

Effect of migration on development of northern ghana



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Migration has been an age-long activity which has been going on in different forms and continues to be a vital component of individual and societal development through acquisition and transfer of knowledge and resources. Migration is a global phenomenon which continues to dominate the scenes around the world, while some form of migration is been promoted for economic reasons, other forms face strict restrictions. Migratory movement within and beyond regional boundaries across has been enhanced through globalization and advancement in modern technology (Koser, K 2008).

In Ghana migration is a common activity throughout all the regions, tribes and family with almost every single family having either an international migrant or internal migrant.

This picture reflects in the Northern region of Ghana in a very alarming manner with many young and able bodies migrating to prominent cities in such of improved livelihood.

Background of the study area.

Northern region of Ghana lies between the two upper regions and the Brong Ahafo region and Volta region. It has Tamale as the regional capital with eighteen districts assemblies. The region is characterized by one rainy season with an annual rainfall of about 750 to 1050mm. The rainy season starts around May through to October and the dry season from November to April. The climatic conditions and vegetation type are classified under dry savanna, the region's environmental conditions are highly influenced by its proximity to the Sahara desert which account for the poor soil type dry weather condition.

The economic activity which is predominant in the region is Agriculture; it employs about eighty percent of the population in the region. With one main farming season, as agriculture in Ghana largely depends on rainfall patterns, the region relies on its rain season for cultivation. The main crops grown in the region such as maize, millet, cowpeas, groundnut, sorghum, cassava, rice and yam are cultivated on subsistence bases. They mostly use labour intensive methods of farming with the simple farm tools and implement.

The region has been behind its southern peers in terms of development for far too long. It is also viewed deprived with limited natural resources to fuel its development process. The south can boast of coastal resource, good soil, with rich mineral and forest resources that accounts for the attractiveness to colonial masters then and investors now. Therefore developments in modern infrastructure and economic activities have been centrally focused in the south which may be attributed to the frequent out migration from the Northern region to no other destination but to the south

The region has historically been faced with out migration, since the pre-colonial era. From the colonial era the north served as labour pool where the needed labour force were fished out to feed the highly labour demanding south, in the mining and the cocoa industry. Males dominated migration then due to the physical demands of the job on the mines and farmers were mostly unskilled. Females were not of significance in terms numbers, those who migrated were mostly accompanying spouses or those migrating to reunite with spouses.

Minimal female out migration from the north can also be attributed to the social-cultural factors such as marriage and family served as barrier in the past to female movement; life was viewed to be mostly around family and marriage. Males were regarded as sole bread winners of the family and females or women as dependents.

However, recent trend of out migration involve more of younger females unlike in the past where female migration was usually for the purpose family reunion; it has been dominated by independently migrated young females. The female numbers from the north has been increasing dramatically and has taken centre stage of recent research into internal migration. Both males and females move to the cities, mostly without any special skills and work menial jobs as head porters, the males use four wheeled trucks in their work (Hashim, 2007).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Internal migration in Ghana has become a means of harmonizing ethnic differences through interaction, cooperate work and inter-marriages.

Migration from regions and districts seen as naturally, economically and socially deprived or deficient in terms of economic activities and basic social amenities to other regions and cities perceived as economically and socially endowed continues all year round in Ghana. Although these forms of movement to other highly rated regions to seek uncertain bright future cut across all regions in Ghana, but anyone may come to conclude that the northern region seems to have a very significant rate of migration (Boakye-Yiadom and MacKay, 2007). The Northern region of Ghana has seen a

massive exodus of youth into other regions for various reasons over the <https://assignbuster.com/effect-of-migration-on-development-of-northern-ghana/>

years. In recent years a new trend that has emerged involve young males and females who migrate to the cities of Accra and Kumasi in particular. Notable among these migrants are females who work as head porters. These females face many challenges daily, exploited and live in deplorable conditions on the streets and slums of Accra and Kumasi. Their male counterparts are not exception as they face similar situation.

This case study seeks to examine:

- i. the various motivating factors behind this migration trend.
- ii. the short and long-term effects migration on Northern Ghana's development.

Literature Review

Migration and development

Development is wide and dynamic concept with divergent views and assumptions. The concept has been variously defined based on the discourse. Development is seen to be a process aimed at achieving specific targeted goals (Kingsbury, D. et al. 2004). It can be explained as a progressive socioeconomic process for empowering the poor to improve their livelihood(Sen, 1988). It is seen as a process which runs parallel to growth or improved situation livelihood.

Migration

“ Migration is defined broadly as a permanent or temporary change of residence.

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No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration.”(Lee E. S, 1966)

Gender and migration

Gender represents socially constructed masculine and feminine while sex is the biological determined categories of male and female. It then explains that one’s sex is determined at conception but an individual gender identity develops over a life course and can fluctuate across a wide continuum of masculine and feminine characteristics. Nicholson (1995 in McDowell 1999: 13), the differences between the two terms sex and gender sex is the biological differences between a man and a woman and gender describes the socially constructed characteristics of men and women. It is further explained that gender is the social organisation of sexual difference. It then follows that gender is the knowledge that establishes meaning for bodily differences.

According to Moore (1988 in McDowell 1999: 7) in analyzing what is to be ‘a woman’ and the cultural understanding of the category, ‘woman’ vary through space and time and how those understandings relate to the position of women in different societies. To understand this we need to understand the concept of gender and gender relations: that is ‘the different ways in which women and men and the accepted attributes of femininity and masculinity which are defined across space and time’ (ibid). She argues that gender is then seen from two perspectives: either as a symbolic construction or as a social relationship.

Gender as a social relation and gender as a symbolic meaning are interconnected and mutually constituted (McDowell 1999: 7). We all act in relation to our intentions and beliefs which are always culturally shaped and historically and spatially positioned. The appropriate behaviour and actions by women and men reflect and affect what they imagine a man or a woman to be, as well as women and men who are differentiated with age, class, race or sexuality, and these expected behaviour and beliefs change over time and between places (ibid). Gender role constraints is underpinned by the social expectation that women's main activities should be close to family care and household maintenance and the assumption that women will interrupt their working lives to care for children and elderly relatives (Tivers 1977 in Jenkins 2005: 8). How has these gender role constraints affected married women with children who have left the home to migrate to a new environment to work in the informal economy to provide for the household.

The Gender and Migration Linkage

Prior to the mid 1980s, migration was regarded as a male phenomenon (Sjaastad, 1962; Lee, 1969; Todaro, 1977; Lipton, 1980). Authors such as Stouffer (1976) and Oberai, (1983) assert that until most recently, the physical movement of people from one place to another for employment was predominantly undertaken by men. The Todaro (1969) and Harris-Todaro (1970) models, which are some of the earliest models of migration, also emphasize that internal migration occurs in a dual economy, in which the urban sector draws male labour force from the rural sector. Meanwhile, other aspects of rural-urban linkages such as the gendered traditional division of

labour and farm and non-farm employment have often been overlooked (Roca, 1994: 102).

Migration was being seen by some researchers and scholars as gender-neutral because it deals with the process of movement of persons (Anarfi, 1982; Sabot, 1988).¹³ Meanwhile, migration is actually gender-structured because men and women migrate for different reasons, use different channels and most importantly, migration has different consequences for men and women in both sending and receiving communities (Chant & Radcliffe, 1992; Silberschmidt, 1999; Potts, 2000). For those leaving, internal migration can result in either empowerment or, on the contrary, increased vulnerability and even victimization (FAO/UNFPA, 1991: 23). Likewise, for those remaining, the departure of men and/or women from the household will have a specific influence depending on the migrant's status and role within the household prior to migrating, such as being main wage earner, spouse, parent or young daughter or son (Fadoyomi, 1980).

For a rural farming household, in particular, the consequences of migration depends on the socio-cultural and economic context, gender and age of migrant, position of migrant within the household, the agro-ecological environment, the type of migratory movement, whether it is temporary or permanent, and the employment possibilities and self-sufficiency of migrant, and the ability to send adequate remittances to maintain the level of farming prior to migration (Andersson, 2002: 78-79). One of the major implications of rural-urban migration is that it is the most able-bodied, relatively young and educated persons that migrate from rural to urban areas. This process, therefore, leaves behind rural communities composed of women, children,
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the elderly and uneducated, who are faced with the tremendous challenge of sustaining their household livelihood and the rural economy effectively (Findlay & Williams, 1990: 65; Anh, 2003: 79). 14

The predominantly male out-migration from rural areas may also bring about changes in the agricultural gender division of labour, as the migration process will invariably increase women's workload on the farm, thereby resulting in the "feminization of

agriculture" (FAO, 1995; Deshingkar & Start, 2003: 99). 15 The out-migration of men

Discussion

Internal migration within Ghana from north to the south has had a long history. Although all forms of migration takes place for specific reasons based on the experience of people from their places origin. There has been several debate on reasons the northern region is lagging behind in development, some attribute it government's neglect, conflict and unwillingness of investors to establish in the northern. All but one thing is has to be looked into critically is migration. The impacts of out migration from the northern region on both young males and females migrant as well as the northern region may reflect in the long term.

For any region or place to develop, it will depend on how efficient the resources available to the area will be utilized. It may involve the assessment of disparities or minding the gaps in development between the sending and receiving areas of migrants. Gaps in educational level among the regions will likely determine the sector of the economy that could absorb

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the migrant. Poverty level in the north influence the trend of migration to other cities as has been estimated to have over two thirds of the population living below the poverty line.

Various reasons that establish relationship between North- south migration and development in the northern region or the northern sector and the southern sector of Ghana, points to the development policy and plan during the colonial era.

Although migration of migration is not only a problem with the northern region but most parts of the country, both males and females migrate internally and internationally.

Out-Migration in other southern regions mostly differs in patterns and benefits. The north-south trend is characterize by young males and females ranging from ages thirteen and above to about 45 year. Between ages 13-25 form the core of the migrant, who are either school drop-out or without any special trade. Over ninety percent are engaged as head porters (Kayayoo) or truck pushers. Their job involves carting goods from the market that has been purchased by patrons to their preferred destination around the market area. Income from their activities is so minimal to even fully support them to maintain good standard of living.

This forces some of the female migrant to resort to prostitution to again extra more income in order to survive. The males sometime join gangs to Many migrant females are relegated to prostitution in destination areas because of their lack of employable skills or due to gender discriminations of employment.

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Some have had to offer sex in exchange for jobs, food, shelter and protection, leaving them prone to sexually transmitted diseases. Many young females who migrate from the Northern and Upper regions of Ghana to the capital Accra, to work as head porters (Kayayei) live on the streets. They are exposed to the vagaries of the weather and face constant risks of sexual assault, theft of their meager earnings and rape. Many are forced into prostitution as a means of survival (Apt, 1998). Besides the combination of low wages and the need to save and send home as much money as possible leaves relegates many female migrants to a low quality of life where their own personal needs and health may be neglected. It is estimated that about 45-55% of refugee populations across the world are women. Many of these women refugees are exposed to gender based sexual violence. They are victims of rape, forced impregnation and abortions, sexual slavery and intentional spread of STIs including HIV/AIDS (UNFPA, 2004

Motivations for migration

A research by Ghana Statistical service estimated that about 80% of the combined Northern Ghana population are living in poverty (Ghana Statistical Service, 2007). Therefore the idea to migrate by a family member is relief to the family. Moreover, the declining soil fertility, lack of access to arable agricultural land and the single farming season has also been a contributory factor. Again the peasant nature of farming means low dispensable income for families.

The Increasing economic and infrastructure gap between the north and the south, increasing economic activities in the receiving cities is seen a factor for both male and female migration from the Northern region. Resource <https://assignbuster.com/effect-of-migration-on-development-of-northern-ghana/>

deficit and lack of income generation activities to support themselves and their relatives has partly influenced the migration (Anarfi and Kwankye, 2005). Movement from the north to the south to mainly cities of Accra and Kumasi may be due to the fact they have heard of these as the surest place to make it in life. The urge to diversify livelihood options as the region has fewer opportunities to offer the regard migration as an alternative source of livelihood. (Anarfi and Kwankye, 2005).

Network of friends and relative, serve to link friends and relatives with jobs and assist them with all the information needed to establish them in the new location.

Intermittent ethnic conflicts in the Northern region have forced people to migrate out of northern region to the south where the peace prevails with improved infrastructure for instants in 1994 the Kokomba conflict causes of people to move south wards. Those who migrated were mostly women and children when men were actively engaged in the conflict.

Impacts of migration

Remittances from migrant serves as an alternative source of income to families of migrant (Quartey, 2006). Unlike international migrants, whose remittance form the bulk of family source of income and may also go into investment in business, housing project to mention but a few, remittances from internal migrants are usually for domestic support of parent healthcare, daily upkeep or childcare. The transfer channels use for transferring monies to family are usually informal through networks again, when a friend or relative is returning home.

Migration changes hands in gender roles with traditional role of women in childcare where women with children leave them in the care of men, parents or relative (Oppong, 1997). Most often the children lack proper upbringing and care when the mother or both parent have migrated out. This usually affects child education and may be neglected when the parent fail to send in money to support the family (Parrenas, 2001)

Migration may lead to lose of vibrant productive labour force that families and communities need most for production in the agricultural, craft and other labour intensive jobs. Thus lose of youthful contribution to development. (Awumbila & Ardayfiô€ Schandorf , 2008)

Challenges of migration

Migrants to the cities of Accra and Kumasi face lots of challenges but females are the most vulnerable world only a minority of women are granted refugee status (UNFPA, 2004). This is because gender related causes of persecution are rarely accepted as valid grounds for refugee status. Also women usually lack the literacy or educational clout to complete the usually bureaucratic application process. (Caritas Europa, 2007). The participation of females in migration has led to Migration in Ghana: Thematic Paper 2009 22 the development of a labour niche for females (domestic work, childcare etc) characterized by low wages, unfair labor practices and exploitation and exclusion of females form certain kinds of work-often of the formal nature (Oppong, 1997).

- Poor Quality of Life

Migrants, especially females tend to be the most vulnerable and they face many challenges and tend to live under deprived conditions often times without access to social services in destination communities.

Conclusion

Based on gender analysis and differences as well as diversity in family and economic status of males and females migrate may have similar motivation for migration but may have difference in the experiences.

The region is losing valuable ingredient that needs to be restructured to enhance the development process in the Northern region. New interventions in the area of capacity building for the youth to improve the quality of life in the region needs be on the plan, and well executed. Educational campaigns on challenges migrants go through and the need to will help in the development process of the region may help reduce or stem the trend in the bud.

Credit accessibility and at an affordable interest to assist farmer and others in private ventures could maintain the population flow.

Improved infrastructure, terms of health facilities, roads, schools, potable water will help bridge the gaps in development that attracts the youth.

Therefore the region may develop other gender related programs to help the youth and the region as a whole