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## CONSEQUENCES OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN MEKELLE TOWN OF ETHIOPIA

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### Abstract:

*Migration is one the fundamental elements in determining population growth and structure. People migrate to urban centers for many reasons among which economic factors are most important. However underlying these is also the desire for social and cultural change in a new environment. These days Migration of people from rural to urban center has become a common feature in developing countries. Ethiopia is one of the less developed and an agrarian countries where agriculture is the backbone of its economy. The development of agriculture is not sufficient and the productivity is deteriorating which fails to meet the basic needs of the society that is why the society is forced to migrate to urban areas. Mekelle the study area is also facing problems resulting from rural-urban migration. It is the capital of Tigray National Regional state in Ethiopia. It is located in the Northern part of the country at a distance of 870km from the capital Addis Ababa. Mekelle city has a total population of 215,546 of which 104,758 are male and 110,788 female. The total area of the city is 24.44 square km (CSA 2007).. The main objective of this paper is to find the existing problem facing Mekelle town due to large influx of migrants from rural areas. For this purpose both primary and secondary sources of data have been used. Findings of this study show that Most of the migrants were between the age of 18-29, which accounts for nearly 60% of the total migrants in the city that there is high rate of unemployment, which is caused by scarcity of agricultural land and job in the rural areas. On the other hand in Mekelle town there is little economic and employment opportunity as compared with the number of influx of the migrants in the city. Employment opportunities are largely available in informal sector because majority of the migrants are unskilled.*

### KEYWORDS:

Consequences, Migration, Ethiopia, geographical, agriculture.

### INTRODUCTION

Migration is one the fundamental elements in determining population growth and structure. In addition, it is the most complex of population dynamics. This is due to migration is selective process affecting individuals with certain economic, social, educational and demographic characteristics and the relative influence of economic and non-economic factors may vary not only between nations and regions but also with in defined geographical areas and populations. (William Norton 1944) Migration involves a permanent or temporary change of residence from one neighborhood or settlement to another (Knox, Paul

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L. 1998)

People migrate for many reasons, including economic and political ones, but underlying these is the desire for change and the challenge of life in a new environment. Only this can really account for which vast population movements, often under extremely difficult conditions which have been taking place throughout history. (GOH CHENG Leong, Gillian c. Morgan 2nd edition, 1994)

The significance of migration however goes well beyond demographic measures. It usually signifies change in lifestyles for the person making a migratory move, whether that person is an American recently graduated from college and going to a first job, a landless peasant from north eastern Brazil seeking to better his luck in Rio de Janeiro, or a new bride in India moving from her home village to that of her husband. Migration for society at large cover a range of social, political and economic forces. (J.LW, G.E.M 1994)

In Ethiopia labour migration has been going on for long period, even though there were some studies particularly on rural-urban migration in Ethiopian is done still many aspects of it remained hardly explored. Migration disturbs the age sex composition of the population thus altering marriage prospects and perhaps the birth and death rates. Often in addition it destroys the existing social bounds and institutional ties, replaying old allegiance with membership in new church, schools and factories. Migration also affects the distribution of people over a given area as well as affecting total population of a region and the population structure of country of city (William Northon, 1944).

Rural-urban migration, natural increase lack of using contraception, attitude of the society who considers child as an asset, low educational status of women and other factors are the most important that lead to population growth in Mekelle city.

As a result unemployment, lack of social services, and many other problems would result. Thus rural-urban migration in Mekelle would continue to increase considerably and result many problems regarding socio-economic, demographic, political religious and other intervention of the problems of rural-urban migration in the area. (CSA 1994)

Therefore, assessing the impacts of rural-urban migration is very important so as to solve or mitigate the aforementioned problems.

Migration of rural to urban center has become a common feature of rural areas. This in turn has an impact on urban living condition. This is because migration to cities and towns accentuate existing problems of adding to urban unemployment increasing on inadequate housing resource, social and psychological stress, poverty, destitution, prostitution, beggary and crime are wide spread in cities and town of Ethiopia.

Generally, Ethiopia is one of the less developed and an agrarian country where agriculture is the back one of its economy. The development of agriculture is not sufficient and the productivity is deteriorating which fails to meet the basic needs of the society that is why the society is forced to migrate to urban areas.

Like other towns and cities of Ethiopia, Mekelle is also facing socio-economic problems and the above mentioned problems resulting from rural-urban migration.

Therefore, investigating the condition of rural-urban migration with their causes and impacts is very crucial.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

### Following are the objectives of this study.

To compare and contrast the living condition of the migrant before and after migration.

To assess the related socio-economic and health problem resulting from rural-urban migration.

To assess the general picture of the problem causes from rural-urban migration

To suggest some possible solutions to minimize the rural-urban migration.

The movement of people from rural areas to urban centers have been creating problem on urban infrastructure and other activities and in other way, the flow of people from rural areas affect the rural production which in turn affects the people from rural areas. Therefore it is important to identify the impacts of migration of people to the city Mekelle from surrounding rural areas and to suggest solutions.

In doing so other research would give an insight about the impacts of rural-urban migration. It would also enable the concerned bodies identify the impacts of rural-urban migration and to take the necessary measures as well. Besides, it would create awareness to the public on the impacts of migration in general rural-urban migration in particular. It would provide city management bodies and upper region official with concrete information regarding the impacts of rural urban migration. Help all other concerned

bodies whose efforts directed toward minimizing the problem of rural-urban migration.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration like fertility and mortality holds a place of prominence in a geographical analysis of population change in any area (Trewartha, 1969, p-137). Migration cannot be considered a mere shift of people from one place of residence to another, as it is most fundamental to the understanding of an area (Gould, 1961, p-106) considers a movement of people as an instrument of cultural diffusion and social integration that result into more meaningful distribution of population. It is in this context, that migration has been of central interest to a discipline like geography, which is spatially oriented and which lays its emphasis upon the understanding of spatial process and spatial interaction. (R. C. Chandna 1986)

Human throughout its history migrate from region to region and between nation states. However, at the end of the 20th the importance and pace of migration has increased dramatically with population increases, political and technological changes and ease of transport and communication (Pankurst P. 2004: 244) one need not to view migration as a disaster or drought phenomena but rather as a process that takes along time to materialize. A sociologist, called Corbett's (1988: 123), view migration as a last stage in a sequence of response to remain conditions and a clear indication that many other responses have failed.

All movement of people are selective in one way or the other. For instance, the migrants who take a decision to move from one place to another may be age selective implying that the people belonging to working age group move largely because of economic motives / exigencies, their greater adaptability to new conditions not with standing. At time, when people of the working age group happen to be the head of the family the children may also move along with them.

The same is true with other parts of the world. In Ethiopia also different forms of migration was registered, which affect demographic and population characteristics. In the country migration research have been hampered by lack of adequate data (As abote, cited in Gebere 2000 p.12) various forms of population movements in response to political turmoil, economic crisis and war. Famine and certain security condition recorded. As historical evidences suggests that in the country there were large inter-regional movement of people from areas of relatively dense population and low economic opportunity.

During the 1984-85 famines about 600,000 settlers were moved from drought affected areas of central and northern Ethiopia to the south western parts of the country (Rahmato 1989 as cited by Gebere, 2000: 78). In addition to these according to the 1994 Ethiopia census out of the total population, except Afar and Somalia where migration data was not collected due to their mobile nature, 4.1% were migration and 85.5% were non-migration out of this, 4.4% of the total urban populations and 9.2% of the total rural population were migrants (NOP, 2005-46).

### STUDY AREA

Mekelle is the capital of Tigray National Regional state in Ethiopia. It is located in the Northern part of the country at a distance of 870km from the capital Addis Ababa. Mekelle city has a total population of 215,546 of which 104,758 are male and 110,788 female. The total area of the city is 24.44 square km (CSA 2007). It found in 39° 28' East and 13° 28' North at an altitude of about 2084 meters above sea level with an average mean temperature of 19°C and the annual rainfall varying between 50 to 250 mm.

### SPATIAL COVERAGE OF THE CITY

The land demand increase as the population size of the city raise from time to time. Mekelle has a built up area average of 16km<sup>2</sup> in 1984 after ten years in 1994 the size built up area reached 23.04km<sup>2</sup> adopting a continuous increase with the rise of population size and job opportunity the city administration has expanded its land holding to 100km<sup>2</sup> in 2004 by engulfing the vast agricultural land of neighboring villages and town. Mekelle is bounded by Endayesus and Choma Mountain to the east and Mesebo mountain to the North. Mekelle is classified under flat to rolling formation. The altitude of Mekelle varies from 2150m, above sea level to 2270 m. This elevation puts this region under the category of Weinadage type of agro climatic zone. Mekelle city is part of Tekeze river basin. Eliala River ends up in river Giba is the main stream flow along with Kalamino river of Aynalem. However there are many tributaries that feed both rivers with substantial amount of water during rainy season. These streams are seasonal where the peak discharge is attained in summer.

**ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

The city's economic activity is largely dependent on micro and small enterprise. The majority of the inhabitants (65%) depend on the informal business. In addition, the private sector capital investment in the last few years by formal enterprises, in about 60% out of the total investment in the region (IDP of Mekelle, 2006). According to statistical bulletin of Tigray region trade, industry and transport office (2007), there are 6583 licensed enterprises in the town out of these, 3331 (50.6%) are retail traders 2860 (43%) service providers, 184(3%) manufacturing industries and 28 (0.4)% are agricultural sectors (TBOTI Mess Census study report, 2007).

In addition, there are also around 23,655 micro and small business in the town operating without license, but only under take registration. Out of these, 47% are male operators and the remaining 53% are females. Inters of the sector, the majority are engaged in petty trades, services, and manufacturing activities (TBTI Mess Census study report, 2007).

**DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

As far as data for this study is concerned both primary and secondary sources of data have been employed .The information have been collected concerning the topic through interview persons working in different cafeterias, hotels, daily laborers and kebelles administrators and other concerned bodies .In order to generate adequate data collected from Mekelle municipality office, report of Kebele administrative office. In general, relevant published and unpublished documents, books, thesis, maps and reports were be used as a secondary data source.

Both primary and secondary data have been collected using two data gathering instrument namely questionnaires, interview from the target migrant people. Questionnaires having both open and close ended questions distributed to the selected samples. Structured interview were designed for the persons working in different cafeterias, daily laborers and Kebele administrators and other concerned bodies have been interviewed.

**SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

It is difficult to get the exact number of migrants in Mekelle. This is because there are no strong administrative and legal strategies to control the movement of people to and from Mekelle.As a result, the Kebele administration or the administration of the city has no such data. Due to this reason the researcher had selected 30 migrants. To select 30 samples the researcher stratified the kebelles into Ketena and were randomly select 6 Kebelles and later 5 person from each Kebele.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION:**

The collected data were analyzed and presented in descriptive form.

Background of the respondents

**Age composition of migrants (Table 1)**

Age group	frequency	percentage
10-18	4	13.3
18-29	18	60
30-50	7	23.3
>50	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey (2011)

According to the data most of the migrants in the study area are of adult age. Out of the total in migrants in the city, 60% belongs to the age group of 18-29 years and 23.3% of them belongs to the age group 30-50 years 13.3% of the migrants belongs to the age group of 10-18 years and most of them are in the form of child labor. Since migration is sensitive to change in the social, economic and political life of the migrants, most of the time adults are more exposed to migration, because they always seek change in their social and economic life. Though the causes for their migration are different most of adult migrants are seeker of employment and education in the city.

**Gender difference of migrants (Table 2)**

Gender difference	frequency	percentage
Male	20	66.7
Female	10	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey (2011)

Table 2 shows that in the Mekelle city most of the migrants are males because the males are more attractive for labor force than females. Among respondents 66.7% of them were males and 33.3% Females.

**The living condition of the migrants:**

According to the information gathered through interview, the study shows that there was high rural-urban migration in Mekelle city to find job opportunity and better living conditions, after the migration of those respondents their economic activity and way of getting livelihood were completely changed. Most of them after migration used different employment option for their livelihood. In the study area where economic enhancement is not rapid, there is little economic and employment opportunity for the migrants.

**Income of the migrants (Table 3)**

Age group	frequency	percentage
10-18	4	13.3
18-29	18	60.1
30-50	7	23.3
>50	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey (2011)

The above table 3 shows 50% of the respondents were getting monthly income between 100-300 birr. Their income level shows that most of the migrants were engaged in the daily casual work, construction work, individual households and handcrafts works etc. After migration they have to face a lot of problems including unemployment which results in urban area because of the increase the number of migrants in a city and limited job opportunities and push them to some other cities in search of jobs or back to their original place.

Educational status (Table 4)

Educational status	frequency	percentage
Illiterate	6	20
1-5 grade	10	33.3
6-10 grade	12	40
10-12 grade	02	6.7
Higher class	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey (2011)

Table 4 reveals that education wise most of the migrants have qualification upto the grade 6-10(40%).They come to the city for higher education .The educational status of about 33.3% migrants was upto 1-5 grade, about 20% of the migrants are illiterate. The main reason for the migration is to work as labor.

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT**

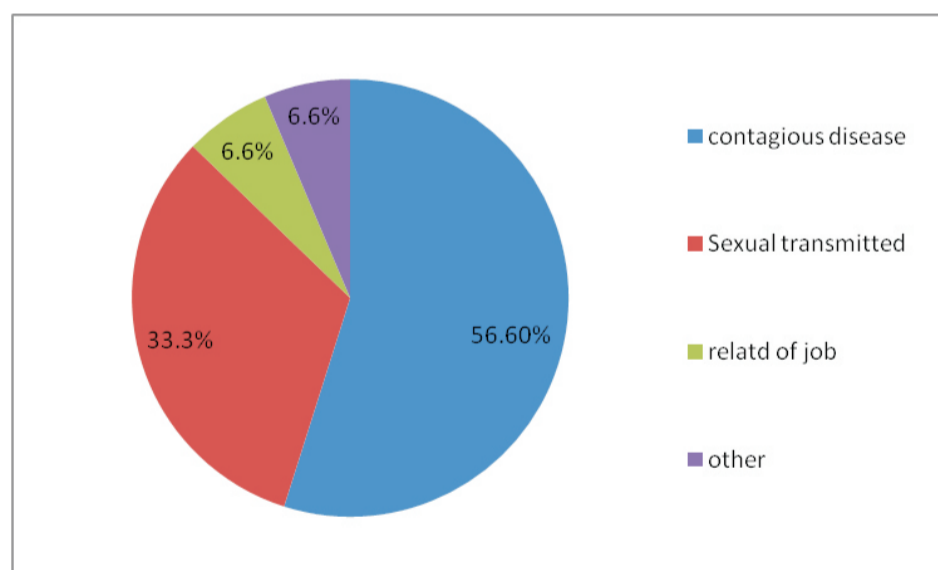
In the study area people migrated to the town from different areas and communities with their cultural values, beliefs, customs and way of social relation they have. After they migrated to town they have an imprint of cultural contacts on their life. According to interview, it was found that most of the migrants were vulnerable to different problems such as unemployment, homelessness, insecurity and as a result they were exposed to certain psycho-social problems, including stress, isolation and hopelessness in life.

Due to these psycho-social problems they were addicted to drugs like chat, cigarette, and alcoholic local drinks. Most members of these groups used begging and robbing as means of their livelihood.

**HEALTH IMPACT**

A greatest threat to human health in the developing world is the lack of adequate water and sanitation services. In Mekelle town there is shortage of access to clean water and sanitation services and the proportion of the urban population covered by clean water and sanitation services were very small.

**The major health problem of the respondents (Figure1)**



Source field survey (2011)



In the above figure 56.6% of the respondents were affected by contaminated water and sanitation as a result they were exposed to disease like Ameba Giardia and other parasites. Some young female migrants were found indifferent locality working as a street girls engaged in commercial sex practices to raise their income. As a result they were highly exposed to sexual and reproduction health problems including HIV (AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, sexual transmitted infection and illegal abortions). Some old migrant said that working place and time was not comfortable which affect their health.

#### CAUSE OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

Internal movement lead to the growth of towns and spread of suburbs and urban spread as well as the decline of older towns and the rural depopulation (C. Morgan 1972)

Reason of migration (Table 5)

Reason of migration	frequency	percentage
Natural disaster	5	16.6
Landlessness	10	33.3
Job opportunities	10	33.3
Education	3	10.2
For married	1	3.3
Family problem	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey (2011)

In the study areas (Mekelle town) people migrated from several places, weredas and rural kebbles to the town. Table 5 reveals that among the reasons the most important cause of migration from rural to urban was landlessness (33.3%) and search of employment (33.3%) in the city. Other causes such as natural disaster, education, marriage and family problem are minor.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the migrants were between the age of 18-29, which is the time of entry into the labour force and this indicates that, there are high number of un employment, which caused by scarcity of agricultural land and job in the rural areas. The remaining push factors, includes natural disaster, war, marriage, family problem similarity among the identified pull factors that attracted those rural migrants to Mekelle town includes education, job opportunities, kin pressure were the major ones. The lives of number of migrants were based on daily labor, informal economic activity

In Mekelle town there is little economic and employment opportunity as compared with the number of migrants. Employment opportunity is available in informal sector because they are not skilled people. Though in the town there are high demand for labour force and the existence of migrant have its own positive impact in addressing the demand, more labour force creates different economic problem in the town. Among the problems, unemployment, homelessness, expensive food items and services, and the spread of rampant urban poverty are the major ones.

Urban poor were exposed to health problems. Access to clean water and sanitation service were expensive and unaffordable for the urban poor this led to different health hazards including, contagious diseases on the other hand those people who face problem of unemployment and unable to challenge the difficulties of the urban life, exposed to psychosocial health problems including stress, hopelessness and certain other mental problems. Apart from this some young female migrants engaged in commercial sex activities for their survival. They give sex services in lower price for their customers who are young contract labour. As a result of this they are highly exposed to sexual and reproductive health problems including HIV/AIDS unwanted pregnancies, sexual transmitted infections and illegal abortions In Mekelle town large number of adult migrants, who are working in different construction projects, informal economic activities etc. various measures have been taken to organizing and cooperating on different micro and small scale industries. To increase the opportunities for the migrants in urban agriculture, raw material production, construction sector and provision of different services are the better option. Initial capital and

the available training are expected from different stakeholders including government, private sectors and NGOs.

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