

Assessing the Status of Peasant Migration in Kigoma Rural District, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study was undertaken in Kidea village of Kigoma Rural District, Tanzania. The study intended to assess the status of peasant migration to Kidea village. Household questionnaire, focus group discussion and key informant interviews were employed in data collection. The study shows that all the interviewed respondents emigrated from 30 villages in and outside the district. Of these villages, only 4 contributed more migrants to the study area than the 26 villages all together. Generally, migration to Kidea Village shows a declining trend. Land shortage, loss of soil productivity, high food prices and limited income opportunities in migrants' places of origin were reported as drivers for peasant migration. To reduce the rate of migration the study recommends provision of farming inputs in migrants' source areas to maximise food production; controlling fertility rate and establishment of income generating activities. Finally, the study calls for thorough study in the four villages that emerged as leading sources of migrants in order to uncover the severity of the drivers for out-migration.

Keywords: peasant migration, drivers for migration, livelihood security

1. Introduction

Globally, peasant migrations are gradually becoming important movements. Factors such as land degradation, population pressure, drought, limited employment opportunities, declining soil productivity and insecurity are forcing individuals or households to out-migrating from their areas of origin to new destinations with the aim of achieving better life conditions (Konseiga, 2003; Bilsborrow, 2002: 77 – 79; Deshingkar and Grimm, 2004: 23).

In, Africa peasant migration is largely taken as a livelihood diversification strategy by the poor. Movements to groundnut schemes in Senegal; to cocoa and coffee plantations in Ivory Coast; to rice-growing areas in Sierra Leone; to rubber plantation in Liberia and to irrigated farms in Ethiopia are a few examples of peasant migration (Deshingkar & Grimm, 2004: 7 – 11). In Ghana De Graft-Johnson (1974: 472) has indicated that about 60% of migratory moves recorded in the 1970 census involved peasants. Similar observations have been made for Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast (Udo, 1975).

In East Africa, the extents to which peasants engage in migrations have also been documented. In western Kenya, families increase their livelihood security by either moving permanently or splitting the locations of the families to virgin land in order to diversify their household income and reduce risk in case of agro-climatic constraints (Oucho, 1995: 3 – 4).

In Tanzania, Mung'ong'o (1998: 6), Mwamfupe & Mung'ong'o (2003: 16 – 35), Mbonile (1996: 95 – 99) and Madulu (1998: 40) have documented migration patterns involving, herders, farmers and labour migrants in several districts Tanzania. Despite the fact that many authors have documented peasant migration as a livelihood strategy in Tanzania less is known about drivers of peasant migration in western Tanzania particularly Kigoma Rural District.

For a long time, Kigoma Rural District has witnessed an increasing trend of peasant migration from one rural area to another. Such migration pattern involves movement from the old villages established during Villagization Programme in 1974 to new villages in and outside the district. Contrary to other regions of Tanzania drivers for such movements in the district have not been well studied and there is almost no literature about peasant migration in Kigoma Rural District. It is therefore, thought that the information collected from this village would create a new knowledge and set out a platform for related research. It is in this light that this study was conducted in Kidea Village. Specifically, this study intended to: (i) identify the villages which were the source of migrants (ii) review the trend of peasant migration to Kidea village from 1990 to 2011 and (iii) identify the driving forces for peasant migration to Kidea village.

Knowledge on status of peasant migration is important for policy interventions geared to influence migration and its impacts on migrants' families and environment. It is also important in improving the conditions in the migrant sending areas and thus curbing peasant mobility. It is on this account that this study is valuable at national and district level. Findings from this study will set a platform and serve as a catalyst to other researchers interested in conducting further studies in the district. Lastly, the study contributes to building knowledge base for academic and research community at different levels of academic pursuits.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 The study area

This study was conducted in Kidea village, located in Kandaga Ward in Kigoma Rural District (Figure 1). Selection of this village was based on the fact that it is one of the newly established villages by peasant migrants. It was, therefore, thought that with 20 years of its existence, the village could provide enough and relevant data pertaining to this study.

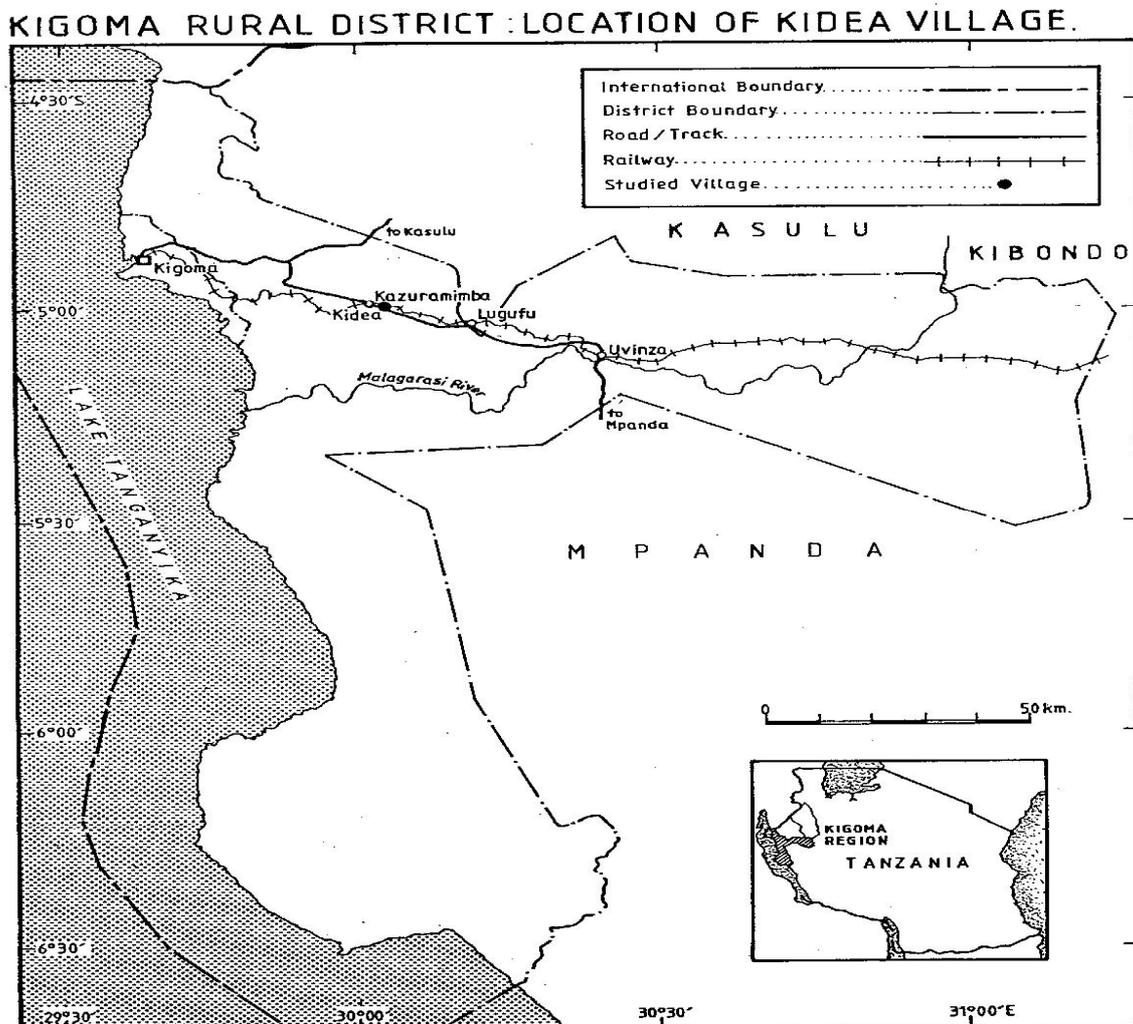


Figure 1: A Map of Kigoma Rural District, showing the location of Kidea village
Source: Geography Department, University of Dar es Salaam, 2011.

The village population size has been increasing since it was established in 1990. Village records indicate that in 1992 the village had 1,125 people. After ten years the population grew to 3,760 people. The 2010 village census showed that the village population had grown to 6,267 people. Of this population, 2,672 (43%) were males and 3,595 (57%) were females (Kidea village Chairman, 2011 Pers. comm). The area receives bi-modal rainfall ranging between 1000mm to 1,200mm per year, usually from November/October to April/May. The average temperature ranges between 12°C to 20°C in July/August and to as high as 32°C to 35°C in August/September (URT, 2008). Almost all the people in the study area depend on agriculture especially crop production as their major occupation. Minor occupations include fishing, livestock keeping, petty business, charcoal making, and timber production. Cassava, beans, maize, potatoes, groundnuts, sunflower and tobacco are commonly grown in the area (Kashaigili *et al*, 2010, URT, 2007). Expanding farming, settlement, charcoal making, timber production and other livelihood activities are rapidly converting forests into open land.

2.2 Data Collection Methods

The study involved two phases. Phase one involved conducting focus group discussion and key informant interviews. Ten purposively selected villagers participated in the discussion. Key informant interviews involved the District Agricultural and Livestock Development Officer, a food trader, a farmer and a pastoralist. Phase two

involved administration of a household questionnaire to validate the information obtained in phase one and to get more insights at household level. 75 households equal to 8.5% of 885 households in the village were randomly selected and considered to be representative and manageable sample size for this study (Boyd *et al*, 1981). In both phases qualitative and quantitative information pertaining to migrants' places of origin, driving forces for migration and trends of migration to the study area were collected.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Migrants' places of origin

The study found that all the 75 respondents emigrated from 30 villages in Kigoma Rural and Kasulu Districts of Kigoma Region (Figure 2). Of these villages, only 4, namely, Bubango, Mwamgongo, Mgaraganza and Kagunga contributed 43 migrants (57.4%) while the 26 villages all together contributed 32 migrants (42.6%). Each of the 4 villages contributed 5 – 20 migrants (Figure 2) while each of the 26 villages contributed 1 – 2 migrants. Further analysis in the 4 villages indicates that, Mgaraganza contributed 6.7% of the migrants, Kagunga 13.3% while Mwamgongo and Bubango contributed 10.7% and 26.7%, respectively (Figure 3).

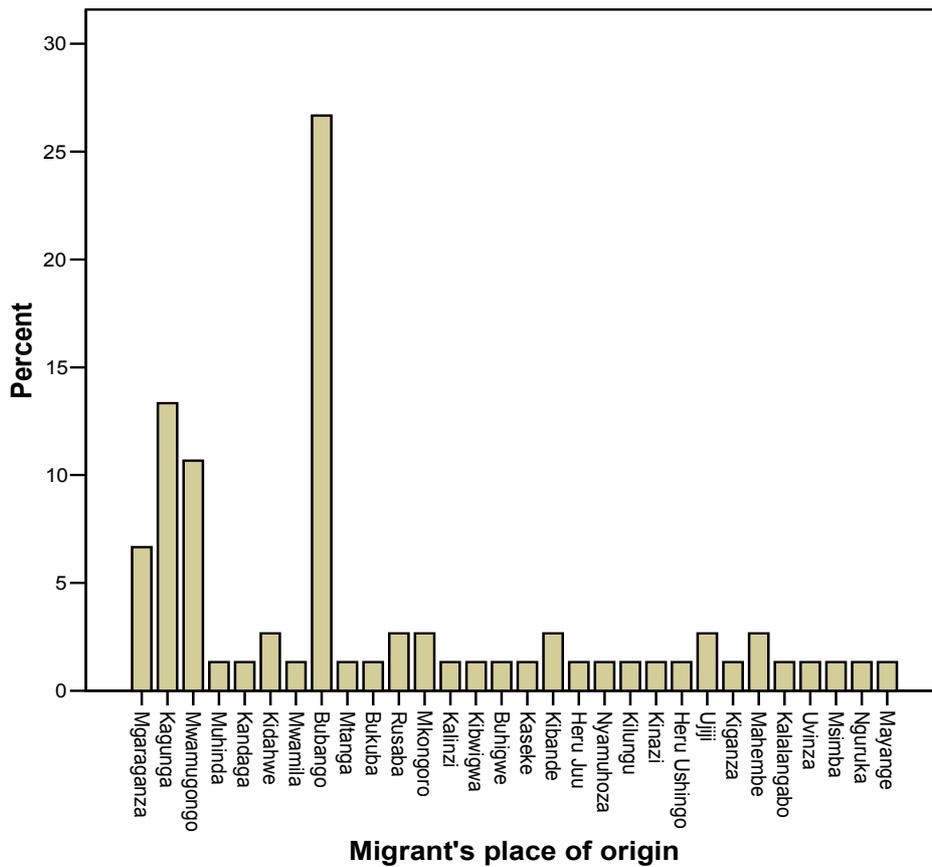


Figure 2: Contribution of migrants to Kidea from 30 sending villages
Source: Field Survey, March 2011

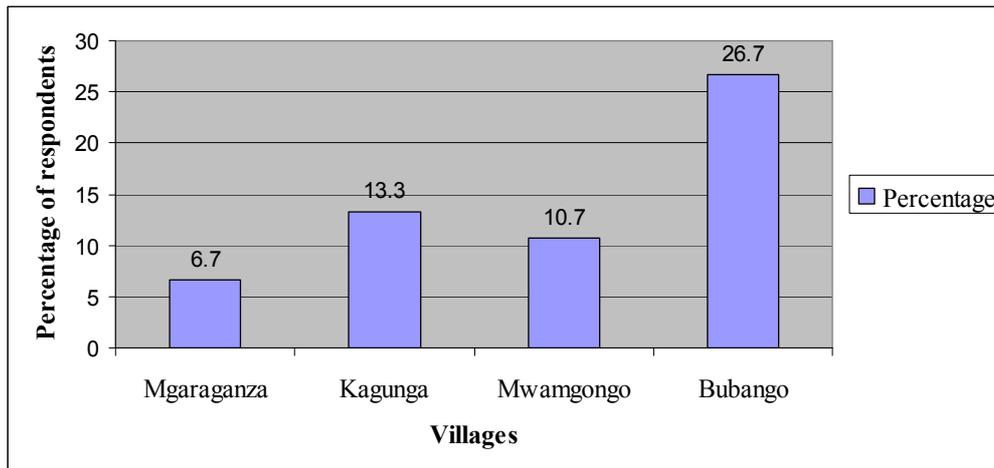


Figure 3: Contribution of migrants to Kidea from four sending villages
Source: Field Survey, March 2011

A larger contribution of migrants from the 4 villages and a smaller contribution from the 26 villages imply that the reported push factors for out-migration might be stronger in the 4 villages and less pronounced in the 26 villages. However, owing to their smaller contribution of migrants to the study area the 26 villages are less emphasized in this study.

3.2 Trend of Peasant Migration to Kidea Village from 1990 to 2011

Data from the household questionnaire, focus group discussion and key informant interviews revealed that migration to the village commenced in 1990. Between 1990 and 1994 the volume of migration was comparatively low and increased by only 6% (Figure 4). The slow speed of immigration to the village in this period can presumably be attributed to lack of networks, contacts and proper information about the attractiveness of Kidea Village, thus, limiting chain migration. Middleton (2005: 9) and Liwenga et al (2012: 104) assert that both networks and reliable information on place attractiveness have great influence on the volume and direction of migration. However, between 1995 and 1999, the number of immigrants increased by 38% and was almost maintained constant in the period between 2000 and 2004, where the volume of migration increased by 35% (Figure 4).

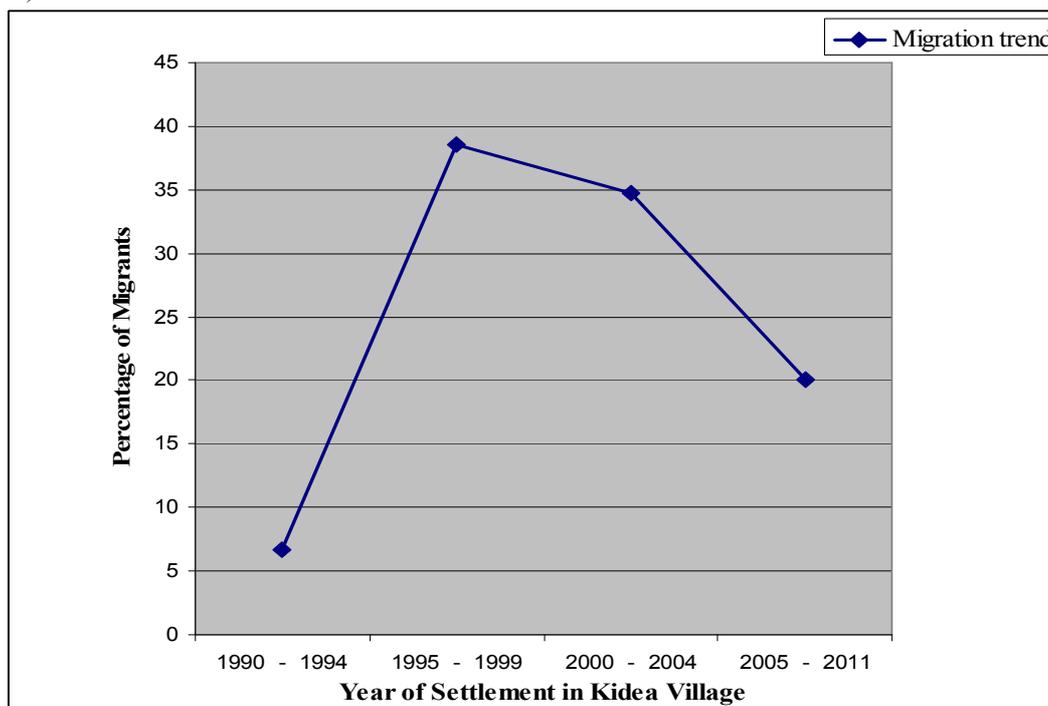


Figure 4: Trend of migrants' settlement in Kidea village from 1990 to 2011.
Source: Field Survey, March 2011

The peaking of migration volume between 1995 and 2004 could be attributed to the well established networks, contacts and information flow between areas of origin and destination, thus, inducing chain migration. This observation was also made by Koser & Pinkerton (2002: 13 & 22) and Boyd (1989: 655). The observed decrease in the volume of immigration between 2005 and 2011 can seemingly be explained by the fact that migrants might have sought about other destinations. For example, it was reported by some participants in a FGD that Ilagala – a lakeshore village located south of Kigoma Region attracted many migrants who engage in both fishing and farming. Likewise, Kigogwe village, in Kasulu District was reported to attract migrants from other hunger – and income poverty – stricken villages, including the 30 villages identified in this study.

Moreover, the commencement of Congolese refugees' voluntary repatriation from Lugufu camps that were located near the village might have deterred rural immigration into the area. This is because during existence of refugees, some villagers benefitted from existence of refugees through trade, occasional casual labour and other social interactions in the camps. It was also reported that in the early years of village establishment, illegal logging and charcoal making were rampant but following the commencement and implementation of conservation measures by the Masito – Ugalla Ecosystem (MUE) conservation organization, the number of people engaging in these activities tremendously decreased, thus, implying that, charcoal making and timber production were some of the pulling factors for immigration to the study area.

3.3 Drivers for Rural – Rural Migration to Kidea Village

Drivers for migration are many and diverse. They also work in combination to influence an individual's decision to migrate. With respect to Kidea Village respondents reported to have been driven by more than one factor.

3.3.1 Shortage of land

Land shortage was reported by 80% of the respondents as the main driver for out-migration. Further analysis in the four villages indicates that 6.7% of migrants from Mgaraganza, 10.7% from Kagunga, 10.7% from Mwamgongo and 18.7% from Bubango associated land shortage to their out-migration. In addition, 33.2% of the migrants from the 26 villages, all together attributed their out-migration to land shortage in their villages of origin (Table 1). Upon settling in Kidea 86.7% of the respondents reported to have secured more land than in their villages of origin.

Table 1: Respondents attributing their out-migration to different drivers (%)

Driver	Response	Villages (n = 75)					Total
		Mgaraganza	Kagunga	Mwamgongo	Bubango	26 villages	
Land scarcity	Yes	6.7	10.7	10.7	18.7	33.2	80
	No	0.0	2.7	0.0	8.0	9.3	20
Low soil productivity	Yes	5.3	13.3	2.7	21.3	29.3	72
	No	1.3	0.0	8.0	5.3	13.3	28
High food prices	Yes	5.3	5.3	10.6	20.0	33.3	74.6
	No	1.3	8.0	0.0	6.7	9.3	25.3
Loss of income opportunities	Yes	1.3	9.3	8.0	8.0	4.0	30.6
	No	5.3	4.0	2.6	18.7	38.6	69.4

Source: Field Survey, March 2011

The findings in Table 1 show that a large proportion of migrants from all villages in general and from the four villages in particular, associated their migration decision to land shortage in their villages of origin. This finding implies that land shortage was responsible for sending people out of their villages to different destinations including Kidea village. Some migrants from Mwamgongo and Kagunga villages, who participated in a FGD, reported that increase in population coupled with land fragmentation contributed to emigration from the two villages. The two villages share a border with Gombe National Park (GNP). The presence of GNP limits further expansion of farmland and agricultural diversification. As number of children per household increased, parents were obliged to sub-divide farmland among the married sons who had established their own families after marriage. As a result, farmland was inadequate for sustaining the increasing population. Inadequate farmland forced some of them, especially those who had limited or no other livelihood options to out-migrate to other areas with plenty of land.

Mung'ong'o (1999) in his socioeconomic study of Mwamgongo village of Kigoma Rural District and Chihiro (2010) in his study of labour migration in the Southern Province of Zambia had similar observation. In addition, Mwamfupe (1998) and Mwamfupe and Mung'ong'o (2003) made similar observations for the Maasai pastoralists as well as Meru and Chagga ethnic groups in some parts of the Northern Highlands of Tanzania.

3.3.2 Loss of soil productivity

Of the 75 respondents, 72% attributed their out-migration to loss of soil productivity. In the 4 villages, 5.3% of

the migrants from Mgaraganza, 13.3% from Kagunga, 2.7% from Mwamgongo and 21.3% from Bubango associated their out-migration to loss of soil productivity. On the contrary, 29.3% of the migrants from the 26 villages all together attributed their out-migration to loss of soil productivity (Table 1). When asked to compare soil fertility between place of origin and destination, 74.7% of the respondents reported that land in Kidea was more fertile than in their villages of origin. To further support these findings, one FGD participant from Mgaraganza village narrated his story as follows:

"I had a small farmland (about 3 acres) on which I used to grow cassava and another small farm with a few oil palm trees, both of which were inherited from our father. Due to prolonged cultivation on the same farm, the soil lost its fertility and I used to get very low cassava harvest. When you intercrop cassava, maize or beans with oil palms, you get poor harvest because mature oil palms are heavy feeders and suppress all other crops grown under their canopy shade. Life in Mgaraganza became more and more difficult, especially to households with no oil palms. I could not continue staying in this village with neither enough food nor money while there are other alternative areas with plenty of fertile land. Therefore, I decided to move to Kidea. Upon settling here, I now have 15 acres of farmland and my family has enough food to eat" (Miraji Hassan (39 years), 2011 pers.comm)

For communities that rely strongly on farming for their livelihood, loss of soil productivity has remarkable negative impact on their food security. As soil losses its natural fertility, crop production per unit area also declines. As a result, people develop various coping and adaptive strategies including moving to other locations in search of more fertile land. As reported by some respondents in both FGD and household questionnaire, Mwamgongo and Kagunga villages are geographically surrounded by steep slopes on which cultivation takes place. Prolonged cultivation on these slopes led to substantial decline in cassava production (Mung'ong'o, 1999). As a result, some villagers out-migrated to other areas with more fertile land.

On the other hand, interviewed migrants from Mgaraganza and Bubango villages revealed that a large part of the land in those villages is occupied by oil palms, leaving small patches of open land. Naturally, oil palms require enough moisture, deep and fertile soil, both of which are largely found in lowlands. When intercropped with oil palms, food crops such as cassava, maize, beans, groundnuts and peas perform very poorly, resulting into poor yield. Because of this, farmers have subsequently resorted to cultivation of food crops on hills surrounding the villages and on limited open land. Prolonged cultivation on these hills since the villages were established led into loss of soil fertility, resulting into decline in food production, especially cassava. Coupled with increasing population and land fragmentation, most individuals and households resort to out-migration to new areas as a survival strategy.

The problem was reported to be more severe among the households owning small oil palm farms or not owning land at all because they could not get enough income to purchase food in the situation of declining food production. This finding, concordantly agrees with what was reported by Guzman *et al.*, (2009); and Mike *et al.*, (2001) that land degradation remains an important global concern because of its adverse impacts on agricultural production and food security.

3.3.3 High food prices

High food price was reported to drive 74.6% of the respondents from their villages of origin. Of this proportion, 5.3% were from Mgaraganza, 5.3% from Kagunga, 10.6% from Mwamgongo and 20% from Bubango. In contrast, 33.3% of the migrants from the 26 villages all together attributed their out-migration to higher food prices (Table 1). Rising food prices mainly due to poor production coupled with declining income opportunities can threaten food security and subsequently force people to seek new locations where either food production is still viable or prices are affordable.

In one village of origin, the price for 1 Kg of maize flour ranged between Tanzanian shillings (Tshs.) 250 and 450 and cassava flour between Tshs. 150/- and Tshs. 300/- while in Kidea the price of the same type and amount of flour ranged between Tshs. 100/- and Tshs. 200/-. In addition, the price for 1 Kg of beans in the village of origin ranged between Tshs. 800/- and Tshs. 1500/- while in Kidea the price of the same amount of beans ranged between Tshs. 400/- and Tshs. 1000/-. To any individual or household experiencing food shortage and limited income opportunities, this difference in food prices is a sufficient justification for out-migration. Oglethorpe *et al.*, (2007) present the same views when they argue that rising food prices, especially of the major staple food, and dwindling income generating opportunities force people to seek options outside their home areas to meet their food requirements and diversify income portfolios.

3.3.4 Limited or loss of income opportunities

Lack of or limited income opportunities were reported to drive 30.6% of all the respondents from their villages of origin. Further analysis in the four villages indicates that 1.3% of the migrants from Mgaraganza, 9.3% from Kagunga, 8.0% from Mwamgongo and 8% from Bubango associated this factor to their out-migration. In contrast, 4% of the migrants from 26 villages all together reported this factor (Table 1). A few migrants, especially from Mgaraganza and Bubango villages associated their out-migration to this factor. This implies that income had insignificant contribution to their out-migration. On the contrary, Mwamgongo and Kagunga villages exhibited a different scenario. As reported by some respondents, the government ban on beach seining

throughout Tanzania including Lake Tanganyika in 1998 contributed to loss of income opportunities in the two villages. On average, each beach seine could employ up to 14 people including two boat operators; the chief operator and his assistant and 10 to 12 net pullers. In the face of limited alternative economic opportunities and lack of enough and productive land, individuals and households who mainly depended on fishing for income and food sought for out-migration as a coping strategy.

The synchrony between the government ban and peaking of migration volume in the two periods (between 1995 and 1999 and between 2000 and 2004) evidences that loss of employment opportunities was one of the drivers for out-migration from the two villages. The above argument is supported by Bryceson (1999) who reported that lack of gainful income opportunities together with other forms of poverty in rural areas have pushed many people out of their villages in search of better opportunities in other rural or even urban areas. Moreover, Deshingkar and Grimm (2004); Gugler and Ludwar (1995) reported similar findings particularly in cash crop growing areas in West African countries.

3.3.5 Low or unreliable rainfall

With regard to rainfall, none of the respondents attributed his/her out-migration decision to shortage of rainfall in his/her village of origin. Rainfall data for the district from Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) – Kigoma indicates that from 1990 to 2010, the district received rainfall varying between 750 mm and 1200 mm per year, with an average of 750 mm per year (Figure 5). According to TMA this rainfall was reliable and uniformly distributed in the district. According to Kigoma Rural District and Agricultural and Livestock Development Officer, this amount of rainfall is enough to allow a wide range of crops to be grown with some double planting of short season crops such as beans, peas and potatoes. When asked to state if shortage of rainfall was one of the drivers for their out-migration, none of the respondents affirmed it. It can therefore, be evidently deduced that low/unreliable rainfall in the areas of origin did not contribute to the observed out-migration patterns from the sending areas to Kidea village.

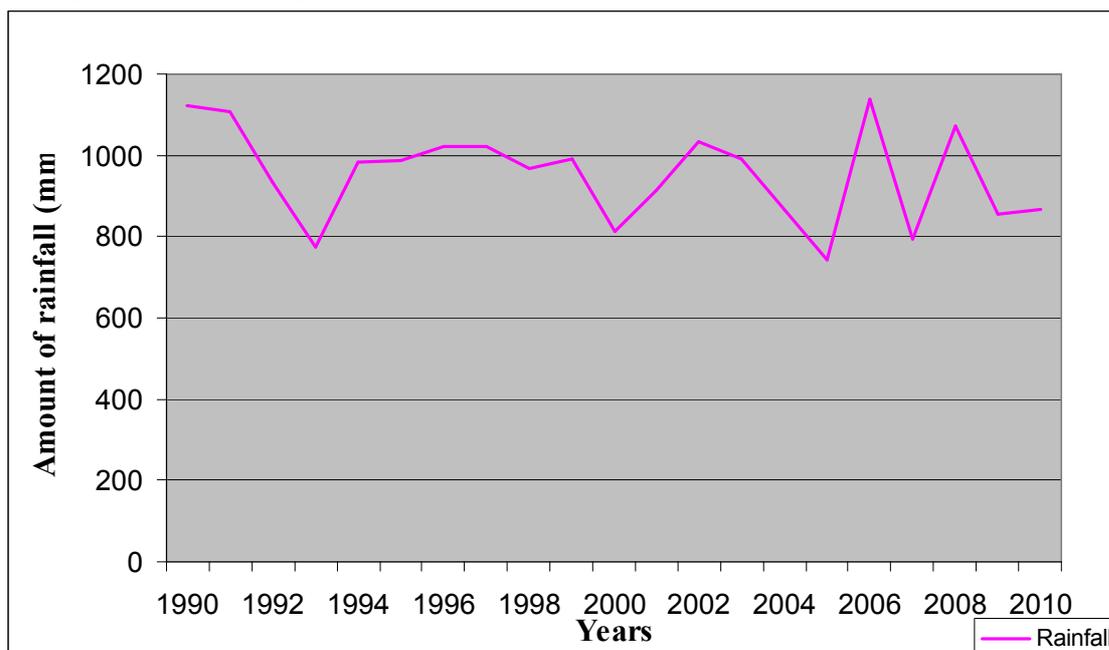


Figure 5: Rainfall trend in Kigoma Rural District from 1990 – 2010

Source: Field Survey, March 2011

According to Atta El Moula (1991: 47) prolonged shortage of rainfall can lead to serious droughts, causing crop failure, erosion of value of productive assets and loss of rural wage employment, which in turn can induce large or small scale movements of individuals or families to better places.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The volume of immigration to Kidea shows a general declining trend. Availability of alternative destinations, closure of Lugufu Congolese Refugee Camps and stern conservation measures implemented by MUE conservation organization might have accounted for the observed trend. A large proportion of migrants originating from the four named villages and very few from the twenty six villages imply that the reported drivers for out-migration were stronger in the four villages than in the twenty six villages. Although all respondents reported to have immigrated to the village permanently some of them however, maintained

occasional visiting relationships with their relatives left in the areas of origin. The phenomenon of migration is normally driven by economic or non-economic factors. This study has documented that migration to Kidea is more of subsistence than long term investment in economic development. All interviewed migrants were smallholder farmers with agriculture being their primary occupation and their productive resources being labour and land. Land shortage, loss of soil productivity, limited income opportunities and increasing food prices were the primary push factors in the places of origin.

The study recommends that the four villages that emerged as leading sources of migrants should be thoroughly studied. Information from these studies can help in identifying drivers for out-migration as well as in identifying and comparing the magnitude of the problem in both sending and receive villages. Wherever necessary, information obtained from these studies can be used in implementing relevant intervention measures if need be.

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