

# Perception of Rural-Urban Migration in Selected Rural Communities in Ondo State, Nigeria

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In most rural areas, the result of rural-urban migration is a rapid deterioration of the rural economy leading to chronic poverty and food insecurity. This study identifies the benefits and problems of rural-urban migration from perception of the non-migrants. A 5-point Likert-type scale containing pre-tested statements was used to measure the benefits and problems of rural-urban migration in three purposively selected rural communities in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study found that non-migrants' socio-economic characteristics do not influence their perception of benefits of rural urban migration and the longer non-migrants stay in the rural area, the higher their perception of the problems of rural-urban migration. The study also shows that all the respondents are undecided on the economic problems arising from rural-urban migration. The study further discovered that the perception of non-migrants on benefits and problems from rural-urban migration is influenced mainly by the martial circumstances and length of residence of the rural non-migrant. The paper therefore proposes that any measure seeking to influence the process of rural urban migration should meet the rural peoples' perception of benefits of the rural-urban migration.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The movement of people from rural to urban areas is a common occurrence in Nigeria . The movement poses some problems in the rural as well as in the urban center even though, there are benefits derivable from it. In most rural areas, the impact of rural-urban migration was a rapid deterioration of the rural economy leading to chronic poverty and food insecurity (Mini, 2000). These arise mainly due to excessive drain of youth from the rural populace thus leaving only the older and aged members to constitute the labour force of the rural area.

According to Braunvan, (2004) people tend to be pulled to the areas of prosperity and pushed from areas of decline. Migrants are usually concerned with the benefits they hope to

gain by moving and usually give less thought to the problems that may be generated as a result of the process. Some of these problems may impact more on the non-migrants left behind in the rural area. Yet, this category of stakeholders in the rural-urban migration process is often not the focus of in most policy debates influencing the process. This study is an attempt to expose the opinion of this group on the process of rural-urban migration with a view to identifying 'new' benefits and problems attributable to the process.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study hopes to contribute to policy debates that seek to influence the process of rural-urban migration. The specific objectives of the study therefore are as follows:

1. to describe the socio-economic characteristics of non-migrants resident in rural communities
2. to examine the various factors affecting rural-urban migration from the perception of the non-migrants left behind in the rural area.
3. to identify the problems of rural-urban migration from perception of the non-migrants.
4. to identify the benefits of rural-urban migration from perception of the non-migrants.

The study also tested two null hypotheses that:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of non-migrants and their perception of benefits derived from rural-urban migration.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of non-migrants and their perception of problems derived from rural-urban migration.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in Akure South, Idanre and Ifedore Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ondo State , Nigeria . Purposive sampling was used to select one settlement in each of the Local Government Areas. The selected settlements are Ayede Ogbese in Akure South LGA, Atosin in Idanre LGA and Igbara-Oke in Ifedore LGA respectively. The snowball method was used to select 30 respondents in each settlement. The snowball method was used to draw a sample from the population because it is physically difficult to locate the members of the population. In this case, it is difficult for an “outsider” in a community to know which families have migrant characteristics, socio-economic characteristics of any member of the migrants’ family left behind in the rural area, perceived factors, effects, benefits and problems of rural-urban migration. The respondents were also asked to suggest possible solution to rural urban migration. Data were collected by the use of pre-tested (using the test-retest method) Interview Guide to elicit information from the non-migrants in the rural area. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and chi-square test were used to analyze the data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents**

Data collected and presented in Table 1 shows that majority (73.3%) of the respondents were male and 78.7% were married. Fifty percent of the respondents belong to age range of 41- 60 years. This implies that there is a predominance of male middle aged people who had rural urban migrants in their family. Also 31.1% of the respondents were not formally educated while the rest had between adult, elementary, secondary and tertiary education. Most are indigenes (66.7%) while 33.3% are non-indigenes. This means that the indigene could say more about the effects of rural-urban migration in the study area since

they were born in the study area. The mean year the non-indigenes have spent was about 12 years while the mode was 6- 10 years, which indicates that the non-indigenes have spent relatively long period in the study area; therefore they could give information on the rural urban migration. These findings are similar to Adebayo and Ajayi's (2001) findings on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics (Marital status, age, gender and educational status) of rural farmers.

**Table 1: Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variables	Mean	Mode
Age (in years)	47.27 years	84.4% 21-60 years
Sex	-	73.3% male
Education Status	-	31.1% No formal education
Native Status	-	66.7% Indigene
Length of residence	11.47 years	63.34% Less than 10 years
Marital Status	-	78.9% Married

### **Factors Affecting Rural-Urban Migration**

As shown in Table 2, three categories of factors are perceived by non-migrants as important reasons for rural-urban migration. The first set is related to the need for education (93.3%) and acquisition of skills in various vocations (72.2%). The second set relate to the absence of desirable job opportunities in rural areas. These include the absence of employment (71.1%), absence of industries and companies (68.9%) and boredom in agriculture (74.4%). The third set of factors is social such as inadequate amenities (68.2%) and expulsion from rural areas due to an offence or crime committed by the migrant or escape from social stigma or burdensome familial ties (68.9%). The first two sets of factors are common in rural-urban migration literature as factors responsible for the movement of migrants. Of the social factors, however, only inadequate social amenities has a fair mention in the literature. (Mabawonku, 1973; Sabot, 1972). It is interesting that 68.9% of the non-migrants opined that expulsion due to an offence or crime committed by the migrant or escape from social stigma or burdensome familial ties could be a reason for migration. It is

possible that the focus of several earlier studies on migrants as the unit of study and analysis had hidden this factor so far.

**Table 2: Factors Perceived to cause Rural-Urban Migration N = 90)**

Perceived Factors	Yes	No
Advancing in Education Opportunity	93.3	6.7
Apprenticeship in Various Vocation	72.2	27.8
Absence of employment	71.1	28.9
Report of cities condition sent by Migrant	44.4	55.6
Absence of Industries/Companies	68.9	31.1
Old Age	44.4	55.6
Joining One Relative in Town	55.6	44.4
Inadequate Social Amenities	62.2	37.8
Expulsion due to offence or crime or escape from social stigma or burdensome familial ties	68.9	31.1
To avoid the boredom in Agriculture	74.4	25

### **Non-migrants' perception of the benefits of rural urban migration**

The respondents were asked to express their perception of the benefits of rural-urban migration in a Likert-type scale containing 25 statements divided into 5 groups (Table 3.) The groups are: Economic, Agricultural, Personal, Cultural and Societal benefits. Each group contains five items. On the economic front, the item for which there is a clear decision by the respondents is that migrants help in the payment of school fees for other members of the family who are in school.

Over 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Of the five statements offered in the group of agricultural benefits, over 80% of the respondent agreed or strongly agreed that the movement of a member of the family to an urban location frees more land space for farming in the rural areas. Respondents also agreed or strongly agreed with two statements of personal benefits that it makes them happy that there is a migrant in the family (87.8%) and that it boosts their morale (81.1%).

Two other benefits with which respondents agreed or strongly agreed are cultural. Over 70% opined that rural-urban migration helps them to appreciate their culture

and helps them to understand the culture of other people. Finally, most of the respondents (71.1%) agreed or strongly agree that migrants bring more investments into the rural economy. While most of the other benefits have been identified in the literature (Mabawonku, 1973; Sabot, 1972), the aspect of greater investment in the rural economy arising from rural-urban migration is a key contribution of this study to knowledge in the field.

**Table 3: Perceived Benefits of Rural Urban Migration (N=90)**

Benefits of rural-urban migration	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Economic Benefits</b>					
The migrant help you to pay school fees.	50	22.2	4.4	16.7	6.7
The migrant pay the house rent.	11.1	33.3	14.4	31.1	10.0
Your income increased because he migrated	8.9	28.9	23.3	34.4	4.4
The migrant get better job opportunity	12.2	23.3	7.8	36.7	0.0
The migrant tells you how to get credit facilities in town	8.9	18.9	24.4	35.6	12.2
<b>Agricultural Benefits</b>					
It provide more land space for farming in rural area	33.3	47.8	7.8	7.8	3.3
The migrant introduce new innovation to the village	11.1	32.2	12.2	38.9	5.6
It helps to locate better market in town for farm products	8.9	28.9	21.1	37.8	3.3
Improved seed varieties are brought by the migrant	11.1	23.3	6.7	37.8	21.1
The migrant taught farmer methods of disease control.	12.2	23.3	14.4	28.9	21.1
<b>Personal Benefits</b>					
You are happy that you have a migrant in your family	35.6	52.2	2.2	8.8	1.1
It increases your morale	24.4	56.7	10.0	7.8	1.1
It increases your property acquisition	7.8	25.6	27.8	31.1	7.8
It relieves you of your responsibility on the migrant	17.8	24.4	22.2	31.1	4.4
It exposes you to new devise and how to operate them.	13.3	24.4	33.3	21.1	7.8
<b>Cultural Benefits</b>					
Rural-urban migrant help us to appreciate our culture	17.8	56.7	8.9	13.3	3.3
Rural-urban migration help us to abolish bad custom	11.1	38.9	16.7	26.7	6.7
It can change people orientation on ritual making	16.7	34.4	16.7	27.8	4.4
It help us to understand other people culture	21.1	51.1	10.0	16.7	1.1
It exposes our culture to other people.	33.3	55.6	5.6	4.4	1.1
<b>Societal Benefits</b>					
The migrant being more investors to the rural areas	22.2	48.9	12.2	15.6	1.1
Migration makes the culture to be widely known	14.4	41.1	12.2	30.0	2.2
Migrant contribute to the building of town hall	13.3	30.0	5.6	43.3	7.8
Migrant contribute to the construction of village road	14.4	28.9	10.0	33.3	13.3
It makes government to focus on your village	7.8	25.6	25.6	26.7	14.4

## Non- Migrants' Perception of the Problems of Rural Urban Migration

Non-migrant' perception of the problems of rural-urban migration were also identified using a 5 point Likert-type scale containing 19 statements (Table 4). As shown in this table, there is no clear agreement among the respondents on the economic problems derivable from rural-urban migration. In terms of agricultural problems, most of the respondents (75.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that the movement of migrants away from the rural area decreases the labour available for farm work.

Similarly, non-migrants agreed on the personal front that they often miss the loved ones (the migrants) who may choose not to return to the village. In fact, over 60% of the respondents agreed that migrants often miss family or village festivals and that rural-urban migration results in higher transport costs for agricultural produce given the reduction in the frequency of movements and therefore, made rural transport less lucrative for transport service providers.

**Table 4: Perceived Problems of Rural Urban Migration**

Problems of Rural-Urban Migration	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly disagree
<b>Economic Problem</b>					
The migrant family waste money	30.0	18.9	11.1	30	10
The migrant family incurs more debt	15.6	33.3	6.7	37.8	6.7
The migrant require much money to depart from home	8.9	34.4	7.8	42.2	6.7
The migrant demands more from home after migration	5.6	33.3	3.3	46.7	11.1
<b>Agricultural Problem</b>					
The movement decreases labour force for farm work	36.7	38.9	4.4	15.6	4.4
It bring about introduction of harmful chemical to supplement loss of labour force	10.0	32.2	16.7	37.8	3.3
The use of machine destroys the soil structure due to decrease in labour force	2.2	25.6	20	43.3	8.9
<b>Personal Problem</b>					
You miss your loved one	57.8	28.9	2.2	8.9	2.2
The migrant refuses to come back to the village	24.4	34.4	10	25.6	5.6
The movement, left more for you to do					
The migrant find it difficult to cope with the city life style.	10.0	31.1	15.6	37.6	5.6
	16.7	22.2	12.2	42.2	6.7
<b>Cultural Problem</b>					
The migrant misses the family festival	27.8	37.8	2.2	28.9	3.3

The migrant loses right to chieftaincy post	6.7	31.1	3.3	43.3	15.6
The migrant miss out at the ceremonial rite	6.7	13.3	11.1	46.7	22.2
Migrant often takes some cultural symbols for sale in cities	10.0	45.6	21.1	16.7	6.7

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**Societal Problem**

Rural-urban migration facilitate urban market hence increase transport cost for agriculture produce	14.4	50.0	12.2	21.1	2.2
The investors steal your resources	7.8	22.2	17.8	47.8	4.4
Industries created cause pollution	4.4	18.9	32.2	36.7	7.8
Land of village are sold at cheaper rate to stranger.	13.3	33.3	8.9	31.1	13.3

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**Test of Hypotheses**

Two main null hypotheses were tested in the study. The first proposes that there were no significant relationships between selected socio-economic characteristics of non-migrants and their perception of benefits derived from rural-urban migration. The second proposes that there were no significant relationships between selected socio-economic characteristics of non-migrants and their perception of problems derived from rural-urban migration.

The result of correlation analysis between selected economic characteristics and perceived benefits score derived from the non-migrants' responses to the statements in the Likert scale shows that there were no significant res (Table 5). This seems to imply that non-migrants' socio-economic characteristics did not influence their perception of benefits of rural urban migration.

Table 6 reveals the results of Chi-square analysis of the relationship between the sex, education, native status, marital status and main occupation. The results show that though the null hypotheses were not rejected for sex, education, native status and main occupation, it shows that marital status influences the non-migrants' perception of the benefits of rural urban migration. The implication is that the married non-migrants have a more positive perception of the benefits of rural-urban migration than unmarried ones.

Table 7 shows that there is significant relationship between the length of residence and the perceived problem score. This means that the longer non-migrants stay in the rural area, the higher their perception of the problems of rural-urban migration. Also, it shows that those who spend more on the food (naira per month) are likely to have a higher perception of the problems of rural-urban migration. Besides these, the analyses did not indicate a rejection of the null-hypotheses for the other selected socio-economic characteristics considered in the study.

**Table 5: Result of Correlation Analysis (Dependent Variables is Benefit Score)**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Remark
Age (in years) and benefits score	-0.087	NS
Length of residence and benefits score	-0.102	NS
Number of wives and benefits score	0.109	NS
Number of children and benefits score	0.045	NS
Total household size and benefits score	0.018	NS
Farm income and benefits score	0.028	NS
Off farm income and benefits score	-0.059	NS
Remittances and benefits score	0.011	NS
Expenses on food (in naira/month) and benefits score	0.102	NS
Expenses on house (in naira/month) and benefits score	0.045	NS
Expenses on health (in naira/month) and benefits score.	0.022	NS

\*Correlation is significant at the 05 level (2-tailed)

**Table 6 Result of Chi-square Analyses (Dependent Variable Total Benefit Score)**

Variable	Chi-square	Degree of freedom	Asymptotic	Decision
Sex	0.744	1	0.388	Accept
Education	4.529	6	0.605	Accept
Native status	1.023	1	0.312	Accept
Marital status	14.830	4	0.005	Reject
Main occupation	21.759	17	0.194	Accept

**Table 7: Result of Correlation Analysis Dependent Variable is Problem Score**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Remark
Age (in years) and benefits score	-0.0117	NS
Length of resident and benefits score	-0.503*	S
Number of wives and benefits score	0.014	NS
Number of children and benefits score	0.036	NS
Total household size and benefits score	0.010	NS
Farm income and benefits score	0.196	NS

Off farm income and benefits score	-0.089	NS
Remittances and benefits score	0.054	NS
Expenses on food (in naira/month) and benefits score	0.224*	S
Expenses on house (in naira/month) and benefits score	-0.065	NS
Expenses on health (in naira/month) and benefits score.	-0.0101	NS

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\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). NS – Not -Significant

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has shown that all the respondents were undecided on the economic problems of rural-urban migration. The study is different and unique in that it did not only show the factors affecting rural-urban migration and its effects like several previous studies but also revealed the perception of the non-migrants on benefits and problems of rural-urban migration. The study has demonstrated that perception of non-migrants on benefits to be gained and problem to be faced from rural-urban migration is influenced mainly by the marital circumstances and length of residence of the rural non-migrant. Therefore, any measures seeking to influence the processes of rural urban migration should meet the rural peoples' perception of benefits of the rural-urban migration.

The study therefore recommends that functional social amenities such as electricity, pipe borne water should be provided in the rural areas. Good schools and qualified teachers should be made available in the rural areas. Agro-allied industries must be set-up in the rural areas to reduce rural-urban migration in order to provide job opportunities for the people of the rural area. The agricultural inputs and farming technologies should be introduced to the rural people to improve the production level. Good road should be constructed for the rural area and credit facilities should be provided for the rural people to improve their production level, which will lead to improvement in their standard of living.

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