

Analysis of the problems and gains associated with rural-urban migration, the Sierra Leone experience

By

***Sahr Eric Nabieu**

Submitted to the Union of African Population Studies (UAPS), for the 5th African Population Conference, Arusha December 2007.

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Acknowledgment

I am indebted to a number of people, whose contribution to this work has been very significant, they include: Dr. Bert C. Williams, Director IPAM-USL, who personally inspired me to undertake this work; staff and students of the Accounting and Finance Department, IPAM, whose contributions and suggestions inspired me to choose and write on this topic. Special gratitude is extended to Mr. James Kolie, for proof reading and editing most part of this work. I remain deeply indebted to wife Esther and my three kids, Isaac, Patrick and Robert for their understanding and patience at home while I stayed for longer hours away from home. Lastly but most importantly, I thank the Almighty God for sparing my life and that of my family.

**Sahr Eric Nabieu MAr (UDSM) Tanzania, PGDip Bus. Admin. (USL), B.Sc. (USL, Sierra Leone. Lecturer Accounting and Finance Department, Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), University of Sierra Leone (USL). PMB 570 A.J Momoh Street Tower Hill Freetown Sierra Leone. Email: snabieu@yahoo.com*

Abstract

Rural-urban migration poses more challenges than the opportunities it seems to create for migrants, their families and the host communities in which they tend to reside. These problems are of greater dimension and more severe in the African countries, where the provision of public infrastructural facilities lags a thousand times behind the growth of the population. This paper intends to measure the severity of the above named challenges even as it tries to address the corresponding benefits of rural urban migration in Sierra Leone. The study will also try to investigate the motivating factors forcing the movement of the rural people into the urban settlements, particularly Freetown. The study expects to discover higher negative consequences of rural-urban migration than the associated benefits in Sierra Leone, such consequences include but not limited to disease, brought about by overcrowded residents, unemployment, and sexual abuse of teenagers by adults inmates, hunger and malnutrition.

Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

The 2004 census result estimated Sierra Leone's population at 4.98 million, about 1.13 million (or 22.78 percent) of this total is resident in the four urban areas (Freetown Bo, Kenema and Makeni), of the country, with Freetown accounting for 772, 873 (or 15.52%) of the nation's population.

Between 1963 and 1985 the population of Freetown grew by 115.96%. There was no census in 1996, because of the civil war, which occupied the greater part of the 90s; however the census result of 2004 shows that between 1985 and 2004 the city's population grew by 64.52 %. While the population of the city was growing at that alarming rate, there was little or no significant change in the infrastructural facilities; neither where there moves to properly plan the road net work within the city. For the past three decades Freetown has been struggling with a single source of electricity supply, leaving two third of its residents (especially in the depressed communities) in darkness almost permanently. Bo, Kenema and Makeni townships had ever been without pipe borne water, very limited telecommunication facilities, to highlight but a few instances.

Many factors have been responsible for the overwhelming growth of the urban areas in Sierra Leone, especially Freetown. Paramount among them could be attributed to the centralised form of administration which was practised by the previous governments until 2005, when moves were made to decentralise the administration of the country. That system allowed decisions about the governance of the entire country to be taken in Freetown, and not even in the provincial headquarters, the rural populace suspected that the chunk the country's resources was collected and distributed among the residents of the urban areas, particularly Freetown. Additionally, better educational facilities and better job opportunities were centrally located, any one longing to do honours degree programme was referred to Freetown, that situation which existed caused the mass exodus of young school leavers to the city in search of quality education. Better hospitals were also found in the urban areas.

The meagre infrastructural facilities available to the country, like pipe borne water, electricity, telecommunication (until the recent intervention of the mobile telephone companies) had in the past been built in the city of Freetown, with limited outlets in the Bo and Kenema townships. The eleven year old war which destroyed three quarter of the country aggravated the rural to urban migration in the country. At the beginning of the war little attention was paid to the protection of the rural people, who fell victim of the rebels' killing and mutilation campaign. Most rural population felt they would be better protected in the urban areas like Bo, Kenema or Freetown where security situation was relatively improved, the move to these apparent sanctuaries was therefore very great throughout the war.

The exodus of the rural population has not been without very difficult challenges. The first problem encountered by both the migrants and the host communities is accommodation, this problems breeds other problems like infectious diseases, sexual abuse/harassment by immediate relatives; lack of privacy of adult inmates and exposure of children to inhumane treatment. Lack of adequate food intake is another very severe problems encountered by both migrants and their host communities, lack of food and other basic needs had lead to prostitution on the part of the teenage girls and even grown-up ladies, which has the inherent consequences of sexually transmitted diseases, like HIV/AIDS, gonorrhoea, syphilis, etc.

Over the years there has been a serious shortage of labour in the agricultural sector within the rural areas. Sierra Leone like most other African countries is endowed with very fertile land capable of producing cereals as well as tubers in abundance. There is plenty of sunshine and rain fall, unfortunately the country is unable to feed itself, simply because there is no labour to till the land. It is through that when a country is developing there is always the need to decrease the labour force in the agricultural sector and deplore the surplus labour in the industries (as in the case of Britain in the Industrial revolution), Sierra Leone's economy is still at its rudimentary stage and requires more labour to develop the agricultural sector.

When one considers the benefits associated with migration one would be tempted to jump to the conclusion that it all be well with the migrants, their families and even the host communities. Shadrudin (2003) also acknowledged this point; he observed that rural urban migration promotes the dualistic approach to the growth of the economy, where the informal and the formal sector grow side by side. In India for instance, this dualistic analysis has also been applied specifically to the urban economy, which has been decomposed into a formal and an informal sector (Todara M. 1997). The bulk of new entrants into the urban labour force seem to create their own employment or to work for small-scale, family-owned enterprises. The self-employed are usually engaged in a remarkable array of activities, ranging from hawking, street vending, letter writing, knife sharpening, and junk collecting to selling fireworks, engaging in prostitution, drug peddling, and snake charming. Others find jobs as drivers, cobblers, mechanics, carpenters, small-scale artisans, barbers, apprentices, and personal servants (Todaro M. 1997).

These opportunities sometimes come by but not all migrants may be lucky to get and fully make use of them. Remember Shadrudin's observation of the migrants in China, who have been unlucky, many of them are homeless, living on the pavements of Calcutta, or Bombay (Mumbai) or other megapolises. The important role that the informal sector plays in providing income opportunities for the poor is no longer open to debate (Todaro M. 1997). Thus the burden on the informal sector to absorb more labour will continue to increase unless other solutions to the urban unemployment problem are provided.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In recent times there are more problems associated with rural urban migration; the impacts of these problems have apparently outweighed the associated benefits. But not many African governments are monitoring the effects of these problems, so as to design policies to try to reverse the trend of internal migration in their various countries. Not many governments are aware of the annual internal migration trend, neither most of them know the factors responsible for the movement of rural people into their cities. At the

same time most African governments have little or no knowledge about the problems encountered by the various households in the depressed communities of their cities. This situation has made it very difficult or rather impossible for African governments including Sierra Leone to plan and deliver the most needed social amenities for their subjects, especially those living in the rural areas to dissuade them from migrating into the city.

The trend of the movement of the rural people into the city has also militated against the agricultural development in these countries. The stage of agricultural development in most African countries is still labour intensive, able bodied men who should till the land have abandon their role in the farms, and have engaged themselves in petty trading in the urban areas

Although, these problems are of larger dimension, pervasive and are continuing unabated, not many governments have launched any regular research programme to monitor the trend of the movement of their subjects on the sustainable basis. Thus the motivation of this research is to evaluate the problems encountered by migrants, even as these problems impact on their host/home communities. The study is also meant to assess the consequences of migration on the development of agriculture in Sierra Leone, and the main factors behind the movement of the rural people.

1.3 The aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to highlight and evaluate the problems encountered by rural urban migrants, their families and the host communities. It also tries to compare these problems against the associated benefits of migration.

The specific objectives of the study would therefore include:

- Enumeration of the spread of diseases resulting from overcrowded homes within the area of study

- To investigate the number of household dependants per family in the depressed community of Freetown, east zone including Kroo Bay
- To find out the number of unemployed or under-employed dependants per family within the depressed communities of the area under survey
- To determine the amount of social amenities available to family members within the depressed communities.
- To determine the main motivating factors behind the rural urban migration in Sierra Leone;
- To evaluate the impact of rural urban migration on the supply of labour for agricultural practices; and
- To analyze the policy implication of rural urban migration

1.4 Expected results and policy implication

The study expects to discover fewer benefits that are associated with rural urban migration, especially for the new migrants, but the challenges/problems are expected to be too many.

The study expects to find a high level of positive correlation between overcrowded residents and the prevalence of communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS, TB and even the incidence of malaria.

Unemployment or under-employment is expected to be higher among migrants than the original indigenes¹ of the urban areas. The original city dwellers are expected to be exposed to better life enhancing opportunities than migrants, especially the new entrants. Most overcrowded residents are shabby and make-shift dwelling places, most of them dangerous for human habitation are expected to be occupied by rural urban migrants.

This study also expects to have negative relationship between rural urban migration and the development of the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone

¹ Those who have lived in the area under study for thirty (30) years and above.

The significance of the proposed study could be highlighted in the following statements:

- It helps enlarge the knowledge base of the staff members of the University as well as the students;
- It will serve as a secondary source of information for those intending to carry out further surveys on population issues
- It will throw light on more burning issues affecting the poor residing in slum areas within our urban areas
- Policy makers can use our report to strengthen measures that can enhance real decentralization of the nation's resources of the country.
- This study can be used to show other countries problems of migration affecting Sierra Leone for cross-country comparison.

Conceptual Framework and the related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Migration in every part of the world is triggered by several factors, economic reasons not being the least among these factors. For instance, Long (2004) writing on rural-urban migration in Britain, observed that several factors combined to make the populace mobile, to him he maintained the uneven spread of industrialization and economic modernization created wage differentials that induce migration. He further lamented that the well developed roadways and increasing rail coverage kept migration cost low, and therefore the trend of migration flourished.

Cornwell et. al (2004) observed that rural-urban migration (urbanisation) should go hand in hand with development. Theories of Lewis (1954) and Ranis Fei (1961) envisaged development as the transfer of labour from the informal subsistence sector to the more productive industrial sector. Cornwell et.al commenting further on the recent urbanisation of the developing countries had this to say: while migration is a normal element of population growth, in most societies, the scale of movement in developing countries is such that urban population swell may have undesirable consequences for the overall poverty and development.

Migration literature has come to regard rural-urban migration as the major contributing factor to the ubiquitous phenomenon of urban surplus labour and as a force which continues to exacerbate urban unemployment problems (Todaro, 1976, P.20)

2.2 The Empirical Evidence

This section highlights the results of various studies done on the subject matter of rural-urban migration. We discuss herein first results of some of health related problems associated with migration.

Most of the available evidence leads to the inference that migrants are usually young people who are healthier than the population they left and it is a result of the selective nature of migration. Freedman (1947), however, pointed out that there are contradicted

evidences about the hypothesis that migrants are healthier than population they join. He also pointed out age and income as important variables affecting health differences between migrants and non-migrants. The association between migration and health is mixed. A number of studies highlight the benefits of access to health services, information, education, safe drinking water, and cash incomes afforded by urban living. Other studies found that poverty; housing and living environments, inadequate water services and waste disposal limit the benefits of urban environments and exacerbate health problems (McDade and Adair, 2001). Three general findings are: migrants and non-migrants tend to have different health status; socioeconomic factors, such as age, sex, income, education, race, housing, population density, and labor force status, determine health status of both migrants and non-migrants but at different levels; and finally qualifications regarding adequacy of migrant, especially migrant status, should be considered.

Though most of the studies on migration and health have looked at health comparison between migrants and non-migrants at a certain point in time, none of them have looked at health of the migrants over time. Since migration is rather a process health of the migrants should also be considered as a process. In fact, this limitation is hard to overcome as it is hard to track migration or migrants. The relaxation of migration the increase of rural-urban temporary migration and the new health system in Vietnam are all originated and interacted through the same root: the political and economic reform. The reform has accelerated urban ward temporary migration brought about economic growth, but also inequality and problems with health access and utilization for migrants. Along with the poor, temporary migrants are negatively influenced regarding health care access. Those temporary migrants maybe even worse off than the urban poor since they are neither belonging to any categories that remain exempt from health charges nor receive free health insurance plan in urban areas.

Machaia (2003), discovered that many factors were responsible for rural-urban migration in Kenya for example these factors includes but not limited to: the unbalanced development of the country, which favours certain regions—starting with the major cities

of Nairobi and Mombassa and certain rural regions. It is inevitable then that people who are able from the lesser-developed regions or from the poorer parts of the country will try to migrate to the more developed parts of the country. The Urban Bias (Lipton 1977) form of development has continued to create two different classes in most African countries, that of the urban class and the rural classes, the latter usually being more impoverished compared to the latter causing uncomfortable inequalities. The neglect of rural masses in East Africa was more eloquently discussed by the late president Nyerere of Tanzania who had put all his efforts to try and make a better life for his rural men and women. His ideas were clearly outlined in the Arusha Declaration of 1967 and subsequent speeches (Nyerere, 1988). The Kenyan leaders were not as eloquent in favor of rural development as Nyerere was (Nyerere (1977). Kenyatta tried to call for the “back to the land policy”; the practice in his government by and large continued the colonial legacy which favoured urban development over rural development except for “some islands” of plantation and commercial agriculture which benefited only the few landowners. Unequal development became the main characteristic of Kenya’s post-independent times during Kenyatta’s and Moi’s regime’s (Kitching, 1980). It is no wonder that migration has continued, mainly rural-urban and also rural- rural.

Many researchers have produced result studies highlighting the problems migrants do encounter in all sphere of life, especially new migrants. The theoretical three-sector model employed by Long (2004) predicts that if jobs were allocated with equal probability to migrants, and non-migrants, the unemployment rate among migrants ought to be much higher than the overall average unemployment rate. However, the empirical evidence suggests that migrants do better than this, that their unemployment rate is no higher than the average.

Methodology of the Study

3.1 Area of study

The target country for the proposed research is Sierra Leone, with sample of 350 residents drawn from four urban areas, including Freetown, Bo, Makeni and Kenema.

These urban areas serve as the most attractive destination for internal migrants in Sierra Leone, and depressed settlements are easily visible in those areas. The sample of residents to be drawn from the above named areas shall be in proportion of the existing population in each of these areas.

3.2 Data type and sources

The study shall make use of both primary and secondary data. The secondary data will be collected from government and non-government establishments, such as the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, NGOS specialized in Health and other social sectors, and independent data collection agencies. For the primary data structured questionnaire will be administered among the target population to collect the necessary information.

Key questions to be included in the questionnaires would be:

- Main factors responsible for the migration of the rural people into the urban areas
- Age distribution of migrants, to determine whether the youth, aged, women men are the majority that migrate
- Main destination of migrants
- Key economic, social and other benefits associated with migration
- Main problems encountered by migrants, including their host communities.

3.3 Sample Selection

The sample frame for the survey will include 350 residents, selected randomly from the main depressed areas of the regions under study; this will enable us to have fair knowledge of the main problems encountered by majority of the inmates within our area of study. The sample shall be in proportion of the given settlement.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data collected will be analyzed using both descriptive and econometric techniques.

The economic model of estimation will be formulated as follows:

Migration = f(need to acquire better education, job opportunities, health care, access to modern infrastructure, need to escape family dispute, effect of the war etc).

Where migration on the left hand side is considered as the dependent variable, and is dependent on the factors outlined on the right hand side.

The equation will be further transformed into econometric relations, inserting coefficient before every independent variable in our equation to analyze their impact on the level of migration in Sierra Leone.

Descriptive statistics, such as correlation coefficients, mode, mean and standard deviation will be used to analyze the problems associated with migration as well as their inherent benefits.

3.5 Institutional Capacity

This research will be undertaken by the Department of Finance and Accounting at the Institute of Public Administration and Management, (IPAM) University of Sierra Leone, (USL) which is endowed with qualified and competent staff in data collection, tabulation and analysis.

The main functions of the survey will be distributed as follows:

Mr Sahr Eric Nabieu: to serve as the team leader of the survey, responsible to coordinate the designing of the appropriate questions for the questionnaires and also to suggest which relevant secondary data would be collected.

Mr James Koli to serve as Assistant team Leader to coordinate the administration of questionnaires in the various regions under study.

Mr Tamba Gbeki will supervise data collection within Freetown

Mrs. Fatmata George will supervise data collection in Bo

Ibrahim S. Kamara will supervise data collection in Makeni

Mr. Abdul Aziz Aowe will supervise the data collection in Kenema.

The Second and Third year students will be employed as data collectors.

Outlay of activities and budget estimate

4.0 Outlay of Activities

No	Activity	Time Lime	Responsibility	Comment(s)
1	Preparation of Survey Proposal	Five Days	Staff of IPAM	Already done
2	Approval of Proposal	Not determined by us	UAPS	Yet to be done
3	Designing of questionnaires	Two weeks	Staff of the Finance and accounting Department IPAM, University of Sierra Leone	Same as above
4	Administration of questionnaires and secondary data collection	One Month	Same as above	Same as above
5	Data coding and classification	One month	Same as above	Same as above
6	Analyses of data	Two months	Staff of IPAM-USL	Same as above
7	Report writing	Two Months	Staff of IPAM-USL	Same as above

4.1 Outlay of Budget for the survey

Activity/Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total cost
Designing of survey proposal	1 staff member X 5 days	\$50 Per	\$250
Designing of survey questionnaires	5 Staff members X10 days	\$50	\$2500
Administration of Survey questionnaires	80 Students X 20 days	\$30	\$4500
	4 Supervisors X 20	\$40	\$3200
	2 Coordinators	\$800 each	\$1600
Data Coding , classification analysis	5 Staff X15 days	\$50	\$3750
Report Writing	Stationery: 10 Packets of Papers	\$8	\$80
	Toner and other computer accessories 2 tubes	\$ 80	\$100
	Computerization 2 Secretaries of the Department	\$500 each	\$1000
Binding of Report	4 Copies	\$20	\$80
Total cost			\$17,060.00

5.0 Institutional contribution

The Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), University of Sierra Leone will have its own contribution in the following ways:

1. Provision of the Office space
2. Use of the Institutes computers and staff
3. Use of the Institute facilities like water light etc.

6.0 Reference

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