

## Assessment of the effects of rural-rural migration on the income of migrant farmers in Mokwa Local Government area of Niger state

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### Abstract

The study assesses the effects of rural-rural migration on the income from agricultural production of migrant farmers in Mokwa area of Niger state. To achieve the study objectives, 280 farmers were randomly selected from seven villages in Takama and Kudu districts where incidence of rural - rural migration is mostly common. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation and Z - test. The result reveals that rural - rural migration is mostly undertaken by young adults of between 30 - 40 years. The respondents have acquired one form of education or the other ranging from Quranic education to tertiary education. Other non - farm activities of the respondents include trading business, craft work and masonry. Some of the contribution of migrant farmers in the study area includes labour supply and introduction of new varieties and farming animals. The results also indicated positive relationship ( $Z=13.77$ ;  $P<0.05$ ) between the income from agricultural production of migrant farmers before and after their migration. Hence, migrant farmers are better off in terms of agricultural production and income in their new location than their places of origin. There is need to strengthen awareness campaigns and redirection of policies that can check poor land utilization and inefficient agricultural methods to sustain land in rural areas.

**Keywords:** rural-rural migration, income, migrant farmers, Mokwa, local government, Niger state

### Introduction

Migration can be regarded as the physical transition of an individual or a group from one society to another that involves changing of abode permanently or temporarily for an appreciable duration and these movements are largely influenced by physical condition, economic, social and political factors (Andrew, 1993). In many poor countries rural-rural migration still dominates with labourers from poorer regions traveling to the agriculturally prosperous areas with high demand for labour, so that they can find alternative to earn a living for themselves and their families (Deshinkar and Grimm, 2005). Hence, rural-rural migration can be viewed as movement of an individual or a group from one poorer area to a more prosperous rural area, which has the resources such as fertile land that can be used to improve the standard of living of migrants.

The deleterious effect of rural-urban migration that leads to urban congestion, urban poverty, unemployment, underemployment, inadequate infrastructural facilities, high crime rate, prostitution, an increase spread of communicable diseases and political unrest makes rural - rural migration a viable alternative to rural-urban migration (Anyanwu, 1992). Rural-urban migration leads to rural depopulation of the more active and energetic young men who are needed for agricultural production and rural

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Science Focus: An International Journal of Biological and Physical Sciences

ISSN: 1596 - 7026

<http://www.sciencefocusngr.org>

development, this has resulted in a fall of total agricultural production and a corresponding increase in the importation of food (Anyanwu, 1992 and (Adepoju, 2000). Rural - rural migration has become a viable alternative to rural-urban migration because of the diversity of the ecological features, the varying local resources and the location of agricultural projects in rural areas serve as major pull factors for migration directed at the rural areas (Adepoju, 1988). Many migrants take advantage of these resources such as fertile land to offer them employment in farming to earn a living and empower themselves economically. Farmers who do not have enough farm land or whose farm land has been exhausted of nutrients embark on rural - rural migration, they migrate from one rural community to other rural communities where they can acquire more and better farm land to practice agriculture (Nwankwo et al, 2005). Rural-rural migration has not only stimulated rural development but also increase the supply of labour in the rural areas in addition to income generated by landlords from rents of lands (Osuntogun, 1979). Some migrants tend to establish their settlements by building houses and provide hired labour to the farmers in the receiving areas, and on the other hand the client community farmers gain income from them by renting out some piece of land to the migrants that are either used for farming or buildings.

The climatic accidents for example, the inherent desert condition of the extreme northern states of this country which often resulted to droughts and consequently crop failure and the favourable climatic conditions of the areas with available vast fertile land, which is yet to be cultivated that makes it agriculturally prosperous may be attributed to push and pull factors that encourage the movement of energetic men and women from one agriculturally prosperous areas to another. Considering the widespread of rural - rural migration in northern parts of the country particularly in the study area, there is the need to document the effect of rural - rural migration on the farmers. This study will not only add to the existing body of knowledge but will also be useful to non-governmental organizations and government in the planning of development policies to increase agricultural production, raise the standard of living of the migrants and to reduce the hazardous living conditions of migrants. Considering the above, in order to assess the effects of rural - rural migration on income from agricultural production of migrant farmers in the study area, the following research questions are hereby put forward:

- i. What are the socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the study area?
- ii. What are the effects of rural- rural migration on the income from agricultural production of migrant farmers?
- iii. What are the contributions of migrant farmers to the study area?

### Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of is to assess the effects of rural-rural migration on the income from agricultural production of migrant farmers in Mokwa local government area of Niger state. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine some selected socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area;
- ii. examine the effects of rural - rural migration on the income from agricultural production of migrant farmers in the study area;
- iii. identify the contributions of migrant farmers to the study area.

### Methodology

The study was carried out in Mokwa Local Government Area of Niger state, Nigeria. The study area falls in guinea savannah zone with an annual rainfall of between 1100mm - 1600mm and has an average temperature of 35°C. Two districts namely Takuma and Kudu were purposely selected for the study because of high concentration of migrant farmers in these districts. Simple random sampling technique was used to select seven (7) villages from the two districts for the study; the selected villages are Labouzhi, Kudu, Takuma, Sheti, Kpaki and Bokani. Similarly, simple random sampling was used to select 20 respondents (household heads) of each of migrant farmers and non - migrant farmers from the selected villages. In all 280 respondents were interviewed.

258

Interview schedule was used to collect relevant data on the socio – economic characteristics of household heads of migrant farmers and non – migrant farmers; while information on the contributions of migrants to the host community and other social implications on the community were collected from household heads of the non-migrants.

Descriptive statistical techniques of frequency counts and percentages were used in achieving objective one and three, while Z- test was used to test the difference between the income from agricultural production of migrant farmers before and after migration.

**Results and discussion**

Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the migrant and non – migrant farmers. The result shows that the majority of migrants’ household heads and the non -migrants are concentrated within the age range of 30 - 50 years who are young adults capable of undertaking farming activities representing over 90% of the respondents interviewed. The results confirms the report of Ngozi (2005) that the age of migrants that undertake rural – rural migration in the South – eastern Nigeria lie between 15 – 55 years constituting about 95 percent of the population interviewed.

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents (N=140)**

Characteristics	Migrant farmers		Non – migrant farmers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Ages (years)</b>				
30 - 40	71	50.7	88	62.9
41 - 50	58	41.4	38	27.1
51 - 55	4	2.9	6	4.3
Above 55	7	5	8	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational background</b>				
Quranic	56	40	46	32.9
Adult	21	15	19	13.6
Primary	33	23.6	23	16.4
Secondary	17	12	30	21.4
Tertiary	02	1.4	22	15.7
None of the above	11	7.9	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Occupation</b>				
Trading/business	39	27.9	49	35
Craft work	18	12.9	26	18.6
Labourer	41	29.3	20	14.3
Masonry	05	3.6	09	6.4
Other	11	7.9	19	13.6
No response	26	18.6	17	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

Majority (91.7%) of the migrant farmers attained one type of education or the other, however, most of them lacked western education. This agrees with the fact that rural-rural migration is mostly undertaken by poorer people with little education (Deshinkar and Grimm, 2005). Table 1 also depicts that, about 81.6% of the migrant farmers are involved in non – farming activities such as offering of farm and non – farm labour to their colleagues or non – migrants, some are involve in trading or business activities such as selling of meat, foodstuff, firewood, charcoal, sugar cane, et cetera. The results also revealed that some migrant farmers were involved in other non - farm activities like craft works (blacksmith, wood calving), masonry, and other activities such as hunting, fishing, Quranic teaching, et cetera and through the offer of labour to their colleagues or non – migrants as farm workers in planting, weeding, harvesting or as construction laborers to gain additional income.

### Conclusion and recommendation

On the basis of the results obtained from this study, the following conclusion can be drawn. Rural – rural migration is undertaken mostly by young adults around the ages of 30 – 45 years who are capable of farming and farming is the major occupation of the migrants and non – migrants but most of them are involved in other non – farm activities to diversify their sources of income. The migration of migrants to the study area has contributed to increased labour supply, introduction of new farming practices, seeds, etc is a means of improving rural household livelihood through provision of opportunities for agricultural intensification that resulted to higher agricultural production and income of both the migrant farmers and the non – migrants alike. Finally, the migrant farmers are better off in their new location meaning that they have more income from agricultural production in their present location than their former places of origin. Therefore, rural – rural migration can serve as a viable alternative to rural – urban migration.

It is recommended that there is need to strengthen awareness campaigns and redirection of policies that can check poor land utilization and inefficient agricultural methods to sustain land in rural areas. This will help avert environmental degradation so as to check or reduce the menace of out – migration and efforts should be made by the government and policy makers to enhance the social status of migrant farmers through planning and formulation of policy to guide new population settlement scheme that is charged with the responsibility of not only directing the migrant farmers to agriculturally prosperous areas but also provision of infrastructural facilities such as health service centers, schools, bore holes, water wells, etc to reduce some of the problems encountered by migrant farmers in their destinations.

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