

INFLUENCE OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION ON CROP PRODUCTION IN OGBA/EGBEMA/NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVES STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of rural-urban migration on crop production in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was designed to describe the socio-economic characteristics of crop producers in the study area, identify the types of crops produced, determine the causes of rural-urban migration among crop producers and ascertain the effect of rural-urban migration on crop production in the study area. A sample size of 216 respondents was chosen from the three major clans of the local government area using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results of the study revealed that 60.19% of the respondents were between 31 and 50 years, 57.87% were males, 47.69% had secondary education, 46.76% were married, 91.67% had farming experience of 11 years and above, 50.93% of the respondents had household size of 6-7 persons and 77.32% of the respondents had annual income less than N100, 000 each. The types of crops produced in the area include cassava (94.44%), yam (82.87%), cocoyam (81.94%), maize (95.83%), okra (81.48%), vegetables (96. 76%), plantain (87.04%), and banana(81.02%), among others. The causes of rural-urban migration are: sourcing for improved standard of living (\bar{x} = 3.63), communal crisis (\bar{x} = 3.28), lack of job opportunities (\bar{x} = 2.67) and natural disaster (\bar{x} = 2.54). Effects of rural-urban migration on crop production are diversification into non-farm activities (\bar{x} = 3.88), decline in rural economy (\bar{x} = 3.35), farm work by aged parents (\bar{x} = 3.29), food insecurity (\bar{x} = 2.91) and low agricultural productivity (\bar{x} = 2.75). The study concluded that rural-urban migration is a serious constrain in crop production in the study area. It therefore recommended among others, that government should provide agricultural inputs to the rural farmers to enhance their productivity, adequate physical and social infrastructures should be put in place in order to encourage rural farmers, also adequate security should be put in place to curb the menace of insecurity in the rural area.

Keywords: Influence, Rural-Urban, Migration, Crop Production

INTRODUCTION

Migration is the movement of people from one geographical location to another, either on a short-term or permanent basis (Ekong, 2003). Generally, migration is an expected occurrence in the existence of a nation (Ofuoku, 2012). Migration occurs through different form, which include; intercontinental migration, rural-urban migration, forced or involuntary migration, impelled migration, seasonal migration, return migration, and long and short term migration. Rural-urban migration is the foremost pattern of internal migration. The choice of migration of any individual involves many 'push factors' which force migrants out of the rural areas and 'pull factors' which attract migrants to urban centres.

The problem of rural-urban migration and its impact on agricultural development is a complex subject. The phenomenon of rural-urban migration is grounded in the persistent inequality in the allocation of social and economic infrastructure such as pipe borne water, good roads, electricity, health facilities, security and industries, among others in rural and urban communities. This has been experienced since the colonial era. Harris and Todaro (2000) explaining

rural-urban migration indicated that expected wage differential is one of the causes of rural-urban migration. It implies that people will continue migrating from rural to urban centres until the wages in the rural areas become equal to those in urban areas.

Like other developing countries, Nigeria is facing rising population growth rate with increasing rural-urban migration. The most distinct characteristic of Nigeria's rural areas is the widespread involvement of the inhabitants in agriculture. The agricultural centre principally on crop farming, animal husbandry, poultry, fishing, forestry, food processing and cottage industry. Agriculture is the most important economic sector in terms of its contribution to the GDP of the nation after oil. Agricultural sector contributes about 41 percent of the country's GDP, employs about 65 percent of the total population and provides employment to about 80 percent of the rural population (African Development Fund, 2005).

Many studies have examined factors affecting rural to urban migration and revealed that the economic consideration was the primary motivation factor (Ikramullah, Shair, & Rehman. 2011). Other studies

indicated that economic push factors (lack of credit, small landholding and rural poverty) were important while others showed high wage rate at urban centres, being the more crucial factor. Other factors include lack of better social services, better education and health facilities and entertainment at urban centres, marriage and joining family at the urban centres (Gimba & Kumshe, 2011).

The unavailability of basic economic and social infrastructure such as water, roads, electricity, health facilities, and the security of lives & properties due to inhabitants in the rural areas are possible causes of rural-urban migration, which consequently lead to low agricultural productivity and low standard of living among people in the rural areas. As economies continued to develop, the percentage of the people engaged in the agriculture sector declined. In general, a 1% increase in GDP leads to decrease of a .052 in the percentage of people employed in agriculture (McCatty, 2004). Rivers State has been described as "Treasure base of the Nation", which however, meant that the major source of revenue for both the state and the nation were derived from the state, unfortunately, the agricultural sector is still at the subsistence level, while crude oil has remained the major source of revenue for the state.

Recently, communities in Rivers State, especially in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State, witnessed high wave of crime and criminality, this ugly incident affected crop cultivation as well as food production, since farmers could not go to farm for fear of being attacked by restive youths. These situations led to the deserting of most communities as well as farmlands, as the security of farmers was no longer guaranteed. This situation led many inhabitants in the rural areas to flee, relocate, and migrate to urban areas for safety. Rural-urban migration can affect crop production in the following aspect, to mention but a few; Aworemi, Abdul-Azeez and Opoola (2011) stated that, when youths and adults that are supposed to remain in the community and contribute to the development of agriculture and the community in general leave the rural areas for other destinations, there will be reduction in the crop production capacity.

Furthermore, the 'lost labour' of able-bodied (migrated) men and women is ascribed a key role in the process of crop production decline. This has serious implications for crop production since most of the work which would have been done by the youths is now left for the aged to do. Also, while migrants are away, households have less labour to allocate to local production activities. Supporting the above assertion, De Brauw and Rozelle (2003) found that the loss of household labour from migration negatively affects household crop production.

Consequently, due to government's inability to provide basic social and economic infrastructure such as pipe borne water, good roads, electricity, health facilities, security and industries, among

others, leads to people moving from one place to another to seek greener pastures, and these situation have negative effect on crop production, due to shortage of manpower among others. Thus, rural settlers in one way or the other still need to cultivate, as majority of rural dwellers depend more on cultivated farm produce for food and sustenance, this study became necessary, to determine the influence of rural-urban migration on crop production in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State.

Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State has experienced a huge wave of migration of 'able bodied men and women into the urban areas in the past three years, due to the problem of insecurity in the area such as kidnapping, rival cult clash, chieftaincy tussle, inter-communal clashes, among others. This mass migration of labour force from the area, as well as others yet to be identified factors could lead to be the cause of low crop production in the study area. According to Iruonagebe (2009), the impact of rural-urban migration is indeed a rapid deterioration of the rural economy, leading to chronic poverty and food insecurity.

This study therefore seeks to find out the influence of rural-urban migration on crop production in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. describe the socio-economic characteristics of crop producers in the study area,
- ii. identify the types of crops produced,
- iii. determine the causes of rural-urban migration among crop producers, and
- iv. ascertain the effect of rural-urban migration on crop production.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) of Rivers State. It is located in the Northern part of the state with close proximity with Delta and Imo State with coordinates 5.342°N 6.656°E. In geographical terms, ONELGA occupies an area roughly thirty kilometers by twenty kilometers in the Niger flood plain, with Ekepeye, Egeni and Ijaw areas to the South and South-West, Oguta, and Awara to the North and North-East, and Aboh, Kwale and Onitsha to the West and North-West. This local government area is one of the biggest local government areas within the Rivers West senatorial district of the state. It has a relatively well-drained land and rich soil which support crop production, fresh water rivers, creeks, wetlands secondary forests and abundant sunshine and rainfall all year round (Ella, 2005). The vegetation of the area is a typical rainforest, characterized by various plant species arranged in

tiers or store. The major arable crops produced in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria include cassava, maize, yam, and vegetables. Common plant species in the area include oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*), mango (*Magnifera indica*), Native pear (*Dacryodes edulis*), Oil bean tree (*penthracletbra macrophylla*), Avacado pear (*persea Americana*), *Musa Spp* Cassava (*manihot esculenta*), Yam (*Dioscorea spp*). African star apple (*chrystophyllum albidum*), Guava (*psidium guajava*), Paw-Paw (*carica papaya*), etc. The natural environment support agricultural activities (Ugwu, Mgbakor-Miriam, Ochiaka & Osiagor, 2014). The major occupation of majority of the people of the area is farming and subsistent fishing, while few of the people in the settlement are into businesses and white-collar jobs.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. There are three clans that make up Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State. Ogba clan consists of 29 communities, Egbema clan consists of 19 communities, while Ndoni clan consists of 18 communities. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for this study. First, purposive sampling technique was used to select the communities. The 10 communities chosen from Ogba clan are Omoku, Erema, Oboh, Obirikom, Okwuzu, Obite, Ama, Ohali-Osumini, Ohiauga and Okansu. The 7 communities chosen from Egbema clan are Elehia, Itu, Ikiri, Egbema, Obagi, Obiete and Obidi. The 8 communities chosen from Ndoni clan are Utu, Isara, Amuajie, Ogu, Odugili, Ndoni, Oboaso and Ogbeogene. Secondly, simple random technique was used to select 10 respondents from each of the 25 communities giving a total of 250 respondents. Primary data were used for the study. Structured interview schedule was used to get information. The data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and simple regression were used to test the stated hypotheses, all were done at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Table 1, 60.19% of the respondents indicated that they were between 31 and 50 years. The findings of this study were in line with the study of Albert and Emah (2013) where most respondents were within

the age bracket of 45-54 years. Also, 57.87% of respondents indicated they were males, while 42.13% were females. This implies that more males were involved in crop productions and there may be tendency for them to migrate to urban centers in search of white collar jobs, thereby leaving farming activities to be done by female members of the households (Mbah, Ezeano and Agada, 2016). Educationally, 47.69% indicated that they had secondary education. It shows that the respondents were literate enough. As observed by Okojie (2002), the more educated a farmer is the more likely he adopts an innovation. In terms of marriage, 46.76% of respondents indicated they were married. This study agrees with the assertion of Mbah, Ezeano and Agada (2016), that there is greater involvement of married people in farming activities in order to ensure household food security. For household size, 50.93% of respondents indicated that they had household size of 6-7 persons. This is an indication that the respondents had a large household size, which could serve as a source of labour on family farms. This situation is also explained from the observation of the Ekong (2010) that household size is affected by the need for manual labour. From result, 51.39% indicated that they had a farm size of 1-3 acres of farmland. This implies that the respondents practice small-scale farming (Mbah, Ezeano and Agada, 2016). In terms of farming experience, 91.67% of the respondents indicated that they had farming experience of 11 years and above. The mean level of the farming experience of the respondents was 11.05 years. This indicates that the respondents had been farming for a long period. According to Mbah, Ezeano and Agada (2016) and Albert, Lad and Isife (2017), this length of experience could also be attributed to the fact that the study area is an agrarian community. Concerning income, 77.32% of the respondents indicated that their annual income was less than N100,000 per respondent. The mean income of the farmers was N139,814.81 per annum. This study disagreed with the finding of Ango, Ibrahim, Yakubu and Alhaji (2014) that all the respondents earned above the Nigerian minimum monthly basic wage rate of N18000. Hence, unchecked migration out of the region may likely pose food insecurity and increase the poverty level in the region.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (n = 216)	Percentage (%)	Mean (\bar{x})
AGE (Years)			42
<20	18	8.33	
21-40	35	16.2	
41-50	130	60.19	
51 and Above	33	15.28	
Gender			
Male	125	57.87	
Female	91	42.13	
Education Attended			
Non Formal Education	28	12.96	
Primary School	61	28.24	
Secondary School	103	47.69	
Tertiary Education	24	11.11	
Marital Status			
Single	26	12.04	
Married	101	46.76	
Divorced	35	16.2	
Widowed	54	25	
Household Size			6
I Person	11	5.09	
2-3 Persons	31	14.35	
4-5 Persons	57	26.39	
6-7 Persons	110	50.93	
8 Persons and Above	7	3.24	
Farm Size (Hectares)			2.39
< 1	61	28.24	
1-'3	111	51.39	
4-'6	37	17.13	
7 and Above	7	3.24	
Farming Experience (Years)			10.68
1-5	3	1.39	
6-10	15	6.94	
11 and Above	198	91.67	
Income Per Annum (N)			139,814.81
< 100,000	167	77.32	
100,000 -500,000	41	18.98	
510,000 and Above	8	3.70	

Source: Field survey (2019)

Crops Produced in Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area

Results in Table 2 showed that the major crops produced was vegetables (96.76%), Maize (95.83%), Cassava (94.44%), Plantain (87.04%), Yam (82.87%), Cocoyam (81.94%), pineapple (81.48%),

Banana (81.02%) and Pineapple (56.48%). The crop farming operating at low level in the study area includes: Cucumber (49.07%), Melon (48.61%), Pepper (47.22%), Sugarcane (27.31%), and Soya bean (25.93%). By implication crop farming is well practiced in the study area. This finding supports the

study of Ayinde, Torimiro and Koledoye (2014) which revealed that majority (59.0%) had their

primary occupation as farming.

Table 2: Crops Produced in the study area

Crops Produced in ONELGA	Frequency (n=216)	Percentage
Cassava	204	94.44
Yam	179	82.87
Cocoyam	177	81.94
Vegetables (Pumpkin, Waterleaf, Okazi, Okro, Pepper etc)	209	96.76
Sugarcane	207	95.83
Pineapple	176	81.48
Pepper	102	47.22
Cucumber	106	49.07
Sweet Potato	105	48.61
Melon	59	27.31
Soya-bean	56	25.93
Plantain	188	87.04
Banana	175	81.02
Total	multiple responses	

Source: Field Survey (2019). Multiple Responses

Causes of Rural-Urban Migration in the Study Area

Table 3 shows the analyses of the causes of rural-urban migration among crop producers in the study area. Using the decision rule that any variable which mean value has 2.50 and above, is a high cause of rural-urban migration; and any variable whose mean value is below 2.50 is regarded as a low cause of rural-urban migration. Subsequently, the major causes of rural-urban migration among crop producers in the study area as indicated by the respondents include: education ($\bar{x} = 3.71$), sourcing for improved standard of living (3.63), communal crisis ($\bar{x} = 3.28$), inadequate infrastructure ($\bar{x} = 3.19$),

lack of job opportunities ($\bar{x} = 2.67$), natural disaster ($\bar{x} = 2.54$), lack of credit facilities (2.52), farming nostalgia ($\bar{x} = 2.51$), among others among others. This finding showed that major causes of rural urban migration is as a result of quest for skill acquisition, education, communal crisis and social amenities. If these facilities are provided in the rural areas, they will deter the people's enthusiasm for cities. This finding supports the assertions of Ayinde, Torimiro and Koledoye (2014) that absence of social amenities and poverty were the major causes of youth migration from rural to urban cities in Borno State.

Table 3: Causes of Rural-Urban Migration among Crop Producers

Causes	HC	MC	LC	NC	Total	Mean	Remark
Need for education and acquisition of skills in various vocations	170	28	10	8	216	3.71	High cause
Food insecurity	4	9	56	147	216	1.45	No cause
Communal crisis/insecurity	93	90	17	16	216	3.28	High cause
Lack of job opportunities	61	56	54	45	216	2.67	High cause
Non-availability of credit facilities	54	54	54	54	216	2.52	High cause
Inadequate physical and social infrastructure	82	91	26	17	216	3.19	High cause
Desire for more political or religious power	48	40	56	52	216	2.29	No cause
Sourcing for improved standard of living	140	67	8	1	216	3.63	High cause
Escape from punishment as a result of crime committed	48	42	56	70	216	2.36	No cause
total	Multiple responses						

Mean Score: ≥ 2.50 = High Cause; < 2.50 = Low Cause.

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Effects of Rural-Urban Migration on Crop Production in the Study Area

Table 4 shows that effects of rural-urban migration on crop producers were: diversification into non-farm activities ($\bar{x} = 3.88$), decline in rural economy

(\bar{x} = 3.35), farm work by aged parents (\bar{x} = 3.29), few workforce (\bar{x} = 3.11), food insecurity (\bar{x} = 2.91), low agricultural productivity (\bar{x} = 2.75), less crop cultivation (\bar{x} = 2.53), reduction of household income (\bar{x} = 2.53) among others. This finding supports the work of Mbah, Ezeano and Agada,

2016) that rural migration leads to a heavy drain on the supply of rural family labour as the individuals who are essential elements for agricultural development programmes are pulled out of the region culminating at low productivity since the work is left for the few.

Table 4: Effects of Rural-Urban Migration on Crop Production

Effects of Rural-Urban Migration	HE	ME	LE	NE	Total	Mean	Remark
Rapid decline of the rural economy	103	93	13	7	216	3.35	High effect
Chronic poverty and food insecurity	78	70	39	29	216	2.91	High effect
Larger percent of workforce absorbed by agriculture is shortened	93	73	31	19	216	3.11	High effect
Reduction in agricultural production	68	66	42	40	216	2.75	High effect
Less crop are cultivated	53	59	54	50	216	2.53	High effect
Leads to diversification into non-farm occupation	65	79	54	18	216	2.88	High effect
Farm work is mostly done by aged parents	97	87	30	2	216	3.29	High effect
Reduction of household annual income	67	72	41	36	216	2.79	High effect
Total	Multiple Responses						

Mean Score: ≥ 2.50 = High Effect; < 2.50 = Low Effect.

Source: Field Survey, 2019

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that rural-urban migration had negative and significant influence on crop production in the study area. Consequently, the study revealed that the major crops produced in the study area included vegetables, maize, cassava, plantain, yam, cocoyam, banana and pineapple. Other crops produced in a minimal quantity include cucumber, melon, pepper, sugarcane, and soya bean.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Adequate physical and social infrastructures such as good roads, electricity, schools and hospitals should be put in place in rural areas by Nigerian government in order to encourage rural dwellers to remain in agriculture, reduce rural-urban migration.
2. Government and non-governmental organisation should provide agricultural inputs such as pesticide, fertilizer, irrigation system, storage system to the rural farmers to boost their productivity.

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