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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Urban-Rural Migration In Rivers State, Nigeria: Implication For Agricultural Production

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| ABSTRACT

This study examined Urban-rural migration in Rivers State, Nigeria: Implication for agricultural production. The study was conducted in Rivers State and adopted descriptive survey design. A multi – stage sampling technique was used to select samples for the study and data for this study were collected from 150 migrant respondents. Descriptive statistics and logistic regression were used to analyse the data. Socio-demographic results indicated that mean age of respondents was 49 years and most (80.0%) and (90%) of the respondents were males and married respectively. All the respondents were literate and majority 62% had large household size of 6-10 persons, with mean household size of seven persons. The study also revealed that high cost of living (80%), need to engage in agriculture (62.7%), sustainable and green living (58.0%), job transfer (54.0%), old age (53.3%), job losses in the urban area (51.0), etc. were major causes of urban-rural migration. Obvious effects of urban-rural migration in agricultural production are participation in agric. activities 92.7%), increased agric. output (66.7%), increased income (70.0%), increased agric. labour supply (58.0%), better and affordable living conditions (94.7) and introduction of improved technology (65.3%). The study also showed that urban-rural migrants' decision to engage or not to engage in agricultural is influenced by explanatory variables. The Pseudo R2 of 0.878 which implied that the significant explanatory variables influenced the criterion (dependent) variables by 87.8%. The coefficient of gender (X1) is statistically significant and negative. Age (X2) had a negative coefficient but significant, meaning that age has an inverse relationship with agriculture. Education (X3) is significant and positive. Household size (X4) is positive and significant, etc. The study recommended that migrants should harness the agricultural potentials of rural areas to increase food production and enhance food security in the study area.

| KEYWORDS

Urban-rural migration, Agricultural production, Food security, De- urbanization, Sustainable agricultural development

Introduction

Migration is the physical movement of people from one place to another. Movement of people one place to another is a regular occurrence known to mankind and it is a process of socio – economic development. Urban - rural migration is the movement of people from more densely populated areas to less populated areas due to environmental and agricultural concerns, retirement, old age, job opportunities, insecurity, simpler lifestyles, etc. According to Ofuoku (2012), the decision to migrate is always in response to prevailing circumstances or situations at the time.

This type of migration is called Counter – urbanization or de – urbanization, which is a demographic and social process in which people move from urban to rural areas or communities (Griffiths, Chapman and Christiansen, 2010).

As economies undergo economic and structural transformation, migration of people in search of better employment opportunities, good environmental conditions, food and nutrition security and security of lives and property within and across countries becomes unavoidable (Food and Agriculture Organisation, (FAO, 2016). Migrants can be agents of development and can contribute meaningfully to economic growth, food security and rural livelihood development.

The need to revitalize the rural areas cannot be over-emphasized because they are no doubt the foundation for sustainable agricultural development and have served as the location of fulfilment for such multifunctional roles as food supply, land preservation, natural environmental conservation, cultural tradition maintenance, local people's livelihood and work, and so on (Xiaoping, 2013). Okukun and Erukakpomren (2023) and Igene, Onymekonwu and Ehiwario (2023) had reported the negative impacts of rural - urban migration on rural economies like agriculture and natural resource management, as labour force drastically reduce due to rural – urban migration for greener pastures. Revitalization of rural communities in the study area can be triggered by the activities of migrants, especially the urban – rural migrants, most of whom are city born people moving into rural communities or people that first migrated to urban areas and are on return journey. These urban – rural migrants may possess creative and innovative ideas that are essential for rural and agricultural development.

It is believed that urban-rural migration will obviously increase agricultural output in the rural communities (Ofuoku, 2012). The demographic and socio – economic attributes of these urban – rural migrants are not known as well as the causes of urban – rural migration.

Therefore, this study was aimed at evaluating the effects of urban-rural migration on agricultural production in Rivers State, a subject on which there had been relatively little or no research. The specific objectives of this study are to: ascertain the socio-demographic characteristics of the migrants; identify causes of urban rural migration; ascertain migrants' means of livelihood in the rural areas; ascertain the effects of urban-rural migration on agricultural production; and determine the factors influencing urban-rural migrants' engagement in agriculture in the rural areas.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Rivers State. The State is made up of 23 Local Government Areas. The State has a population estimate of about 8,000,000 people (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2020) and is located on latitudes 4º 45' North and longitudes 6º 51' East of the equator ((Rivers State Agricultural Development Programme (RSADP), 2014).

Agriculture (crop and livestock farming and artisanal fishing) is the major occupation of the people of Rivers State, and is induced by the rich and fertile soil and water bodies, which stretches the length and breadth of the state. There are principally three agricultural zones in the State (RSADP), 2014). Zone one with headquarters in Bori (Khana LGA), zone two with headquarters in Andoni (Andoni LGA) and zone three with headquarters in Omuma (Omuma LGA).

The study adopted survey design. The sampling unit of this study comprised all migrant farming households in Rivers State. Data for this study was generated from primary and secondary sources. Primary Data was collected with the aid of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in five sections respectively. Section A ascertained the socio-demographic characteristics of all the farming households. Section B identified the causes of urban rural migration. Section C identified the means of livelihood of the migrants in the rural area. Section D ascertained the effects of urban – rural migration on agricultural production and Section E determined the factors influencing urban rural migrants' engagement in agricultural production. The items in sections B were measured using the four point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree. Secondary Data was generated from published materials.

A multi – stage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 150 migrant farmers for the study. Firstly, one local government area was randomly selected from each agricultural zone and these were Oyigbo, Okrika and Etche L.G.As. Oyigbo LGA has seventeen

communities, Okrika LGA has twenty one communities and Etche LGA has nineteen communities. Secondly, from each of the L.G.As selected, a proportionate sampling was applied to select 10 communities (multiplying the total number of communities by 50%), and from each of the communities selected, 15 respondents were purposively chosen since there was no record of the number of migrants within the communities to produce a total of 150 respondents.

In order to achieve the specific objectives of this study, descriptive (mean, frequency counts, percentages) and inferential statistical (Binary logistic regression) tools were applied. The binary response in this study was whether the respondents were engaged in agricultural activity or not, i.e. yes (1) or no (0). The logistic model was implicitly stated as:

$P(Y) = Ln (^{P}/_{1} - P)$

$Ln (P/1 - P) = b_o + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 ... b_9 x_9 + e$

$Logit [P(X)] = log [P(X) / (1 - P(X))] = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \ldots + B_K X_K$

Where;

Y_i = Engagement in Agriculture (Dummy variable; Yes = 1; No = 0)

P = Probability of engagement in agriculture

X_1 = Gender variable (Dummy- Male = 1; Female = 0)

X_2 = Age (years)

X_3 = Education (No. of years spent in school)

X_4 = Household Size (No. of people)

X_5 = Marital status (married=1; Otherwise = 0)

X_6 = Wage employment (wage employment = 1; otherwise = 0)

X_7 = Self employment (Self employment = 1; otherwise = 0)

α_0 = Constant term

ε = Error term

Results and discussions

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Urban-Rural Migrants

Table 1: Distribution of migrants according to socio-demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Age			
20-29	13	8.7	
30-39	25	16.7	
40-49	26	17.3	49.0
50-59	39	26.0	
60-69	47	31.3	
Total	150	100	
Gender			
Male	80	53.3	
Female	70	46.7	
Total	150	100	
Marital Status			
Single	10	10.0	
Married	135	90.0	
Total	150	100	
Highest Level of Education			
Primary	18	12.0	
Secondary	54	36.0	
Tertiary	78	52.0	
Total	150	100	
Household Size			
1-5	50	33.3	
6-10	94	62.7	7
11-15	6	4.0	
Total	180	100	
Occupation			
Farming (crop/livestock)	120	80.0	
Product marketing	20	13.3	
Others	10	6.7	
Total	150	100	

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 1 shows that most respondents (31.3%) and (26.0%) were between the ages of 60 – 69 and 50 – 59 respectively. The average age of the respondents was 49 years. This implies that most urban-rural migrants are adults. This result supports the findings of Ofuoku (2015) and Adebo & Sekumade (2012), who opined that factors that push them away from urban to rural areas were urban problems such as stress, stealing and crime and to reduce cost of living in urban areas.

The respondents were also identified based on their gender distribution. Table 4.2 also indicates that 53.3% of the respondents were males while 46.7% were females. This shows that men migrate more from urban to rural areas to ensure welfare (food security), comfort and safety of their family members. This finding is in consonance with Ofuoku (2015) which opines that migrants are mostly males and married who still have responsibilities as married men, considering the fact that most of them had fairly large household size, which implies more mouths to feed.

Table 1 further showed that majority (90%) of the respondents were married while only 10% were single. This agreed with Ofuoku (2015) who maintained that majority of migrants are married with responsibility to feed their dependents.

Table 1 also shows that 52.0% of the respondents completed tertiary education, 36% completed secondary education while only 12% of the migrants completed primary education. This implies that most urban-rural migrants are educated men and women who may have left the cities because of job transfer, retirements, high cost of living in the cities and need to participate in agricultural activities.

Table 1 also shows that majority 62.7% of the migrants had a family size of 6-10. The decision to migrate from urban to rural areas could be because of the size of family hence renting an accommodation in the cities that will be adequate for this household size will certainly be very expensive and coupled with high cost of living in the urban areas.

Table 1 further revealed that majority 80% of the urban-rural migrants engaged agriculture in the rural area migrated to, thereby increasing the number of people involved in agriculture to boost food production.

Causes of Urban - rural Migration

Urban-rural migrants embarked on return migration, most to their villages of origin and many to places and villages they felt very conducive and affordable.

Table 2: **Percentage distribution of the causes of urban – rural migration**

Causes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Unemployment	51	34.0
High cost of living in the city	120	80.0
Retirement/retrenchment	50	33.3
Safety and security challenges	45	30.0
Social vices	37	24.7

Sustainable and green living	87	58.0
Job transfer	81	54.0
Congestion in the city	40	28.0
Health related issues	28	18.7
Old age	80	53.3
Loss of jobs in the city	77	51.3
Need to engage in Agriculture	94	62.7
Environmental challenges	29	29.3
Death of spouse	31	20.7

Source: Field survey, 2023 Multiple responses recorded

Table 2 shows that most of the migrants (80.0%) migrated to rural area due to high cost of living, 62.7% were as a result of engagement in agriculture, 58.0% were forced to the rural area by sustainable and green living, 54.0% , 53.3% and 51.3% were pushed by job transfer, old age and loss of jobs in the city respectively. The implication is that majority of the urban-rural migrants engaged in counter urbanization due to high cost of living in the urban centres and other factors as stated in Table 2.

Migrants Means of Livelihood in the Rural Areas

Table 3: Percentage distribution of migrants means of livelihood in the rural areas

Means of Livelihood	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Crop Production/processing	89	53.3
Marketing of agric. products	50	33.3
Poultry Farming	41	27.0
Transportation	10	7.0
Agricultural labour supply	60	40.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023 ***Multiple responses recorded***

Table 3 reveals that 53.3% of respondents were into crop production and processing in the rural area, 27.0% were engaged in poultry farming, 33.3% were into marketing of agricultural products, 40.0% supplied agricultural labour and only 7% did transportation business. This implies that majority of urban-rural migrants were engaged in agriculture and agricultural related activities. This result supports the finding of Ofuoku (2015) in his study of urban – rural migration in delta state, Nigeria: implication for agricultural extension service, that agriculture and its related activities are the main occupation of migrants to rural areas. This implies that most

urban – rural migrants engage in agriculture as a means of livelihood, thereby increasing the number of farmers and boosting food production.

Effects of Urban-Rural Migration on Agricultural Production

Table 4: Effects of Urban - Rural Migration on Agricultural Production

Effects	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participation in agricultural activities	139	92.7
Increased agric. output	100	66.7
Increased income from agriculture	105	70.0
Increased agric. labour supply	87	58.0
Better/affordable living conditions	142	94.7
Introduction of improved agric. technology	98	65.3

Source: Field survey, 2023 Multiple responses recorded

Table 4 shows the effects of urban – rural migration in the study area. The Table shows that most of the migrants (92.7%) participated in agricultural activities, 94.7 % now have better and affordable living conditions, 70%, 66.7%, 58.0% and 63.3% have increased income, increased output, increased agricultural labour supply and introduction of improved technology respectively as effects of urban – rural migration. The implication is increased food production which enhances food security situation in Rivers State. This result agrees with Arene and Mkpado (2002) in their study of counter – urbanization and agricultural productivity in Imo State, asserts that counter – urbanization accelerated agricultural intensification and cultivation of marginal lands by the urban – rural migrants.

Determinants of Migrants' engagement in agriculture.

Table 5: Logistic regression result of factors influencing migrants' decision to engage in agriculture

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Wald Statistics
Gender (X_1)	-0.067	0.998	0.035*
Ages (X_2)	-0.246	0.904	0.044*
Education (X_3)	0.051	0.785	0.045*
Household Size (X_4)	0.049	0.598	0.032*
Marital Status (X_5)	0.062	0.942	0.048*
Wage employment (X_6)	-0.1423	0.284	0.059*

Self employment (X_7)	0.0674	0.315	0.472*
Constant	0.223	0.985	0.226*
Pseudo R^2	0.878		
Log – likelihood			
Prob>chi^2 = 0.0000			

***Significant (P<0.05)**

Table 5 shows the logistic regression analysis of factors influencing migrants' decision to engage in agriculture. The result shows that all the explanatory variables are determinants of the dependent variables. It means that urban-rural migrants' decision to engage or not to engage in agriculture is influenced by the explanatory variables. The Pseudo R^2 of 0.878 implies that the significant explanatory variables explain or influence the criterion (dependent) variable by 87.8%.

From the logistic analysis, the coefficient of gender (X_1) is statistically significant and negative. Given that this is a dummy variable (female = 1 and male = 0). This shows that males may be engaged in agriculture but are not active compared to their wives who are more inclined to agriculture, at least they own a backyard garden. The coefficient of age (X_2) had a negative coefficient but significant. This implies that age has an inverse relationship with agriculture. As people grow old, they reduce their engagement in agricultural activities because they no longer have the strength needed for agricultural activities. With this development they resort to hired labour, if they decide to engage in agriculture. Education (X_3) is significant and positive. This implies that years of schooling and information gathered would help the migrants to appreciate the importance of agriculture and it becomes a means of livelihood in the rural area. Education helps in the adoption of innovation. Household size (X_4) is positive and significant. The larger the household size, the more it will cost to provide the basic needs for the family members. So, agriculture becomes a means of livelihood for the migrants in the rural area.

Marital Status was significant and positive (X_5). This implies that they have family responsibilities to shoulder. To cushion the effects or loads of family responsibilities, agriculture readily comes to mind. Wage employment (X_6) was significant and negative. This means that the more migrants engage in wage employment, the less likelihood of their participation in agricultural activities. Self employment (X_7) was significant and positive

implying that the more migrants engage in self employment, the more likelihood of their participation in agricultural activities.

Conclusion

Most of the urban – rural migrants were pushed to the rural area by high cost of living in the urban areas, and are mainly married, male, and literate and are interested in agricultural activities. These urban – rural migrants should be encouraged to contribute their quota in food production to enhance food security situation. It is believed that the results of this study and the implications would be of great interest to agricultural stakeholders for necessary actions as the urban – rural migrants make their contribution to agricultural production.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are given:

1. The study recommended that migrants should harness the agricultural potentials of rural areas to increase food production and enhance food security in the study area.
2. Agro-allied industries should be set up in the rural areas to enhance storage, processing and packaging of farm produce and in effect create jobs for the rural dwellers.
3. Now that people are massively migrating back to the rural areas, there should be adequate security to curb social vices and other associated ills.

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