

Module: Modern Nigeria & Global Trends

Topic 6: The "Japa" Phenomenon & The Diaspora

The term **"Japa"**—a Yoruba word meaning "to run, flee, or escape"—has become a defining part of Nigerian social and economic discourse in the 2020s. It refers to the large-scale migration of Nigerians, especially young professionals, to countries like the UK, Canada, USA, and Australia.

1. Why are People "Japa-ing"? (Push & Pull Factors)

- **Push Factors (Why they leave):** High inflation, insecurity, unemployment, and a desire for better healthcare and education systems.
- **Pull Factors (Why they go there):** Better wages, career advancement opportunities, and "Global Talent" visas offered by Western countries to fill their own labor shortages.

2. Brain Drain vs. Brain Gain

- **Brain Drain:** The loss of Nigeria's most skilled workers. This is most visible in the **Healthcare** sector (doctors and nurses leaving) and the **Tech** sector (developers moving to Europe/America).
- **Brain Gain:** The idea that these migrants acquire world-class skills, networks, and capital abroad that they eventually bring back to invest in Nigeria.

3. The Economic Power of the Diaspora

The Nigerian Diaspora is often called Nigeria's "hidden gold mine."

- **Remittances:** This is the money sent back home by Nigerians living abroad. Nigeria receives over **$20 Billion** annually in remittances—this is often more than the total amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) the country receives.
- **Investment:** Many "Japa-ed" Nigerians still build houses, start businesses, and fund tech startups (like those in the "Digital Economy" topic) in Nigeria.

4. The "Japa" Paradox: Social Impact

- **Family Structure:** Many families are now split across continents, leading to a "loneliness" crisis for elderly parents left behind.

- **Global Influence:** The diaspora has helped spread Nigerian culture globally. This is seen in the global success of **Afrobeats** (Wizkid, Burna Boy, Tems) and the international recognition of Nigerian authors and filmmakers.

5. Government Response

The Nigerian government has established the **Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM)**, headed by Abike Dabiri-Erewa. Its role is to:

- Engage Nigerians abroad to participate in national development.
- Protect the interests of Nigerians living in foreign countries.
- Encourage "Diaspora Voting" (though this is still being debated in the Constitution).

Student Summary:

Whether a person stays or goes, the goal of modern current affairs is to understand that Nigeria is now part of a **global village**. A student in Dukku can remain in Nigeria but work remotely for a company in Canada, effectively "Japa-ing" digitally without ever leaving home.