

Tragedy of Rural Youth Out-Migration and Its Socio-Economic Consequences in Lemo Woreda of Hadiya Zone, Southern Ethiopia

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Abstract

Out-migration affects the socio- economic situation of the youths, families and people at large in a country. However, rural youth out-migration in Ethiopia in general and Hadiya Zone specifically has become more common business. Hence, this study was conducted to investigate the causes and consequences of youth out-migration from Lemo woreda of Hadiya zone in Southern Ethiopia to South Africa. Primary and secondary sources of data were used. Primary information collected from returnees and families of migrants through interview schedule, FGDs and KI guidelines. 100 respondents were selected for survey questionnaire by purposive sampling technique. Descriptive statistical method is employed to analyze quantitative data by using SPSS whereas the qualitative data was analyzed using description. The result of the study reported that in Lemo woreda out migration is dominated by young aged 23-29. The largest proportion of youth migrants have faced imprisonment, hunger and social crises, vulnerability to disease, and loss of life during traveling to South Africa, Dependency on remittance, low educational achievement, loss of life, and shortage of labor force in the origin are among the problems due to migration. Based on these findings recommendations are given to concerned bodies to give due attention to help youths to study and create better job opportunities in their origin.

Keywords: Ethiopia, Youth, out-migration, returnees

DOI: 10.7176/JESD/11-17-02

Publication date:September 30th 2020

Introduction

Migration is defined as changing the place of residence by crossing a specified administrative or political boundary. It is movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State (IOM, 2014). As of 2017, the number of international migrants worldwide stood at almost 258 million (or 3.4 percent of the world's population). According to UN Population Division estimates 14% of the migrants are below 20 years old youths (Wilkinson, 2015; Becky C. and Brigitte R., 2016; Castles H., de Haas and Mark J., 2014).

Youth migration is a form of productive labor migration and the people most likely to leave are those of working age and students. Unfortunately, many young migrants frequently get trapped in exploitative and abusive jobs, including forced labor. And too often, they – like other migrants – become scapegoats for the shortcomings of economic and social systems (Habte, 2015; ILO, 2016). According to the International Labor Organization in 2018, the youth unemployment rate was 10.9% in Sub-Saharan Africa (Assefa et al, 2015; ILO, 2018).

Each year, thousands of young Ethiopians risk their lives in an attempt to reach South Africa, where they hope to establish better lives for themselves and their families. Migrants often sacrifice their life. There were 614,000 Ethiopians in modern slavery both within Ethiopia and abroad (Balayneh, 2016; Habte, 2015). In Ethiopia, the unemployment rate stands at 24 Furthermore, low incomes, unemployment, underemployment and poor working conditions are highest amongst youths, while about 71% population is under the age of 30 years (FAO, 2018).

In Ethiopia, the problem is widely observed in two zones of the southern parts, namely in Hadya and Kambata-Tambaro Zones (Sinedu, 2009; Habte, 2015). Most of the young adults who move irregularly to South Africa had suffered several problems—among them are being smuggled, physical abuse, human right violation, death as well as robbery (Teshome et al., 2013). However, the problem still needs investigating the trend specific to the woreda and update the risk in the zone. Hence, this study focuses on investigating causes and consequences of youth migration from rural area of Lemo woreda in Hadiya Zone of Southern Ethiopia to South Africa.

Statement of the problem

Recently, many rural youths of Lemo woreda of Hadiya zone have left their origin and migrate to different countries by the push and pull factors or support of smugglers. It has been estimate that about 120,000 Ethiopians work and live in South Africa, and the flow has dramatically increased as a result of the effective operation of migrant smuggling networks. However, since the majority is irregular migrants, they are invisible, and nobody knows the true figures (Adugna, 2019, Assefa et al, 2015).

According to the report of Hadiya zone Human Resource and Social Affairs department, it is estimated that, totally 61,148 youths (female 13,452 and 47,698 male) have migrated illegally to South Africa from the zone in 6 years period from 2013 to 2018. From Lemo woreda a total of 8,266 people (2,066 female and 6,200 male) within the same year interval. This irregular migration has high consequence in the life of the youth migrants (Hadiya Zone Human Resource and Social Affairs Department, 2018).

It has visible negative consequences in Lemo woreda. Youths become less educated and both teachers and students from the grade levels of 7-12 move to South Africa by dropping out their work and education. Students even children's dream of Lemo woreda is to migrate to the South Africa. The youth migration has contributed to the school dropout in the area. Based on the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region Education Bureau data of 2009/2017 E.C, school dropout rate was 13.8% in Hadiya zone, which was the highest from all zones in the region and was well above the regional average 10% (SNNPR Education Bureau, 2009/2017).

Hence, motivation of the researcher is to come up with scientific findings which would have policy implication and could be baseline for local government authorities' priority setting to rural youth.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted to specifically address the following objectives.

- identify causes initiate rural youths to out-migrate to the Republic of South Africa
- identify consequences of rural youth out-migration on the migrants, their families and the community at large

Youth migration in Ethiopia

UN defines youth as someone aged 15-24 years (Castles H., de Haas and Mark J., 2014; UN, 2016). For the purpose of this paper the researcher used the definition of Ethiopian National Youth policy. It defines youth as those aged between 15-29 years (Ethiopian Youth National policy, 2004).

Most migration studies in Ethiopia are concerned about internal migration and not much is done on international migration (Habte, 2015; Adamnesh, 2006). Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Ethiopia faces complex challenges of food insecurity, overpopulation, drought, political instability, and ethnic conflict. There are currently 614,000 Ethiopians in modern slavery which ranks Ethiopia fifth in the world (IOM, 2014).

South Africa has emerged as an important destination of Ethiopian labor power migrants. Recently, there has been enormous amount of labor migrants from Hadiya and Kembata –Tembaro zones to the South Africa (Teshome et al., 2013). Most of the young who migrate to the South Africa are economically active and are heading in pursuit of “dream” of capturing the green pasture there. This problem is widely observed in the Southern parts of Ethiopia, Particularly in Kembata-Tembaro and Hadiya zones (Habte, 2015; IOM, 2013).

Effects of migration

Rural youths' out-migration related implications are many and multi-faced (*Mwiti, 2015*). Studies have demonstrated that Ethiopian migrants generally spend 1-3 years in neighboring countries before immigrating to where they are migrating. Ethiopian refugees residing in refugee camps in neighboring countries may also receive resettlement in other countries further abroad (Teshome et al., 2013; Emerta et al, 2010). Most of the young adults who migrate to the South Africa are economically active and are heading in pursuit of dream of capturing the green pasture there (Assefa et al 2015; Frouws, B., 2015).

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Research Methodology

Description of the study area

Lemo woreda is located in Hadiya Zone of South Nations and Nationalities and People Regional State (SNNPR). The town of Hosanna is surrounded by Lemo. The woreda has a total of 33 rural and 2 urban Kebeles. According to SNNPR, BoFED, Annual Statistical Abstract 2009 EC 2014/2017 the total population of the Woreda is 160,620, of which 81,161 are female. The average family size of the woreda is 6 and the average land holding size is 0.75 ha per Household.

Research Design

Cross sectional research design with descriptive survey was employed while conducting this research.

Sampling techniques and sample Size determination

The researcher employed purposive sampling technique. This woreda was selected due to the intensity of the problem. From this Woreda, the researcher selected four kebeles purposively. These kebeles are known by intensity of youth out migration by the woreda and the community. The selected kebeles were Lereba, Lisana, Hayse and Belesa. From the total population of the four kebeles there are about 1,700 youth migrants including returned migrants and sample size was 100 individuals by using the formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where N=Population size Household Heads); n=Sample size (to be interviewed); and e^2 =Margin of error. The margin of error ($e=0.1$) and calculated as follows:

$$n = 1,700 / [1 + 1,700 (0.1 \times 0.1)]$$

$n = 1,700 / 17.01$ $n = 99.94$, approximately around 100 individuals as mentioned above.

Among the respondents, 60 were migrants' family members and 40 were returnee returnees. A total of 32 participants were selected for focus group discussions in purposive sampling technique. One FGD was conducted at each kebele level with 8 participants. The composition was two FGDs with families of out migrant in two kebeles and two FGDs with returnees in two kebeles. Key informants include elders, head of Hadiya Zone Lour and social Affairs, Lemo woreda trade and industry office and head of Lemo woreda Youth and sport office were participated in the study.

Methods of data collection

For the purpose of this study, the primary data has been collected using interview schedule and key informants' interviews and focus group discussion tools on the other hand.

Methods of data analysis

Simple descriptive statistics (percentage and frequency) for quantitative data and narration have been used to analyze data generated.

Result and Discussion

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The table 1 below, we understand that 85% of out migrants' families were male and 15% female.

Table 1. Sex profile of respondents

Variables	Out-migrant		Return migrant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Sex				
Male	51	85	26	65
Female	9	15	14	35
Total	60	100	40	100

As shown below, the large proportion of out migrants' families are in age category above 40 (83%), followed by 30-40 (17%).

Table 2. Age profile of respondents

Variables	Out-migrant		Return migrant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Age				
15-22	-	-	15	38
23-29	-	-	25	62
30-40	10	17	-	-
40-45	50	83	-	-
Total	60	100	40	100

The result of the study shows that the migration tendency in the study area is dominated by the single migratory group of out- migrant about (65%) followed by married (35%).

Table 3. Marital status of the respondents

Variables	Out-migrant		Return migrant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Marriage				
Single	-	-	26	65
Married	52	87	14	35
Divorced	8	13	-	-
Total	60	100	40	100

Sex selectivity of migration of youth is mainly attributable to the type of work available in South Africa as well as the difficulty of the journey, which on the average takes over two months. This also supported by other finding conducted in the area (Teshome et al., 2010). The migration decision of an individual is also influenced by marital status. The migration of young adult to South Africa is age selective.

Socio- Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 4. Level of education of respondents

Variable	Out-migrants		Returnees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Education				
Can't read and write	7	11.6	-	-
Attended primary school (grade 1-8)	22	36.6	18	45
Attended secondary school (grade 9-12)	20	33.3	16	40
Completed Diploma	7	11.6	6	15
Completed BA/BSc Degree	4	6.6	-	-
Total	60	100	40	100

The result in above table shows from the families of out migrants, the higher rate were primary students (22%) followed by secondary about (20%), diploma (7%), cannot read and write (7%) and first degree and above (4%). The level of education for most returnee is primary school students (45%) followed by secondary (40%) and the better educated are only (6%).

Occupation of respondents before migration

The large percent of migrants 49% were unemployed before they migrate. According to the FGD participants reported most of the youths who were participating on farming activities had no their own farming land but it belongs to their parents or they work for equal share with others.

Table 5. Occupation type of respondents

Variable	Out-migrants		Returnees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Occupation				
Employee under government or NGO	5	8.3	2	5
Farming	17	28.3	4	10
Petty trader	7	11.7	5	12
Employee under private sector	7	11.7	4	10
Unemployed	24	40	25	63
Total	60	100	40	100

Transportation during migration

Large proportion of the youth migrants 79% used by car and foot and the 21 % of the youths traveled through air plane & car. The cars are containers/lorry only for goods/materials. The migrants are also using the foot transportation through fearful and troubling forests.

Table 6. Transportation during migrating

Variables	Out-migrant		Return migrant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Means of transportation				
Airplane and car	-	-	26	65
Car and foot	9	15	12	21
Divorced	51	85	28	79
Total	60	100	40	100

The routes fluctuate depending on the physical and legal barriers migrants encounter. Financial capacity as well as the level and depth of connection smugglers might have with border police, immigration officers and public officials, means that one migrant can easily fly to Kenya and then transit to Mozambique or Swaziland or other neighboring countries before arriving in South Africa. Another might cross the Ethiopian-Kenyan border on foot, and continue the journey to South Africa bribing border police as well as immigration and public officials.

Source of Money for transportation

Table 7. Source of getting money for transportation and paying for traffickers

Variables	Out-migrant		Return migrant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Means of getting money				
Selling own farm land or other assets	6	10	2	5
Selling/renting families' farm land and/or other assets	31	52	16	40
From own saving	3	5	-	-
Loan	11	18	8	20
Fiancé/husband	9	15	14	35

As the result in the above table shows, the families of the out migrants view that, higher proportion of youth migrants (52%) out migrants got money from selling or giving families' farm land and/or other assets and (40%)

returnees showed the same cumulatively 47% got money for transportation from selling or giving families' farm land and/or other assets for rental.

Causes of youth migration

Table 8. Push and pull factor of rural youth migration

Variables	Out-migrant		Return migrant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Factors for migration				
Low unemployment	30	50	19	47.5
Family pressure	7	11.7	6	15
Peer pressure	14	23.3	3	7.5
Farm land shortage	4	6.7	4	10
Low wage rate	5	8.3	8	20
Expectation of better life in destiny	14	23.3	8	20

As the above table shows the leading push factor for rural youth migration is low employment opportunity in their origin 49% followed by peer pressure (17%).

Consequences of out-migration

Table 9. Consequence during journey

Variables	Out-migrant		Return migrant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Consequences of migration				
Imprisonment	17	28	12	30
Trafficked	2	3	5	12.5
Beaten and robbed	20	33.3	16	40
Exposed to hunger	12	2	27	67.5
Exposed to disease/illness	18	30	31	51.6
Miss-treated by trafficker	15	25	14	23.3

During traveling to South Africa youths are facing different problems and fear. According to the result of the study, the largest proportion of migrants (49%) youth migrants have faced exposed to disease/illness, followed by hunger (39%) and beaten and robbed (36%).

The FGDs of returnees said that their journeys were harsh with unexpected negative consequences. They reported that they were beaten physically, most of them noted that they did not reach South Africa on promised time and it usually took months even years to reach there. Considerable percentage of smuggled migrants were transported inside a closed container, the journey was much terrible as reported by the returnees. Hunger, vulnerability to diseases, mistreatments, human trafficking and loss of life are the common characters of irregular migration.

A study by Yordans Seifu (2015) reported that, the low social status of Ethiopian immigrants exposes them to a range of risks, one consequence of which is the violation of their individual rights. Since many immigrants from Ethiopia are unable to speak English or other South African languages, especially during the initial years of their arrival, they are unable to mediate their relations with bureaucracy easily. This means that they depend on money to 'talk' on their behalf. Indeed, the conventional and popular motto in the South African informal economy is "money talks". Hence, bribing becomes a means of survival. If an immigrant has a car but not a driving license or adequate driving skills, he 'makes-a- plan' with traffic police and drives freely.

Conclusion

The financial and material improvements of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa – evidenced and documented through remittances, different videos and photographs – is in sharp contrast to the low living standard of the population in rural area of Lemo woreda, encouraged youths to migrate to South Africa. The youth Migrants travel to South Africa with multitude of risks and discouraging challenges they encounter on the journey and in the settlement processes. Consequently, many died in transit countries before reaching South Africa. Even for many of those who arrived South Africa; it is not an easy thing to find job and income due to language and other way of life related problems.

High irregular youth migration to the South Africa is the dominant livelihood strategy for smugglers/irregular brokers. These brokers are exposing youths to severe and complex problem in South Africa both during their way to South Africa and even after they reached there. Most of rural youth migrations in South Africa from Lemo woreda are still living in shop which is closed by strong metal doors with small openings only to give goods and take the payment. They do not open the door by fearing robbers and killers.

Though there are a lot of migrants in South Africa and on the way with unsecured condition, the government of Ethiopia, South Africa and the passing countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and other countries were not doing on valuable solutions to secure the lives of these migrants and keep human right.

Recommendations

Depending on the findings of the study the researcher proposes the following suggestions that could be implemented by government officials at different levels, other national and local leaders, religious leaders and the community at large in the study area:

- With the help of the development strategies put in place, the GOs and other development stake-holders working in the area should have to design interventions contributing to create decent work opportunities for the youths in the rural area.
- In the other way there should be pre-departure information and training guides for those youths who prefer to migrate as final decision. The pre departure information can help youths to take informed decision to move legally.
- The government should strongly apply the law to punish the irregular brokers/smugglers and the officials and polices who are corrupted and support the irregular migration.
- The Ethiopian government and transit agencies should have to think and create legal way for legal movement.
- The local government structure and Hadiya Development Association should connect the Diasporas in South Africa to the development of the area.

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