

The Effects of youth rural-urban migration on the socio-economic aspects of migrant-sending rural households; the case of Yaya Gulale woreda

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Research Article

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Abstract

Youth migration is becoming a world-wide pandemic. In developing countries like Ethiopia rural-urban migration is continuing to occur at high levels as people seek new opportunities in the city to escape from rural poverty. Young people leave their villages and even their countries because of the limited potential for development inside their community. The effects of this exodus of youth can simultaneously affect development in both urban and rural areas. To this end, this study was conducted to assess the effects of youth rural-urban migration on the socio-economic aspects of migrant sending rural households. In order to generate extensive data, the study was employed cross-sectional qualitative research design. Study participants were selected via purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Both primary and secondary data were employed; in-depth interview, key informant interview and focus group discussion were used to collect the first hand information from study participants. Data generated through different data collection instruments triangulated for their reliability and validity purpose and analyzed by using thematic analysis. Finding from this study reveals that youth rural-urban migration is a burden as well as opportunity for migrant sending rural households. Hence, the out flows of economically active people from rural agricultural sector reduce the availability labor force migrant households are experiencing shortage of labor which adversely affects their productivity. Moreover, rural youth migration put the life of rural elderly parents at risky as much as it takes away the care givers thereby exposes them for loneliness and depression. On the other side, youth rural outmigration is an opportunity for migrant sending households as much as the money sent back from migrants helped family left behind in improving their livelihood. It is recommended that in order to minimize the rate of rural youth migration social amenities should be provided by government and awareness should be given for migrant households on the best use of remittance to maximize its long-term benefits.

1. Introduction

Human migration is an ancient phenomenon that stretches back to the earliest periods of human history. In the modern era, emigration and immigration continue to provide States, societies and migrants with many opportunities. In the same vein, migration has emerged recently as a critical political and policy challenge in relation to matters such as integration, displacement, safe migration and border management (IOM, 2018). According to FAO estimation, internal migration appears as a massive phenomenon, exceeding international migration as there are around the world 763 million who engaged in internal migration compared to 244 million international migrants (FAO, 2013). Estimation of DFID, 2004 also shows that in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) nearly 50 to 80% of every rural household has at minimum one migrant in urban areas in which most of them are young.

Migration from rural to urban centers is a common phenomenon observed in the population all across the world and especially in the developing countries. In most parts of contemporary Africa, migration of people towards cash employment is a familiar phenomenon. FAO (2011) has provided arguments explaining the higher propensity of rural youth to resort to internal migration. The most important reasons for this are; low employment opportunities for youth, negative perception that it is often associated with

low returns to working in agriculture and low rural infrastructure. On the other hand, better urban life style; availability of better infrastructures and employment opportunities are equally important factors that pulling the rural youths to urban areas (Leavy and Smith 2010).

In Ethiopia migration nexus development has getting a debatable issue for various reasons. One of the reasons is that, the country's development policy emphasizes on the central role of agricultural sector in transforming the economy of the country by participating a new generation of rural young people. On the other hand, the country's capacity to provide social amenities and modern agricultural technologies for the rural community is very limited. Due to this, the majority of the rural youths have been leaving the tedious and less profitable rural agricultural activities in order to search for less labor demanding alternative employment opportunities with better payment, access to social services and infrastructure in urban areas (Gela 2013). This may have various social and economic effects on the rural area or the sending communities as youths are potential resource for agriculture and rural development as well as poverty reduction in their areas of origin.

Even though understanding the consequences of rural youth out migration for migrant-sending area is very crucial for policy formulation, researches conducted in the area which display the view of left behind households are few. In addition, most of researches conducted are neglected social consequence of youth migration by solely study the economic effects. For instance, (Birhan 2011) reveals that sizeable depopulation of rural labor forces as a result of increased rate of out-migration from rural areas can hamper agricultural production. The study conducted by Zewdu (2014) and (Kassa 2016) also show the effect relationship between migration and local development induced by the flow of money through remittance in the home communities in rural Ethiopia. Their study reveal that remittances are considered important by the migrant-sending households to enhance asset formation, increase levels of income and consumption, improve debt repayment position, and augment family members education and medication.

Despite the fact that rural-urban migration has a long history in Ethiopia and its effects may vary from place to place, it has not received thorough attention from the perspective of migrant-sending area. The objective of this study is therefore, to explore the economic and social consequences of rural youth outmigration on migrant-sending rural households.

2. Materials And Methods

2.1. Study areas

This study was conducted in Yaya Gulale, one of the woredes in the North Shoa Zone, Oromia Region of Ethiopia. It is found at a distance of about 114 km from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia and 46 km from the Zonal town - Fitcha. The population projection indicates in its report that the total population of the Yaya Gulale woreda is estimated to be 64,720. The total number of household heads in the

woreda is about 13,483 with 59% economically active people out of the total population of the woreda (CSA, 2007).

The livelihood strategy of Yaya Gullalle woreda is based on mixed farming (crop farm & livestock rearing) and the rest 10% lives in urban areas. Farming is the main economic activity in which seasonal rainfall pattern determined the production activity. Livestock rearing is also another livelihood strategy in which household engaged as a source of food, cash income and it also seen as a prestige among the rural community (Yaya Gulale Agricultural Office, 2019).

2.2. Study Design, Sampling and Selection of study participants

Qualitative research design was employed towards achieving objectives of the study. Qualitative research method is helpful as much as it allows the researcher to capture in-depth and comprehensive information relevant to the study from study population. Cross-sectional design was employed in this study as it is best suited to studies aimed at finding out the prevalence of a phenomenon understudy.

In order to identify the target sample households, non-probability sampling (purposive and snowball) sampling technique were employed. To select sample kebeles as a sampling unit from the seventeenth woreda kebeles, purposive sampling was employed. Thus, four kebeles from the total seventeen kebeles were selected purposively in accordance to their migration intensity based on information obtained from the woreda youths and sport affairs. These selected kebeles are; Goda Jaba, Buyamaf Qoat, Sole Gibe and Ali Dhera.

Once the smallest geographic study units (rural kebeles) were determined, migrant-sending household heads (HHs) was used as active participants to get thorough information of the issue understudy as much as the effect of youth rural-urban migration is more visible at the migrant sending household level than the households whose members not migrated yet. Accordingly, in order to select the sample of migrant-sending household heads from each selected kebele snowball sampling was employed. Since the number of migrant-sending households in the study woredes was unknown snowball sampling was used as it is a respondent-driven kind of sampling techniques. This sampling technique is often used in case where sampling frame is hard to establish and it is assumed that study participants are recruited based on the reference of local people. In consideration of the aforementioned points, the researcher has decided sample size for this study. Accordingly, a number of sample sizes of the study were seventeen participants. This actual sample size was determined based on data saturation in relation to richness and thickness of data.

2.3. Methods of Data Acquisition

The data of this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through qualitative data collection instruments such as in-depth interview, key informant interview and focus group discussion. Accordingly, seventeen in-depth interview, three key informant

interviews and three FGD were conducted to have thorough firsthand information of the issue under study. Secondary data were collected from reports of relevant government and non-government organizations, books, articles, other research work, published and unpublished materials.

2.4. Methods of Data Analysis

The information gathered through qualitative instruments of data collection was carefully transcribed. Transcribed data were organized, summarized into manageable themes, and divided into meaningful analytical category. Finally, the well organized and summarized information were discussed thematically, based on the objectives set for the study.

3. Results And Discussion

3.1. Effects on the Economy of migrant-sending households

a. Decline of households labor supply

As it is known, agriculture is the main source of livelihood and the backbone of our country's overall socio-economic development. It also plays an important role in employment opportunity creation and poverty reduction. Ethiopian government has also working on modernizing agriculture which has feed other sector mainly industrial and service sector. Despite its importance in economic development and poverty reduction, agriculture is losing the most important labour force as the result of rural-urban youth migration which can meaningfully contribute in the decline of household agricultural productivity.

Farming is labor intensive in its nature more than any other job and rural households depend on family labor for agricultural activities which is mostly contributed by the youth household members who are physically strong and economically active labor force. However, young people have been migrating from rural areas leaving women, children, the elders and the physically and mentally disabled behind in most of the time. Even though these family members left behind can participate in agricultural activities, their participation and contribution is low compared to the youths. This affects agricultural labour supply as it reduces the number of working family members especially the economically active labor force which leads to greater burden or work load among family left behind. Pertinent to this, one of migrant households head study participants age 67 described that:

...I was feeling strong when my young children were living, assisting and encouraging me in agricultural activities. We were cultivating all our farmland and producing adequate amount of yield to feed our family members as we had adequate human labor. However, now almost all of my young children migrated to towns and I encountered critical labour shortage. I became overburdened with various duties and in critical need of assistance (field data, April 2019).

Youth rural outmigration is also adversely affects the rural labor markets as much as increased agricultural workload on the household members left behind obliged them to highly use external labor force at expensive wage price and use for farm activities. As result of wage price inflation reduced the

amount of yield to be saved for future consumption and income the households get from agriculture because the largest part of yields obtained from agriculture is used for sale to cover labor expenses. The less availability and increase in wage labour in study area described by study participants age 58 as follows:

...These days youths prefer jobs in urban areas compare to the laborious and less rewarding agricultural activities in the rural. Consequently, the availability of labor force for agriculture in the rural area has been decreasing drastically and daily. Hence, many households including mine are in critical shortage of labour for agriculture (field data, April 2019).

Pertinent to this, the finding from FGD also shows that currently the youth who have the capability to carry out farming has attracted by the urban job opportunities which drastically reduce the availability of labor force in the area. As tis known unlike other activities, agricultural activities are seasonal based. For instance, there is a season for land cultivation and preparation. Similarly, there is a season for sowing, weeding and harvesting. Once the season for a given activity is passed, it is difficult to get it until the coming year. But a number of households in our community have become unable to undertake several agricultural activities need to be undertaken within appropriate season mainly due to labor shortage resulted from youths migration to urban. Some households even become unable to cultivate all the agricultural land they have because of labor shortage.

Based on the finding it was observed that youth rural outmigration is resulted in increasing shortage of household labour supply which meaningfully decreases the agricultural productivity of migrant households. This finding corroborates the finding of (Kassa 2016) and (Martín, Nori, and Bacchi 2017) who disclosed that, rural youth emigration has eventually contributed to household workforce loss and problematized household agricultural performance which has an implication of reduced agricultural productivity.

b. Access to Agricultural Farmlands

Contrary to labor shortage it created, youth rural-urban migration has resulted in access to agricultural land for some households in the rural area. As youths rural-urban migration increases from time to time, more and more households have become encountered agricultural labor shortage and unable to cultivate their lands. Consequently, they are forced to rent their lands to those households who have relatively adequate labor force for agricultural activities. Concerning this, some of the study participants described that they were suffering from shortage of agricultural land for a long time. However, youth rural-urban migration from the community gave them ample opportunity to access agricultural land. In other word, youth rural outmigration opened the opportunities for the farmers in the community who had no enough farmland to undertake farming. One of study participants age 62 stated as follows:

Migration makes me feel safe of suffering from inadequacy of farmlands. When I think they are live here with us there are a number of thing that I have to fulfill for them in order to allow them start their own life. They have to get farmlands, oxen, and the place of residence. If they were not migrated the farmlands

should be distributed for all of them and not sufficient to get enough farm income. I know thinking as such is being selfish but as I can see from my neighbor always the cause for conflict between parents and children as well as between children is the issue of farmlands. Thus, I can say the migration of my children give me a relief in having resource like farmlands (field data, April 2019).

The finding depict that the migration of youth in the study area gave reliefs for the household members left behind as it boosted their opportunities to access sufficient farmlands. In this regard, this study came up with similar findings by (Mahama 2013). In his study on rural-urban migration and agricultural productivity he found that movement of a member of the family to an urban location frees more land space for farming in the rural areas for the left behind farmers who looking for farmlands. Thus, their conformity show that youth migration give a relief for left behind farmers and boost their opportunities to access farmlands.

c. Migration and Remittance

As we have seen in the above section rural-urban youth migration is seen as a troublemaking for the rural households as much as it hampers agricultural production by taking away the important share of the most vital and the economically active members of the rural household workforce except its optimal effect of boosting the access of farmlands. On the other hand, resource remitted from migrants in the city has positively affected the life of households left behind by solving the budget constraints, food consumption and thereby improve households' long-term welfare through investments in farming which can sustainably improve life. Thus, rural-urban youth migration is viewed as economically benefiting the household members left behind in the rural area through remittance. Resource transfers in the most cases seen as helpful for the living conditions of receiving households in terms of improving their livelihoods. Study participants age 64 described as follows:

.....we were suffering from food insecurity in summer season before the migration of my young children. We were also living in low standard house in which its roof is made up of thatch, so called 'mana cita'. But now, there is improved living condition by the money we got from my son migrated to city as much as it enables us to build new house, secured from any kind food related problems (field data April 2019).

The finding of the study showed that remittances sent home by migrants are upgrading the livelihood of left behind migrant households. The money sent back from migrants helped family left behind in several ways for instances; it recompense the loss of farm labour which allow migrant households to hire laborer, contributing to household improvements in basic needs and also stimulating crop production through fulfilling the needs of migrant households to invest in farming. With this regard the study is in concordance with the research conducted by (Kassa 2016) in Ethiopia who come up with results which reveal that money sent back from migrants upgrade migrant households asset and income position, improve their levels of basic needs, contribute to strength their capacity of averting risks resulting from drought, pests and famine, enable recipients to use improved agricultural inputs and enhance migrant family member education and medication. In addition this finding is also agree with (Taylor 2006) who hold the view that, reduce in farm income due to the reduction of available labour by out-migration may

be compensated by remittances which sent back from the migrants in city which are used to purchase additional inputs or hire labour substitutes for cropping.

3.2. Social costs on migrant-sending households

i. Decline of Family Social Bonds

The finding of this study also revealed that migration of youths from rural area affects the social relationships within a rural family. In particular, the physical absence of the migrant may have adverse effects on family members left behind which expose them to have the feeling of less powerlessness and loneliness. This is due to the fact that the more the family members no live together, the less they concern about each other and less they depend on each other which more consequently depends only themselves and recognizes no other rules of conduct than what they are formed on their private interests. Thus, the more family members are living not together the more their social bonds are declined which negatively affecting the life of the family has left behind equally with the labour constraint they are facing. One of study participant stated age 69 as follows:

....Migration takes away the joyful life of my family. I am very happy when my migrant children come to visit me. I simply feel happy by looking at their face. I lose this all happiness life as the result of my children migration. It was my pleasure if we are living together here even in a very challenging life (field data, April, 2019).

ii. Care Drain and its Effects on Elderly Rural Parents

The findings from the study participant show that the isolation of adult children (care drain) from their elderly parents reduces their happiness and leads them to have a feeling of loneliness. This is in agreement with (Scheffel and Zhang 2019) which found that, elderly parents in rural areas rely heavily on their families as main source of support in old age. However, as the results of migration these traditional norms become get weakened which leads to a deterioration of the willingness and ability of the younger generation to support the elderly rural parents. Consequently, left behind elderly parents are suffering from loneliness and depression which affect their social life. One of migrant households head study participants age 71 described that:

....I am ploughing and performing the heavy agricultural activities by this age. All of my children left me and migrate to the city. Sometime I feel useless because I don't know what will happen tomorrow there will be a day when I can't totally able to feed myself. By now I am living with only my wife we seek support from our children but it's only a wish as much as there is no at least one children living with us who may give us support (Field data, April, 2019).

According to the study findings many migrant households experience feelings of loneliness and loss as most important negative impact of youth rural outmigration. Almost all informants from migrant households indicated during the elaborating in-depth interviews that they miss their son, daughter very much. The relationship between the migrated household members and the remaining family is weakened

or even dismissed, because lack of any contact. Especially in the case of the migration of the all children, feelings of loneliness or abandonment appeared to have major impact on psychological and even physical well-being of the remaining older parents. The family structure of rural people is also not working well as the results of youth rural outmigration. Extended family is the well-known type of family structure in an investigation area where parents, children grandparents and other ancestors are lives together. But rural-urban migration of youth put the endurance of extended family in question by taking the youth which are expected to be the responsible body for the continuity of next generation.

Youth's rural-urban brought an important change around the rural social institutions. There are two ways of this effect relationship. On one side, labour migration weakening social labour sharing group among migrant households as much as the decreased household labor supply limit their active participation. On the other hand, the availability of cash money from the remittance endangers local social institutions which declines its importance as it is replaced by hiring labor forces. One of study participants age 56 described that:

....Institution such as "Daboo" and "Iddir" is the important asset that we have in common with a local community. I was actively participate in those institutions I shared idea with other, have a good relationship, working together my own tasks with them and closer with community around you. But after migration of the family members I am not participating actively compare with when I was with my migrated children. Because I am overburdened by the workload created after migration of family members (field data, April 2019).

3.3. Copping strategies adopted by migrant-sending households

Finding of study reveals that in response to the social and economic problems resulted from youth rural out-migration, migrant households are utilizing different coping strategies to overcome. Labor shortage is the most important economic effects of youth migration that rural migrant households are severed from. In pertinent to this, different coping strategies are utilized among them; land renting, hiring laborer, use oxen as labor force by giving for those haven't thereby use their labor. Whereas, social problem induced youth migration are tackled by hiring labor which playing dual role of filling the gap of labor constraints and supporting migrant parents affected by loneliness and Guddifacha is also practicing by taking the children of their relative. One of migrant households head study participants age 62 explain that:

....We used to entirely depend on our household members for agricultural labor force. However, our labor force from this source has been declining gradually because of the migration of our young children. Thus, having understood this, we decided to hire labor force even though the chance of getting laborer in the area is very difficult as a consequence of high rate of youth migration to city (field data, April 2019).

Finding from FGD participants also show that, renting farmlands is one of the best known coping strategies adopted among households those their children migrated to city. FGD participants said that, in

study area, in order to meet the growing demand for farmlands, farmers adopt different short-term land rental contracts such as sharecropping, contract farming, and fixed cash renting in which all of them have their own terms of the contract between the property owner and land renter. Among the above mentioned land rental system, sharecropping is the best known used among migrant households in study area. Sharecropping is a land rental system in which a landholder allows renter to use the land and there will be share of crops produced on the land thereby, each party receive income from the farm output equally which is known as “Qixxe” by local language.

4. Conclusion And Recommendation

The study indicated that youth outmigration has a dual affects for migrant households which can be categorized as negative and positive effects. On the one hand, youth migration served as an opportunity for migrant households as much as money send back from youth migrant in city might helped the family members left behind to improve their food consumption, housing status and agricultural productivity. On the other hand, youth migration has brought challenges to the migrant households because it hampered agricultural production by taking away the important share of the most vital and economically active members of the rural household workforce.

Besides its effects in declining agricultural productivity, youth migration has also put the life of elderly rural parents at risk by weakening the traditional norms of younger generation to support elderly parents. Consequently, the elderly parents left behind are suffering from loneliness and depression which affects their social life. In addition, the finding showed that rural family structure and local social institutions has also affected negatively on account of youth rural outmigration because the very important parts of rural society are on the move which can put under question their endurance. Based on the findings of the study it is recommended that in order to minimize the rate of rural youth migration social amenities should be provided by government and awareness should be given for migrant households on the best use of remittance to maximize its long-term benefits.

Declarations

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Consent: The researcher follows the Ethical procedure in undertaking this research and as the consent of research participants. For this research the informants consent was asked whether they have interests or not and as they have full of right to stop the interview if they are not mood to continue.

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests

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Figures

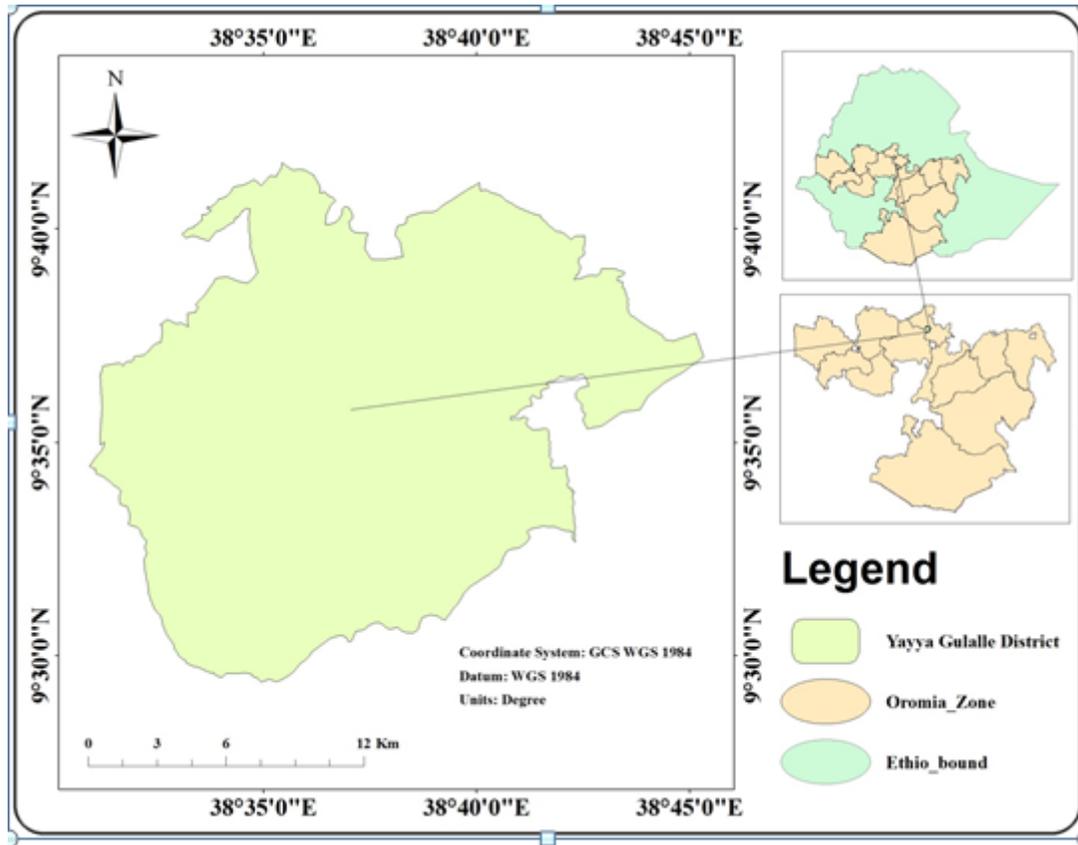


Figure 1

Map of study district (woreda) in the national setting