

Migration and Rural-Urban Linkages in Ethiopia

Migration Briefing 1: Research November 2006

Key Topics

1. Migration types
2. Commuting to towns
3. Seasonal short-term migration
4. Long term migration
5. International migration
6. Rural-urban linkages

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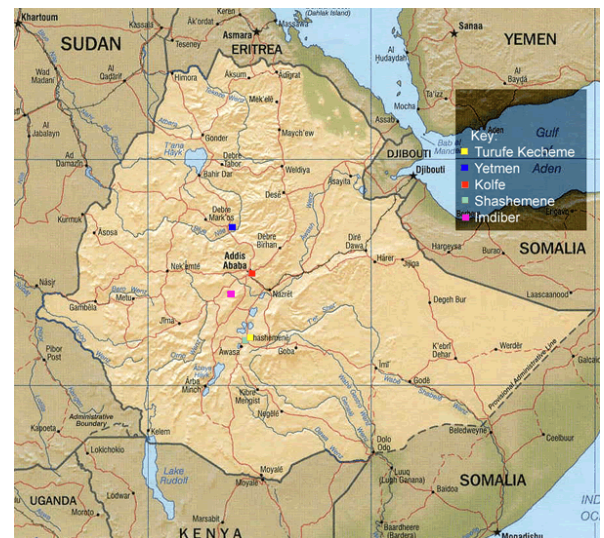


INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to provide a better understanding of rural-urban linkages, the dynamics of migration, and the informal sector in Ethiopia. The study explored types of linkages between urban and rural areas and processes and consequences of labor migration poverty alleviation implications. The study used analysis of migration data collected by the Wellbeing in Developing Countries - Ethiopia Programme based on two urban and three rural research sites: Addis Ababa (the capital city), Shashemene (a business town in Oromia Regional State, ONRS), Turufe Kecheme (a rural village in Oromia National Regional State, ONRS), Yetmen (a rural village in Amhara National Regional State, ANRS) and Imdibir, a Gurage village in the Southern Nations and Nationalities People Region, SNNPR).

MAJOR STUDY FINDINGS

The study identified ten types of migration and rural urban linkages four of which are presented here in more detail; regular commuting to towns; short-term and long-term migration within Ethiopia and international migration. In relation to internal migration the benefits and problems for sending and receiving



Ethiopia – site locations

communities and households are described.

MIGRATION TYPES

The study identified the following ten types of migration and rural urban linkages four of which are presented in more detail.

Regular commuting to towns People moving on a frequent basis for work either within rural areas or going from rural areas to towns.

Seasonal migration for daily labour and cash Seasonal migration to work as daily labourers or for fixed periods within rural areas or from rural areas to towns.

Food insecurity distress migration Migration at times of seasonal food shortage in the hungry season or at times of drought and famine.

Shock related distress migration Migration to resolve particular problems resulting from shocks such as indebtedness due for fertiliser or taxes or oxen loss.

Women's distress migration

Woman leaving rural areas due to marriage-related abuses and divorce usually from rural areas to towns.

Women's migration for marriage Women leaving their natal area and moving to the place where their husband lives.

Migration for education Young people moving from areas where education services are limited or not considered appropriate to other areas, usually in towns or religious centres where such services are available.

Migration for health services Individuals moving in search of better health services in towns, spiritual centres or at holy waters

Longer-term migration within Ethiopia

Migration which results in a longer residence and settlement in the place to which the migrant moves.

Longer-term international migration Migration to other countries notably the neighbouring countries, the Gulf and US.

COMMUTING TO TOWNS ON A REGULAR BASIS

People living sufficiently close to urban areas go to these for the following twelve reasons:

Markets

Schools

Health services

Casual labour

Grain mill

Kebele/wereda administrative services People going to seek administrative services, including making claims and resolving disputes at local administrative centres.

Skilled work People with skills such as carpenters and mechanics providing their services in towns.

Transport work People using carts to transport people from villages to local towns.

Trading People carrying out trading activities between their villages and local towns or within the latter.

Begging Destitute people seeking charity in local towns especially around religious centres and market places.

Recreation People going to towns for market and relaxation and men for drinking, watching football matches and video shows, and visiting sex workers.

SEASONAL OR SHORT-TERM MIGRATION

Reasons

The following seven reasons for seasonal or short-term migration were identified.

Food insecurity This is generally due to household food shortage during the hungry season before the harvest.

Shocks This includes people moving due to landlessness, shortage of land, lack of rain, bad harvests, lack of off-farm employment opportunities, need for cash for taxes and debts.

Urban employment opportunities This involves people working in urban areas in construction work, loading, chopping wood, blacksmithing, as well as other informal sector and domestic labour.

Other seasonal employment opportunities This involves people working in rural areas in daily agricultural labour, coffee-picking, sowing in the Awash valley, cotton harvesting, gold mining, mango harvesting, potato planting and harvesting, *tef* harvesting, and forest lumber work.

Trade This involves short term migration in trading activities.

Attending school

Working children This involves children from poor parents being sent to work as herders in rural areas or domestic servants in rural or urban areas

Benefits for sending communities and households

The following benefits were mentioned:

Reduces consumption needs Members migrating reduces the number of people to be fed.

Provides cash Migrants remittances or cash on return can be used for taxes, paying debts, education, medication, buying oxen, farm implements, small-stock, and other household assets.

Problems for sending communities, households

The following problems were mentioned.

Reduced access to labour The migrants' absence means a labour shortage

Overwork The migrants' absence can result in overwork of remaining members

Benefits for receiving communities

The main benefit mentioned for receiving communities was

Cost of labour The presence of migrants resulted in a lower cost of labour, particularly domestic labour.

Problems for receiving communities

Three major problems mentioned were:

Pressure on housing, services and sanitation

Increased unemployment problem

Increased petty trade, begging and prostitution

LONG-TERM MIGRATION

The longer term migration may be divided into the following three types:

Straddling This involves a migrants having families with members in both rural and urban sites and forming kin networks.

Linked This involves regular linkages exchanges between independent households in rural and urban areas.

Disassociated In these case migrants cut their links with home area and focus on urban livelihoods and identities.

Reasons

The following seven reasons for longer-term migration were identified.

Local livelihood strategy In these cases migration is part of the way of life and integrated into the local livelihood as a strategy, for instance in the case of Imdibir in Gurage

Limited rural livelihood opportunities This is the case where rural livelihood opportunities are limited often due to shortage of land and increasing population leaving in particular the youth landless or underemployed.

Women's positions and cultural practices Women may be induced to migrate by shocks or cultural practices

including death of parents, early marriage practices, abduction, violent husbands, divorce, widow inheritance.

Attractions of town life Stories about success cases of urban migrants and urban lifestyles and wealth were considered important attractions.

Distress migration Distress migration included people leaving as a result of family disputes and feuds, and demobilised soldiers facing harassment.

Marriage Women moving for marriage is the norm due to the prevalence of virilocal marriage customs

Urban employment opportunities Urban employment opportunities included construction work, loading, chopping wood, other informal sector, domestic labour, small restaurants, production of food and local drinks, taxi assistants, commercial sex work, cooking, lottery ticket selling, and weaving work

Benefits for sending communities and households

The following five types of benefits were mentioned.

Contributions to community projects

Investment in community infrastructure

Provision of household assets

Remittances

Information flows Migrants can be a source of information flows about opportunities, risk, and can influence local practices.

Problems for sending communities and households

The following four types of problems were mentioned.

Increase in female-headed households The migration of men can result in a larger proportion of vulnerable female headed households.

Erosion of family love The migrants absence can result in strained relations and less close family relations

Children neglected Migrants' children may be neglected or lack affection, care and material support.

Communities weakened A large proportion of migrants away can affect the communities wellbeing.

Benefits and problems for receiving communities

The benefits and problems for receiving communities were the same as those mentioned for short-term migration.

Benefits for migrating individuals

The following five benefits were mentioned for individual migrants:

Resources for self Migrants are able to earn income which they can use for their own purposes

The benefits for the household

Migrants can earn income with which to support their households

Seeing new places Migrants have the opportunity of seeing new places

Good for character The migration experience was viewed as a challenge that can develop the migrants' character.

Broader social networks The migration experience provides opportunities for migrants to broaden their social networks.

Problems for migrating individuals

The following problems facing migrants were mentioned:

Lack of employment Migrants may find it difficult to find work in a competitive environment without guarantors.

Economic hardship Migrants may face economic problems in employment, housing, access to services etc.

Social isolation Migrants may be socially isolated, miss home and lack networks of support.

Vulnerability to domestic exploitation and abuse Domestic servants in Ethiopia and abroad are often over-worked and at risk of rape and pregnancy

Child workers Young boys and girls sent to be domestic servants, young boys sent to do weaving work in towns, and children sent to work as herders in rural areas are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Sex workers Women involved in sex work are vulnerable to harassment, at risk of disease, face insecurity of income, and social ostracism and degradation.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

International migration to neighbouring countries, the Gulf and Arab countries, and the US was significant from the Kolfe Site with 24 migrants of whom 22 were female. There was only one case each mentioned in Shashemene and Yetmen. From our research we know that even though the numbers are small, remittances and stories of success are affecting the views and aspirations of the youth.

RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES

Rural-urban linkages were found to be very important, for commuting, short-term and long-term migration

Community linkages

The following six types of linkages were mentioned:

Marketing
Services
Work
Religion
Recreation
Social activities

Short-Term Migration

Three types of linkages were mentioned:

Schools
Health services
Work

Long-Term Migration

Four types of linkages were mentioned:

Kin networks
Ethnic linkages
Work information
Remittances