

MIGRATION TO ADDIS ABABA AS A SURVIVAL STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN OF MECHA DISTRICT ORIGIN, NORTHWEST ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explore the significance of migration as a survival strategy pursued by migrant children from rural areas of Northwest Ethiopia who are engaged in informal sector activities in Addis Ababa. It attempted to investigate the principal causes of their outmigration; identify their agency and negotiation strategies; their living and working conditions; and the problems they encounter. Data were collected using survey, observation and interview. The study divulged that the major causes for children to flock out of rural areas include household poverty, peer influence, exposure to heavy workload, early marriage and marital dissolution, death of parents, physical punishment, presence of relatives in the city, and the desire to further one's education. Lottery vending, daily labour and housekeeping are the most important activities pursued by migrant children to earn their livelihoods. The study further disclosed that despite the enormity and complexity of the problems and challenges migrant children face in the urban destination; they make significant contributions to sustainable urban development, to their rural families and to themselves. They develop the courage and resilience to endure challenges; and establish cooperation, mutual help and friendship to cope with adversities to realize their dreams.

Keywords: Ethiopia, Children, Migration, Informal Activity, Agency

INTRODUCTION

Migration is a phenomenon of antiquity though it has accelerated in recent times owing to improvements in transportation and communication technology (Piguet and Pankhurst, 2009). It occurs as a result of human curiosity or some repulsive conditions in the area of origin and/or real or perceived attractive circumstances in a destination (Oberari and Singh 1983; Woldie, Degefa and Getie 2010). It is an important component of rural-urban linkages and a means of achieving economic efficiency thereby promoting sustainable development; and a necessary condition for the creation and strengthening of a sense of nationhood and national unity (Lynch, 2005).

Migration is not only a creator of diversity; it is also a response to diversity (White & Woods, 1980). It is considered as a development fostering process operating in time and space to correct rural-urban, interurban and interregional imbalances (Spengler & Mers, 1977). Migration, through the creation of diverse workforce of wide range of skills and experiences is more likely to produce a creative and open society to new ideas than the one made of homogenous group of people (IOM, 2005). Migration has implications for those moving, those left behind and those at the destination (Lynch, 2005). It is considered not only as coping mechanisms to escape poverty, but also an opportunity for rural children to improve their living and working conditions and learn new skills as well as feel a sense of pride, and be viewed as modern within their family and their community.

Ethiopia is one of the least urbanized countries in the world; the level of urbanization being only about 20 percent. In addition, there is rising population pressure, overcrowding and surplus labour resulting from high fertility and declining mortality; fragmentation and scarcity of farm plots and rainfall unreliability in rural areas. There are limited non-agricultural employment opportunities and low and often fluctuating agricultural incomes. Rural areas often lack socioeconomic and infrastructural facilities and amenities. As a result, the perpetual exodus of children and young people from rural areas to urban centers appears to be inevitable.

In recent times increasingly significant number of children is moving out of rural areas of Northwest Ethiopia to live and work in Addis Ababa. The reasons for their migration are likely to be diverse and hence there is a need to explore the push and pull factors, and the context in which child migration prevails. Although there is evidence that migration from rural areas proceed in a step-by-step progression, children opt for the national capital which is far away from the villages as their destination. It is also imperative to investigate the mechanisms by which children negotiate their migration with their families or guardians and whether they find the destination area as they expected it from a distant origin. It is, therefore, necessary to explore whether migrant children have improved their livelihoods; the conditions surrounding their lives in the city relative to the rural situation; challenges encountered, and adaptation mechanisms and survival strategies employed. The overriding objective of this study is, therefore, to explore the significance of migration as a survival strategy pursued by migrant children from rural areas of Northwest Ethiopia who are engaged in the informal sector activities in Addis Ababa. This study also bridges the knowledge gap on child migration studies in Ethiopia as the migration of children has either been

masked under family migration or the focus tends to be on children in particularly difficult circumstances such as street children.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa on migrant children who originated from Mecha District of Northwest Ethiopia. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study. The primary data were obtained through a questionnaire survey conducted on 50 sampled working migrant children who are engaged in selected urban informal activities. Snowball sampling was used in the selection of participants of the study. Interviews were conducted, observations were made and photographs were used to access detailed information on the causes-processes-consequences nexus of child migration.

Secondary data were gathered from sources such as official documents, published and unpublished reports from various organizations and related literature to achieve a comprehensive perspective of the issue under consideration.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF MIGRATION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Todaro's Model of Migration was used to guide the conduct of the study as it appears to be relevant in explaining rural-urban migration of children. The model explains rural-urban migration in terms of the income differential that exists between the urban formal sector and rural agricultural sector and migrants' expectation of obtaining an urban job in the formal sector. Todaro (cited in Lynch 2005) represents rural-urban migrants in a two stage process. In the first stage the migrant is either unemployed or employed in the traditional informal sector while looking for a modern sector job. In the second stage the migrant often succeeds in finding a modern sector job which grants higher earnings. As a result, from the view point of life-span income, the migrant is acting rationally as the modern sector earnings in the second stage are sufficiently high to compensate the low traditional sector earnings and the cost of relocation. The Social Network Theory of Migration is also helpful in informing this study in that interpersonal networks and social relationships such as kinship and friendship ties, religion, acquaintance, ethnicity, neighbourhood, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas foster migration. Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can depend on to gain access to employment and lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net-returns to migration (Massey *et al.*, 1993).

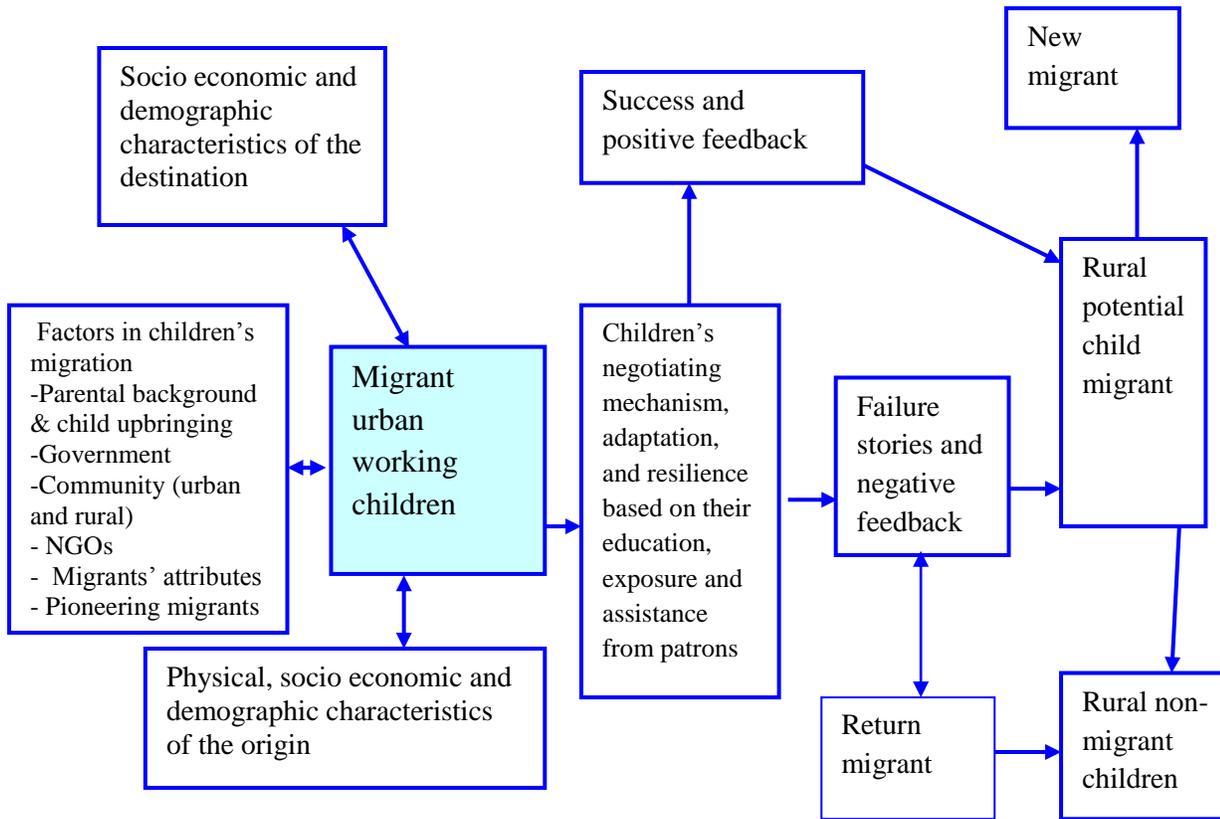


Figure 1: The conceptual model of the Determinants and Consequences of Child Migration

Source: Own construction based on literature and observation

The outmigration of children from villages is determined by a wide array of environmental, demographic, socioeconomic and cultural variables. Children are likely to depart from their rural origins as a result of the attributes of the origin and destination areas, parental background, peer influence, improvements in transportation technology and access to information sources and individual child characteristics.

Different actors play a meaningful part in the decision of children to migrate. The success and failure of the migrants could also be affected by parents, governmental and non-governmental organizations and the individual migrant's resilience and creativity. Children's success and failure in the destination depends on their negotiating mechanism, adaptation, and resilience based on their education, exposure and assistance from patrons. Success and positive feedback triggers further

migration from the same rural origin implying a kind of chain-migration while failure discourages potential migrants to depart from the rural origin.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE MIGRANT SENDING AND RECEIVING REGIONS

The migrant sending area, Mecha Wereda (also called Mecha District), is one of the 14 weredas of West Gojjam Administrative Zone of the Amhara National Regional State of Ethiopia. It is located about 546 northwest of Addis Ababa. According to the 2007 Population and Housing Census report, Mecha *wereda* had a population of 292,250; and only a 7.7 level of urbanization (CSA, 2010). With a total area of about 1,408.64 km², the wereda had a crude density of 219 persons per square kilometre making it the second densely populated wereda in the Zone. An overwhelming majority of the households (85.8%) have a household size ranging from 3 to 8; the average being 5.3.

Mecha Wereda is predominated by a low plateau of about 2000 meters above sea level; a kind of depression surrounded by elevated landmass at its other ends. It is part of the Blue Nile (Aby) drainage basin where numerous streams such as Little Aby and Koga Rivers flow towards the north and discharge their waters in to Lake Tana, which itself is drained out by the Blue Nile River. The annual average temperature in the wereda ranges from 24-27°C with annual mean rainfall of 1500mm. The highest rainfall comes mainly from June to August. May is the hottest month.

Most (93.17%) of the people of the wereda are engaged in subsistence mixed farming. The major types of food crops cultivated are cereals and pulses while oilseeds are mainly produced for market. *Teff* (*Eragrostis teff*) is the principal staple food crop. Livestock are reared for their economic and social importance; where cattle, donkeys, horses, sheep, goats, and chicken are the most common types.

The migrant receiving area, Addis Ababa, is not only the capital city and the commercial and industrial centre of Ethiopia, but also the diplomatic capital of Africa and the seat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (City Hall 1989). It is well connected to the other places through various modes of transport.

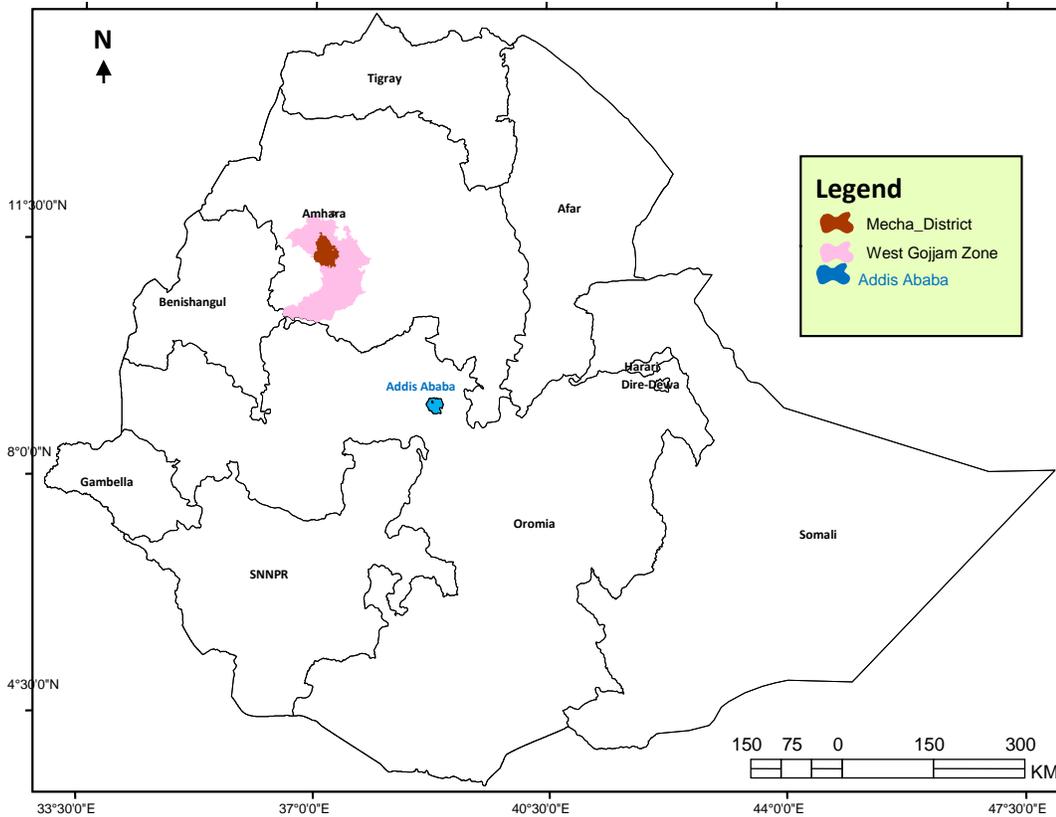


Figure 2: Map of the study areas in the national setting

Addis Ababa is located in the central Ethiopian highlands; between 8°55'N to 9° 3'N and 38 ° 40' E to 38 ° 50'E (See Figure 1). Its elevation ranges from about 2000 meters in the south to over 2800 meters in the north, the average being 2400 meters above sea level. Temperatures are mild and relatively constant throughout the year; the average being approximately 15°C. The main rainy season runs from June to September which accounts for about 63 percent of the annual average rainfall of 1200 mm (EMA 1988).

According to the 2007 census result, the population of Addis Ababa was 2,739,551; and it has been growing at an average annual rate of 3.8% between 1994 and 2007. The primate city has attracted a large number of people from different regions of the country who come in search of employment opportunities and services representing as many as 80 ethnic groups. About half (47%) of its total population is rural-urban in-migrant.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANT CHILDREN

Migrant working children are characterized by a wide range of demographic attributes. As depicted in Table 1, the ages of the surveyed children ranged from 10 to 18 years. The average age of the participants was 16.24 years; girls were slightly older than boys.

Table 1: Distribution of participants by age and gender

Attribute		Number	Percent
Age	10-14	17	34
	15-18	33	66
	Total	50	100
Sex	Male	36	72
	Female	14	28
	Total	50	100

Boys are more likely to migrate for a number of reasons. Firstly, in Amhara communities boys are expected to generate income for the family and for themselves by working outside the home. Secondly, most informal urban activities require physical strength, which boys are biologically endowed with. Thirdly, migration associated-risks such as sexual abuse and physical assault are particularly severe for females. Lastly, demand of girls for domiciliary work usually encourages parents to retain them at home.

The number of siblings that one has impacts on his/her decision to migrate or not; because as the number of siblings increases, the competition for limited rural household resources, especially land also increases. Therefore, as a result of parents' limited capacity to provide proper assistance and education to their children and because of the increasing pressure over resources and worsening conditions of the family situation, some of the children opt for urban-ward migration as a survival strategy. As clearly shown in Table 2, majority of the participants (96%) came from large families of greater than three siblings.

Table 2: Educational status and number of siblings at initial departure

Attribute		Number	Percent
Level of education	Unable to read and write	6	12
	Read and write only	9	18
	Primary education	33	66
	Secondary education	2	4
	Total	50	100
Number of siblings	0- 2	2	4
	3-5	27	54
	6-8	16	32
	9 and above	5	10
	Total	50	100

According to the data presented in Table 2, about two-third of the children had attained primary education. The presence of a high proportion of children only with a primary level of education could be attributed to the lack of or limited access to secondary education in the rural areas they had migrated from.

Table 3: Socioeconomic characteristics of parents of migrant children

Attribute		Number	Percent
Literacy status of fathers	Illiterate	28	56
	Read and write only	14	28
	Primary education	6	12
	Secondary education	2	4
	Total	50	100
Literacy status of mothers	Illiterate	39	78
	Read and write only	8	16
	Primary education	3	6
	Total	50	100

As shown in Table 3, most of the parents of the children (78% of the mothers and 56% of the fathers) cannot read and write while a meaningful proportion of their parents could only read and write. Less educated parents are likely to have lower material possession and therefore a lower potential of satisfying their children's needs; and tend to be poor at childcare and handling which in turn leads to child out migration.

DETERMINANTS OF RURAL OUT-MIGRATION OF CHILDREN

As already mentioned in the introductory stage, the reasons for child migration from rural domiciles to urban environments are diverse and complex. The various rural push and urban pull factors are quite critical to the construction of explanations for the children's migration.

Table 4: Causes of migration of children to Addis Ababa

Causes of children's migration	No	Percentage
Rural poverty and the need to supplement family income	39	78
Peer influence	33	66
Exposure to heavy workload at home	23	46
Early marriage and marital dissolution	6	12
Death of parent(s)	8	16
Physical punishment by parents and guardians	12	24
The presence of other family members in town	9	18
To be relieved from parental control, seeking one's freedom	12	24
Disagreement with their families	10	20
Marital instability of parents, and presence of step-parent	18	36
To further one's education	5	10

The basic reason for children's migration from Mecha is poverty. Most respondents (78%) indicated that their parents are poor and are unable to provide them with their basic necessities. Household resource-scarcity coupled with large family size makes it difficult to satisfy basic needs of children let alone providing them with the platform for their future development. Children's desire to supplement family income is also a manifestation of the poor economic stand of parents. Working children reported that declining produce because of diminishing soil fertility and agricultural productivity; and land fragmentation reduces sustenance. The death of livestock particularly oxen, which are the main draught powers in agriculture, shake the survival strategies of rural households. Uncertainty of agricultural products, soaring agricultural input prices, limited non-agricultural employment opportunities to supplement family income, and parental failure to payback debts require the departure of a family member to bring some money to reimburse loans.

As one can decipher from Table 4, peer influence is also a significant determinant of child migration (66%) from the rural areas of Mecha. Children depart from their rural homes because of the enticement presented to them by their own peers of conditions in the destination. There is also a tendency for children already in town doing informal jobs to exaggerate the freedom that they enjoy in an attempt to lure new comers. The information that they usually obtain from pioneering migrants makes them ambitious and eager to migrate. The presence of other family members in town is also an important contributor to migration.

Marital instability is found to be an important cause of migration. Children who live with stepparents receive little attention, care, and socialization; and when mistreated and neglected often migrate to fend for themselves. Exposure of children to heavy workload at home, feeling of helplessness and defeat, poor academic performance and school dropout also motivate children to migrate. In agricultural communities, parents usually urge children to be engaged in backbreaking domestic works and field activities such as tilling the land, herding, weeding, collecting firewood, fetching water, performing messenger services, cooking, and taking care of younger siblings.

Urban-oriented education and changing lifestyles and the desire to further one's education impact out-migration of children. After completing primary education in a school located within their own peasant association (combining work and schooling and assisting their parents), children are often required to travel longer distances away from home to attend secondary schools mainly in rented houses in towns. Therefore, the inability of poor parents to cover food and accommodation expenses for their children at a distant town is a cause of school dropout and migration.

Other important factors of child migration are the low regard for farming work, pressure of labour recruiting agents, physical punishment by parents or guardians, relief from parental control, disagreement with families and conflicts with other community members, early marriage and marital breakdown.

In addition to the origin area related push factors and the communal as well as individual migrant related attributes, cities in Ethiopia also exert tremendous pull effect in drawing children from rural areas of the country such as Mecha District. The relative ease of access to information about places and opportunities elsewhere, aspiration for higher urban income, the lure of towns and its real or imagined opportunities for personal advancement and independence, parents perception that the opportunities available for their children are far greater in the city than in their home village, and development of

manufacturing industry and expansion in construction and services in urban areas, and economies of agglomeration that favor the already established cities result in the movement of children out of the relatively deprived rural areas.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF MIGRANT CHILDREN IN THE DESTINATION AREA

The participants are engaged mainly in economic activities at places with heavy concentration of people such as market places, main streets and around squares, bus stations, car and taxi stops, near university campuses, construction sites as well as densely packed residential areas. Migrant working children in urban areas tend to be place and time conscious to secure high level and sustainable incomes.

Table 5: Types of work migrants are engaged at the destination

Type of occupation	No	Percent
Lottery vending	28	56
Daily labour and carrying goods and luggage	12	24
Housekeeping	10	20
Total	50	100

Lottery vending

Lottery vending is an activity in which a large number of the surveyed child migrants (56%) in Addis Ababa are engaged in. It is predominantly a boys’ activity that only requires rudimentary numeric literacy and initial capital to buy the lottery tickets. There seems to be a sort of chain migration and ‘job inheritance’ where newcomer migrant boys right away start the lottery vending business with the assistance of their forerunners.

Lottery vending requires children to be as highly mobile as possible to cover wide areas and get customers from all parts of the city; wandering from early morning to nightfall selling lottery tickets. They often rent a room in groups which the landlord uses it to sell food items and local beverages during the day time and convert it to a sleeping place at night. From lottery vending, children often earn between 45 and 50 birr per day (US\$1 ≈ 17 Ethiopian birr), the amount collected being higher on weekends and holidays.

Not all migrant children came from poor rural households. There are times when children depart from the village because of peer influence, distorted information and the bright light effect and glamour of cities. The migration account of the 15-year old Desta from Bachuma Peasant Association of Mecha District is summarized as follows:

Desta came to Addis Ababa not because his father is poor. His father possessed about four hectares of productive farmland and different livestock. He just ran away from home because he was lured by the manner pioneering migrant children were dressed when they come to visit family, their urban slang and the urban things they possess. It had been slightly more than a year since he came to Addis Ababa but didn’t find life in Addis Ababa the way he wished it to be because it is a busy place where nobody cares for him. He has to fend for himself, he could not attend school and the nostalgia was unbearable. The income he fetches from lottery vending is not too big to pursue decent urban living that he dreamt of; and the hardship

associated with lottery vending is unbearable. Though he disappointed his family by deserting them, he wanted to go back home and resume schooling believing that his father would not fail him.

Daily labour and carrying of goods and luggage

This activity is performed mainly by new migrants, mostly boys because it does not require initial capital and skills. It is eventually used as a springboard to make way to other activities. Children usually hang around bus stations, bus and taxi stops, mill houses, construction sites, and nearby market places to carry loads or luggage. Often they carry loads beyond their capacity, and yet they are mistrusted and considered as thieves/ pickpockets by passengers. Children are also engaged in the booming construction sector as daily labourers.

Asaminew is a 17-year old boy who came to Addis Ababa two years ago together with his friend. He recounts his migration experience and living conditions in Addis Ababa as follows:

I came here from Mecha District of West Gojjam Administrative Zone because my father was unable to sponsor my study for a junior secondary school which is about 15 kilometres from home. I frequently asked him to buy me school uniform and stationeries so that I could pursue my schooling, but he turned down my request. He wanted me to assist him in the farm. Most of my colleagues pursued their education. You know my cousin became a teacher after he completed his education but my father wanted me to be a farmer, oh! That was unpalatable. I just ran away. Father didn't know my whereabouts: perhaps he might be mad at me... may be he cursed me ...may be he regretted for thwarting my ambition for further education. When I came to Addis Ababa things were not as I expected. I neither got a job readily nor pursued my education. I almost finished the money that I brought from home and became a derelict. Then, I did everything that I found. There are, of course, times when I find it difficult to sustain income for which I save for times of adversity. Now, I am getting used to life here, I live with three countrymen who are slightly older than me at a place called Kore in Addis Ababa sharing accommodation expense. Next year, I am planning to continue my education in the evening program at a government school near my residence to fulfil my dreams of becoming a skilled house builder.

Carrying heavy load by children is a day to day routine for those engaged in it. Frequently, they carry loads as heavy as thirty kilograms for over a kilometre distance. This, no doubt, will have a deleterious effect on their physical wellbeing.

Housekeeping

Among the migrant children were housemaids, an exclusive activity for girls. It is a challenging activity since the girls are expected to be on duty before sunrise up to late evening. Confined in a compound, children perform lots of household chores which include making meals, cleaning kitchen utensils and cups, cleaning houses, cleaning compound, washing clothes, roasting and grinding coffee beans to make coffee, making tea, carrying goods, preparing dough and baking *enjera* (flattened bread-like staple food of Ethiopia enjoyed with soup like dish called *wott*), making beds, nursing babies and making their hair and lots of other backbreaking activities. Maids spend almost the entire day in intense heat and smoke that obviously affect their health. In most instances they attend night schools under fatigued and exhausted conditions. These children consider going to school as a time to talk to people and time of respite from the onerous responsibilities they have to perform in the

house. They are usually paid on a monthly basis that might range from 200 to 500 birr depending on age, length of stay in the activity, the specific locality they work in the city, and the size of the household they work in and the amount of household work they are expected to discharge.

Wude is a 17 years old girl. She came to Addis Ababa four years ago from Enamirt Peasant Association of Mecha District to live with her aunt. She attended elementary school while she was in the rural village and then came to Addis Ababa to pursue junior secondary school. However, she could not get on with her aunts and cousins so she ran away. She had since worked in at least four households. Some of her employers didn't let her pursue her night school; others were merciless and unsympathetic and treated her poorly. However, she had been at the current household for a year. This household, she says, is very considerate and allows her to continue her junior secondary education in the night program. Of course, the backbreaking household chores of tending an extended family will be awaiting her from dawn to dusk.

The participants generally revealed that the money they earned from their activities was reasonably sufficient compared to the rural situation where many of them would not have earned any at all. For this reason, they are willing to remain in the urban area regardless of the challenges. The income they obtain varies depending on the type of activity, their demographic behaviour, support from relatives, the specific geographic sites where they operate and other variables. Most of the children occasionally remit part of their earnings to their parents, especially on holidays. From the foregoing discussion it appears that the informal activities that migrant children are engaged in help some of them acquire the means to attend evening school and also acquire some skills. Thus, it could be considered as a pathway for some to ultimately enter the formal labour market.

Challenges and Coping Mechanisms

Migrant children face difficult challenges at their urban destinations. The participants lamented the fact that there is little or no parental and governmental support. It is difficult for them to access education and training as well as the necessary capital for their activities. They often complain about the meagre and intermittent income they get from their work, the long working hours, the difficulty of saving enough money and the lack of play time. Besides, some of the activities they are engaged in have both short and long term physical and psychological consequences on their health and eventual well-being. They reported mistreatment from employers and exploitation by adults in positions of power vis-à-vis little legal protection in times of need.

Migrant children often fail to satisfy their basic needs. There are times when children forfeit their lunch or dinner; and eat leftovers from nearby restaurants by providing waste-dumping and messenger services. Cooperative living through the sharing of facilities like room is rampant and in situations where a member fails to contribute his share for the monthly rent for example, it would be covered by the rest until he/she is able to contribute. Migrant children have a strong sense of commitment to one another and have developed profound network and friendship that allows them to share food and clothing, come to each other's aid when they are sick, provide guidance and care so as to mitigate the effects of their vulnerability.

The health and sanitation conditions of the places where children live are dreadful. A combination of this poor nutrition and housing results in many of them regularly falling sick, thereby worsening their chances of working enough hours to sustainably earn the required amounts of money for their upkeep.

In many instances, migrant working children combine schooling with their work though others have dropped out of school. Being unable to attend the whole-day regular program, most children attend the night school at reduced fees. However, the combination of work and schooling is a daunting task since most of them are exhausted by the time they have to be in school. Their attention span is seriously impaired and so they are unable to concentrate and perform class-work and home-take assignments. Since education is the beacon of opportunity and sustainable livelihoods of migrants is a function of the knowledge, skills and attitudes they develop, the city government has to give special assistance for the migrant children who endeavour to improve their circumstances.

Although international organizations such as UNICEF, and governments are of the opinion that child labour has a deleterious effect on working children, there is evidence that some types of work make positive contribution to children's development; as work enables children to develop a sense of responsibility, resilience, confidence and particular skills for life (Rodgers and Swinnerton 2002 in Addisu 2010). It also liberates children from complete dependence on their parents, and opens up an avenue for them to develop strong work ethics and social relations as well as make them develop a sense of pride for contributing to their family's upkeep. For impoverished rural families, child work outside home is a vital source of income. The departure of children from the quagmire of rural poverty is by itself something to be cherished among the working migrant children.

Summary and Conclusion

Migration is a cause and consequences of sustainable development. For a country such as Ethiopia where the level of urbanization is very low, migration of children and young people out of rural areas is not only inevitable but it will also proceed at a much faster rate. Rural urban migration of children and the attendant involvement in informal activities is more widespread than it is admitted by city authorities and policy makers. It is both a challenge and an opportunity for children to secure a living, socialize and exercise potentials. The informal activities that migrant children are engaged in could be considered as springboard to ultimately join formal activities.

The most important factors for children to depart from rural areas include rural household poverty, dysfunctional families, low prospect of gaining access to farmland and diminishing agricultural productivity, peer influence, lower educational status of parents, exposure to heavy workload, physical punishment by parents and guardians, and the presence of other family members in the city.

Migrant children in Addis Ababa make significant contributions to the urban community and of stainable urban development through their affordable and available labour; and to their families through the remittances and gifts they send. They also minimise the pressure on scarce family resources such as land. While in the city, they engage in a wide array of activities such as shoe shinning, portering, lottery vending, and house-work in order to earn their living. The income they earn depends

on the type of activities they are engaged in, their age, the specific geographic sites where they operate, the amount of time they spend on work and other variables.

Migrant working children are found to be resilient and so are able to withstand challenges as they pursue their dreams. They are cognizant of their lone agency in an alien environment to derive their own livelihoods sustainably as they have almost no one to lean on. This makes them psychologically prepared, strong and self-reliant to deal on their own matters. Children also established cooperation, mutual help and friendship to cope with adversities. On top of that, the city government has to set minimum wages for working children, assist them in their attempts of searching for jobs, ensure that their future is not compromised and augment their social capital through improving access to education and health services.

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