

A review on Causes and Consequences of Rural- Urban Migration in Ethiopia

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Abstract- The study specifically aims to review cause and consequences of rural- urban migration in Ethiopia. Environmental degradation, lower agricultural productivity, inadequate social services, demographic pressure, land shortages in rural areas were identified as the major push factors of migration. Although “push” factors predominate, there are some significant “pull” factors that attract rural people to urban areas such as education, health services, security, better job, advancement opportunities and other urban amenities. Depending on reviewed document, the most significant consequences of migration in the urban areas are overcrowding and congestion, strain on urban social services rising food costs, worsening air and water quality and increasing violence, prostitution and diseases are important.

Index Terms- Causes, Consequences, Migration, Rural and Urban.

I. INTRODUCTION

Migration and mobility continue to attract much interest, but also growing concern. The 2013 World Policies report states that, “among 185 countries with available data in 2013, 80 per cent of governments had policies to lower rural to urban migration, an increase from 38 per cent in 1996” (UN DESA, 2013). This proportion is highest in low- and middle-income nations in Africa and Asia – the regions that are currently undergoing urban transitions. Rural-urban migration has been historically connected with industrialization, urbanization and economic growth (Bhattacharya, 1993). Rural-urban migration eases inter-sectoral factor mobility and plays a vital role for structural changes. Moreover, migration has also been a key livelihood and survival strategy for many poor groups across the developing world, particularly in Africa. In Africa, migration has been considered as a way of life where the people migrate from place to place due to political, socio-economic and demographic reasons.

Rural-urban migration has contributed for half of the urban population growth in Africa in 1960s and 1970s and about 25% of urban growth in 1980s and 1990s (Waddington & Sabates-Wheeler, 2003; Adepoju, 1977; Lall et al, 2006). Concentration of investment in industries, commerce, and social services in towns has been the causes for regional inequalities and differences in economic opportunities. In addition, the productivity of the rural and agricultural sector has remained low

and leading to rural out-migration to urban and industrial sectors (Adepoju, 1977).

Similarly, Ethiopia has been common mainly in the form of rural-urban migration flows (Fransen and Kuschminder, 2009). As a result, rural-urban migration trend in Ethiopia can be explained by a number of so-called push and pull factors (Kunt, 1973 cited in Fransen and Kuschminder, 2009). Markos and Gebre-Egziabher (2001) summarize the main push factors in Ethiopia as being over population, famine, poverty, land scarcity and lack of agricultural resources. In addition to these push factors; many rural people are being pulled to Ethiopian urban areas as a result of the development of these areas into more important business centers (Betemariam and White, 1999).

Migration in Ethiopia was not only an individual and/or family response to adverse socio economic, physical and political environment, but also as a result of the official government policy. Therefore, the paper reviews the causes and consequences of rural-urban migration to provide significant suitable planning and response strategies to the emerging challenges and problems.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concepts and Definitions

Migration can be defined in terms of spatial boundaries as internal and international. Internal migration is the movement of individuals within a country whereas international migration involves the flow of individuals between countries where national boundaries are crossed. The UN (1970:2) defines migration as:

“a move from one migration defining area to another (or a move of some specified minimum distance) that was made during a given migration interval and that involves change of residence.” A migrant is also defined as:

“a person who has changed his usual place of residence from one migration-defining area to another (or who moved some specified minimum distance) at least once during the migration interval” (UN, 1970:2).

Migration is considered as the movement of people from one geographic region to another, which may be on temporary or permanent basis. It usually takes place at a variety of scale; intercontinental (between continents), intracontinental (between countries of a given continent), and interregional (with in countries) (National Geographic Society, 2005).

However, the nature of migration and the cause for it are complex, and there is no general agreement among researchers on the cause of migration. Arguments about the difference on

migration causing factors exist not only among researchers from different discipline, but also among researchers within one discipline (Timalsina, 2007). Thus, concepts and approaches of classifying migration are other important aspects of migration study. Any classification of migration is difficult to formulate and understand because it takes into consideration numerous criteria or stimulating factors of varying nature (Trewartha, 1969 and Vyanga, 1981 cited in Sinha, 2005).

III. TYPES OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

Migration is usually categorized depending up on the type of political boundaries crossed (for internal and external/international) (Weeks, 1989). Depending upon length of time, it is said to be short-term and long-term migration as well as temporary and permanent migration (McDowell and De Haan, 1997). On the basis of distance, it may be classified as short distance and long distance migration, members involved (individual and mass migration), decision making (voluntary and forced migration) movement of people based on interest; *Involuntary migration*: the movement of people from place of origin to new areas because of war (armed conflict), environmental degradation or natural disaster such as drought and famine, social organization (family, class and individual migration), causes (economic and non-economic) and aims (conservative and innovative) (Sinha, 12 2005). Depending up on rural-urban nature of the area, migration becomes, rural-rural, rural to urban, urban to rural and urban to urban (Clarke, 1987 cited in Sinha, 2005). One of the most significant migration patterns has been rural to urban migration, i.e. the movement of people from the country side to cities in search of opportunities (National Geographic Society, 2005; Rwelamira, 2008). It is also possible to classify migration into five major types based on the situation of migrants: *Primitive Migration*: migration in response to environmental conditions undertaken by people at low levels of development; *Focused Migration*: compulsory transfer of a group of people, usually by a government. *Impelled Migration*: similar to forced migration but it differs as the migrants retain some ability to decide whether to move or not; *Free migration*: individual movements for economic betterment; *Mass Migration*: large numbers or entire communities, moving in mass without being fully informed on an individual basis of what to expect.

Moreover, the common types of rural-urban migration are circulating in the following forms including step migration (village-town-city), circulatory (village-city-village), seasonal (migration associated with periodic labor demand) and chain migration (where migrants follow their predecessors, and assisted by them in establishing an urban area) (Lynch, 2005; National Geographic Society, 2005).

Urban-ward migration in Ethiopia is both direct and step-wise. About 75 percent of in-migrants to Shashemene (Bejeren, 1985:54) and 62.5 percent of rural urban migrants to Awassa (Berhane, 1993:86) were step-migrants. On the other hand 57.6 and 74 percent of the migrants to Nazareth (Kebede, 1991:80) and 35 Arbaminch (Birru, 1997:53), respectively, were direct migrants. The same studies indicated that step-wise migration is more common among urban-urban migrants than rural-urban migrants. The majority of urban in-migrants in Ethiopia are short distance migrants. But compared to rural-rural migrants, urban-

ward migrants (ruralurban and urban-urban) are less common and are relatively long distance migrations (CSA, 1992:145; Markos and Seyoum (eds), 1998:164). Urbanward migration studies on Shashemene (Bejeren, 1985:53), Nazareth (Kebede, 1991:70), Awassa (Berhane, 1993:72) and Abraminch (Birru, 1997:50) indicate the predominance of rural-born migrants in the stream. This is not only an indication of the high propensity of rural population to migrate but also the low level of urbanization in the country.

The other concept related to migration is the push-pull which concerned with reasons for migration. It explains that, for any individual the decision to migrate results from the interplay of 'push' and 'pull' factors. The 'push' factors are pressures which encourage individuals or families to leave one place (the rural home land). Most of the literatures reveal that people are forced to leave their living environment (original places) because of different unfavorable socio-economic, cultural, natural and political conditions, which are referred as '*push factors*'. *Some of the push factors* are negative home conditions that impel the decision to migrate, eg. lack of job opportunities, lack of resources, unfavorable climatic condition, low crop yield, land shortage, poor employment prospects etc. The 'pull' factors are attractions of the destination (attractions of the city). For example high wages, employment opportunities, wide range of amenities etc. (Gmelch and Zenner, 1996:190; Broadly and Cunningham, 1994:22). In some cases only 'push' factors will be of major importance and in other situations, 'pull' factors will be of overwhelming importance which include those positive attributes perceived to exist at the new location, such as job opportunity, better climate, educational opportunity. (Witherick, 1994:79 and Hornby and Jones, 1993:102).

IV. FACTORS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN ETHIOPIA

Migration is a strategy for moving out of poverty that is accessible to the poor in rural Ethiopia. It is often a risky investment, it has low short term returns, has the potential to end in disaster, exposes migrants to exploitation, hard work and abuse. However, in many cases it is the only investment opportunity available, and the only opportunity some of the rural poor have to change their lives. Many of the participants in this research linked migration to education, and the comparison illustrates the nature of migration as an investment in human capital. The poverty and lack of opportunity that accessing and completing education is extremely difficult and has high opportunity costs for rural households. It is a major investment for a poor household to send all their children to school, which requires considerable sacrifice. It is also an investment that often does not pay off.

Despite levels of decisions, studies conducted on migration agree that there are important factors that would lead to migration decisions. The type of people migrating and levels of decisions made, the reviewed literatures so far showed that rural-urban migration has push and pull factors although the extent could differ contextually. The Ethiopian rural areas have been experiencing a lot of problems pushing their residents towards migration. Although population pressure and food insecurity have been increasingly becoming obvious push factors, lack of access to farm land is the major problem, which force most

people to leave their areas (Abate, 1989, cited in Ezra and Kirso, 2001:750).

Environmental degradation, lower agricultural productivity, inadequate social services, demographic pressure, land shortages in rural areas were identified as the major push factors of migration (Kebede, 1991; Sileshi, 1978; Befekadu, 1978). Similarly Markos and Gebre-Egziabher (2001) state that, population pressure, famine, poverty, land scarcity and lack of agricultural resources push the rural people to the urban areas of Ethiopia.

Empirical Studies on Causes and Consequences of Rural-Urban Migration in Ethiopia

Causes of Rural-Urban Migration in Ethiopia

Available studies indicated that rural-urban migration in Ethiopia is a suitable mechanism to improve own and families' living standards and to relax land constraints in the rural areas (Brauw and Mueller, 2011:3). Most of the studies agree that the Ethiopian rural areas are characterized by weak socio-economic conditions, unreliable weather for agricultural activities, poor infrastructure and environmental degradation (Demeke and Regassa, 1996, cited in Ezra and Kiros, 2001:752 and Brauw and Mueller, 2011:6).

According to Feleke (2005), in the four Kolfe (one of Addis Ababa's sub-cities) migrants in these urban neighborhoods have revealed rural poverty as their initial and main reasons for the migration of male migrants notably from the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), Amhara, Oromiya, and, to some extent, from Tigray. Like the case of Shashemene, the main push factors are rural vulnerability and lack of assets expressed in the form of diminishing farmland sizes in all their rural localities and shortage of landholdings, lack of rain, recurrent drought, absence of an effective extension system, limited investment in irrigation based agriculture, high population pressure, lack of off-farm employment opportunities, and imposition of heavy taxes. In addition to this, pull factors for their step migration mentioned by urban male migrants included increasing construction activities, demand for urban domestic workers, better pay for service work and the presence of social support from the long term migrants in Kolfe (Feleke, 2005).

Among these predictors four of them (namely, household size, educational status, sex, and ethnicity) are found to have significant relationship with the response variable. Households with 4-6 members are 35.1 percent less likely to migrate because of economic reason compared to the reference category. Similarly, households with 10⁺ members are 87.6 percent less likely to migrate because of economic reasons compared to the reference category. It is also evident from the table that the odds of migration because of economic reason increase steadily as educational status of household heads increases. The same table indicates that female migrants are 1.6 times more likely to migrate because of economic reasons compared to their counterpart male. The relationship between ethnicity and reasons for migration was found to be significant only for Amhara migrants (Alemante *et al.*, 2006).

Zewdu and Malek (2010) indicated that rural urban migration in Ethiopia could be triggered by low income generated in the agriculture sector and need to diversify activities

in other sectors. However, the majority of cases in Ethiopia show that the poor have more inclination for migration than the rich. Unlike experiences in other countries, with diminishing income opportunities, the poor tend to migrate than the rural rich in Ethiopia (De Haan et al, 2000, cited in Zewdu and Malek, 2010:15). Hence, the nature of the factors would happen to be more of problem driven.

A study conducted on seasonal migration in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia (Gete et al., 2008b) showed that the young and single men tend to migrate seasonally because they do not have land to work on and means of subsistence to establish their own livelihood. Land policy and other related political decisions may force subsistent farmers to tie themselves with a piece of land and avoid being away. Nevertheless, with the new generation remaining landless and land fragmentation reaching to an unaffordable level, migration to urban areas is something that every desperate rural residents would like to embark on. In the mentioned study, in the Amhara Region, 55 percent of the respondents who are young and single migrate seasonally (*ibid*).

Similarly, Mesfine (1986) and Betemariam and White (1999) also witnessed that landlessness, agricultural policy, population pressure, recurrent drought and famine, war and political crisis were the major factors responsible for mobility and they also stated that the difficulty of locating all the various factors causing rural exodus.

There is evidence that small plot of farmlands, which are inadequate to support a family, are a driver of migration (World Bank, 2010). Gibson and Gumru (2012) report that a development initiative providing water taps in villages in Ethiopia led to lower mortality rates and higher fertility. The resulting competition between male siblings for land led to higher rates of migration in the villages that had taps than those that did not. For women and girls, there is evidence that early marriage and sexual abuse are drivers of migration (World Bank, 2010). Nevertheless, migration rates in Ethiopia are relatively low. Migration is mainly to nearby towns, and for the purpose of employment (de Brauw *et al.* 2013a; World Bank, 2010). Low rates of migration may be linked to land ownership policies in Ethiopia. All land is owned and allocated by the government and households maintain the right to farm it through continuous residence and use of the land, this mitigates against migration (de Brauw and Mueller, 2012).

The review document revealed that the significant cause of migration is lack of land ownership in rural areas. Therefore, it is an indicator that to develop policies and strategies which include engaging rural youth in non-farm activities and establish different income generating activities by providing loan and extension service for the rural people.

Tesfaye (2009) also state that in rural Ethiopia, migration of labor is a common practice by the rural people during the slack farming season so as to supplement their income. This type of migration is undertaken even in normal times so as to diversify household livelihood portfolio and as a coping strategy in poor farming periods.

Zewdu and Malek (2010) argue that improved agricultural productivity could facilitate rural-urban migration with growing non-farm activities. This assumption seems to show increasing capacity and opportunity with growing agricultural output per person. Those who are able to hold adequate farming land could

strive towards improved productivity by using their available labor and investing on agricultural inputs. Again investing on non-farm activities depends on available opportunities in rural areas. This idea seems to contradict with a theory revealing that rural-urban migration improves productivity per person because of increasing or not diminishing holding sizes.

Abdurahaman (1987) in his study indicated that the main reasons for internal migration in Ethiopia are regional inequality of development and income; existence of population pressure; low agricultural productivity; attraction of towns; ethnic violence and other similar reasons.

Although “push” factors predominate, there are some significant “pull” factors that attract rural people to urban areas such as education, health services, security, better job, advancement opportunities and other urban amenities (Birru, 1997; Befekadu, 1978). The presence of relatives and friends as well as the flow of information between origin and destination has been also identified as among the most important factors and key influences on the pattern of migration (Beyene, 1985; Bjerer 1985; Worku, 1995). Worku (1995) in the case of Gurage migration states that migrants from some areas migrate not necessarily because they are among the poorest but groups can develop a tradition of migration, once certain patterns of migration exist. He argues that Gurage’s engagement in self-employed occupation such as petty trade, and settlement on the permanent basis in urban areas provided a strong source of attraction for further Gurage urban migration.

A study conducted in Ethiopia, in selected kebeles of Shashemene (Juron, 1985) indicated that the major reasons for in-migration are of two types: *Economic reasons*:- individuals are migrating to get a job, transferred by the government and trading; *Social reasons*:- migrants were brought to town by relatives, divorced, or married someone in town and the like.

Apart from economic reasons, social and cultural factors play an important role in rural-urban migration. People with better-off in their income could migrate to urban centers to get a better social infrastructure (education, health) driven by urban amenities, urban culture and lifestyle. In urban areas, there is a better access to information, modern technologies and modern way of thinking. The significant outflow of workers and inflow of remittances, as well as the continuous exchange of goods, ideas and cultural values, have changed the rural landscape economically, socially and demographically (IFAD, 2007; Mendola, 2006).

According to (Alemante *et al.*, 2006) indicated that women are increasingly migrating to urban areas in search of job opportunities and better life. Some of the women are taking migrations as the only way out from the marriage arrangement as a result of harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, abduction and unhealthy relationship in the family. In most cases the intended pull factor might not actually be reachable due to the poor skills and the overall negative attitudes of the community towards women. As a result, women who migrated from rural areas are forced to be engaged in activities such as housemaid, domestic works and other low paying and risky activities which ultimately expose them to various abuses such as sexual harassment, labor exploitation, rape, unwanted pregnancy, physical abuse and the like. On the other hand, how the prospective migrants perceive living conditions in destination

areas may have a decisive influence on migration. Migrants are attracted to towns by the favorable attitudes they have regarding city living.

V. CONSEQUENCES OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN ETHIOPIA

The effects of migration are viewed from two directions. On one hand migration causes excessive urbanization, unemployment, income inequalities, ecological stress and population mal-distribution whereas on the other hand migration is a necessary part of economic growth, equilibrating tendencies, facilitating industrialization, improving income distribution and introducing technological change in agriculture, and generalize that migration is the human right ensuring choosing one's destination to improve welfare and economic benefit.

The effects of the movements from an area of origin to areas of final or temporal destination have been well documented in literature such as Anarfi *et al* (2003), Nabila (1974), Mahama *et al.* (2012) to mention a few. The consequences of migration are numerous in the urban areas among which overcrowding and congestion, strain on urban social services rising food costs, worsening air and water quality and increasing violence, prostitution and diseases are important.

Alemante *et al.*, (2006) found in their study, (42.8 percent) male migrants than female migrants (31.5 percent) have reported to be suffering from serious food insecurity or insufficiency. The Chi-square result has also shows significant association between the sex of the migrant and vulnerability to food insecurity at the place of destination (P-value of 0.002).

Migration puts pressure on schools, health services, and food items prices to rise. As economic conditions of urban centers worsen, a growing number of people shift from employment in the formal sector to work in the informal labor market. Employment in the informal sector is less secure, and incomes are lower than formal sector. Within the informal sectors, the urban poor work in variety of jobs, such as, as street vendors, petty traders, taxi drivers and in other small transport, in personal services such as shoe shiners, in security services such as night watchmen, car parking attendants, janitorial services, and also begging and commercial sex workers. These diverse activities share the common thread of low status, low wages, long hours, and often dangerous and insecure working conditions.

Homelessness among migrants was reported to be one of the most serious reported problems. It is observed that 57.4 percent of males and 53.1 percent of females have reported to face homelessness. Further, 40.9 percent of males and 45.8 percent of females are reported to feel that they have experienced unequal opportunities in every aspect of life. It is also apparent to note that some respondents (5.2% of males and 12.1 percent females) have reported to encounter repeated social crises such as steeetism and prostitution at the place of destination (Alemante *et al.*, 2006).

The economic activities of the rural area are mainly agricultural in nature, which are performed manually with application of traditional technology and labour intensive in nature. Since rural-urban migration is selective of certain characteristics, it affects the composition of the population in

sending areas. Thus, out migration areas loss a disproportionate percentage of younger and better educated population. As a result, the proportion of the total population economically dependent increases as the relative share of economically active working labour force is reduced which consequently lead to decrease in rural productivity (Aliyev, 2008; Caldwell, 1969 cited in IDRC, 1977; Mendola, 2006) even though the consequence of out-migration on rural productivity and social progress is clearly not known.

Alemante *et al.*, (2006) indicated that the gender differential of reported sexual harassment is more for female migrant (18.0%) than males (4.7%). Overall, about 10.5 percent of migrants have reported to face sexual harassment of one kind or the other. The association between the sex of migrant and risk of harassment found to be significant at 0.001 (P-value of 0.000). Small proportion of both males and females reported to be vulnerable to crimes of some kind during the course of their stay at the place of destination. Such vulnerability, however, has not yield gender relationship.

The temporary and circulatory nature of migration creates conducive environment for the transmission of STDs such as HIV/AIDS. Migration has been linked to STDs in many countries. For example, villagers in Thailand, Uganda, Nigeria and Ghana mentioned that migrants often return with HIV/AIDS (Deshingkar and Grimm 2005). Thus, migratory movements cannot be blamed for the spread of STDs. Certain migratory movements may increase STDs infection rates, as can be argued in the case of male only migration in South Africa mining industry and its social consequence (example the creation of second families) (Deshingkar and Grimm 2005).

Similarly, Alemante *et al.*, (2006) reported that 21.4 percent of males and 27.2 female migrants faced the risk of contracting diseases once or more times during the course of their life as migrants in the current destination. The overall proportion shows that, about 23.4 percent of all migrants have encountered sickness at least once. The Chi-square analysis also revealed that there is some association between sex of the migrant and sickness encountered.

The migration of rural youth in to urban area means, they are introducing themselves with new environment in terms of physical setup of the area, and the culture as well. Their interaction with the people in the urban area would lead to lose of their traditional culture where they grew (Andersen, 2002; Jamilah, 1981).

The UN (1991) reported that the migration which is caused by population pressure becomes age and sex selective. The result will be a rejuvenation of the population structure of the urban area at destination because the migrants are younger than the resident population. Moreover, some studies demonstrated that the age selectivity nature of rural-urban migration supplies cities with more young adults which in turn increase crude birth rates in cites and urban areas.

VI. CONCLUSION

Migration has environmental, economic, social and cultural factors that play an important role in rural-urban migration. Rural People with highly drought prone and environmental degraded area low income, poor access to social services could migrate to

urban centers to get a better social infrastructure (education, health) driven by urban amenities, urban culture and lifestyle. In urban areas, there is a better access to information, modern technologies and modern way of thinking. The significant outflow of workers and inflow of remittances, as well as the continuous exchanges of goods, ideas and cultural values, have changed the rural landscape economically, socially and demographically.

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