

Economic activities of migrant rural dwellers in Irewole area of Osun state, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Inadequate natural resources and environmental problems have led to the migration of different ethnic groups across the ecological zones of Nigeria. Therefore, this study examined the economic activities of migrant rural dwellers in Irewole Area of Osun State, Nigeria. Two communities, Wasinmi and Bamigbola were selected for the study and 188 migrants were randomly interviewed. The result showed that the majority of respondents were within the age range of 16-47 years, married and belong to Yoruba, Ibo, Ashanti from Ghana, Iggede (Benue State), Ibira (Kogi State) and Ngas (Plateau State) ethnic groups. They were literate with household size of less than six and engaged in food crop production, livestock production, trading, hired labour on farms, transport business, processing of oil palm, cassava and other minor economic activities like honey collection, digging of wells and sponge making. These activities were done for both household consumption and sales. Majority of these activities are carried out in both wet and dry seasons with the exception of hired labour, honey collection, digging of wells and sponge making which were done during the dry season. Majority identified inadequate funds, water supply, low sales, lack of basic amenities, health hazards, and lack of agricultural input as major problems facing them. The relationship between educational status and level of involvement in economic activities was found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 7.624$, $p \leq 0.05$). Significant difference also exists in economic activities of male and female respondents ($t = 2.42$, $p \leq 0.05$). It is therefore recommended that a soft revolving loan scheme, extension services and other social amenities be provided to improve the economic activities of migrant rural dwellers.

Key words: Economic Activities, Migrant, Rural Dwellers, Constraints

INTRODUCTION

Migration refers to the movement of people from one geographical location to another, either on temporary or permanent basis. It is basically a reflection of the im-

balances in opportunities and life chances which exist between places. The movement may be from rural to urban, rural to rural and more recently, from urban to rural. Also, the movement can be from one

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ecological zone to another. Various reasons had been identified as causes for the movement of people from one location to another. In Nigeria, the lack of opportunity to earn cash income during the slack season in the farming calendar has engendered migration among Hausa farmers (Jabbar *et al.*, 1995). Rural-rural wage differential may also generate migration. For example, the introduction of export cash crops like cocoa and rubber into south-western Nigeria, led to the migration of farmers from other parts of the country into this region. Another asserted reason for migration in the country is the problem of insufficient land within the farmer's own territory. This is common among the Ibo people, who migrate to the south-western part of the country where there are more arable land for economic purposes. Likewise, with improvement in education and skills, people with higher education in rural areas tend to move out to find commensurate employments in towns and those with poor or no educational background migrate to acquire skills (Ekong, 2003).

People also migrate to escape from social and cultural imprisonment in homogeneous rural areas; innovators who want something new and different are generally fired by this motive to migrate (Jibowo, 2000). The need to escape from social upheavals, violence, and political instability for example, the movement of the people of Owo from their hometown to nearby urban and rural areas due to political instability, suspected or real persecution may also lead to migration in urban-rural, rural-urban or rural-rural direction (Ekong, 2003). A good example is the movement of Ife-Modakeke people out of their territory to nearby urban and rural areas due to

conflict in their homeland (Ekong, 2003). Adverse physical conditions in the environment such as drought in the case of pastoralists, flood, exhaustion of pasture (in case of nomadic farmers), development of road transportation and improved communication systems and many other reasons have been found to contribute to the growth and spread of migration among rural dwellers. The problem of soil infertility, aggravated by gully erosion caused the villagers in some parts of Udi, Nsukka and Awka in Anambra and Enugu States respectively, to abandon their villages (Ekong 2003). Lipton (1976) in his study of migration from rural areas in poor countries also observed that rural migration appears to come from two major economic classes. These include the very poor landless and illiterate group and relatively well off, better educated and unskilled group.

Various studies (Jabbar *et al.*, 1995; Oyesola, 2000; Ekong, 2003) had shown the movement of people from different ethnic background to various ecological zones of the country. Oyesola (2000) found that Agro pastoralist in Ogun State involved in crops, livestock and other income generating activities that are foreign to their ethnicity. Land tenure problems through inheritance and soil fertility had also caused the movement of rural south-eastern people to the rural southwest for economic activities. Recent studies (Albert 1999; Nnozi 2003; Otite 1999) on conflict have also revealed migration within the southwest rural areas. Likewise, conflicts in the south south ecological zone have necessitated migration to the southwest and due to the cost of living in urban centers, most of them migrated to rural areas to engage in various economics activities that are available.

Most of the past developmental projects for agricultural and rural development concentrate mostly on indigenous people giving less attention to non-indigenes. For agriculture to grow and be sustained there is need to give recognition to non-indigenes who are residing in most economic advantage rural areas. Rural development is not only the provision of social infrastructures but also, the economic development of individuals that form the rural community. Therefore, having a knowledge of economic activities of non-indigenes will provide a working knowledge that will inform the intervention to be developed for them.

Communities are no more homogenous but heterogeneous, social and economic activities are changing and this will affect their well-being. Hence, there is a need to carry out studies on migration so that interventions that will meet migrant's needs would be provided.

The study therefore, provides answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the personal characteristics of migrants' rural dwellers in the study area?
2. What are their economic activities?
3. Why do they engage in these economic activities?
4. When do they engage in these economic activities?
5. What problems are they facing on these economic activities?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

Irewole Local Government Area with Ikire as its headquarters is located between Latitudes $7^{\circ}15'$ and $7^{\circ}31'$ and Longitudes $4^{\circ}05'$ and $4^{\circ}25'$ east of Greenwich. It is bounded in the North by Ayedire Local

Government Area, in the West by Egbeda Local Government Area of Oyo State, in the Southwest by Ife North Local Government Area, in the South by Isokan Local Government Area and Northeast by Ayedade Local Government Area. The local government area is divided into eleven wards, namely Arinkinkin, Ayetoro, Balogun, Bamidele, Bamigbola, Ikire, Ikoyi-Ile, Majeroku, Molarere and Wasinmi. Information gathered from the local government office revealed that majority of the migrant rural dwellers settled in Wasinmi and Bamigbola. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, Wasinmi and Bamigbola communities were purposively selected for the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Analysed Questionnaire

Sex	Estimated Freq	%	Actual Freq	%
Male	160 (66.66)		130 (54.16)	
Female	80 (33.34)		58 (24.17)	
Total	240	100	188	78.3

Source: Field Survey 2004.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Purposive random sampling was used to select eighty males and forty females from each of the communities giving a total sample size of two hundred and forty respondents.

Table 1 presents the distribution of analysed questionnaire. This study intended to interview two hundred and forty respondents, but one hundred and eighty-eight respondents were interviewed due to limitations on the field of study, such as cultu-

ral reasons where women are not allowed to be interviewed and men are busy on their farms, and some are also involved in processing of oil palm during this period. The survey was conducted between February and May 2004.

Measurement of Variables

The dependent variable for the study is economic activities. This was measured by listing all economic activities in rural areas of southwestern Nigeria from literature, asking respondents to indicate on a 2-point scale of Yes (1) and No (0) the ones in which they are involved. The level of involvement was measured on a 3-point scale of rarely (1), occasionally (2) and always (3). Individual scores were summed up and mean for all the respondents calculated. This was then categorized into 2 groups. Respondents with scores of the mean and above were categorized to have high level of involvement in economic activities, while those with scores below the mean were categorized as having low level of involvement. The independent variables of the study included personal characteristics of respondents, purpose of involvement, time of involvement and constraints being faced. Personal characteristics measured included age, sex, educational status, marital status, ethnic background and family size. Purpose of engagement was measured on a 3-point nominal scale of household use only (1), sale only (2) and both (3). While time of involvement on a 3-point scale of dry season (1), wet season (2) and both (3). For constraints being faced, respondents were asked to list and rank in order of severity. Data were collected through interview schedule and analysed using frequency counts, means, percentages, chi-

square, t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	130	69.1
Female	58	30.9
Total	188	100.0
Age		
16 – 31	88	46.9
32 – 47	74	39.3
48 – 63	14	7.5
64 and above	12	6.3
Total	188	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	44	23.4
Divorced	4	2.1
Married	130	69.2
Widowed	10	5.3
Total	188	100.0
Ethnic Group		
Yoruba	32	17.0
Ibo	4	2.1
Hausa	16	8.5
Ashanti (Ghana)	2	1.2
Igede (Benue State)	70	37.2
Ibira (Kogi State)	48	25.5
Ngas (Plateau State)	16	8.5
Total	188	100.0

Residing years		
< 1 – 15	128	68.1
16 – 31	26	13.8
32 – 47	26	13.8
48 and above	8	4.3
Total	188	100.0
Educational Level		
Primary	64	34.0
Secondary	60	31.9
Tertiary	32	6.4
No formal education	50	26.6
No response	2	1.1
Total	188	100.0
Household Size		
1 – 5	130	69.2
6 – 10	46	24.4
11 – 15	8	4.3
16 and above	4	2.1
Total	188	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2004.

The result showed that the mean age of respondents in the area was thirty-six years. Majority (86.3%) were between the ages of 16 – 47 years, this implied that, they are in their energetic age in life and could be involved in more than one economic activity. The reason for this kind of observation is that studies had revealed that youth are the majority that migrates from one place to another in search of better living (Ekong, 2003).

Majority (69.1%) of respondents were married. This implied that migrants do move in most cases with members of their families in search of better living. The result of analysis showed that ethnic groups present in the study included Yoruba, Ibo,

and Hausa, Ashanti from Ghana, Iggede of Benue State, Ibira of Kogi State and Ngas of Plateau State. Iggede (37.2%) are the most common migrants in the area, followed by Ibira (25.5%), Yoruba (17.0%), Ngas 8.5%) and Hausa (8.5%). The reason for this kind of observation is because of savannah vegetation in the study area that favours root crop production, which is the major occupation of Iggede and Ibira ethnic groups. The Yorubas in the study area are from Ife and Modakeke town where conflict had deprived them of their economic resources in the last few years. Respondents are mostly involved in food production. Majority of the respondents (68.1%) had been residing in the study area for more than 15 years. It can be observed from the Table 2 that, as the number of years increased, the number of respondents decreased.

Table 3: Distribution of Economic Activities of Respondents

Economic Activities	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
a) Food crop production	140 (74.5)	48 (25.5)	188 (100)
b) Livestock production	32 (17.0)	156 (83.0)	188 (100)
c) Trading (petty)	62 (33.0)	126 (67.0)	188 (100)
d) Hired labour	26 (13.8)	162 (86.2)	188 (100)
e) Transport business	8 (4.3)	180 (95.7)	188 (100)
f) Tree crop production	8 (4.3)	180 (95.7)	188 (100)
g) Others (honey, sponge, digging of wells)	8 (4.3)	180 (95.7)	188 (100)

Source: *Multiple Response Field Survey, 2004.

The reason for this observation might be that, as they grow older, they return to their original hometown. This has also been observed by past studies. Respondents are literate who can read and write. This implied that their educational status motivated them to migrate. This observation has been asserted by Kees (2003) and Ekong (2003) that most youth with education usually migrate in search of better economic activities.

Most respondents (69.2%) had an household size between 1 and 5. This small household size may be due to the fact that, they are in a foreign land where there is restriction to ownership of properties or wealth to cater for larger family size. Past studies had also shown that youth form the

majority of migrants, in search of lucrative job.

Table 3 showed that majority (74%) of the migrant were engaged in food crop production; this may be due to the suitability of the soil for planting root crop. The root crops included yams, cassava and cocoyam. Trading is mainly done by women and Hausa men (33%). Livestock produced include cattle, chicken, ducks and goats. Only 13.8% of the migrants were hired laborers. It was observed during the field study that economic activities of respondents significantly contributed to their well-being. Also, ethnic groups were engaged in different economic activities.

C. Respondents Purpose of Involvement in Economic Activities

Table 4: Distribution of Purpose of Involvement in Economic Activities

Economic Activities	House hold		Both (2)	No Response (%)	Total (%)
	consumption	Sales Only			
a) Food crop production	4 (2.1)	16 (8.5)	120 (63.8)	48 (25.6)	188 (100)
b) Livestock production	-	10 (5.3)	22 (11.7)	156 (83.0)	188 (100)
c) Trading (petty)	-	14 (7.4)	48 (25.6)	126 (67.0)	188 (100)
d) Hired farm labour	2 (1.1)	16 (8.5)	8 (4.3)	162 (86.1)	188 (100)
e) Transport business	-	8 (4.3)	-	180 (95.7)	188 (100)
f) Tree crop production	-	8 (4.3)	-	180 (95.7)	188 (100)
g) Others (honey, sponge, digging of wells)	-	-	8 (4.3)	180 (95.7)	188 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2004.

Table 4 showed that majority (63.8%) of migrants were involved in food crop production for both household consumption and sale, 11.7% of livestock producers use it for both household consumption and sales, while 25.6% and 4.3% of the respondents were engaged in trading and hired farm labour both for household and

sales. Respondents were engaged in transportation and tree crop production only for monetary gain. Household consumption means that respondents engaged in such economic activities for consumption within their individual households, while sale only means they engaged in the activity to generate cash income.

D. Time of Involvement of Respondents in Economic Activities

Table 5: Distribution of Time of Involvement in Economic Activities

Economic Activities	Dry (%)	Wet (%)	Both (%)	No response	Total
a) Food crop production	4 (2.1)	10 (5.3)	126 (67)	48 (25.6)	188 (100)
b) Livestock production	4 (2.1)	-	28 (14.9)	156 (83.0)	188 (100)
c) Trading (petty)	6 (3.2)	-	56 (29.8)	126 (67.0)	188 (100)
d) Hired labour	16 (8.5)	-	10 (5.3)	162 (86.2)	188 (100)
e) Transport business	-	-	8 (4.3)	180 (95.7)	188 (100)
f) Tree crop production	-	-	8 (4.3)	180 (95.7)	188 (100)
g) Others (honey, sponge, digging of wells)	8 (4.3)	-	-	180 (95.7)	188 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2004.

E. Problems faced by Migrants in the Study Area

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by their Problems

	1 st Problem	2 nd Problem	3 rd Problem
Finance	120 (63.8)	48 (25.5)	28 (14.9)
Lack of water	36 (19.1)	26 (13.8)	8 (4.3)
Low sales	4 (2.1)	10 (5.3)	-
Lack of basic amenities	4 (2.1)	28 (14.9)	14 (7.4)
Health hazards	6 (3.2)	4 (2.1)	4 (2.1)
Agricultural Inputs	10 (5.3)	16 (8.5)	6 (3.2)

Source: Field Survey, 2004.

Table 5 showed that majority (67%) of migrant who were engaged in food crop production, do so in both dry and wet seasons. While only few of the respondents were engaged in livestock production, trading, hired labour, transport, honey collection, sponge making, well digging and tree-crop production during dry season.

About 63.8% of respondents identified lack of funds as their major problem, while 19.1%, 2.1%, 3.2% and 5.2% had lack of water, low sales, lack of basic amenities, health hazards and lack of inputs as their major problems respectively. This problem of finance as explained by the respondents during survey is hindering them from increasing their level of food, tree and livestock production. Because if they have more credit, they will be able to increase their acreage of production and purchase improved farm inputs. Their present level of production is seriously affecting their well being but not as in their former place of residence.

F. Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics of the migrants and their level of involvement in economic activities. (the selected personal

Table 7; Chi-square Test

Charac- teri- stics	Chi- square value	Df	p- value	Decision
Sex	0.409	1	.60	Not Signifi- cant
Marital status	4.560	3	.21	Not Signifi- cant
Educa- tion-al level	7.624	3	.05	Significant
Decision: $p \leq 0.05$ = significant				

characteristics are sex, marital status and educational level).

The result given in Table 7 showed that there was a significant relationship between educational attainment and level of involvement in economic activities. The study revealed that those respondents with higher educational attainment were more involved in economic activities. This means that education has exposed them to more economic opportunities.

H₀₂: There was no significant difference in the economic activities of male and female respondents in the study area.

Table 8: T-test Analysis for Difference in Economic Activities of Male and Female Respondents in the Study Area

Sources of Varia- tion	N	X	SD	t- valu e	df	p- val ue	De- cisi on
Male	130	113.03	2.53	2.42	186	0.02	Signifi- cant
Female	58	14.97	1.05				

Decision $p \leq 0.05$ = significant

The result of analysis in Table 8 above showed that the economic activities of male and female respondents were different in the study area. This confirmed the findings on gender studies, which revealed that roles and responsibilities are different within households and community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions could be made:

- Majority of the respondents were males, below 47 years of age, married, had formal education, household size of between 1 and 5 and had been residing in the study area for more than 5 years.
- The ethnic groups found in the study area were Iggede, Ibira, Yoruba, Hausa, Ngas, Ibo and Ashanti from Ghana.
- Their economic activities included food crop production, livestock rearing, trading, hired labour, tree crop production and transportation services. They were involved in these activities to provide food for household consumption and to generate money to meet other expenses. They engaged in these economic activities both in wet and dry seasons of the year.
- Problems faced by migrants in the study area included lack of funds, inadequate land, lack of agricultural inputs and lack of social amenities like water, electricity and health center.
- Literate respondents were involved in more than one economic activity.
- Male and female respondents were engaged in different economic activities.
- People do migrate from economic and social improvishment to improve their social welfare through economic activities.
- There was no difference in the economic activities of natives and migrant, except that some of the mi-

grants who don't have enough cash to rent or hire land for crop production tend to be tenant farmers.

- Migration has improved the social well being and income level of migrants when compared to their original living areas.

Recommendations

To improve and boost social well-being of migrants in rural communities the following recommendation could be made:

- ♦ Adequate provision of fund to migrants by granting soft and revolving loan through Agricultural and Rural Development Cooperative Bank.
- ♦ Government should provide adequate and functional social amenities for the populace by sinking boreholes and digging wells, health centers, television and radio listening centre, etc.
- ♦ Good road and transport system should be provided to open up the study area so as to increase sales and thereby solve the problem of low sales.
- ♦ Storage facilities should be provided to store excess products
- ♦ Finally, social welfare officers should give adequate attention to non-indigenous people.

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