly qualified and trained manpower, which is considered one of the precious sources the country possesses in vital fields, such as education, health and public service. In fact, such a substantial exhaustion in Sudanese manpower has unfortunately led – among other factors – to both delay and impediment the economic development. The development was augmented by negative elements that comprised limitedness of finance and investment; absence of proper economic planning; the outbreak of disputes and emergence of environmental problems such as draught, starvation and desertification. Sudanese emigration includes both labor and forced migrants. Sudanese citizens and people with Sudanese origin currently living abroad can be estimated at between 1.2 and 1.7 million people, however this figures need to be taken with caution due to different coverage and systems, missing data and limited comparability.

This study has indicated that the number of the male Sudanese immigrants has exceeded that of the females, as males constituted 90 per cent of the sample, whereas females were only 10 per cent. This confirms that the rate of economic immigration among the males is extremely high in contrast with that of females. This is due to the availability of employment opportunities for males in a larger percentage; and that most of these male

immigrants are holders of university or postgraduate degrees. They exemplify with high qualification and academic capabilities and constitute 74 per cent of the sample members. This supports the assumption that the immigration was selective and easy for qualified professional, particularly when we take into account that the countries hosting these immigrants pay them generous attractive salaries and the evidence for this is that we notice a direct relation between the individual's education and qualification level and his income. Additionally, such hosting countries create for immigrants a favorable environment that helped them conduct research and develop themselves professionally and development in an attempt to prolong the stay of such immigrants in their countries to achieve the maximum possible benefit from them. According to the study 54 per cent of the sample members confirmed that they use modern technology means with a percentage of 60 per cent in discharging their work duties.

Whereas, the age bracket constitution of the sample is concerned, it was found that 84 per cent of the members constitute (21-60) range, which considered the cohort that is most capable of production, creation and effective participation in any development for a country. This confirms that the immigration constituted a great loss to the economy of Sudan and has an extremely disturbing impact that obstructs the country's eco-social development.

In deliberation of the professional structure of the immigrants, it has been observed that most of the sample's members were active employees before their immigration, as they actually constituted 76 per cent, whereas the percentage of those who were unemployed was only 24 per cent. This stands as eye-catching evidence that go against the assumption that immigration might be one factor that decreases unemployment. Furthermore, it can be concluded that immigration has drained this society out of its influential factors, creating an imbalance in the local manpower structure. It left a significant effect on economic sectors – slowing down the country's economic growth. It is remarked that the substitute elements that filled in the vacant posts of immigrants were not up to the proficiency and qualification of the immigrated elements. Furthermore, qualification and training of substitute elements required a very long time and huge cost. Additionally, it is known to every person the fluctuating nature of the immigrants' remittances, as the economies of the hosting countries depend basically on the changing petrol prices. Despite the fact that economic pressures constituted 23 per cent of the reasons that lead to immigration, the analysis of such reasons must concentrate in the first place on the economic aspect.

### **Significance**

This study gives a greater significance to the manpower capital factor that is required to push forward the wheel of economic development and contribute to its achieving in Sudan despite the surprisingly growing immigration of Sudanese manpower, especially the immigration waves of qualified manpower. Furthermore, the study aims at explaining the impact of these immigration waves, which were seen as selective and created a conspicuous shortage in the numbers of males, particularly those belonging to age ranging between, 21-60 and who were considered the most productive, vigorous and contributing in achieving the desired development.

### **Objectives**

This study aspires at knowing and understanding the reasons and intention of immigration of professional Sudanese manpower and their preference to work outside

Sudan, especially in Arab oil-rich countries as well as the impact of such immigration on the possibility of achieving development in Sudan.

## Methodology

The analytical descriptive method was used in this study. It employed questionnaire as one the primary means, in addition to secondary means such as books, university dissertations, journals and periodicals as well as daily newspapers to verify that whether assumptions are valid or not. In this connection, the study explored the views of certain sample of (500) Sudanese immigrants of whom (300) working in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and (200) in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and representing the various regions of Sudan with the purpose of knowing the reasons and motives for immigration. For evaluating such views exploration, the program of Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) was employed, followed by due analysis of the answers of the samples' members and study data as well as test of assumptions.

## Sudanese Immigrants Abroad

Man had known immigration since long time for the sake of either hunting or seeking water and grass for his cattle, sheep or camels. However, by the passage of time man immigration focused on education, commerce or on other non-economic reasons such as wars, starvation waves, draught, desertification, suppression or religious beliefs. Allah Almighty says *"Verily, those who believed, and those who emigrated and strove hard in the way of Allah, all these hope for Allah's mercy. Indeed, Allah is oft-forgiving, most-merciful"* Qur'an 2:218. Furthermore, Article (13) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates regarding the individual's right for movement as follows: (Every individual has the right for free movement and for selecting the residence place within the boundaries of the country; and every individual has the right to depart any country, including his own country, and has the right to return to his country) (UN 2002).

In fact immigration is not just a mere relocation of individuals or groups from one particular place to another. Astonishingly, it is a 'cheap' transfer of administrative experts and skillful or qualified personnel and healthy manpower from poorer countries to richer ones (Jalaudeen 1979, p36). Ironically, it is as if the case of a poor country that renders generously service to a richer one.

The external immigration of Sudanese individuals has gained significance since the sixties, particularly after the Second World War, but its wave amplified tremendously during 1970-1983. Their movement started from late seventies as economic immigrants searching for improved income and better living conditions (Migration in Sudan, 2011). This led due to the sharp increase in petrol price in 1973 and appearance of comprehensive development in the Gulf States, which resulted in making available work opportunities with more attractive employment conditions for males than females. From the data of study field, it has become clear that 90 per cent of the sample members are males as indicated in Figure (1).

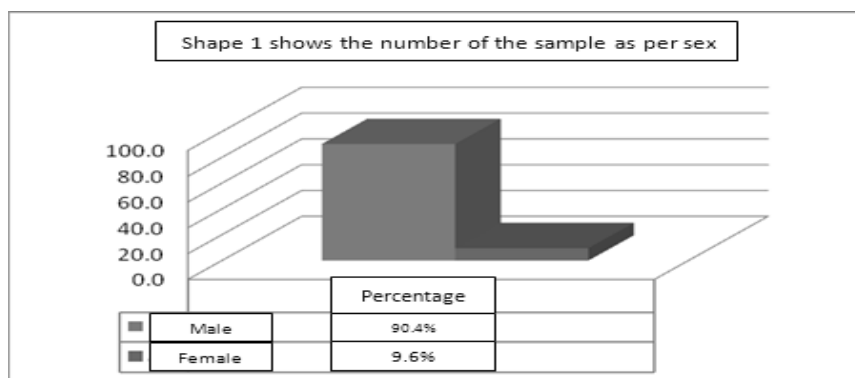


Figure 1: Displays the number of Sample members comprising Sudanese immigrants as per sex (male or female).

There are differences over estimating the numbers and rates of Sudanese immigrants abroad; as the declared numbers represent only those working with various employment contracts, but they don't comprise those traveling via other methods such as tourism or visit or enter countries illegally and their status changes latter into permanent immigration. Likewise, certain Sudanese immigrants don't incline - for one reason or the other - to register their data at the registries retained by the Sudanese embassies, consulates general or missions in the respective countries hosting such immigrants.

By following the movement of the Sudanese immigration to other countries, one notices that its rates, particularly to Arab oil-rich countries, increased during the years that followed 1973. In fact, in 1978, the number of Sudanese working in the said countries reached ( 132000 ) individuals "one hundred and thirty-two thousand", then the increase continued during 1980 and 1982 till the number reached 250000 "Two hundred thousand" in 1984. This is indicated by Table (1).

Country	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Saudi Arabia	90	115	125	137	150	155	150
Libya	25	28	30	32	35	36	38
UAE	-	8	10	12	13	14	13
Iraq	1	-	-	2	7	15	25
Yemen	1	2	8	12	10	8	7
Kuwait	3	3	3	4	5	6	7
Others	7	8	8	9	11	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>250</b>

Source: Muhammad Al-Awad Jalaludeen- Money Transfers of Sudanese Working in Arab oil-rich countries- Arab Institute for Planning-Kuwait- Researches and Deliberations of the Experts Meeting convened on 5/7/1986 - Shabab House for Publication & Translation-1987-Page 304. These estimations were based on two studied conducted by the researcher in 1978-79 and 1984.

Table 1: Shows the estimation of the number of Sudanese Immigrants Received by Arab countries during the period 1978-1984 (Numbers are in thousands).

In the evaluation for immigration and manpower carried out in 1990 by the Ministry of Manpower, the number of Sudanese immigrants was estimated at approximately 420000 individuals "four hundred and twenty thousand", but during the period 1990-1996 the number of Sudanese immigrants decreased due to the Second Gulf War. This was reflected on the economies of the Gulf States; and a reverse immigration of Sudanese workers to Sudan occurred and the number of those who returned reached 150000.

In another survey conducted in 1996 and 1997 by the Department of the Sudanese Working Abroad for counting the number of the immigrants as per specialization (Engineer, university professor, etc), it was remarked that there was a substantial increase in the immigration rates for all specializations, but the most significant increase was in the number of professions such as university professors, physicians (doctors), engineers and other vital and significant professions. Since relevant statistics is inaccurate, it can be said that their number exceeds what is listed. The increase in the number of immigrants reached around 30001 in only one year and this is shown by Table(2).

Profession	1996	1997	Increase
Engineer	2287	2723	435
University Professor	435	525	90
Physician (Doctor)	1652	1966	314
Pharmacist	424	531	107
Lawyer	252	311	59
Official	15378	18051	2673
Worker	79879	104435	24556
Teacher	7573	8720	1147
Others	3548	4116	619
Total	111428	141429	30001

Source: Department of the Sudanese Working Abroad –Computer department – immigrants' statistic for 1996 and 1997.

Table 2: Shows the number of Immigrants as per Specialization for 1996 and 1997

At the end of the past century, there was a remarkable increase in the demand for employment contracts focusing on a particular occupation titled (cattle breeding worker) which is considered by most of those utilizing it as a sheer cover for those practicing other occupations and who desire to immigrate with any means. This confirmed that the immigration of qualified personnel practicing intellectual, professional or skillful occupations was on continuous increase and with all means. Table (3) indicates the continuous increase in the number of qualified personnel who immigrated under the mask of the occupation available at the host countries and which is titled (cattle breeding worker) as their employment contracts number reached approximately 27256 between the period from the mid of 1999 to the mid of 2000 (just a year).

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Saudi Arabia	2795	3163	2788	2477	2004	1450	1361	1291	1494	5484	1597	1176	27093
UAE	9		15						7		28	33	94
Qatar	11		1	9	8						15	24	68
Bahrain											1		1

Source: Department of the Sudanese Working Abroad, 4th Sudanese Immigrants Conference-2000 –Page 49.

Table 3: Shows statistics of the number of those immigrated under the mask of the occupation titled (Animal breeding worker) during the period from the first of June 1999 to the end of May 2000.

Based on the statistical survey conducted by the Department of the Sudanese Working Abroad for 2002 and 2005 , it was found that the number of immigrants reached (592790) till 2002, but it increased in 2005 and reached (661027) at a growth rate that reached 11.5 per cent. Furthermore, this increase in the number of immigrants deprived Sudan

through the passage of time of the most significance resource it possesses, as indicated in Table (4).

Arab Country	2002	2005
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	403735	456074
Iraq	51209	51843
Libya	47145	52445
UAE	40312	45901
Yemen	19209	19352
Qatar	14068	16105
Bahrain	1201	1283
Jordan	1154	1296
Kuwait	8168	8525
Sultanate of Oman	5497	6437
Egypt	478	783
Lebanon	319	470
Syria	212	416
Morocco	30	40
Tunisia	29	30
Algeria	25	26
Palestine	-	1
Total	592790	661027

Source: Central Statistical Department- Statistics of the Department of the Sudanese Working Abroad for 2002 and 2005.

Table 4: Displays the number of Sudanese working abroad during 2002 - 2005.

### Motives of the Immigration

Immigration is a result of eco-social non-balance among different regions, as there are certain factors that compel "individuals" to move away permanently from their original living places driven by economic objectives, whereas there are other elements that attract such individuals to the new places they settle at for the same objectives (Bofair, Shrayouk and Hendreson. 1985). However, despite the fact that, the intermingling factors of external immigration are numerous, they are divided into two main sections; the pushing factors encountered by an individual at his original region and which are termed as repellent ones, and attractive factors at the targeted country and which are termed as positives ones. Economic factors, such as differences in incomes, salaries rates at various countries as well as increase in unemployment level and extreme poverty are considered some of the main factors influencing immigration and the most repellent factors. As in Figure (2) below, the members of the sample have indicated that there were a number of factors that pushed them to immigrate outside Sudan. However, economic pressures constituted the highest rate which reached 23 per cent .This confirms that the motives of immigration are not confined only to economic pressures but they include other pressures. Furthermore, all such motives reaffirm that the country losses the energy of qualifies personnel. This is indicated in figure (2) below.

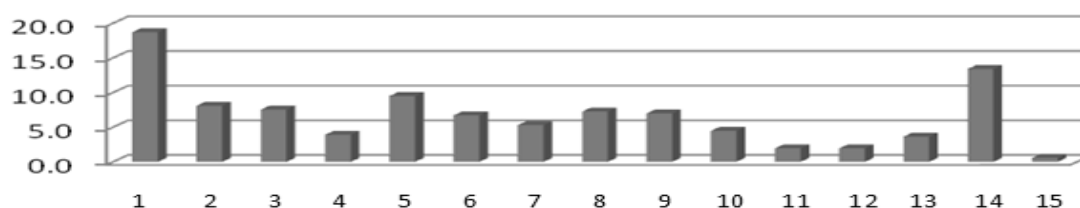


Figure 2: displays the reasons of immigration.

1-Economic Pressures 2-Political Pressures 3- Social Pressures-Slowness of Promotion in Jobs 5- Absence of Work Incentives 6- Work Environment is not conducive 7- Control of particular Group 8- Negligence of Qualified Personnel 9- Deterioration of Many Services 10- Work Atmosphere is not Conducive for Work 11- Study 12- Search for Work (I did not find) 13- Inequality in Rights 14-For the Sake of Better Life 15-Others

More importantly, the revolution of communication and explosion of information has substantially increased the rates of the immigration.

### The Policies

In Sudan, the official concern with the phenomenon of immigration and immigrants commenced after the sharp rise in oil prices in 1973, coupled with the increase of demand of Arab oil-rich countries for immigrating manpower for developing their economies. Furthermore, the country has promulgated manpower law in 1974 (Amended in 1976), which guarantees the right of the individual for movement. This was followed by resolution no. (93) Of 1976 on the regulation of Sudanese immigration and avoidance of the leakage of qualified Sudanese manpower from Sudan to other countries. Moreover, Labor Department has issued a number of measures regulating foreign employment and protection of the rights of those working abroad.

The first law on income tax of the Sudanese individuals working abroad was enacted in November 1981 at a rate of 10 per cent of the annual income with a view to supporting the finance of the State Public Fund and contributing towards implementing development projects. Since it was difficult to verify the exact income of individuals working abroad, the Taxation Reform Committee of 1983 has recommended that income tax law for the Sudanese individuals working abroad should be based on the professions they practice. As a result, a law for national contribution (changing the name of the old income tax) was issued and classified the occupation into typical tax brackets (Labor, official). This is explained in Table (5) below which displays the development of national contribution during the period from 1981-92. However, we must take into account the instability of the national contribution for even two successive years as it is noticed that it fluctuated between increase and decrease suiting the latest developments and surrounding changes.

Job	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Labor	225	155	300	225	125	100	100	100	100	80	80	150
Official	445	310	450	340	250	200	200	200	200	180	180	350
Professional	670	460	450	340	375	300	300	300	300	300	300	600
Businessman	2225	1540	2000	1500	500	400	400	400	400	400	400	800

Source: Department of the Sudanese Working Abroad-Taxation Bureau-Guide to National Contribution-Table (1)-Nov 2003-Page 4.

Table 5: Shows national contribution (taxes) brackets for the Sudanese working abroad, during the period from 1981 to 1992 in USA \$ (Dollar)

During the period from 1993-98, certain brackets of national contribution (taxes) have been amended. Likewise, economic, social and political changes in the host countries as well as employment of nationals of such countries instead of expatriates and decrease of the wages of immigrating manpower made it essential for the government to amend the national contribution in consideration of the circumstances of those working abroad. Hence, the Council of Ministers adopted resolution no. (69) Of 1999 which stipulated the exemption of the third of the financial tax dues for the period from 1993-97. Furthermore, in 1988, exemptions from national contribution comprised the cases of individuals suffering

from chronic diseases such as cancer, kidney failure, heart problems and those with permanent partial or total handicap and widows. Consequently, decrease of the national contribution for all brackets continued and with varying percentages till 2005 when the two segments of labors and officials were exempted as per resolution no. (550) as indicated in Table (6).

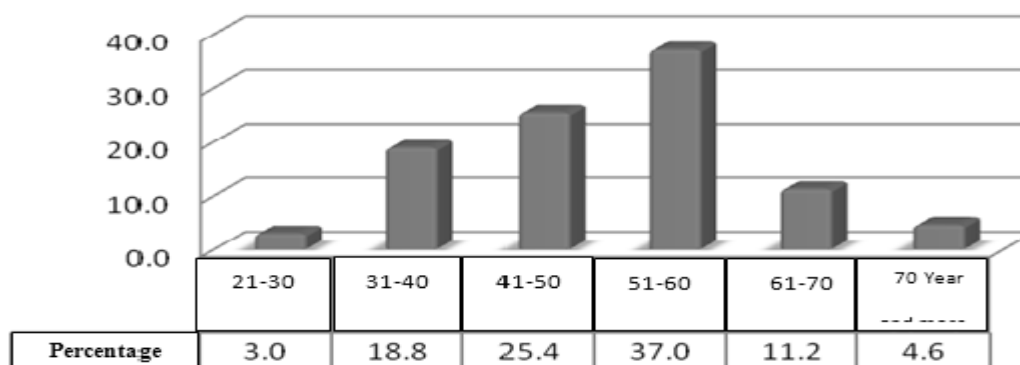
2004		2005	
Labors	60 \$	Labors	---
Officials	100 \$	Officials	---
Professionals	200\$	Professionals	100\$

Source: Department of the Sudanese Working Abroad-Taxation Bureau-Guide to National Contribution-Table (1)-November 2003-Page 6.

Table (6) displays the national contribution brackets for 2004 and 2005

The resolutions on the reduction of taxes and fees collected by Embassies or Consulates as well as cancelation of compulsory fund transfer and addressing arrears of taxes have remarkably affected the national contribution. As for the exemptions given in full by the Department of the Sudanese Working Abroad to certain cases, it is observed that most of those benefited from it were holders of higher academic certificates who suffer from chronic diseases. This is considered an addition to the loss of the income generated from the national contribution.

In a nut shell, despite the rise of rates of immigration in Sudan, it is remarkable that the government was not successful in adopting a sagacious, national and studied policy for attracting the huge savings of immigrants. So as to take advantage of them in achieving the desired comprehensive development as in the case - for instance - in the Arab Republic of Egypt that grants immigrants facilities and privileges as incentives for them to attract their savings for pushing forward the development wheel in the country. Furthermore, the Government policy fluctuates between encouragement and restriction. Therefore, the financial return or proceeds from immigration is almost insignificant in comparison with its extremely high cost which was manifested in depriving the country of its qualified, trained manpower who are capable of construction and production . It is clear from the data of the questionnaire for the sample that the age bracket (21-60) constituted 84 per cent. This indicates that considered an obstacle for achieving economic development as displayed in figure (3) below.



Source: Field study -2010

Figure 3: shows the number of the sample members (immigrants) as per age bracket.

People know that economic development is a very expensive effort. This is represented in the high cost of education and training undertaken by the state for qualification and training of individuals before immigrating. Thus, when such quailed



individuals immigrate, the country will no doubt lose the most productive sources which are required for the promotion of society in various economic, social, political, environmental and cultural fields. However the impact of this migration on the health sector is horrific (Omar, 2012).

### **The Impact of Money Transfer**

Despite the fact that many economists believe that money transfers are considered the most important advantage achieved by the countries that send immigrants outside their countries (Page and Plaza, 2005). The reliance of transfer flows and their size depend on various factors that include the circumstances of the economies of Arab oil-rich countries, magnitude of immigrating manpower, level of education of the immigrants and their incomes and their desire to transfer such income, indicate that such transfer flows and their size have fluctuating nature; and that it is difficult to calculate them precisely and make reasonable expectations about them in future. Since money transfers are personal incomes, the resolution of their remittances rests solely with the immigrant individual himself. Therefore, we find that a great portion of them is not directed to industrial and agricultural investments, but on the contrary it is directed to service sector as well as to parasite and marginal ones and other sectors which immigrants think they can deal with easily and that they neither need venture nor big capital. Furthermore, the proceeds from such sectors are guaranteed in the short run. This in turn causes decrease in the investment fields and opportunities in the productive sectors due to the non-availability of satisfactory development infrastructure in Sudan. (Anon 1987)

The successive governments in Sudan have employed since the seventies different means for encouraging immigrants to transfer their savings to the country for making use of them in reviving economy (Policy of attracting immigrants savings). But, despite these efforts, immigrants refused to transfer their funds through the official channels such as commercial banks and money exchange shops; and inclined to transfer them through illegal means, black market or in-kind transfer as there are facilities for transfer and that the price of the Sudanese Pound is not stable. This confirmed that the magnitude of transfer through the official transfer channels was disproportionate to their real magnitude. In the reports released by the Bank of Sudan for 1987, it was indicated that the private transfers did not exceed four billion Dollars till 1975; and that they rose in 1979 to 43.1 million Dollars and reached 396 million Dollars in 1980. Then they started to retreat and fluctuate from one year to another; and it became impossible to specify their general trend. This does not reflect the magnitude of those working abroad but serves as a conspicuous manifestation for the fluctuation of policies, incentives systems and decrease of incomes in the host countries (Bank of Sudan, 1987).

### **Results & Recommendations**

The effect of immigration on the economy is indeed great as such immigration makes it unable to manage effectively its natural and human resources because the country loses subsequently the cream of its professionals and skillful manpower, an act that causes an acute shortage in many technical and professional skills. This will naturally lead to misuse and exhaustion of resources.

Despite the increase of the immigration rates abroad, we notice that the government did not benefit much from the immigrants transfers due to its failure in following a responsible policy that attracts such savings and utilizes the hard currency made available in reviving and developing the country's economy in a sustainable manner. Therefore, it is

observed that most of the immigrants' transfers are directed to purchasing real estates and residential plots at the expense of investment in productive sectors, as 80 per cent of the sample members were able to construct houses and purchase residential and agricultural plots. This matter supports the assumption that investment opportunities in Sudan in productive fields decrease among immigrants, most of whom prefer investment in guaranteed and rapid return fields, in addition to the lack of information on viable and profitable investment opportunities.

The study recommended that it is essential to limit as far as possible the immigration of qualified professional personnel, especially through promulgation of laws that regulate immigration and increase with possible means its proceeds as well as guarantee the return of highly qualified personnel to Sudan via re-considering the salary ladder, rendering encouragement incentives, taxes and customs facilities, as well as providing of security, job opportunities and better living conditions as well as improving social environment such as education and health through re-considering general and higher educational system and improving it to suit labor market and meet the requirements of economic developments.

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