Research Article   **Open Access**

The Nexus between Youth Rural-urban Migration and Human Insecurity in Ethiopia: The Case of Wolaita Sodo Town

Assefa DT* and Yismaw YG

Civics and Ethical Studies, Wolaita Sodo University, Wolaita Sodo, Sodo, Ethiopia

Abstract

The study was sought to investigate the nexus between youth rural-urban migration and human insecurity in Ethiopia. The study, by assessing the major problems caused by youth rural-urban migrants, identify the major sources of human security in Wolaita Sodo town and explore the relationship between youth migration and human insecurity in the study area. Mixed research approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative method, is used for this study. In order to identify the target sample, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed. Based on the research problem and objectives, both primary and secondary data sources are used. More specifically, the methods used to collect the necessary primary data were questionnaire and interview. Quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive statistics (like percentage and frequency) while the qualitative data collected through interview were used to triangulate the results of quantitative data. The findings revealed that, while housing problem and development of slums, urban unemployment, and urban crime are the most severe problems aggravated by youth rural-urban migrants, theft, and smuggling are the main source of human insecurity in the town.

Keywords: Youth; Rural-urban migration; Human insecurity

Introduction

Migration is a truly global phenomenon, with movements both within nations and internationally across borders. According to the National Geographic Society (2005), migration involves the movement of people from one place to the other. The world has an estimated 244 million international migrants and more than 763 million internal migrants [1]. This shows that a considerably higher number of migrants moved within their countries, mainly from rural to urban areas or from one rural area to another [2].

People choose to migrate because of different reasons. Although civil unrest, war, ethnic conflicts and violations of human rights are certainly among the causes of migration, in many cases migrants decide to leave their community for economic and socio-cultural reasons to seek work elsewhere. The situation is compounded by increasing population pressure and a deteriorating natural environment.

There are different forms of migration; broadly speaking internal and international. From the internal migration; Rural-urban, urban-rural, rural-rural and urban-urban are the major forms. Rural-urban migration (RUM) is the movement of people from the country side to the urban centre. Both at the urban destination and at the rural origin there are demographic, economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of migration which is diverse and deep [3].

Evidence shows that rural-urban migration whether for temporary or permanent is the most significant form of migration. Study conducted on Sub-Saharan African countries revealed that the youths are integral components of the migrant population in terms of both volume and the effects they have on both their points of origin and destination. Estimates indicate that 15 percent (approximately 26 million) of the migrant population are youth.

Internal migration with its changing constituents of migrants become on the increase in Ethiopia. Rural out flow is become smaller, whereas urban rural migration declining the most. According to the data from the Ethiopian Central Statistical Authority, while rural-rural migration becomes decreased through time from 56 to 49 and then to 47 percent in the period of the previous three censuses, the rural -urban migrants on the same periods Shows significant increments.

Though the rural youth migrants became unable to realize their objective, according to Erulkar et al. [4] the reasons for rural to urban migration in Ethiopia among youth occurred primarily in search of educational opportunities followed by employment opportunities and for escaping early marriages. The opportunities for work are limited to informal work such as domestic work, coffee shop assistant, or bar girl [5].

The findings by Alemante, et al. shows that, like other parts of the country, movement of people across regional and zonal boundaries is historically a common phenomenon in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) where influx of people migrates from rural to small and big towns due to different reasons.. The exodus of people from rural to urban centers has becoming serious problems of most small and growing urban areas in the region.

Statement of the Problem

Rural-urban migration in Sub-Saharan African countries constitutes the single most important cause of the rapid growth of the urban population. Migration from rural areas on average accounts for about 60 per cent of the urban population and in exceptional cases as much as 75 percent. The 2008 UN-HABITAT Global Report on Human Settlements states that developing regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa, are experiencing the fastest rate of urbanization attributed to high levels of natural population increase and an increase in rural-to-urban migration.

*Corresponding author: Assefa DT, Professor, Civics and Ethical Studies, Wolaita Sodo University, Wolaita Sodo, Sodo, Ethiopia, Tel: +251921937331; E-mail: destategegne@wsu.edu.et

Although actual data is scanty, it is believed that Wolaita Soddo town received a large rural urban migrant population each year. Based on the first, second, third national censuses and the unpublished documents of Municipality of the town, the population size of the study area increase from time to time. For instance in 1967 the total population of the town was only 10,842 and in 1975 the population grown to 19,414. During the first national census in 1984 the population was only 24,278 but grown to 36,287 in 1994 (during the Second National Census). Later in 2007 (during the Third National Censuses) the population reached 76,050 from which 43,639 were migrants and currently the population estimated to be 127,397. This indicates that the town experiencing a high number of in-migration mainly from Woalita Zone and nearby Zones.

This has led to over population of the town leading to the creation of new settlements and a proliferation of ghettos all over the town bringing considerable strain on public utilities. Now the urban population has persisted at a rate that greatly exceeds the rate of creation of possibilities for gainful employment for job seekers. Employment is particularly hard to find for unskilled rural migrants. Some of these unemployed people find shelter with and depend on relatives. This impairs the towns' ability to meet service delivery needs. Others survive through engagement in the informal economy. This growing group becomes part of the urban poor. One consequence of escalating urban poverty is the growing number of unemployed youth rural-urban migrants. Their survival is tremendously precarious, and they have little hope for any meaningful future and are extraordinarily vulnerable to abuse. For many, prostitution and crime are the only means to survive.

As urbanization grows, the town becomes globalized and crime increases in complexity. The incidences of crime and the degree of violence have increased tremendously in Wolaita Sodo town. Now a town experiences a wide range of criminal activities ranging from the petty to organized crime. Theft, mugging, smuggling, kidnapping and human trafficking are among the forms of crime the town experiencing. Women, the elderly and the weak are easy victims of all kinds of crime. Urban insecurity is, however, not limited to these vulnerable groups. Insecurity is widespread and felt by a high proportion of citizens.

Even though writers in the past have tried to identify the causes and consequences of youth rural-urban migration, yet not many studies have tried to show the relationship between youth rural-urban migration and urban human security. That is why this study focused on the nexus between youth rural-urban migration and urban human insecurity.

Objectives

The general objective of the study is to assess the nexus between youth rural-urban migration and human insecurity. The following specific objectives have been formulated to address the general objective.

➢ To assess the major problems caused by youth rural-urban migrants,

➢ To identify the major sources of human security in Wolaita Sodo town,

➢ To explore the correlation between migration and human insecurity in the study area.

Research Questions

The major task of this research is to answer the following questions.

1. What are the major threats to human security because of youth rural-urban migrants?

2. What are the major problems caused by youth rural-urban migrants?

3. To what extent the youth migration and human insecurity correlated?

Materials and Methods

Description of the study area

The land area of Wolayta measures 438,370 hectares, or 4500 Kilometer square, of which 54 percent is cultivated, 11 percent employed for grazing, and 21 percent under bush, shrubs and forest cover. In various studies, Wolayta has always been associated with high population. Travelers who passed through the area in the first decade of the twentieth century spoke of dense settlements and crowded markets. Besides, the population of Wolayta is overwhelmingly rural. According to the 2007 population and housing census of Ethiopia, Wolayta had a total population of 3.7 million people or 2.31 percent of the country's population. As the 2007 census showed, the urban inhabitants were only 289,707 which is 12.7% less than the national and regional average of 17% and 16% respectively [6]. According to Desalegn Wolayta Stands as least 'Urbanized Zone' of the Southern Ethiopian regional areas as compared with other neighbors areas. The areas fertility rate is considered as one of the highest in the country in which the average rural women have has 6.9 children during their reproductive years. In contrast, productive resources and environmental assets (land, soil, natural vegetation, water resources, etc) have dwindled considerably over the last four decades [7].

The concentration of the population is high in Wolyta compared with other areas in the region and outside of the region. For instance, we can indicate the population density existing in different locations within the zone, Bolosso has a population density of 637 persons per Km^2, Damot Gale 750 Km^2, Soddo Zuria 438 Km^2, and for the Zone as a whole the density is 360 Km^2. For comparative purposes, we should note that the population density in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region where Wolayta Zone resides is 118, in Amhara 108, and Oromia 67 Km^2 [8]. Under the circumstances, such demographic concentrations pose grave risks for human health, and are the basis of rural vulnerability and poverty. High population has led to immense pressure on environmental resources. Much of the forest cover of the area has long disappeared; there is continuous cropping of farm land.

Research design

In research of this kind, the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods at the same time is more advisable. Quantitative data provide precise summaries and comparisons, while the qualitative data provide general elaborations, explanations, meanings and relatively new ideas. Taking all these into account, mixed research approach, which combine both quantitative and qualitative methods is used for this study [9].

Sample size and sampling procedure for target population

In order to identify the target sample, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed. At the first stage, cluster sampling which is used to select sample based on geographical location was employed in order to make the samples more reprenstative. Therefore the samples were categorize into two 'sub-cities' namely; merkato and mehal kifle ketema/sub-city. Identification of the study sub-cities was considerate of the intensity of crime through observation in town.

Second, out of the selected sub-cities two kebeles were selected in accordance to the intensity of the problem. Once the smallest geographic study units (kebeles) were determined, sample respondents were selected on the basis of probability sampling techniques for the sake of ensuring representativeness. And then to conduct this study 90 samples were participated.

Sources and method of data collection

Based on the research problem and objectives, both primary and secondary data sources are used. Multiple data collection strategy is more advantageous than single data collection strategy in research work. There are strengths and weaknesses to any single data collection strategy and using more than one data collection approach give opportunity to the researcher to combine the strengths and correct some of the deficiencies of any one source of data. More specifically, the methods used to collect the necessary primary data were questionnaire and interview [10].

Method of data analysis

The analysis of data was conducted based on the research objectives and nature of the data. Accordingly, the quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive statistics (like percentage and frequency). Moreover, the qualitative information collected through semi-structured interview is analyzed through descriptive forms and methodological triangulation of ideas. The researchers used SPSS 16 to carry out the statistical analysis [11].

Results and Discussion

The major problems caused by youth rural-urban migration

The data shows that, the major problem in the town is the problem of housing which is common for both developed and developing countries. In some Sub-Saharan African cities, housing shortages have caused the price of housing 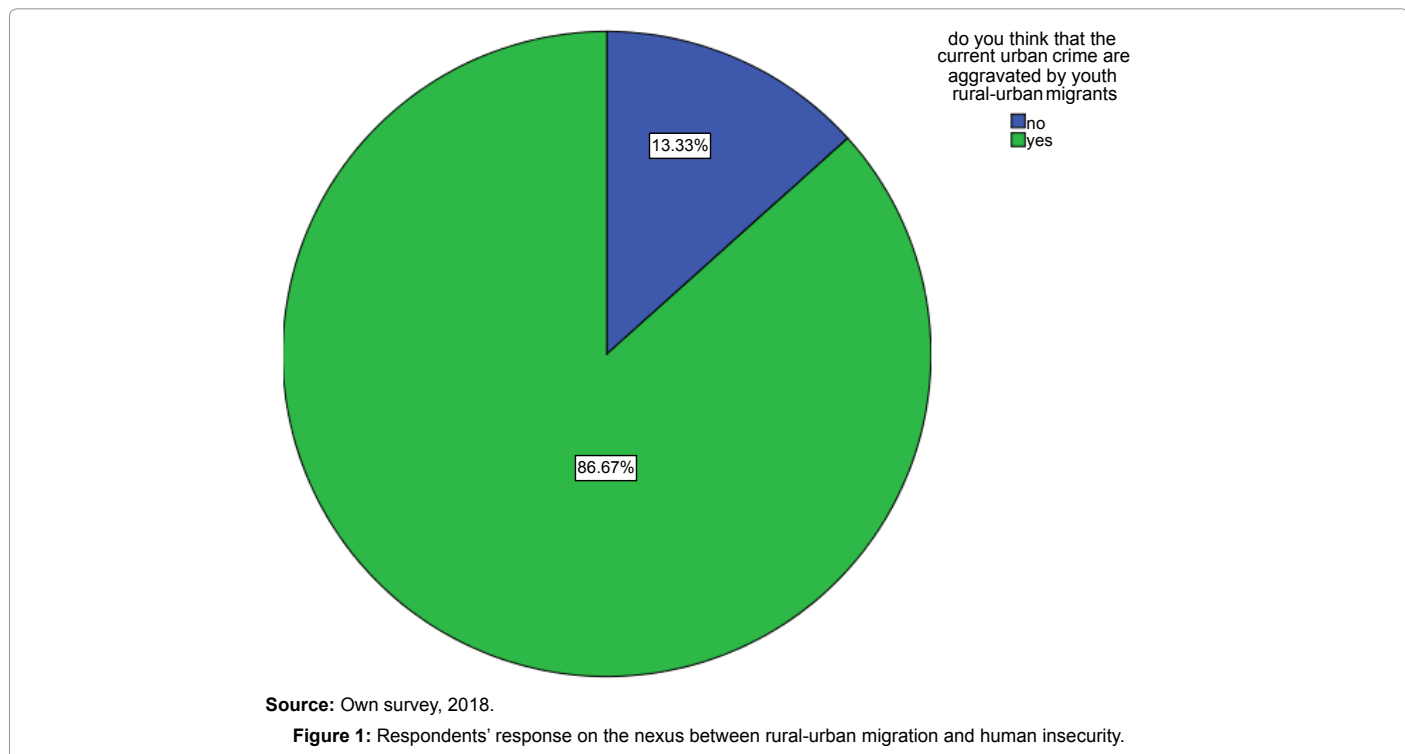units to increase drastically (World Economic Forum, 2017). The world economic forum insisted that one of the biggest challenges cities face is providing adequate and affordable housing to migrants, which is often in limited supply (Figure 1).

Shortage of housing found the prevailing situation in Wolaita Sodo town which fails to accommodate the rapidly growing city population. The respondents were asked how much they are agreed about housing problem as a major problem in the town caused by youth rural-urban migrants. They responded that 23 (25.6%) of them strongly agreed, 60 (66.7%) agreed, 4 (4.4%) disagree and 3 (3.3%) undecided. As a result slums and squatter settlements are widespread in different areas of.

This research also tried to explore the development of slums as a problem in the town. According to the survey, out of the total respondents 4 (4.4%) strongly agreed, 62 (68.9%) agreed and 7 (7.8%) undecided while disagreed respondents accounted 17 (18.9). From the result one can understand that, even though there are significant numbers of respondents disagreed on slums development in the town as a major problem, 73.3% respondents perceived it as a problem among others.

Slums dwellings in the study area can be found in such low laying areas as ditch embankments and on the edges of sewers and near the road sides. Most of the slums have temporary structure with semi-permanent building materials. Due to the location and the forms of these houses basic services and amenities cannot be provided in these houses. This poor housing, lifestyle and dwellers activities are creating not only environmental problems but also social crime.

The survey data also revealed that in the two sub cities the major problem because of youth rural-urban migration is high rate of urban unemployment. According to Table 1 while 53 (58.9%) respondents responded their agreement as strongly agree, 37 (41.1%) respondents state their agreement of urban unemployment as a serious problem in their respective sub cities. This indicates that urban unemployment is the sever problem in the town since the agreed and strongly agreed respondent's together accounted for 90 (100%).

Source: Own survey, 2018.

Figure 1: Respondents' response on the nexus between rural-urban migration and human insecurity.

Problems	Alternatives										Total	
	SDA		DA		UN		A		SA			
	No.	%	No.	%	NO.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Housing problem	0	0	4	4.4	3	3.3	60	66.7	23	25.6	90	100
Slums development	0	0	17	18.9	7	7.8	62	68.9	4	4.4	90	100
Unemployment	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	41.1	53	58.9	90	100
Urban crime	0	0	6	6.7	3	3.3	47	52.2	34	37.8	90	100
Source: Own survey, 2018.												

Table 1: Residents' response about the major problems because of youth rural-urban migration.

Sources of human insecurity	Alternatives										Total	
	SDA		DA		UN		A		SA			
	No.	%	No.	%	NO.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Theft	0	0	2	2.2	1	1.1	45	50	42	46.7	90	100
Hijacking	21	23.3	41	45.6	8	8.9	18	20	2	2.2	90	100
Kidnapping	34	37.8	40	40.4	5	5.6	7	7.8	4	4.4	90	100
Murdering	19	21.1	32	35.6	5	5.6	33	36.7	1	1.1	90	100
Drug trafficking	15	16.7	43	47.8	3	3.3	29	32.2	0	0	90	100
Smuggling	1	1.1	4	4.4	3	3.3	40	44.4	42	46.7	90	100
Source: Own survey, 2018.												

Table 2: Residents' response about the major sources of human insecurity in the town.

According to empirical evidences, the majority of the workers entering the informal sector are recent rural migrants who are unable to find jobs in the formal sector. Their main reason for taking part in the informal sector is to use what little skills they have to earn enough income to sustain their daily lives. As mentioned before, urban informal sector activities can be labor intensive, the labor coming from every member of the household that is able to work. They work very long hours, sometimes making it difficult for the children to attend school regularly.

The other problem identified during the survey was increasing crime rate. According to the surveyed data the agreed and strongly agreed respondents of urban crime as a major problem accounts 47 (52.2%) and 34 (37.8%) respectively. This indicates that now wolaita sodo town has emerged as a town of crime and insecurity. From empirical evidences, among the many negative social consequences of youth rural-migration are the increase in the incidence of crime and violence [3]. From this it is simple to conclude that the influx of more and more people into the town may contribute to the increase in crime level. As people migrate, not all of them find employment and in order to make a living, some may venture into crime, and surely, increased crime rates have been prevalent in the study area.

The major sources of human insecurity in the town

Table 2 shows a summary of the major sources of human insecurity in wolaita sodo town where the majority of the respondents indicated theft as the main source and accounted 87 (96.7%) who stated their agreement in sum as agreed and strongly agreed. The other source of insecurity revealed by the survey was smuggling. According to the survey the sum of agreed and strongly agreed respondents accounts 82 (91.1%). While murdering with 34 (37.8%) and drug trafficking 29 (32.2%) responses indicated by the respondents as the main sources of human insecurity, hijacking and kidnapping with 20 (22.2) and 11 (12.2%) of the sum of the agreed and strongly agreed responses hold the last rank in order.

The nexus between youth rural-urban migration and human insecurity

The survey data revealed that 78 (86.67%) respondents perceive that the current sources of human insecurity are aggravated by youth rural-urban migration.

In response to the growing threat of human security because of youth rural-urban migrants, according to the information gained through interview the majority of the youth migrants from the rural area seemed to create their own businesses in the urban labor force, or work for small-scale family run enterprises. Most of them engaged in a variety of activities such as hustling, street vending, knife sharpening, prostitution, selling drugs and selling fireworks. Other migrants found jobs as barbers, carpenters, mechanics, maids, personal servants and artisans.

Another interviewee who strongly agreed with the above idea responded that:

"Most of the migrants involve themselves in the informal sector activities than the formal one. People employed here get less monetary benefits...and this makes them unable to meet their basic needs like cloth, food and housing. In many cases they adopt unfair means for livelihood like smuggling, begging, drug trafficking, trafficking of women, prostitution etc.".

The other interviewee respondent said:

"Since youth in migrants encountered a problem of finding license to start up their small scale businesses. Due to inability to get license, they were forced to work illegally. For example if you see most of the youth migrants who are giving motor transport service, they have no legal license. But many thefts are committed by such service providers'."

From the above respondent's idea, it is simple to conclude that, among many negative consequences of youth rural-migration, the increase in the incidence of crime and violence and in turn inevitably resulted human insecurity. Thus this reveals that a healthy social environment in the city is threatened.

Conclusion

Based on the increasing concern of government and the public on rural-urban migration, this paper explores the nexus between youth rural-urban migration and urban human insecurity, Problems

associated with rural urban migration are also investigated. The study concludes that human insecurity is created and aggravated by youth rural-urban migration. Major problems like housing problem, development of slums, urban unemployment, and urban crime are caused by youth rural-urban migrants. With regard to urban human security, theft and smuggling are found to be the main source of human insecurity in the town.

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