

CHILD MIGRATION *in* ETHIOPIA



Authors

1. Ethiopia Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
2. Francesco Teo Ficarelli and Jim van Moorsel (*Mixed Migration Center - MMC*)
3. Halifet Ayemohammed Yusuf
4. Dr Getnet Tesfaw
5. Adane Alemayehu Tadesse
6. Dr Tsedeke Lambore Gemecho
7. Dr Getu Ambaye Teshale
8. Dr Haymanot Tesfaye
9. Dr Aschalew Abeje Lakew
10. Dr Meron Zeleke

Editorial support

1. Edgar Mwine
2. Clarissa Heinlein
3. Felicia Klapka Nadine

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📍 24, Kololo Hill Lane, Kololo
P.O.Box 647, Kampala. Uganda

✉ sipodi.east@kas.de

🌐 www.kas.de/en/web/sipodi-east

Contents

Monitoring Report on Child migrants in Wolaita, Gamo, Hadiya and Kembata Tembaro Zones of the former Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region of Ethiopia.	4
Ethiopian youth along mixed migration routes: Comparing profiles, drivers, and aspirations.	22
Root Cause and Measures to Address the Female Child Migration in South Wollo: A Human Rights Perspective	38
Parental migration status and psychosocial well-being of children left behind in Southern Wollo, Ethiopia.	50
Dynamics of Child Migration in the Context of Changing Climate: A Case Study of Rural Shashemene, South Central Ethiopia	68
Count Regression Modelling on Number of International Migrants in Household	81
The Socio-economic Reasons for Child Trafficking in the Border Area of Ethiopia and Sudan (Metema), Northwestern, Ethiopia	103
Child Trafficking in Ethiopia: Challenges and Opportunities for Prevention	113
Challenges and adaptive responses of rural-urban migrant children in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia	131
South-South Child Migration and Decision Making; the Ethiopian Experience	141

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung presents to you this publication on child migration in Ethiopia. We are grateful for the commitment of our partners, Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, and the International Organisation for Migration – Ethiopia Office, with whom we have been able to put this together.

Child migration is a complex and pressing issue in the Horn of Africa today. The phenomenon of children leaving their homes and communities in search of better opportunities or escaping challenging circumstances is a matter that deserves our deep understanding and proactive response. This publication aims to shed light on the various dimensions of child migration, explore its root causes, and identify effective strategies to address its challenges.

We believe that academic research plays a vital role in shaping our understanding of complex issues and informing evidence-based policies and interventions. The insights from this research are crucial in formulating sustainable solutions and ensuring the well-being and protection of migrant children.

In the opening chapter of this publication, we present to you the findings of a study by our partner, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, on the human rights concerns associated with child migration. In the following chapter, the Mixed Migration Centre offers an analysis of the migration routes used by child migrants but also compares their profiles, assesses the drivers, and highlights the profiles of youthful migrants.

In the chapters that follow, eminent researchers delve into the specific cross-cutting issues to do with child migration. From gender perspectives and the effects of climate change on child migrants to regressed scientific models for understanding the extent of child migration, the research that makes up this publication is rich and provides a wide angle of analysis.

For these insights, we like to thank all the researchers who have contributed to this publication. We also thank Niklas Mayer for overseeing these processes from inception to this stage. The last stage of this journey is for policy makers and leaders at all levels to adopt some of the recommendations in this publication and transform them into a meaningful response to the challenges of child migration. We are confident that this publication is an adequate catalyst for meaningful policy engagements and collaboration and for this, we invite you to read it and act on it.

Thank you.

Nils Wörmer
Regional Director KAS – Regional Programme
KAS – Regional
Security Dialogue for East Africa

Edgar Mwine
Project Officer
KAS – Regional
Security Dialogue for East Africa

Note from the Coordinator

Migration of children and youth in Ethiopia is dynamic and multi-faceted. Faced with scarcity of land, droughts, conflict, poverty, and lack of job opportunities, children in Ethiopia depart from the rural areas towards the cities and large-scale agricultural plantations inside the country, but also towards neighbouring countries, especially Sudan, Kenya and Somalia, and to distant destinations such as South Africa and the Gulf countries. Whereas they constitute potentially important elements of income diversification of poor households, child and youth migrants are particularly vulnerable to abuse by traffickers and other migration networks, for exploitative and physical hard labour, as well as prostitution. Adverse health outcomes, school dropouts and human rights violations and other challenges have been linked to child migration in Ethiopia.

To address these dynamics and enhance knowledge and awareness, Wolaita Sodo University, Konrad Adenauer Foundation Regional Program Security Dialogue East Africa and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission – with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) jointly organized a National Research Conference and Policy-Dialogue: “Child Migration Challenges in Ethiopia” - held on 16-17 June 2023 at Wolaita Sodo University. The conference brought together academic researchers from different parts of Ethiopia, local civil organizations and development practitioners, as well as policymakers and government officials from federal, regional and local levels.

Since I have stayed almost two years as a guest researcher at Wolaita Sodo University, and since the topic at hand is one of the case studies of my PhD research, I am deeply grateful to the mentioned partner organization, above all to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, for the opportunity of organizing the research conference and the circulation of the conference papers. I also use the opportunity to thank Wolaita Sodo University for hosting the event, as well as for the pleasant collaboration during the last two years. The conference papers assembled here reflect a collaborative effort to understand the aspirations, intentions and protection risks of child migration in Ethiopia, to critically examine existing policies and interventions, and to propose innovative solutions that prioritize the well-being and rights of these young migrants.

In extending my gratitude to the dedicated scholars who have contributed to this publication, as well as to participants of the conference at Wolaita Sodo University, I invite readers to engage with the narratives, research findings, and recommendations presented within. The authors featured in this publication offer valuable perspectives, grounded in research and firsthand experiences, shedding light on the factors influencing child migration in Ethiopia. Throughout these pages, the resilience and strength of the young migrants shine through despite the adversity they face. As we explore their experiences, constraints, and migration decisions, we are reminded that behind every statistic and policy challenge, there are real lives, dreams, and aspirations that deserve our empathy and collective commitment to positive change.

Niklas Mayer

Consultant and Researcher on Migration and Development

Monitoring Report on Child migrants in Wolaita, Gamo, Hadiya and Kembata Tembaro Zones of the former Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

EHRC is an independent federal state body established as per the Federal Constitution and reporting to House of Peoples' Representatives as a national human rights institution with the mandate for promotion and protection of human rights. (Article 55/14 of FDRE Constitution cum Proclamation No. 210/2000, as amended by Proclamation No.1224/2020).

EHRC is mandated to promote, ensure respect of, and protect human rights in Ethiopia, with the objectives of:

- Educating the public about human rights.
- Ensuring that human rights are protected, respected, and fully enforced; and
- Ensuring that the necessary measures are taken where human rights are found to have been violated.

Based on its commitment for Equality, Dignity and Justice, EHRC core values are:

- Independence
- Inclusiveness
- Solidarity with victims of human rights violations/vulnerable
- Factual & Ethical.

As Ethiopia is one of the largest refugee hosting countries in the world, has an ever-increasing population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and is a source, transit, and destination for many migrants, EHRC has identified the promotion, respect, and protection of the rights of refugees, IDPs and migrants as one of its key priorities under its Five-year Strategic Plan.

EHRC's key strategic interventions include investigation of human rights violations and monitoring human rights situation; research and advocacy; empowerment of vulnerable communities to claim their rights; monitoring compliance with national and international standards, as well as partnership with stakeholders to advance the rights agenda, as well as protection needs of these segments of society.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a human rights situation monitoring on child migration conducted by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC/the Commission) in *Wolaita, Gamo, Hadiya* and *Kembata Tembaro* Zones of the former Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) from May 23, 2023 – June 11, 2023. The monitoring was undertaken with the primary objective of identifying human rights violations and concerns, including trafficking affecting child migrants involved in cross-border and internal migration from the region. To guide the data gathering and analysis, the Commission used standards enshrined in relevant provisions of the FDRE Constitution, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (also known as the Palermo Protocol), and its implementing Proclamation No. 1178/2020 as amended by Corrigendum 11/2013. Using the four pillars (4Ps) framework of the Palermo Protocol composed of *prevention, protection, prosecution* and *partnership*, the Commission has identified several major human rights concerns in the areas monitored.

Key findings:

- **Prevention:** Despite commendable efforts to prevent child trafficking and other child migration-related exploitation, resource constraints and challenges related to physical accessibility of hotspot areas and coordination gaps between relevant actors are hindering prevention efforts.
- **Protection:** Child victims of trafficking in the monitored areas face challenges in accessing protection services, including being placed in police stations and detention facilities due to shortage of safe houses. Other challenges they face include lack of sufficient child friendly psychosocial support; limited access to health services, particularly mental health services; lack of school supplies and gaps in reintegration and family reunification activities.
- **Prosecution:** Despite the prevalence of child trafficking and migration related exploitation in the areas monitored, the number of cases prosecuted is very low. Challenges to prosecution efforts include the release of suspects on bail sometimes with minimal bail payments thus leading to non-appearance of accused persons; offenders regularly changing their tactics to avoid being caught; the pressure and threat suspects put on victims and their families; direct involvement of families in child irregular migration and community's non-compliance with the criminal justice system, in particular, by intervening through traditional means of dispute resolution. Understanding of the different elements that constitute the crime of child trafficking is also very weak.
- **Partnership:** Despite collaboration efforts by some relevant stakeholders, including the establishment of trafficking prevention task force in all zones, there is a lack of clarity of mandate with regards to child trafficking and migration-related exploitation, resulting in duplication of efforts and poor coordination.

Recommendations:

Prevention:

- Increase resources and improve accessibility of hotspot areas, including the use of media to strengthen awareness-raising activities on child trafficking and other child migration-related exploitation.
- Enhance coordination between relevant actors, including government agencies, NGOs, media and community leaders, to develop and implement comprehensive prevention strategies.

Protection:

- Increase the number of safe houses around hotspots and provide sufficient child-friendly psychosocial support for victims of child trafficking and exploitation.
- Ensure that child victims of trafficking and exploitation have access to health services, particularly mental health services.
- Provide child returnees with school supplies and economic support to enable them to go back to school.
- Improve the reintegration activities of governmental bodies and NGOs, including by ensuring that family reunification is carried out in the best interests of the child and that child returnees receive adequate follow-up and economic support after reunification.

Prosecution:

- Strengthen prosecution efforts by addressing the challenges identified, such as the release of suspects on bail with minimal bail payments, offenders changing their tactics, suspects threatening victims and their families not to report and testify against them, and the direct involvement of families in child migration and community's non-compliance with the criminal justice system. Capacity building of law enforcement actors should also be given due attention.

Partnership:

- Clarify the mandate on child trafficking and migration related exploitation of relevant government bodies to avoid duplication of efforts and improve coordination.
- Strengthen collaboration between relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, media, and community leaders, to develop and implement effective prevention, protection, and prosecution strategies.

Introduction

Ethiopia experiences high levels of both internal and cross-border migrations, including trafficking. According to a report by the International Labor Organization (ILO), more than 12 percent of the cross-border migration in Ethiopia is from the former Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), with *Hadiya*, *Kembata Tembaro*, *Wolaita*, and other zones identified as hotspot areas (ILO, 2022). In a similar vein, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicated that hundreds of children from these areas irregularly migrate annually to South Africa through Moyale (IOM, 2023). The number of children internally migrating from and within the region is also high. These children who are involved both in cross-border and internal migration are particularly vulnerable to various human rights violations, including trafficking along the migration route and at their destinations.

While local governments and non-governmental organizations offer some assistance and reintegration services to child returnees from irregular migration, lack of sustainable and adequate implementation of social, economic, and psychological support remains a significant concern. Organizations working in the area of migration, such as IOM also reported that child returnees of irregular migration face several challenges due to the inadequate support system at their place of return exposing a significant number of them to secondary irregular migration and human rights violations (IOM, 2022).

Against this background, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) conducted a human rights monitoring in *Wolaita*, *Gamo*, *Hadiya*, and *Kembata Tembaro* Zones of the former Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) from May 23, 2023 - June 11, 2023. An assessment of the context and of relevant stakeholders was also conducted. The monitoring was undertaken with the primary objective of identifying human rights concerns that occur in the context of child irregular migration with a view of utilizing the findings for evidence-based advocacy to adequately prevent and respond to child trafficking and migration related exploitation. In an effort to identify human rights concerns associated with child irregular migration in the area, including child trafficking, the Commission used standards enshrined in the relevant provisions of the FDRE Constitution, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), and its implementing Proclamation No. 1178/2020 as amended by Corrigendum 11/2013. The guiding framework to gather and analyze data and evidence, is based on the Palermo Protocol's four pillars (Ps) to prevent and respond to trafficking in persons—prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership—which were chosen to highlight the main human rights concerns in combating irregular migration and migration-related exploitation targeting children, including child trafficking.

Methodology

Prior to deployment, the monitoring team conducted a pre-deployment assessment on the context of child migration in the region. The team contacted the relevant governmental bodies, including the Regional Labor and Social Affairs Bureau; Zonal Labor and Social Department heads, and the Regional Partnership Coalition (RPC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The pre-deployment assessments revealed that while children in *Hadiya* and *Kembata Tembaro* Zones are mostly active in cross-border migration, children in *Wolaita*, *Gamo* and *Gofa* Zones usually engage in internal migration to big cities and towns.

Following the selection of the Zones, child migration hotspot woredas were identified with the support of experts from the regional and zonal Labour and Social Affairs Bureaus. From among the areas identified as hotspot for child migration, based on considerations of resource constraint and accessibility, three woredas were selected from each of *Wolaita* and *Gamo* Zones, and two woredas were selected from each of *Kembata Tembaro* and *Hadiya* Zones. The following table summarizes the woredas covered by the monitoring:

No.	Zone ZDD	Specific Woredas covered by the monitoring
1	<i>Gamo</i> Zone	<i>Bonke</i> Woreda, <i>Gacho Baba</i> Woreda, and <i>Chencha</i> Woreda
2	<i>Hadiya</i> Zone	<i>Soro</i> Woreda and <i>West Badewacho</i> Woreda
3	<i>Kembata Tembaro</i> Zone	<i>Hadero</i> Woreda and <i>Shinshicho</i> Town in <i>Kachabira</i> Woreda
4	<i>Wolaita</i> Zone	<i>Damot Galle</i> Woreda, <i>Boloso Sore</i> Woreda, and <i>Duguna Fango</i> Woreda

Table 1: Locations where the Commission conducted its monitoring mission

To gather data and evidence, the monitoring mission employed key informant interviews, focus group discussions, observation, inspection of various documents and literature review. Accordingly, interviews and consultations were conducted with relevant woreda, zonal, and regional authorities. Additionally, migrant children, including returnees, victims, and reintegrated children were interviewed, along with their families whenever appropriate. The mission involved visiting six safe houses run by government and non-governmental organizations. Following data collection, the monitoring team analyzed the data using relevant international human rights standards and national laws.

Limitations

This monitoring report does not claim to fully capture the human rights situation of child migrants, victims of trafficking and returnees in the former SNNPR, nor the full complexity of the problem in the zonal administrations covered by the monitoring. The scope of the monitoring report is limited due to difficulties in accessing some of the hotspot woredas of SNNPR for child migration and a lack of adequate human and logistical capacity on the part of the Commission.

Legal Framework

- There is no international, regional, or national legal instrument that specifically deals with child migrants. However, normative frameworks that are pertinent to the protection of children against various forms of exploitative practices are applicable to the protection of migrant children.
- Ethiopia ratified several universal and regional treaties that are relevant for the protection of children. For example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols prohibit all forms of abuse and exploitation against children. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) also has similar provisions Ethiopia is also a member state to the ILO Forced Labor Convention, 1930 (No. 29); the ILO Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, 1957 (No. 105); the ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 and the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention No. 182. The two Protocols to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons (also known as the Palermo Protocol) and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants — provide a comprehensive protection framework for victims of trafficking and smuggling, including children.
- Apart from the aforementioned treaties, which are considered as integral part of Ethiopian law, the FDRE Constitution contains provisions that are relevant for the protection of migrant children. The Constitution prohibits slavery, forced labor and trafficking in persons. It recognizes the right of every child not to be subjected to exploitative labor practices, corporal punishment, or cruel or inhuman treatment. It also requires that the best interests of the child guide all decisions made by public or private charitable institutions, courts, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies.
- Among the existing domestic legislations, Proclamation No. 1178/2020 as amended by Corrigendum 11/2013 on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons defines child trafficking and provides protection to child trafficking. According to Article 3 (2) of the Proclamation as amended by Corrigendum 11/2013 and pursuant to Palermo Protocol, trafficking in persons is constituted of three elements:
 - **Act:** recruiting, transporting, harboring, hiding or receiving a person.
 - **Means:** threat or use of force or other means of coercion, or of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or by the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of the person.
 - **Purpose:** exploitation, including slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or debt bondages; removal of organs; prostitution or other forms of sexual activities; forced labor or service; begging or criminal act; forced marriage; surrogacy; child labor exploitation; or exploitation similar to these acts.
- In the case of child trafficking, Article 3 (3) of the Proclamation 1178/2020 as amended by Corrigendum 11/2013 states that it is sufficient to prove the act and the purpose, and is not necessary to prove the presence of any of the means as listed out above. This is in recognition of the vulnerable position of children that makes it difficult for them to provide consent to being exploited.

- The Proclamation pursuant to the Palermo Protocol makes a distinction between trafficking in persons (TIP) and smuggling of migrants (SOM). SoM is the procurement of either the illegal entry or illegal residence of a person into or in a country of which that person is not a national or permanent resident for financial or other material benefit.
- However, the distinction between TIP and SOM are often very subtle. While some trafficked persons might start their migration journey by making a deal with a smuggler, they might find themselves deceived, threatened, coerced, abducted or forced into exploitation. The same criminals may be engaged in smuggling and trafficking of persons, using the same routes and methods of transportation. In most cases, while the relationship between a smuggler and a smuggled migrant usually comes to an end after the illegal entry or illegal residence for a certain amount of payment or material benefit, the relationship between a trafficker and a trafficked victim might last for several years as profits are mainly harvested through exploitation. As a result, SoM does not necessarily result in victimization of smuggled migrants, while TIP is considered a crime against a person and thus trafficked migrants are recognized as victims in need of protection and assistance (UNODC, 2010)
- Mirroring the Palermo Protocol, Proclamation No. 1178/2020 as amended by Corrigendum 11/2013 offers a comprehensive framework for combatting trafficking in persons, especially children. Accordingly, under the Proclamation, the Ethiopian Government is duty bound to discharge its obligations in four areas of interventions to prevent and respond to child trafficking: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership (coordination).
- **Prevention:** Government authorities have the responsibility to take various measures to prevent and combat trafficking, especially women and children. The measures include putting in place relevant policies, laws, programs and national action plans to combat trafficking and addressing the root causes of trafficking and raise awareness on trafficking by providing people with the skills and information they need to protect themselves. Proclamation No. 1178/2020 obliges federal and state institutions to raise public awareness in order to prevent criminal activities related to migration.
- **Protection:** Government has the responsibility to respect the rights of victims of child trafficking and provide comprehensive assistance to help them recover. The Government should ensure that child victims of trafficking receive appropriate services including health, social services, legal and psychological counseling and support, temporary shelter and other similar services. The law recognizes the need to address victims' vulnerabilities that may lead to specific physical, emotional, and psychological harms. The Proclamation obliges law enforcement agencies to be sensitive to the situation of victims of trafficking. Among others, the Proclamation prohibits keeping victims in police stations, detention centers, and prisons under any circumstances. Witnesses also require legal protection in accordance with the Witness Protection Proclamation No. 669/2010. It is worth noting that, victims, as defined in the National Referral Mechanism for Victims Directive No. 562/2020, include both those who have suffered harm or faced violations of their rights because of trafficking crimes, as well as those who are vulnerable or exposed to those crimes.

- **Prosecution:** With a goal of holding traffickers accountable and deter others from engaging in similar activities, government authorities have the responsibility to criminalize trafficking offenses, put in place effective law enforcement and criminal justice systems and prosecute and punish the act of child trafficking. For a successful investigation and prosecution of child trafficking, prosecutors and judges should be trained to identify whether or not the two elements that constitute the crime of child trafficking (three elements in the case of trafficking in persons) are present. Considering that the primary purpose and source of profit in the case of trafficking in persons is exploitation, prosecutors should be trained to prove the presence of exploitation. Prosecutors should also be capacitated to prove the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt by a third person of a child, which distinguish child trafficking from other forms of exploitation or slavery-like practices.
- **Partnerships:** collaboration between governments, NGOs, businesses, and other stakeholders are essential to combat trafficking and child migration-related exploitation. In this regard, Proclamation No. 1178/2020 requires that all stakeholders collaborate and coordinate their efforts for the effective prevention and response to child trafficking. The National Council on Migration which has been established by Proclamation 1178/2020 has also issued Directive No. 562/2020 on National Referral Mechanism Directive for Victims and Directive No. 563/2020 on the Organization and Operation of the Members and Working Groups of the Migration National Partnership Coalition Directive No. 563/2020 with a view to define the National Referral and Support Systems among stakeholders. Through coordination mechanism, stakeholders are expected to exchange information and migration data and build referral mechanism through which victims and vulnerable child migrants would be able to get adequate support and rehabilitation service.

General Context of Areas Monitored

With an estimated overall area of 109,015 square kilometers, the former SNNPR constituted 10% of Ethiopia's total landmass while approximately accounting for 20% of the country's total population (ILO, 2022) The Region also stands out as one of the most densely populated areas in Ethiopia (Logan, 2017)

In many areas of the former SNNPR, cross-border and internal migration has been prevalent for many years. The most preferred route for cross-border migration, including for child migrants has been the Southern Route that commonly transits through Kenya for onward travel to countries in southern Africa, most notably Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique with the final destination being South Africa (IOM, 2019) *Gurage, Hadiya, Halab, Kambata, Selti, Tembaro*, and *Wolaita* zones are among the migratory hotspots where irregular migrants originate from, and/or transit (ILO, 2022)

While the initial migration from Southern Ethiopia to South Africa was triggered by regime changes and ensuing economic and political upheavals, it was subsequently sustained by transnational social and smuggling networks (Estifanos, Zac, 2020) In fact, in recent years, thousands of migrants from southern Ethiopia have died or gone missing while attempting

to reach South Africa *via* the Southern Route. According to the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs of the former SNNPR, 4,265 deaths and 1,707 disappearances of migrants from the Southern districts of *Hadiya* and *Kembata Tembaro* were recorded along the Southern route between 2012 and 2019 (IOM, 2023).

Child migration flow in the former SNNPR is characterized by irregular migration to South Africa and internal migration to big cities in Ethiopia. Based on IOM Flow Monitoring data, in 2021, 8 per cent of migrants who headed to South Africa were children. According to the information gathered from the RPC, while mainly children under the age of 15 migrate internally from various rural kebeles or towns to Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Shashemene and other places, those over the age of 16 often get involved in both internal and cross-border migration to other countries like South Africa through Moyale-Kenya route. Reports on irregular migration, show that while some of these children start their journey with their family members or prospective employers making a deal with a smuggler, they might find themselves deceived, threatened, abandoned, or coerced into paying more money than originally agreed to by the chain of smugglers along the journey. There is also a great chance that irregular migrants get arrested, detained, and deported if they are intercepted by the police or border control (IOM, 2023).

Major Findings of the Monitoring Mission

Based on the information collected and analyzed, the monitoring team identified the following major findings in the areas of prevention of child migration-related crimes; protection of child migrants; prosecution of those involved in trafficking and exploitation; and partnership (cooperation and coordination) efforts among relevant stakeholders.

Prevention

- There have been commendable efforts in Ethiopia to put in place the necessary policies, laws and institutional frameworks to combat trafficking. Proclamation No. 1178/2020 has been amended by Corrigendum 11/2013 to define the acts of trafficking in accordance with the Palermo Protocol and strengthened the legal framework to combat trafficking and smuggling. The establishment of the National Council on Migration and partnership coalitions at various levels in accordance with Proclamation No. 1178/2020 are positive developments.
- In the areas monitored, there are commendable efforts to prevent child trafficking and other child migration related crimes. Information to raise awareness has been periodically disseminated to parents at kebele level. Interception of children along the migration routes and at bus stations (by bus station workers also known as *chagn awraj*) and by traffic police are also being widely conducted.
- Despite the positive efforts, resource constraints are hindering prevention activities such as research, provision of awareness raising activities in remote kebeles, and follow-up

activities regarding child returnees. For example, at the time of data gathering, from among the four zonal administrations covered in the monitoring, only Wolaita Zone had conducted research on the causes and solutions of child and women trafficking. In order to mitigate the budget constraints for awareness raising, all woreda administrations had set a certain amount of money to be deducted from the annual budget of all sector offices (usually less than or equal to 2%) and transferred to the Office of Women and Children Affairs to ensure that children in vulnerable situation get support. However, it was reported that it was challenging to mobilize the expected resources due to cash shortage.

- The awareness creation efforts by the relevant offices are also hampered by physical inaccessibility of some of the hotspot areas. For instance, *Soro, Bonke, Gaco Baba, Chench Woredas* and *Bitena town* remain unreachable due to challenging geographical location of these places.
- Local law enforcement authorities face various challenges while trying to prevent crimes related to child migration due to lack of coordination mechanisms and information exchange between relevant actors at woreda and kebele levels. Moreover, lack of inter-regional information exchange and weak prosecution efforts exacerbate the challenge.

Protection of victims

Child migrants from the areas monitored face various abuse and human rights violations in the course of migration and at the place of their destination. However, child returnees do not get adequate legal, mental, psychological, and reintegration services from government and non-governmental organizations. The following are the main concerns regarding the protection of victims of child trafficking and migration related exploitation.

Detention like treatment due to shortage of safe houses

- Although the law requires for child victims of trafficking and migration related exploitation not to be placed in police stations, detention centers or prison facilities under any circumstances, child migrants continue to be subjected to detention like treatment due to shortage of safe houses in monitored areas. Although there are safe houses for victims of trafficking which are run by Women and Children Affairs Office in some places, children are put in detention facilities and police stations in most areas covered by the monitoring mission. Even in *Chench Woreda* of *Gamo Zone*, where there is a safe house run by the government, child returnees and victims of child trafficking were kept in an unsanitary room in the woreda police station, which is not suitable for children's health and psychological well-being. On the other hand, the Commission noted that safe houses run by private entities are only available in *Sodo City* of *Wolaita Zone*, and *Arbaminch City* in *Gamo Zone*.

Lack of sufficient medical care and child-friendly psychosocial support system

- Children who migrate to towns and cities often return after being exploited, mistreated, and exposed to physical and psychological harm, gender-based violence, and diseases. For example, child victims the monitoring team interviewed in *Chench Woreda* reported that they used to be burned on the leg with a hot rod to keep them awake whenever they

got tired and feel sleepy while weaving. They stated that this experience caused them both physical and psychological trauma. A child in Arba Minch City who was raped and contracted HIV was found kept at a police station with no health services, while the criminal prosecution process was ongoing.

- Some children, the Commission interviewed were living on the streets of Addis Ababa, Harar, Arbaminch, Wolaita Sodo where they were exposed to physical violence, inadequate food, and narcotic and substance abuse. For example, a 13-year-old boy in Arbaminch who was repeatedly sent to the city by his father to work and support the family sustained various abuses, was bruised by stones on his head and leg, barely ate food and became sick while living on the streets. In this and other similar cases, although some medical care was offered, no adequate child-friendly psychosocial support were provided to help victims cope with the emotional and psychological trauma. In another case, the Commission encountered a returnee in West *Badewacho* Woreda who was mentally ill due to mistreatment by her employer, including exploitative working conditions and beatings. Since no appropriate medical support was available in the woreda, her family could only offer her religious therapy though she showed little sign of improvement.
- In the areas monitored, the Commission has observed that, in safe houses run by NGOs, health screenings and assessments are proactively conducted. However, government-led protection services, including reunification services, do not typically involve health screenings, but only provide medical support if the children have suffered visible injuries.

Challenges in accessing education.

- Despite the availability of schools in the areas monitored, due to lack of school supplies and economic constraints with their families, child returnees are prevented from returning to and attending schools. This further perpetuates the cycle of poverty and irregular migration, as these children are denied the opportunity to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to improve their prospects in life. Inability of family to ensure provision of scholastic materials and food insecurity contribute towards irregular migration in the areas covered by the monitoring mission.

Challenges in reintegration and family reunification

- In the areas monitored, the Commission has found gaps in the reintegration activities of governmental bodies and NGOs. These include unclear mandate of stakeholders, efforts to reintegrate child victims of trafficking without proper assessment of their best interests, and limited follow-up and economic support after family reunification. Considering family reunification as the only solution for child victims of trafficking pose a problem for children who have been forced into irregular migration by their own family.
- Although Proclamation No. 1178/2020 stipulated that the reintegration service should be provided by the Rural or Urban Employment Creation and Food Security agency, in the areas monitored, this agency does not actually engage in reintegration support. However, the monitoring team observed that other government organs such as police, women and children affairs office, as well as labor and social affairs office engage in efforts to reunify children with their family.

- While the family reunification efforts by government bodies and private institutions are commendable, they are being conducted without thorough assessment of the best interest of the child and providing adequate support that could address the root causes of child migration. This has caused a cycle of child irregular migration in areas monitored especially in *Chenchä* Woreda, where children reunified with their families would repetitively try to migrate irregularly. In this regard, the Woreda police have reported that there are children who re-migrated up to three times after being reunified with their families.
- Some of the key informant interviewees expressed concern that the reintegration support provided to child returnees in a form of cash assistance is inadvertently encouraging a cycle of child irregular migration. For example, according to *Wolaita* Zone Bureau of Women and Children's Affairs, in 2021 alone more than 200 children have migrated from *Ajora* Kebele of *Bombe* Woreda in *Wolaita* Zone after receiving financial support of 18,000-20,000 birr made by private institution.
- Overall, in most of the areas covered by the monitoring, the re-migration rate among returnees who were reunified with their families is reported to be high. For example, in 2022 and 2023, from among 50 children who were reunited with their families in *Kembata Tembaro* Zone, *Hadero* Woreda, 35 of them have re-migrated. In *Hadiya* Zone, *Soro* Woreda, from among 19 child returnees, 9 have tried to re-migrate and died on the road *en route* to reach South Africa. In West *Badewacho* Woreda, from 38 child migrants who returned to their families in 2022/3 only 2 were attending school during the follow-up period, while the rest have reportedly migrated again. In *Wolaita* Zone, *Areka* Town, from among 13 children who returned in 2022/3, around 11 have re-migrated. In *Gamo* Zone, a total of 711 and 440 child migrants were reunited with their families in 2022 and 2023 respectively. Many have reportedly re-migrated.
- At the time of the monitoring, regional authorities reported that there were more than 1,560 returnees in the four zones, to whom different reintegration and family reunification services were offered. However, hundreds of those who returned have reportedly re-migrated putting the effectiveness of reintegration efforts into question.

Prosecution

- Based on information from regional authorities and RPC, children from *Gamo* Zone mainly migrate through brokers/traffickers for the purpose of engaging them in traditional cloth weaving in Addis Ababa or Arbaminch city. Similarly, traffickers recruit and transport the majority of children in *Wolaita* Zone to big cities, like Addis Ababa to engage them in various small vending and trades. This clearly indicates that the elements of recruitment, transport of children for the purpose of exploitation are present. In all these circumstances, the children are being moved away from home, local community, support and safety systems into a community or environment where the children are isolated and manipulated by others to a great extent, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation and human rights violations.

- On the other hand, children from *Kembata Tembaro* and *Hadiya* Zones and neighboring woredas, and usually boys above 16 years old, migrate to South Africa through the Moyale-Kenya route. It is common for family members, local brokers or acquaintances and prospective employers in South Africa to make arrangements with smugglers and cover the costs for children to irregularly migrate to South Africa transiting through three to four countries. During its visit to Wajir, Kenya and Zambia in 2022, EHRC interviewed a number of children who were detained in these two countries of transit and were about to be deported to Ethiopia. A great number of them reported that they have been arrested and detained for up to three years in different countries of transit, while a few stated that this was not their first time to be detained, deported and re-migrate, showing the vicious cycle of irregular migration. Most reported being asked to pay a large sum to be able to continue their journey.
- Despite the prevalence of child trafficking through recruiters, traffickers and harborers, in the areas monitored, the number of cases prosecuted is very low. According to RPC of the former SNNPR, during 2022/23 various woredas in the Region reported more than 50 cases that involve the prosecution of offenders of child migration related crimes. However, several woredas such as *Hadero*, *Soro*, *Duguna Fango*, *Damot Gale*, and *Bonke* did not report even a single charge being pressed against suspects.
- Prosecution efforts face several challenges. The release of suspects on minimal bail payments which lead to non-appearance in court, offenders regularly changing their tactics to avoid being intercepted by law enforcement agents, and the pressure and threat that suspects inflict on victims and their families, which hinder victims from cooperating with the police are among the main challenges.
- The inclination of prosecutors to charge suspects with lesser offenses even when compelling evidence indicates the commission of child trafficking is another challenge. This practice partly arises due to a lack of comprehensive understanding of the elements constituting child trafficking.
- Moreover, the influence and direct involvement of families in their children's irregular migration and the community's non-compliance with the criminal justice system by intervening through traditional means of dispute resolution have affected responding to child trafficking through criminal prosecution. For instance, in *Wolaita Zone Boloso-Sore Woreda Areka Town*, it was indicated that some suspects were released upon the intervention of community elders using traditional dispute resolution mechanism. Similarly, in *Kachabira Woreda in Kembata Tembaro Zone*, *Soro Woreda in Haidya Zone* and *Gaco Baba Woreda in Gamo Zone*, interventions by community elders and family members using traditional dispute resolution mechanisms have led to the discontinuation of prosecutions.

Partnership

- In all the zones covered by the monitoring, there are collaboration efforts between relevant stakeholders. It's commendable that all zones put in place a trafficking prevention task force that meets frequently to discuss on various issues relating to child migration. However, there is a lack of clarity of mandate in relation to migration. This is particularly

true for the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs and the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs. This was partly associated to the lack of structural harmonization across the federal institutions and their regional counterparts. Following the adoption of the new proclamation No.1263/2021 defining the powers of the executive organs, the responsibility and roles of federal institutions have been revised, and as result new arrangements are created at federal level. However, similar approaches are not yet adopted in all regions. For example, in the former SNNPR, both the bureau of women and children affairs and bureau of labor and social affairs engaged in registration and reunification of child migrants and other migration-related issues. This resulted in duplication of efforts. The RPC explained that the Regional Council has been asked to adopt a directive to clarify the mandate of relevant institutions, and that this process is underway.

- Government bodies in the monitored areas often have difficulties coordinating their efforts, primarily due to a lack of effective information sharing system at the woreda, regional, and federal levels. Additionally, the referral mechanism does not make available adequate services to victims of child trafficking and vulnerable children.

Conclusion

- In the areas monitored, while there are commendable efforts to prevent child trafficking and other child migration-related crimes, these efforts are hindered by resource constraints, lack of adequate understanding of the elements of child trafficking, physical inaccessibility of some hotspot areas, and lack of coordination between relevant actors.
- Despite the law, adequate services are not made available for victims of child trafficking, including safe houses. Instead, child victims face detention-like treatment, inadequate health services, challenges in accessing education, reintegration and family reunification services.
- Reintegration and family reunification efforts are often conducted without a thorough assessment of the best interests of the child. Due to inadequate support, the rate of re-migration is high among child returnees.
- The prosecution of child trafficking in the areas monitored is very low, despite the prevalence of these crimes. Lack of adequate understanding and capacity to prove the presence of elements constituting the act of child trafficking, the release of suspects on insufficient bail, the changing tactics of offenders, the undue influence of suspects on victims and their families, and the involvement of families and communities in traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are some of the challenges.
- There is a lack of clarity of mandate on migration, particularly between the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs and Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs. This has led to duplication of efforts and poor coordination among government institutions.
- Efforts are underway to clarify the mandates of relevant institutions, but more needs to be done to improve coordination and information sharing at the woreda, regional, and federal levels.
- The absence of an effective referral mechanism for victim of child trafficking and vulnerable migrant children has hampered efforts to prevent child trafficking and provide adequate services to victims.

Recommendations

Strengthen Prevention Efforts

- Law enforcement organs and non-governmental organizations working on child migration should train people who work in bus stations on how to identify child migrants who are at risk of trafficking and exploitation, how to approach and communicate with them, and how to refer them to appropriate services. Law enforcement organs and non-governmental organizations should also work with communities to raise awareness of the risks of child migration and the dangers of child trafficking and encourage people to report cases of child trafficking to the authorities.
- Relevant regional and zonal authorities should allocate adequate budget for the effective planning and implementation of research, training and awareness raising activities in connection to child trafficking and exploitation. They should work with local and international non-governmental organizations for this purpose.
- Regional, zonal and woreda authorities should develop and implement a plan to reach hotspot areas that are currently inaccessible using alternative means of transportation or working with the media and local partners, including community radio to conduct awareness raising activities in these areas.

Improve Protection of Victims

Establish and operate safe houses.

- Protection services provided by government actors during criminal processes should always consider to follow a child-friendly support mechanism that will not re-victimize children and expose them to further human rights violations. To that end, all zonal justice bureaus and zonal women and children affairs should collaboratively establish adequate safe houses for witnesses and child victims of trafficking and exploitation.
- Government and non-governmental service providers should establish and operate sufficient safe houses for child victims of trafficking and migration related exploitation. Law enforcement and other relevant officials should be trained on the proper handling of child victims of trafficking and migration related exploitation, including the importance of prohibiting detention-like treatment.

Provide sufficient child-friendly psychosocial support.

- Government and non-governmental service providers should establish and operate adequate child-friendly psychosocial support centers in areas with high rates of child irregular migration, including trafficking and make them accessible for child victims of trafficking and migration-related exploitation.

Provide adequate health services for victims.

- Protection service providers should ensure that regular and adequate health screenings and assessments are conducted for all child victims of trafficking and migration related exploitation. They should ensure that all child victims have access to quality health care services, including mental health services and the health care workers are trained on the special needs of child victims.

Improve access to education.

- Regional, zonal, and woreda education bureaus should ensure that potential child migrants get education, returnees are able to go back to school and continue their education and provide financial and in-kind support for their continued engagement. The education bureaus at regional level should make sure all children attend primary education (compulsory), and follow-up drop-out rates and do close monitoring together with bureaus at the woreda and zonal level. Moreover, local level education bureaus should strengthen school feeding programs in areas where it already started and should assist bureaus to establish these programs in areas where they do not exist.

Address challenges regarding reintegration and family reunification

- Both governmental and non-governmental institutions providing reintegration service should do a comprehensive child, familial, and communal assessment prior to designing and implementing support services that ensure the best interest of the child victim. Such support services should also address the underlying push factors for the irregular migration to prevent re-migration of children.
- Government and non-governmental service providers who are working on family reunification should put in place adequate follow-up and support to child returnees after reunification with their families and address the root causes of child irregular migration. They should also promote positive parenting practices and family support to help prevent child irregular migration and re-migration.
- Zonal women and children affairs' offices should establish institutions that would provide alternative care for children who cannot be reunified with their families.

Strengthen Prosecution Efforts

- Federal and regional justice bureaus should increase the capacity of prosecutors and law enforcement agencies to effectively gather evidence and conduct investigations on child trafficking and exploitation cases.
- RPC should train law enforcement bodies at woreda and kebele level based on the Standard Operation Procedures and manuals to build their capacity to identify child trafficking cases.
- Regional and zonal justice bodies should avoid releasing suspects on minimal bail payments. This could be done by developing stricter bail guidelines for child migration related exploitation and trafficking cases.

- Regional and zonal justice bodies should regularly adopt their strategies to address the issue of offenders changing their tactics and work with communities to raise awareness on the different ways that traffickers and smugglers operate.
- Justice organs at regional, zonal and woreda levels should address the issue of family involvement in child irregular migration and community non-compliance with the criminal justice system through public education and awareness raising activities and by working with traditional leaders to promote respect for the rule of law.

Enhance Partnership and Coordination

- Federal and regional authorities should clarify the mandates of relevant institutions and develop and implement comprehensive guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of different government bodies and other stakeholders in the prevention and prosecution of child trafficking and migration related crimes and the protection of child victims.
- To address the challenges regarding inter/intra-regional coordination, the Ministry of Justice or the National Partnership Coalition should effectively implement Directive 562/2013 for the national referral mechanism for victims and vulnerable migrant children in regions. RPC should also implement the mechanism at local level to ensure the smooth implementation of Proclamation No. 1178/2020 as amended by Corrigendum 11/2013.

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Ethiopian youth along mixed migration routes: Comparing profiles, drivers, and aspirations.

Francesco Teo Ficarelli and Jim van Moorsel (Mixed Migration Center - MMC)

About MMC

MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in Danish Refugee Council (DRC) regional offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Geneva and Brussels. MMC's regional hub for Eastern and Southern Africa | Egypt & Yemen is based in Nairobi, Kenya, with national representation in Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda.

About the authors

Francesco Teo Ficarelli is MMC's Eastern and Southern Africa | Egypt & Yemen's Project Coordinator based in Kampala. Formerly, he was MMC's Information Management Officer in East and Southern Africa as well as North Africa. Prior to joining the MMC team he worked for a number of NGOs including IPA, REACH, ACTED, and ICARDA. He has substantial experience in data collection methods, data management and analysis. Teo has a background in economics and international relations, holding a BA in European Studies from Royal Holloway, University of London, and an MSc in Local Economic Development from the London School of Economics.

Jim van Moorsel is the Research & Policy Specialist with MMC Eastern and Southern Africa, Egypt & Yemen, specialised in qualitative migration research and migration policy and programming. Prior to joining this region, he was with MMC focusing on mixed migration research in North Africa. Previously, he worked as a Migration Assessment Officer on Libya. His experiences also include providing support to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Georgia, and to the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in Malta. During his studies, he volunteered with the Dutch Refugee Council. Jim holds a BA in Romance Languages and Cultures and an MSc in Globalisation, Migration and Development from Radboud University.

Key findings

Each year, thousands of Ethiopian youth aged 18-24 journey along a variety of mixed migration routes out of East Africa, particularly the Eastern Route (towards the Arabian Peninsula) and the Central Mediterranean Route (towards North Africa and the Mediterranean), (Kuschminder, et al, 2012). By analyzing standardized, quantitative 4Mi data collected along these two routes, this study sets out to understand the different profiles, journeys, aspirations and decision-making of young Ethiopians on the move.

The key findings below highlight the stark differences between the Eastern Route (ER) and Central Mediterranean Route (CMR), both in terms of the profiles of youth moving along these routes, as well as the different migration aspirations and sociocultural norms underpinning such movements. The findings lend empirical evidence to the idea that one's movement forms part of a wider system of migration connecting origin and destination countries and that strong and distinct cultures of migration operate along these two routes (Bakewell, 2014)

- **The regions of origin of youth on each route are different.** Ethiopian youth interviewed in Sudan, Libya and Tunisia on the Central Mediterranean Route were in large part from the conflict-affected region of Tigray (42%) and neighbouring Amhara (24%). Those traveling along the Eastern Route to the Arabian Peninsula and interviewed in Djibouti and Somalia were most frequently from Oromia (52%) and Amhara (23%). Distance to the closest border, religion and cultural affiliations with countries on the journey and at intended destination were found to be key factors in migration decision-making.
- **Youth along the CMR have comparatively higher education levels than their peers along the ER.** Education levels of Ethiopian youth moving northwards were higher (47% had completed secondary school and 8% had completed tertiary education) than those moving eastwards, where only 18% had completed secondary school and 1% had completed tertiary education.
- **Youth on both routes were not earning income prior to departure.** Most respondents on both routes were not earning an income in the 12 months prior to departure. Among those traveling north, this was linked to the fact that many (48%) had been students in their origin country. Those along the ER cited more often having been unemployed prior to migration.
- **The main drivers of migration were largely distinct, although remained mixed to different extents, along the two routes.** Journeys northwards were in large part driven by violence, insecurity, and conflict (90%) in regions of origin, while journeys towards the Arabian Peninsula were most commonly driven by economic factors (67%).
- **Respondents traveling along the two routes revealed distinct intended destinations and reasons.** On the ER, respondents cited economic opportunities as the dominant reason (68%), followed by generally better living standards (36%). In contrast, Ethiopian youth on the CMR identified reasons related to their protection: respect for human rights (73%), safety (65%), personal freedom (60%), access to asylum (59%) and good social welfare systems (55%).

- **Most respondents along the CMR planned to remain in their intended destination, while this was not the case for those along the ER.** 75% of respondents on the CMR planned to stay in their intended destination permanently, whereas most respondents on the ER planned to remain in their intended destination only temporarily (67%).
- **Respondents along the CMR more often reported intending to apply for asylum.** Close to all respondents on the CMR stated they planned to apply for asylum once they had reached their destination (97%), while only 38% declared the same on the ER.
- **External influencers are more prevalent among youth along the CMR.** Decisions to migrate were influenced by external sources for 58% of young Ethiopians travelling northwards and 42% travelling eastwards. Among those reporting influencers of their decision, smugglers were the most frequently cited on the CMR (49%) and returnees (38%) on the ER.

Introduction

Ethiopian youth embark on migration journeys for mixed reasons including conflict, violence, drought, poverty and pursuing aspirations for a better life (Adugna, 2021). Earlier research has pointed out the existence of a culture of migration in Ethiopian communities, including “strong familial pressures to migrate put on young Ethiopians by their family, peers and the community”, (RMMS, 2014). Ethiopian youth can be found along most major mixed migration routes intersecting on the African continent, including the Eastern Route (towards the Arabian Peninsula), the Central Mediterranean Route (towards North Africa and Europe) (sometimes referred to in East Africa as the ‘Northern Route’ from Sudan onwards) as well as the Southern Route (towards South Africa), (Kuschminder, et al, 2012).

This briefing paper aims to understand the migration dynamics among Ethiopian youth along two mixed migration routes – the Central Mediterranean (CMR) and Eastern Routes (ER). Using MMC 4Mi data on Ethiopian youth collected in Djibouti and Somalia along the ER and in Libya, Sudan and Tunisia along the CMR, as well as secondary sources, it examines the different profiles among Ethiopian youth along each route and how and why routes and intended destinations are being selected.

Furthermore, as this was a first step in routes-based analysis using available 4Mi data, future research should expand data collection to allow for analysis of the Southern Route and to allow for more probabilistic investigation of the determinants of vulnerability along these routes. Findings from this study seek to inform mixed migration and protection actors in Ethiopia, including humanitarian organisations, government institutions and civil society. A focus on youth (18-24 years old) allows to compare across both routes according to age, and to better understand what drives young people to leave Ethiopia in pursuit of (temporary) lives elsewhere.

Background

In terms of numbers, the volume of Ethiopians moving along these routes vastly differ. The ER is the most popular, with IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix reporting around 71,000 arrivals of Ethiopians in Yemen in 2022. An increase has been recorded in 2023, with 92,357 arrivals from January – September 2023 (IOM, 2023). This is followed by the Southern Route, where an estimated 10,000 – 12,000 Ethiopians journey along annually. Along the CMR, which constitutes a costly and long journey for East Africans, Ethiopians typically do not feature among the main nationalities arriving in Italy – likely owing to the challenges, including detention, faced in Libya and their inability to engage in onward movement. Some 454 Ethiopian arrivals were recorded in Italy from January – August 2023, (UNHCR, 2023). As of October 2023, over 2,400 Ethiopians were registered by UNHCR in Libya and 1,280 Ethiopians recorded in Libya by IOM DTM as of August 2023.

Studies have recognized the existence of a culture of migration among certain Ethiopian communities, where young Ethiopians face strong social pressures to migrate by their family and peers, (Johnson, et al, 2021) argue that, overall, “mobility is a defining feature of young people’s lives across Ethiopia: some migrate to find new ways to support their families and some to escape abuse.” Moreover, staying may sometimes be “riskier than leaving”. This is because while migration towards the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa or Europe, among other intended destinations, may yield an uncertain future, it could be seen as a *positive uncertainty*, versus the known prospects of marginalisation, poverty, hopelessness and abuse associated with remaining, (Johnson, 2012). In this way, young Ethiopians on the move can be portrayed as active agents in shaping their lives and futures, (Achilli, 2009) “while navigating various alternatives including internal and international migration”. This, however, does not mean they would be able to mitigate all risks on the journey along the Eastern Route and the Central Mediterranean Route, or that they have planned their migration meticulously and in detail.

Another theory which may describe Ethiopian movements along these routes is the Migration Systems Theory, (Bakewell, 2011) This theory departs from the concept that there are migrant *pioneers* who may have the agency to establish certain structural patterns, in this context the forming of movements along routes, eventually creating a ‘system’. Together with a relative dependence on networks or ‘social capital’, (De Haas, 2011) the intersection of various elements, or outcomes, of the processes linked to migrant *pioneers* may “lead to the emergence of particular systemic qualities of the migration movements.” With the interplay of migrant agency often being predicated along ethno-societal lines, it has been argued, (Bakewell, 2011) this could also explain why certain Ethiopian communities have access to international migration, while this may not be the case for others.

Methodology

This study is based on 901 quantitative 4Mi surveys with Ethiopian youth aged 18-24 along the ER and the CMR. Ethiopian youth on the Eastern Route were interviewed in Djibouti (n=416) and Somalia (n=237). Ethiopian youth on the Central Mediterranean Route were interviewed in Sudan (n=171), Tunisia (n=62) and Libya (n=15). All surveys were conducted between February 2021 and March 2023 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Locations of data collection

Country of data collection	Location of data collection	n	%
Djibouti (n=416)	Tadjourah	172	41%
	Obock	105	25%
	Ali Sabieh	94	23%
	Djibouti Ville	45	11%
Somalia (n=237)	Bossaso	195	82%
	Hargeisa	42	18%
Sudan (n=171)	Khartoum	149	88%
	Other	22	12%
Tunisia (n=62)	Médenine	51	82%
	Other	11	18%
Libya (n=15)	Tripoli	9	60%
	Other	6	40%

Respondents were sampled through purposive and snowballing approaches based on age, language and length of time spent in the country of interview (two years or less, to capture the experiences of those actively on the move). In Libya, Tunisia and Sudan, data were collected through remote interviews, leveraging co-national networks of enumerators who were refugees and migrants themselves.

Given the sampling methods, the data cannot be seen as representative of the overall population of Ethiopian youth traveling along the different mixed migration routes, but rather intends to present an analysis of profiles and experiences of those interviewed through similar sampling methods and with similar tools in each location. For this reason, the next section, analysing the demographic profiles of Ethiopian youth on the move should be treated with caution and used for contextualizing the broader findings within the study.

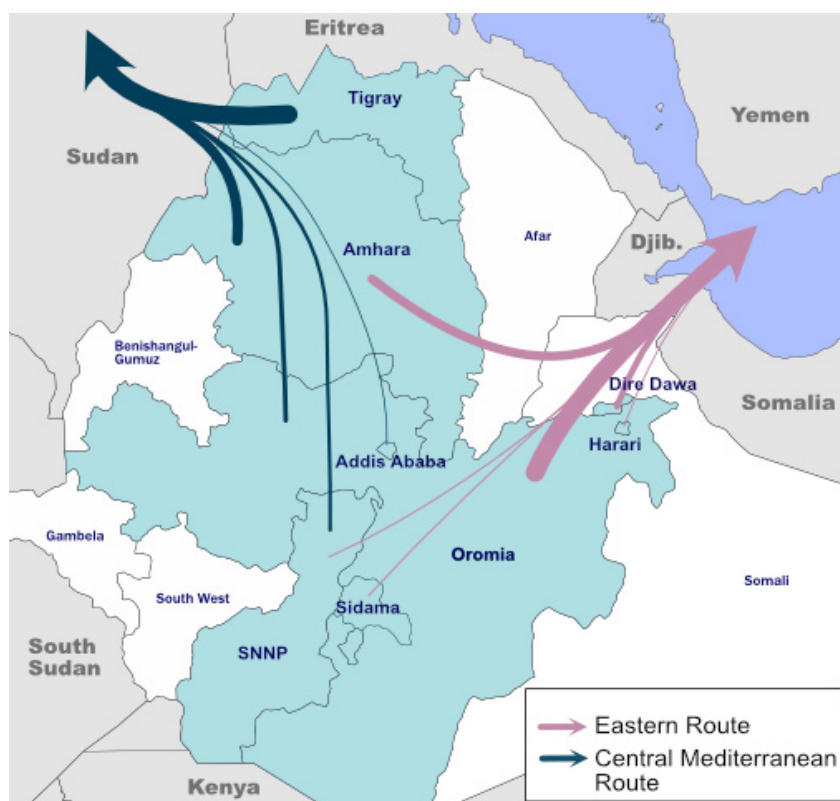
As data were collected in Sudan, Libya and Tunisia during and after the conflict in Northern Ethiopia, this could have contributed to a temporal bias in the findings where more respondents reported a conflict-affected location of origin, and cited conflict and violence as a driver of their movements.

It is also key to note that data were collected prior to the conflict that began in Sudan on April 15, 2023. The findings presented here on the movements of young Ethiopians interviewed in Sudan have likely shifted due to active fighting and a dire humanitarian situation. It can be expected that Ethiopian youth in conflict-affected areas in Sudan who are able to flee will do so via three ways: seeking a safer place within Sudan, returning to their home country or secondary displacement to another country. However, owing to their existing vulnerabilities, many Ethiopian youth caught up in the conflict will be unable to flee and involuntary immobile within Sudan.

Demographic profiles of Ethiopian youth along different routes

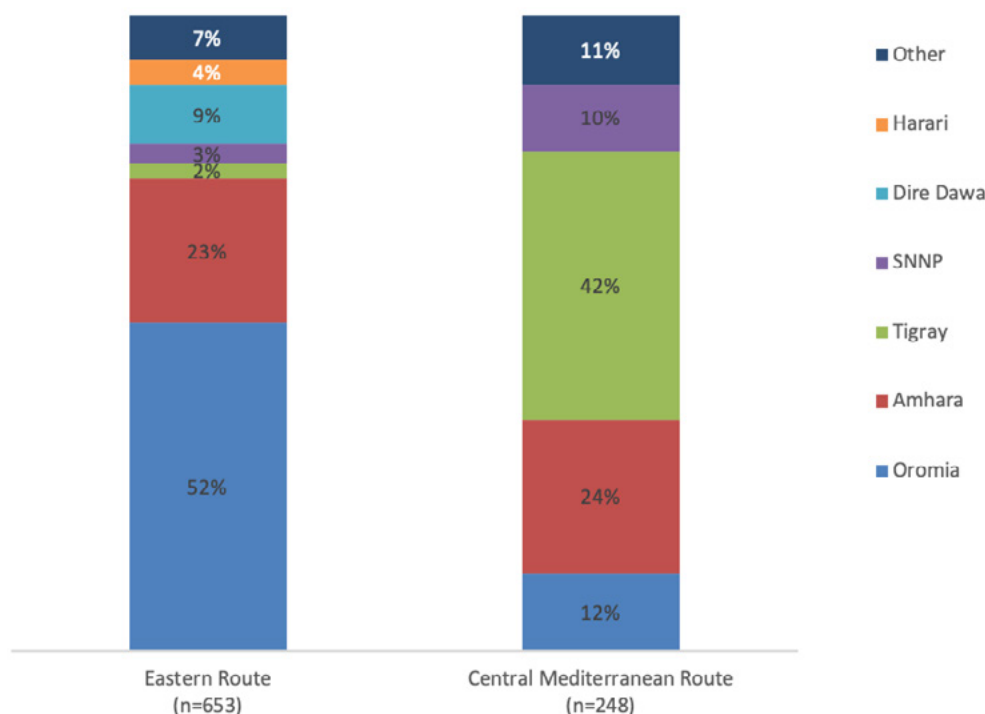
Young Ethiopians commonly migrate across the closest international border to their region of origin. Regions of origin of young Ethiopians differ between the two migration routes. 66% of respondents interviewed on the CMR were from the northern regions of Tigray (42%) and Amhara (24%), bordering Sudan. These two regions in northern Ethiopia have been affected by war since 2020 until, and beyond, the November 2022 Peace Agreement, leading to significant forced displacement. This was followed by 12% from Oromia, 10% from the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNP), and 11% from other regions.

Map 1. Regions of origin of young Ethiopians travelling along the Central Mediterranean and Eastern Routes.



Among those interviewed on the ER, more than half (52%) were from Oromia, while 23% were from Amhara, 9% from Dire Dawa, 4% from Harari and 12% from other regions. Most were, therefore, from the centre and east of Ethiopia, where the country borders Djibouti and Somalia. As can be observed in Map 1, migration often occurs across borders close to regions of origin: many respondents interviewed on the CMR were from Western and Northern Ethiopia while those on the Eastern Route were from Eastern and Southern Ethiopia.

Figure 1. What region are you from in your country of nationality?



Youth on the CMR more often started their journeys as minors and often travelled with children under their care. 12% of respondents on the CMR had departed while under the age of 18. This was true for 4% of those on the ER. 9% of youth traveling northward were also moving with children in their care at the time of interview, while this was less often the case for youth traveling eastward (2%). This suggests more varied and complex profiles of Ethiopians traveling northward, including comparatively more families, and may stem from the more permanent migration plans associated with these journeys. Likewise, this dynamic may be linked to the time of data collection, during and after conflict in Northern Ethiopia. The flow of humanitarian aid, particularly into Tigray, was blocked for a lengthy period of time during the conflict, leading to a food insecurity emergency, (BBC, 2023) which may have further contributed to the movements of entire families out of Northern Ethiopia into Sudan.

Youth on the ER are frequently single men. In terms of gender, 74% of respondents were men and 26% were women on the Eastern Route, as compared to 57% men and 43% women on the CMR. The ER is known for being dominated by single men, as mentioned in the Background section. However, as mentioned in the Methodology section, the data collection was carried out differently on these two routes, with remote interviews along the CMR potentially allowing for greater access to women respondents, who could have been more comfortable with interviews over phone as compared to in-person.

Slight differences were observed in the two samples in relation to whether respondents came from an urban or rural background. Just over half of respondents on the CMR (56%) and just under half along the ER (48%) originated from urban settings.

Religion of respondents on the two routes reflects regions of origin and intended destinations.

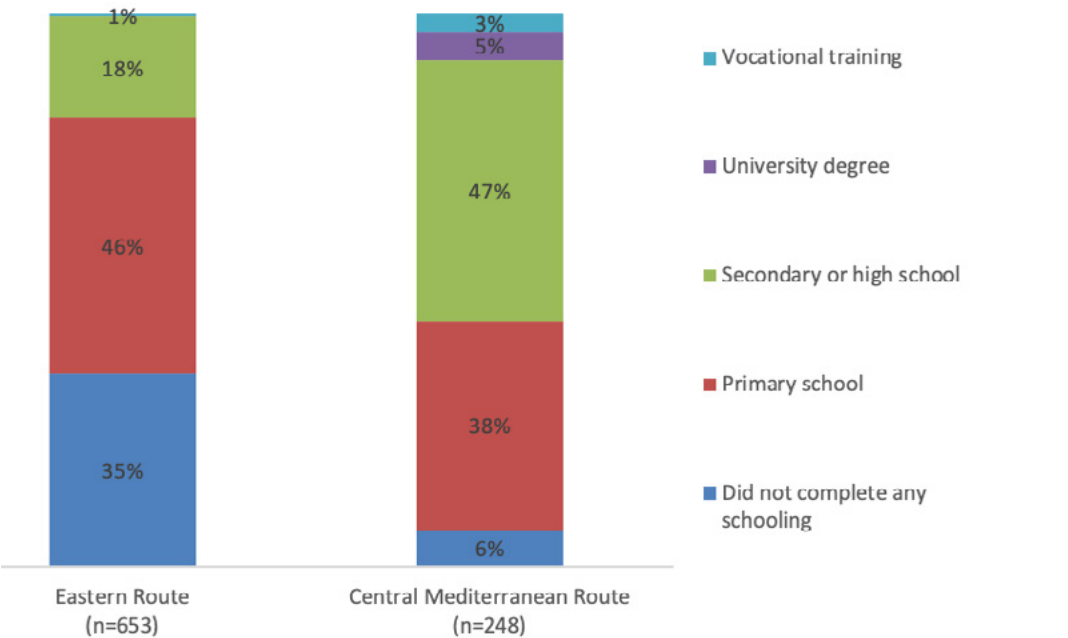
Religious profiles differed on the two routes, linked to both the intended destinations of respondents and their regions of origin. Almost three-quarters (74%) of those on the CMR cited Christianity as their religion and 26% cited Islam. On the ER, where Ethiopians predominantly move towards Saudi Arabia, 22% were Christian and 78% were Muslim. This also links to regions of origin, as most practicing Christians can be found in the Ethiopian highlands in the north and in the major urban centres, and Muslims mostly populate the southeastern lowlands. Oromia comprises a multireligious region and society, with a Muslim majority and a slightly smaller Christian population, (Duipe, 2021)

The highlighted findings showcase how the profiles of Ethiopian youth along the compared mixed migration routes are different and are informed by proximity from location of origin to the nearest border crossing (and connecting to a mixed migration route), as well as religious and socio-cultural aspects.

Socio-economic backgrounds of Ethiopian youth along different routes

Youth on the CMR have higher education levels compared to those on the ER. Comparing educational profiles between the two samples revealed pointedly different educational backgrounds. Ethiopian youth traveling along the CMR had higher rates of educational attainment than those along the ER (Figure 2). This finding may be linked to the fact that slightly more Ethiopian youth along the ER originated from rural areas, with arguably less or poorer access to education. Moreover, the ER represents a labour corridor for those seeking lower skilled jobs in the Arabian Peninsula, often in the construction, agricultural and pastoralism and domestic work sectors.

Figure 2. What is the highest level of education you have completed?



Youth on both routes were not earning income prior to departure. During the 12 months prior to departure, the majority of youth interviewed along both routes were not earning any income (65% on the CMR and 60% on the ER). However, the main reasons for not earning an income differed. For those on the CMR, almost half (48%) reported that they were students, 39% were unemployed and 13% were sick, taking care of the home/children or had another reason. Respondents on the ER were most commonly unemployed (67%), with a smaller proportion citing being students (24%) or other (10%) reasons for not earning any income. Unemployment characterized the lives of a larger share of youth travelling eastern compared to those travelling northward.

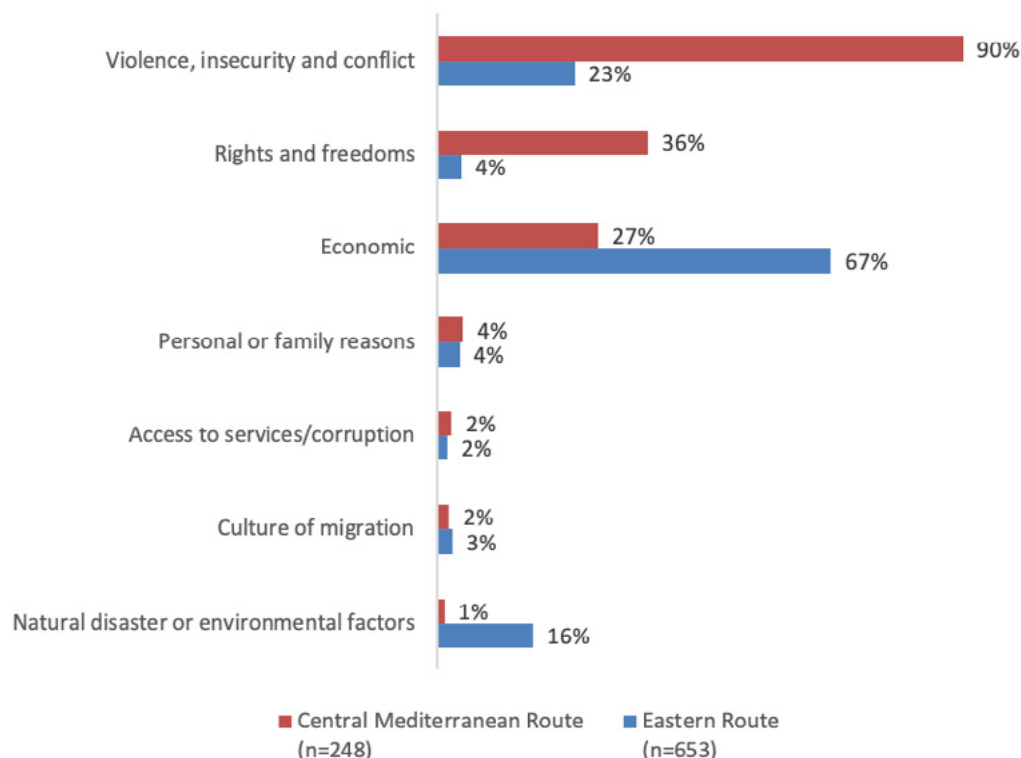
Young Ethiopian respondents who cited having an income in the 12 months prior to departing along the CMR (n=88) most often worked in small businesses (shops, catering or services) (47%; 41/88), driving or transportation (17%; 15/88) and agriculture or pastoralism (15%; 13/88). Those with an income who departed along the ER (n=264) more commonly worked in agriculture (38%), reflecting their rural origins, followed by small businesses (24%), construction (16%) and domestic work (14%).

The socio-economic aspects are different for Ethiopian youth traveling along the CMR, compared to their peers moving along the ER. With migrants showcasing different labour and educational backgrounds when comparing both routes, these findings could support targeted resilience and livelihoods programming in locations of origin with potential migrants and returnees.

Migration drivers of Ethiopian youth on different routes

Journeys northwards were in large part driven by violence, insecurity and conflict, while journeys towards the Arabian Peninsula were most commonly driven by economic factors. The drivers that prompted young Ethiopians to leave their locations of origin and undertake journeys on the two routes varied considerably, while they remained mixed to different extents. 90% of respondents who were interviewed on the CMR cited violence, insecurity and conflict as a reason to have left their location of origin. This likely reflects departures triggered by the 2020-2022 civil war in Northern Ethiopia, characterized mainly by conflict in Tigray but also the Amhara and Afar regions, (RFI, 2021). Respondents on this route also identified rights and freedom (36%) and economic reasons (27%) as drivers of their movement. Continuing volatility and localized conflict in parts of Amhara, (Al Jazeera, 2023) are likely to continue to drive displacement and international movements out of these regions.

Figure 3. For what reasons did you leave (location of origin)? (multi-select)



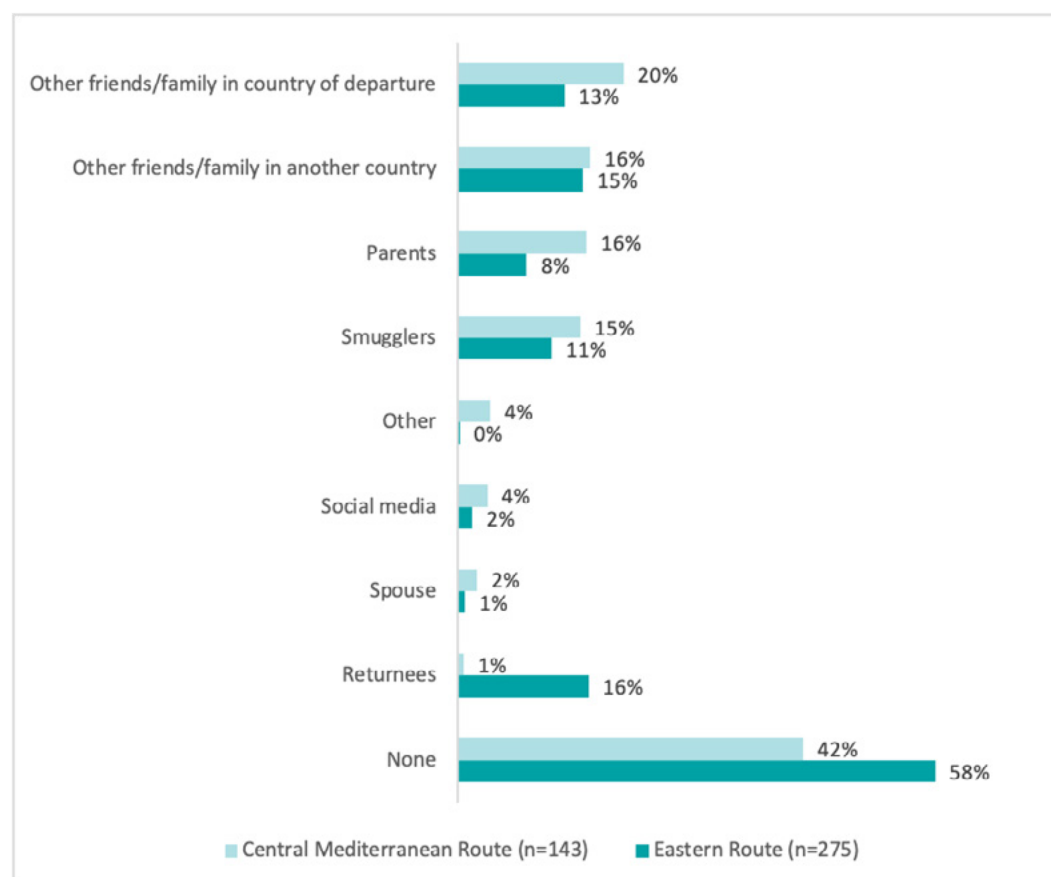
67% of eastward journeys, on the other hand, were most frequently driven by economic objectives, although 23% cited violence, insecurity and conflict as a driver. Environmental factors were also cited by 16% along this route, specifically drought/dryness as influencing their migration decision. This reflects the protracted drought affecting the Horn of Africa since 2020, particularly in Ethiopia’s eastern regions and Oromia. As mentioned above, migration has increasingly become a response to the decreasing feasibility of agricultural and pastoralist livelihoods in the face of climate change. Continued efforts are needed to equip Ethiopian youth from these areas with education and diversified skills outside of agriculture and pastoralism to reduce the risk of falling into precarious employment in urban destinations and along the route.

A ‘culture of migration’, as mentioned earlier, among Ethiopian youth may also play a key role in the decision to migrate, although it did not feature among reported drivers for this study. This could be due to the fact that it may be an underlying factor upon which respondents may not always reflect. Awareness campaigns and sensitization efforts on the risks and dangers of irregular journey could further address unpacking this “hidden driver” and opening up community-led discussions on the topic.

External influencers on the decision to migrate are more prevalent among youth along the CMR. Turning to the influencers of migration-decision-making, external influence by other

people or information sources was confirmed by 58% of young Ethiopians traveling towards North Africa and the Mediterranean and 42% of those moving towards the Arabian Peninsula. Influences on journeys northward mainly came from friends/family in Ethiopia (20%), friends/family in other countries (16%), parents (16%) and smugglers (15%). For eastward journeys, youth most commonly cited returnees as an influence on their decision (16%), suggesting that these shared experiences encouraged similar journeys. Others cited friends/family in other countries (15%), in Ethiopia (13%) and smugglers (11%). These findings align with earlier IOM reporting from 2020 on the ER, (IOM, 2020), stating that a large proportion in their sample of Ethiopians interviewed in Obock (Djibouti) took the decision to migrate alone, and more than half did not inform their families before leaving.

Figure 4. Can you choose the biggest influences on your decision to migrate? (Multi-select)



In terms of gender, on both routes, women more frequently outlined their decision had been externally influenced (67% vs. 50% for men on the CMR and 47% vs. 40% for men on the ER). This may echo research on household migration strategies which finds women to be better remitters than men, (KNOMAD, 2021). The data show little evidence of women's migration being solely determined by their spouses.

While more than half of youth on the CMR had obtained information on the route prior to departing, only a quarter of youth on the ER did so. Once the decision to migrate is made, preparation to embark on the journey is in large part carried out through gathering information about routes, the situation in the destination country, costs, risks, etc. Surprisingly, only 26% of respondents on the ER reported having obtained any information prior to starting their journey. This could leave youth vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, which is rife along the ER, as outlined in recently published research, (Ravestone, 2023). In contrast, despite being in large part driven by conflict, which may force more rapid decision-making (and rapid-onset displacements), a higher proportion of those on the CMR had obtained information (52%). This may be linked to the education profiles outlined above (notably higher education levels among those moving north) and more access to resources and networks to seek information. In line with findings related to influences in decision-making along the ER, smugglers (12%) and returnees (11%) were the most common source of information prior to the journey.

On the CMR, the most common sources of information were smugglers (26%), friends/family in another country (20%) and friends/family in Ethiopia (16%). While this largely aligns with the data on their migration influences, it suggests a more important role for smugglers in providing information once the decision to migrate is taken. The reliability of such information provided by smugglers is less clear and outside the scope of this study. Other research has found smugglers operating along this route to be highly exploitive and blur the line with traffickers, (Ravestone, 2023).

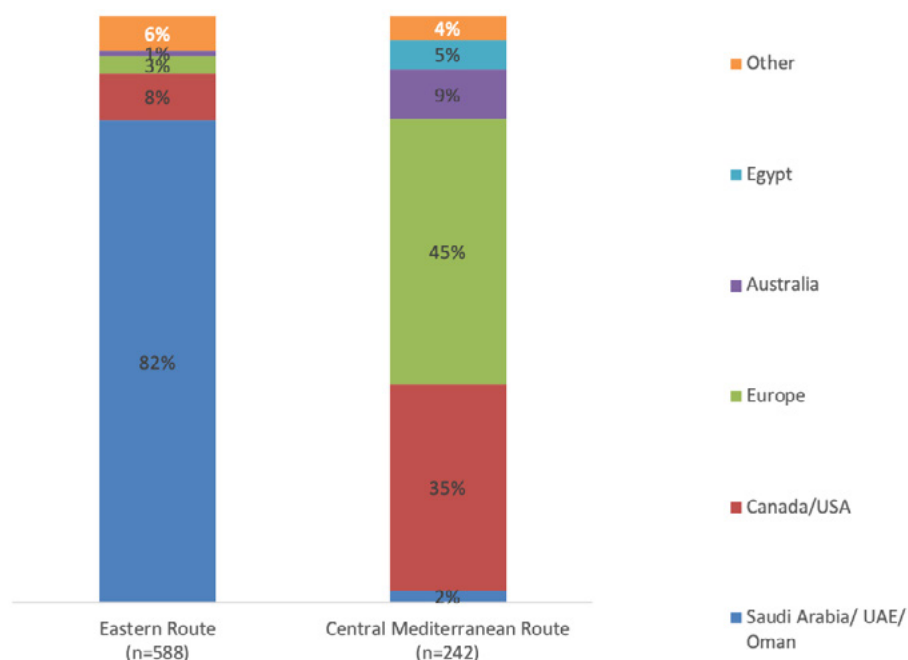
The cited drivers for Ethiopian youth traveling along the CMR on the one hand, and the ER on the other, shine light on the types of migration Ethiopian youth embark on, and what they aspire to achieve in their intended destination. At the same time, migration drivers are not mutually exclusive, and some overlap across respondents journeying along both routes should be noted, demonstrating the very mixed migration nature of these movements. These demonstrate the widespread understanding of migrating being an opportunity in search of a better life, while at the same time locations of origin may be affected by conflict, insecurity, and violence.

Intentions and aspirations of Ethiopian youth on different routes

Respondents traveling along the two routes revealed distinct intended destinations and reasons. The majority of respondents interviewed on both routes stated they had not yet reached the end of their journey at the time of interview in Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Tunisia and Libya (90% on both routes).

Among these, preferred destinations were the Arabian Peninsula (82%: Saudi Arabia (76%), UAE (5%) or Oman (1%)) and US/Canada (8%) and Europe (3%) for those on the ER, and Europe (45%) or US/Canada (35%) for those on the CMR, see Figure 5.

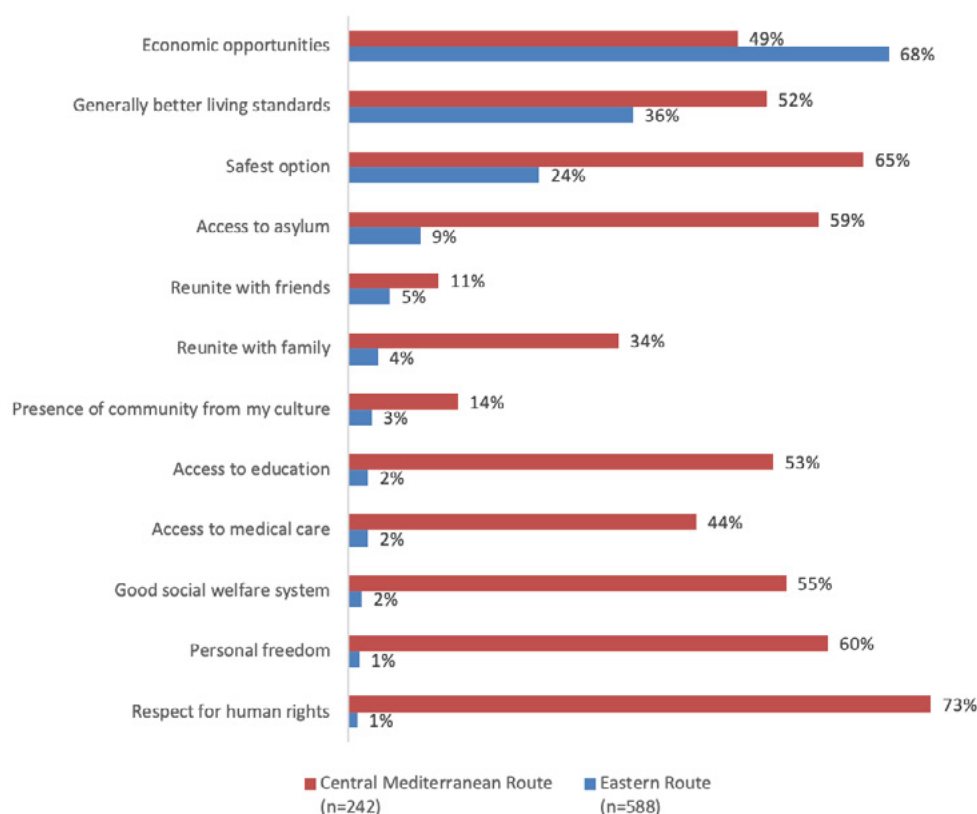
Figure 5. What country is your preferred destination? (Among respondents that answered ‘No’ or ‘Don’t know’ to ‘Have you reached the end of your journey?’)



Destination choices were largely driven by search for economic opportunities eastward and search for safety and stability northward. The reasons for selecting the destination reflected the reasons for leaving. Movements of youth eastward were in large part driven by a search for better economic opportunities. Economic opportunities were the dominant reason for having chosen their destination among those on the ER (68%) (Figure 6). Some respondents also mentioned better living standards (36%) and safety in destination (24%).

Ethiopian youth on the CMR, on the other hand, revealed a very different and wider variety of reasons for having chosen their destination, many related to their protection. Respect for human rights was the most commonly cited reason (73%), followed by it being the safest option (65%), personal freedom (60%) and access to asylum (59%). These reflect how choice of destination is made in consideration of the drivers that are prompting migration. Such respondents were in large part fleeing conflict/insecurity and lack of rights and freedom. Access to social welfare systems (55%), access to education (53%) and medical care (44%) were also frequently cited, outlining longer-term aspirations.

Figure 6. Why did you choose this destination? (Among respondents that answered ‘No’ or ‘Don’t know’ to ‘Have you reached the end of your journey?’)



Youth migrating northward intend to apply for asylum in destination countries and remain permanently. Most youth on the ER plan to return home in the future. Close to all respondents on the CMR stated they planned to apply for asylum once they had reached their destination (97%). 38% declared the same on the Eastern Route, which reflects the smaller share of respondents citing violence and persecution as drivers and could also explain the smaller share of the respondents on the ER citing their intended destination was US/Canada, Europe or Australia. Additionally, Saudi Arabia is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and does not have an asylum system, (UNHCR, 2022) suggesting that some respondents intending to apply for asylum there may not be fully aware of this. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents on the CMR stated they intended to remain in their preferred country of destination permanently, underlining limited expectations for sufficient improvements in the conditions within their regions of origin Ethiopia and reflecting the destination selection. Most respondents on the ER, on the other hand, outlined planning to stay in their intended country of destination only temporarily (67%). These findings are supported by a 2020 IOM report where 86% of interviewed migrants in Djibouti *en route* to Saudi Arabia intended to return home and saw their stay at intended destination as only temporary. The aim to return home was very much tied to ‘achieving a goal’ abroad which would facilitate an expected better socio-economic status in Ethiopia, (IOM, 2020).

The implications from this section point towards the stark differences in intentions and aspirations Ethiopian youth inhibit while on the move, according to which route they travel. At the same time, while it is unlikely Ethiopian youth would shift from one route to another, in a potential future where conflict would largely subside in Ethiopia and in the region, more intentions of temporarily migrating – rather than permanently – for economic reasons across both routes could (re)appear, including along the CMR.

Conclusion and recommendations

Using standardized 4Mi data collected across East and North Africa, this paper employed a routes-based analysis to demonstrate how profiles, migration drivers and intentions of Ethiopian refugee and migrant youth are structured along two key mixed migration routes: the Central Mediterranean Route and the Eastern Route. In doing so, it sheds light on why certain communities or profiles may opt for a journey along one mixed migration route over another and, hence, what migration dynamics might be anticipated with future shifts in Ethiopia's political, economic, social and environmental landscape.

More broadly, given the stark differences between the profiles and dynamics of the two routes, the data suggest that Ethiopians shifting between routes would be a highly unlikely scenario. Instead, major shifts in the structural drivers of migration are more likely to intensify or constrain movements along these routes and impact how people move. For this reason, the unlocking of more accessible, safe, and regular pathways for conflict-affected Ethiopians and for Ethiopian youth seeking to provide for their livelihoods against severe economic crisis are key to mitigate the risks along perilous journeys. Along the Eastern Route, it is also crucial that Ethiopian authorities advocate for diversified labour opportunities in destination countries and improve oversight of bilateral labour agreements with a focus on the protection of human rights, including labour rights.

The following are key recommendations for mixed migration and protection actors in Ethiopia, based on this study's findings:

- Assistance and development agencies in Ethiopia should consider increasing support to small businesses to enable those who see migration as a less desirable livelihood strategy to remain in-country.
- Authorities in collaboration with development and humanitarian actors should improve access to education to help Ethiopian youth working in agriculture and pastoralism to find safe, alternative, or supplementary livelihoods more easily when impacted by climate shocks.
- Authorities and assistance organizations should strengthen their efforts to work with communities of origin to improve access to information for youth seeking or intending to migrate.
- National and local authorities, UN agencies and relevant other stakeholders should expand on and increase longer-term reintegration programming, regardless of category of return (voluntary or forced), which includes not only development assistance but also psycho-social support, given the exploitation and abuse experienced by many along the journey.

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Root Cause and Measures to Address the Female Child Migration in South Wollo: A Human Rights Perspective

Halifet Ayemohammed Yusuf

Born and raised in Saudi Arabia, Halifet Ayemohammed Yusuf is a Law Lecturer at Wollo University, a Global Peace Ambassador under the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), East Africa, and Qatar Foundation Alumni. Halifet holds a Bachelor of Law degree, from Wollo University, Ethiopia and a Master of Arts in Applied Islamic Ethics from the Hamad bin Khalifa University, Qatar. Her thesis mainly explored the deportation of Ethiopian migrants from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) from an Islamic Ethical and Human Rights perspective. She has also recently completed a Master of Law in Human Rights Law from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. Her LLM thesis researched the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and its contribution to realizing the right to development in the Nile basin using natural resources from a human rights-based approach. As an Ethiopian young female law lecturer, Halifet is a passionate human rights researcher who presents on different legal topics and aims to continue her PhD in migration governance. Her research interests include legal, sociocultural, political, and security issues, specifically focusing on international law, development, gender, ethics, society, AI, migration, religion, and human rights.

Abstract

According to the United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs, international migrants reached 281 million in 2020, and 35.5 million children, the highest number ever reported, were estimated to reside outside their country of origin. In South Wollo, child migration to the Middle East has become a cultural norm. Female children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the culture of migrating, and this puts them at risk of exploitation, trafficking, and other forms of human rights abuse. Thus, this paper aims to examine the root cause of the culture of migrating female children in South Wollo, its human rights concerns and possible measures to address the problem. The paper used a cross-sectional research design with a qualitative component to better understand the environment in which migration occurs and investigate how migration is lived and experienced at the household and community level. Primary data was collected through key informant interviews and individual case reviews. Multi-stage sampling procedures were employed to select sample districts and

study participants. The secondary data was mainly obtained by analyzing relevant literature and reports that provide baseline information for the paper. The findings demonstrate how gender-based cultural expectations affect the child's experiences and vulnerabilities during the migration journey and the destination's integration process. Root causes for female child migration include limited employment opportunities, domestic violence against women, rising living costs, particularly after the Northern War, land eviction, conflict, and restricted girls' access to education and health. Addressing violence against female child migrants requires addressing poverty, discrimination, and limited opportunities. Government, stakeholders, and organizations must implement programmes to reduce poverty, promote education, and provide targeted support.

Keywords:

Culture, Female, Gender, Migration, Child, Ethiopia.

Introduction

Female child migration in Ethiopia has been an issue of growing concern. Although the root cause of this phenomenon is multifaceted, it can be broadly attributed to poverty, lack of access to education, gender inequality, and conflict. Poverty remains the primary driver behind female child migration in Ethiopia as families struggle to provide basic needs for their children. This leads to poor access to education as families cannot afford school fees or other associated costs.

Furthermore, gender inequality in Ethiopia still contributes significantly to female child migration as girls are often seen as a burden on the family rather than potential contributors. Nonetheless, it is essential to note that the most recent global gender gap report published by the World Economic Forum in 2022 indicates that Ethiopia has made significant strides recently. Specifically, the country has improved its standing considerably, moving from 97th place to 74th place out of 146 countries worldwide. Additionally, the gender gap score has witnessed an increase of +0.19%. As it currently stands, the gender gap in Ethiopia has closed by 71% (World Economic Forum, 2022).

Regardless of the advancements in the economy in recent decades and increased educational opportunities, there remains a dearth of job creation and placement for the approximately three million young Ethiopians entering the workforce annually. Notably, the number of educated youth unable to secure suitable employment has risen, disproportionately affecting females (ILO, 2020). Although the limitations mentioned above extend to the national level, the Amhara Regional State faces even more significant challenges regarding unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young graduates from universities and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) institutions (ILO, 2020, p.6).

Additionally, although most individuals who embark on the Eastern Route are of the male gender, there has been a significant increase in female migrants over the past two years. Specifically, the number of women taking this journey has grown twice, rising from 53,000 in

2021 to 106,700 in 2022 (IOM, 2023). Hence, although Ethiopia is a country of unique culture and traditions, female child migration has unfortunately stood as the most striking customary livelihood strategy, especially in South Wollo. This practice has been in place for decades, and this tradition has been passed down from generation to generation and is still alive today. It has had positive and negative effects on the lives of Ethiopian women, but it remains an integral part of the country's culture. This research took a closer look at this tradition and explored the culture of female child migration in South Wollo by looking at its causes and human rights implications.

Literature Review

Migration is a persistent reality in Ethiopia, influenced by factors that compel (push) and attract (pull). One notable example of a compelling factor is climate-induced migration, often due to water scarcity or crop failure (UNICEF, 2019). According to projections made by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), it is anticipated that a significant number of individuals - ranging from 25 million to 1 billion - may be classified as environmental migrants by 2050 due to the climate crisis (IOM, 2023). Ethiopia, one of the most drought-prone countries globally and the most climate-sensitive nation in the region due to its heavy dependence on rain-fed agriculture, is particularly vulnerable (Climate Knowledge Portal).

Other factors that compel migration include political instability, conflict, and lack or disruption of educational or livelihood opportunities (UNICEF; Akumu & Frouws, 2017). As expected, the Northern conflict has also aggravated as a significant factor driving Ethiopian women and girls out of their homes in search of safety and security elsewhere, with 2.6 million individuals classified as internally displaced persons, along with over 240,000 individuals who have returned to their homes and 94,140 refugees and asylum-seekers from Tigray, Amhara, and Afar regions (UNHCR, 2022).

In early 2023, the IOM reported a significant increase in women and children migrating from the Horn of Africa to Gulf countries (GCC) irregularly via Yemen (AlJazeera, 2023). On the other hand, favourable prospects in the labour market or for livelihoods frequently attract migrants, both within and outside the country (ILO, 2017). Moreover, the anticipated sustained increase in the Ethiopian population (up to 85 % by 2050) will exacerbate the pressure on the country (Rigaud et al., 2018).

Ethiopia boasts an extensive history of labour migration to the Middle East, surpassing that of its East African counterparts (Ayalew, Aklessa, & Laiboni, 2020). Ethiopian women have been migrating to Middle Eastern and Gulf nations for at least two decades (Demissie, 2017). In particular, the province of Wollo, situated in the northeastern part of the country, has become a critical departure point for migrants enroute to the Middle East through Djibouti (Adugna, et al., 2021). Prior research in Ethiopia indicated a pattern of "step migration," whereby individuals migrated from rural regions to Addis Ababa before continuing to the Middle East (Girmachew, 2014).

However, this pattern has given way to a shift in trend, whereby migration directly from rural regions, such as Wollo, has become the norm (Girmachew, 2014). According to Adugna

Deshingkar & Atnafu, (2021), secondary data reveals a considerable proportion of migrants who traverse the Djibouti -Yemen passage emanate from the region of Wollo (Minaye, 2013). In 2013/14, 163,000 Ethiopian migrants who lacked legal documentation were repatriated from Saudi Arabia (IOM, 2014), out of which 34,164 migrants hailed specifically from the region of Wollo (Sisay, 2019).

This group of Wollo migrants constituted over 20 %of the overall number of irregular migrants from Ethiopia who were repatriated by Saudi Arabia (Sisay, 2019). Additionally, it is noteworthy that a significant proportion of the 2,100 Ethiopian nationals who were stranded in Yemen and subsequently offered repatriation assistance by the IOM in June 2019 were also from Wollo (Adugna, et al., IOM, 2019).

While it is true that migration experiences and drivers may differ across various groups and regions in Ethiopia, it cannot be denied that gender norms do play a significant role as push factors (UNICEF, 2019).

Specifically, it has been observed that some young females, particularly from the South Wollo region, migrate predominantly to the Middle East to generate income and provide remittances to their families residing in Ethiopia. However, it is imperative to note that this phenomenon exposes females to various risks, including but not limited to violence, mistreatment, and/or exploitation. Consequently, the adverse outcomes that may arise in the context of child migration generally include but are not limited to forced labour, irregular payment of salary or denial of wages, mistreatment, passport confiscation, kidnapping, sexual abuse, and other similar occurrences (United States Department of State, 2018, p.184-185; ILO, 2017, p.12).

Children's migratory or displaced status does not result in the forfeiture of their inherent human rights. It is imperative to note that the application of international human rights law remains intact for children in transit, regardless of whether their journey is confined within their nation's borders or extends beyond them. Notably, the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* ensure the consideration of the best interest of the child and fulfilment of fundamental rights including the right to life, health care, education and to be free of exploitation, violence, and abuse (Ferris, 2020).

The abovementioned human rights instruments hold a status equivalent to the law of the land, as stipulated in Article 9 (4) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution. The FDRE Constitution also includes specific provisions geared towards safeguarding children's welfare and best interests, and Article 36 (1) expressly provides that "Every child has the right to life; to a name and nationality; to know and be cared for by his or her parents or legal guardians; not to be subject to exploitative practices, neither to be required nor permitted to perform work which may be hazardous or harmful to his or her education, health or well-being; to be free of corporal punishment or cruel and inhumane treatment in schools and other institutions responsible for the care of children." Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge that the aforementioned legal protection applies to displaced children due to various factors, including but not limited to conflicts, disasters, and climate change (Ferris, 2020).

Methodology

The focus area of this paper was on the place of origin, South Wollo. Dessie City was selected as the study area because most potential migrants from all over South Wollo are found, i.e., mainly Sengo Gebeya, Boru Meda, and Tita sub-city. Further, it is also feasible and practical to approach the diversified migrant community since Dessie has a branch of the Immigration Office. This paper has utilized a diverse range of sources, including interviews with key informants who participated in this research, including *Dessie City Employment and Training Department, South Wollo Zone Women, Children, and Social Affairs Department, and Immigration Office Dessie Branch* as well as engagement with the perspectives and experiences of 35 participants (30 potential young migrants as well as returnees and five child migrants).

The selection of key informants from particular institutions was based on their possession of firsthand knowledge of the migrating community hailing from South Wollo. The informants' ability to provide confidential information regarding the nature of the issue while remaining anonymous further justified their selection. In addition, the informants were chosen from a diverse array of sectors to ensure a multifaceted perspective on the underlying issues. It has also substantially benefited from a broader spectrum of sources, such as academic research, government reports, and news articles, to deliver a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the issue.

Results and Discussion

In South Wollo, girl-child migration is a growing phenomenon that has significantly impacted the province's culture. It is estimated that 90% of people applying to get a passport at the Immigration Office in Dessie in South Wollo are potential female migrants who want to travel to the Middle East, as a key informant has highlighted. The administrative zones in South Wollo with the most migrating population are from Wegdi, Tehuledere (around Hayq), Werebabo, Qalu, and Kemessie. It has become increasingly common due to poverty and lack of economic opportunities in those rural areas. As a result, families are forced to send their daughters away for better prospects and future security.

According to an official working in the Immigration Office, Dessie Branch, while 90% of migrants from South Wollo are women and girls, most are between the ages of 14 to 18 and often lie about their age to get a passport and end up being rejected for passport application. There are also incidents where the minor female children's fathers or families argue and pay bribes to immigration officers and *kebele* officials to facilitate their daughter's migration. They sent them through the irregular route if it didn't work out.

Generally, girl-child migration is a practice that is mostly done without the consent of the individual involved. Families send their children away often in hopes that they will have better opportunities and future security. The practice also has cultural significance because it allows parents to maintain solid familial ties with their children in the case of family hardship. When families or parents were informed about the negative consequences of migration, including death, they responded, “አላህ/እግዚብሔር ፈርዶ ነው። ሞት እዚህ ቢሆንም አይቀርም።”, which translates to “*That was their destiny, and death occurs, whether it is here in Ethiopia or the Middle East. So, it's better to die trying to change one's life instead of waiting to die staying in the country*”.

Some also do not have the patience to wait for one or two months till they get their passport, use the regular path, and choose the unsafe route. However, many girls are sent off against their will with little to no preparation and risk being abused or exploited by those who receive them into care. For example, while the prevailing depiction portrays it as a securely structured criminal association of individuals or organizations formed for a common purpose or to undertake a specific activity, the enabling of smuggling is intertwined with the daily societal framework and encompasses familiar individuals occupying roles and positions that constitute the village and district hierarchy. The efficacy of migration assistance typically hinges on the trust established through co-ethnic or kinship and religious connections (Adugna, et al., 2021).

As study participants have explained, most young migrants migrate for work and economic reasons. Still, it's not the only factor because even rich people or those with wealthy families and government workers, such as teachers, police officers, and the like, migrate. People with wealthy families decide to relocate, believing their family wealth is not theirs, so they want to make their own money. As for government workers, they believe there has not been any significant change in their lives; hence, migrating them is an alternative livelihood strategy.

From a woman's perspective, a key informant from the South Wollo Zone Women, *Children, and Social Affairs Department* stated that migration affects marriage; most female migrants consider it an empowering means and one way of leaving their husbands and kids with the family. On the other hand, the community in South Wollo perceives female migration as a popular source of income and highly encourages it. When a girl is born, celebration peaks as she emigrates later. Therefore, the culture of female child migration in South Wollo is a complex and multifaceted issue that has been prevalent in the region for decades. While there are various reasons families choose to send their daughters away, poverty, lack of access to education, and early marriage are some of the main driving factors.

First, the migration of female children is often linked to high dropout rates in certain situations. In the Amhara region generally, and South Wollo Zone in particular, educational institutions have been identified as a primary contributor to the prevalence of migration (Assfaw & Minaye, 2022, p. 60). Particularly, students in grades seven through twelve have displayed a heightened susceptibility to migration (Assfaw & Minaye, 2022, p. 60). The decision to migrate, particularly among certain women, is significantly impacted by gender roles, inequitable opportunities, and societal expectations. For example, comparing to other women abroad also affects the decision to migrate for young girls, in addition to considering the birth of girls as a blessing because of the expectation that she will migrate to the GCC in the future and others wield a considerable influence on the individual's decision-making process.

This phenomenon has been attributed to many factors, such as economic circumstances, particularly poverty and the need to migrate to foreign countries for employment opportunities (Yassin, 2020, p.36). Household-level factors such as child labour and school-level factors such as distance can also contribute to this issue. Many families cannot afford to send their daughters to school or do not see the value in educating girls. This can limit opportunities for young girls and their families, leading them to see migration as the only viable option.

Additionally, cultural factors such as early marriage play a role in this phenomenon. They are also prevalent in South Wollo, with many families marrying off their daughters at a young age (Tekile, Woya, & Basha, 2020, p.1190-1195). This practice can lead to a cycle of poverty and limit the opportunities for young girls to pursue their dreams and aspirations. In some cases, migration is seen as a way to escape early marriage and seek a better life. In South Wollo, particularly in *woredas* such as rural Qallu, Argobas, and Oromia zones, parental attitudes towards girls' education remain negative (Yassin, 2020). There is a prevailing belief among parents that a girl's place is in the home and that she should be married off at an early age before becoming corrupted by modern and urban lifestyles.

Furthermore, evidence suggests that parental pressure for migration contributes to the decision to allow or even compel daughters to travel to the Middle East in search of work and better opportunities (Yassin, 2020). This is often motivated by a desire to escape poverty and improve the family's finances. Young girls are usually sent to work in the Middle East as domestic servants, street vendors, or in low-skilled jobs that pay very little. Unfortunately, these jobs are often exploitative and leave young girls vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and even trafficking. The lack of legal protection and the stigma attached to migration make it difficult for these girls to seek help or report abuse. Hence, the issue of female child migration to the Middle East is a pressing concern regarding human rights.

There has been a significant increase in the number of young Ethiopian girls who migrate to countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, seeking employment as domestic workers. Unfortunately, many young girls face exploitation, abuse, and severe violations of their basic human rights. They can frequently arrive at the GCC via the Sponsorship (*Kafala*) system. This mechanism enables their transportation and provides steady earnings upon arrival, typically in domestic service. However, this system also renders them susceptible to precarious circumstances (Fernandez, 2017).

The Middle East is notorious for its lax labour laws and lack of protection for migrant workers. This makes it easy for employers to exploit young girls who are in a vulnerable position. These girls are often forced to work long hours under terrible conditions, with little pay and no access to basic rights and services. They are also at risk of physical and sexual abuse and violence, especially those with irregular statuses. One of the most prominent human rights concerns is the lack of protection for these girls. Many of them are sent to the Middle East without legal documentation or protection, making them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They are often forced to work long hours under challenging conditions, with little pay and no access to medical care. In some cases, they are even forced into prostitution or other sexual exploitation.

Another concern is this migration's psychological impact on these young girls. Many of them are separated from their families and communities, and they may face discrimination and isolation in their new environments. They may also experience trauma from the abuse and exploitation that they are subjected to. These young girls are robbed of their childhood and basic human rights. They are being denied the right to an education, the right to freedom from exploitation, and the right to a safe and healthy environment.

Many are forced into labour beyond their physical capabilities and subjected to dangerous working conditions. They are denied the right to rest and leisure, essential for their physical

and emotional well-being. Further, the issue of Ethiopian female child migration to the Middle East is not only a human rights concern but also a gender issue. These girls are often subjected to gender-based violence and discrimination, further compounding their vulnerability, which can have long-lasting effects on their well-being. The situation worsens because many of these girls are not allowed to have a passport to travel legally or to avoid the “bureaucracy of taking the legal route,” as pointed out by a key informant; hence, they travel irregularly and are undocumented migrants with no legal protection.

They are often denied healthcare, education, and basic human rights. Regarding returnees, they are often seen as outsiders when they return to their communities and are made fun of by calling them names in Amharic, such as “*Terez* or *Temelash*,” and sometimes deported individuals are ashamed for returning empty-handed. Consequently, they struggle to reintegrate into their local cultures and customs. Therefore, they choose remigration, even after starting their family. Others may remigrate because their family or spouse has taken the wealth they have worked for many years. As a result of being betrayed, they preferred to remigrate as they had nothing left in their country. Those who came back with enough money believe that their money is not enough, besides Ethiopia’s demanding lifestyle and hustle, which they think does not allow them to care for themselves.

The effect of the Tigray war also tremendous, especially for businesspeople and traders, especially women, who lost all their properties and impacted increasing female child migration. The Middle East in particular, or the GCC is primarily the preferred site for them to migrate because they either have family and friend ties or information, and most “international dalala’s network and influence” is in that area, the location nearness, and the existence of irregular route option. One of the significant concerns with this trend is the age of the migrating girls. Many of them are young girls leaving Ethiopia with no knowledge of the working conditions they are likely to face. They are often promised good jobs and a decent wage, but the reality is usually very different. Once they arrive, their passports are often confiscated, and they are forced to work long hours with little to no pay.

In addition to the issue of forced labour, these young girls often face physical and sexual abuse from their employers. They are frequently subjected to beatings, rape, and other forms of violence and cannot escape their situation. Many are too afraid to speak out and are often isolated and alone with no support system to turn to. The other critical challenge in addressing this issue is the lack of awareness among families and communities about the risks of child migration. Many families are unaware of their children’s dangers when sent to work in the Middle East. They think migration is a well-established livelihood strategy for them and their kids. They may not understand the importance of protecting their children adequately; instead, they believe that “bad things could happen because God has predestined it” as explained by a key informant from the Dessie City Employment and Training Department.

But some parents, particularly in rural areas, are often unaware of the risks and dangers of this practice and believe their daughters will have a better life. Hence, there is a need for greater awareness campaigns in Ethiopia to ensure that families are better informed about the risks of child migration and encourage them to seek safer alternatives. The other main challenge in addressing the issue of irregular migration is the lack of data. Because this

type of migration often occurs through informal channels, tracking the number of girls leaving Ethiopia can be challenging. Additionally, many girls cannot speak out about their experiences due to fear of retribution or lack of legal status. This was one of the challenges encountered while interviewing most girls for this paper. Addressing this issue should include increasing awareness of migration risks, strengthening the legal framework to protect girls from exploitation, and providing support services to those affected.

Moreover, it is crucial to ensure that law enforcement agencies are well-trained in identifying and responding to violence against child migrants. This may involve establishing units or ensuring that personnel are sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of these children. It is crucial to investigate individuals for wrongdoing, ensuring that they are prosecuted and met with proper punishment per the law. Further, improving access to education, healthcare, housing, and economic opportunities for migrant families can help reduce the desperation and exploitation that often lead to child migration. For instance, offering training and business prospects to the girl's families can enhance their economic empowerment and decrease the likelihood of their children migrating and facing violence.

These programmes provide individuals with skills that are in demand in the job market and assist them in establishing their own enterprises, generating stable sources of income, and emancipating themselves from exploitative circumstances, further investing in community-based programmes that promote social cohesion, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding between migrant communities and the host population. Collaborating with other countries, regional organizations, and international bodies to share best practices, exchange information, and develop joint initiatives to address migration-related challenges is equally important. It is only by working together that the human rights and dignity of Ethiopian female child migrants can be ensured and protected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

South Wollo is an area in Ethiopia plagued by the cultural phenomenon of female child migration. This trend has been observed in various parts of the province and is characterized by sending young girls away from their homes and families to work as domestic servants, mainly in the Middle East. This practice has become deeply ingrained in the culture, with many families seeing it as a common way to alleviate economic hardship. The reasons behind the culture of child migration are complex and multifaceted. Poverty is a major driving force, as many families in rural areas struggle to make ends meet. Children, especially the female ones, are often seen as an economic source and sending them away to work is viewed as a way to ease the financial strain on the family. Additionally, many families believe that sending their daughters away will provide them with better opportunities and a chance for a better life. However, the reality of female child migration is far from ideal.

While the culture of female child migration in South Wollo may have started as a means of survival for many families, it is vital to recognize the harm it can cause young girls. Many young girls are subjected to harsh working conditions and are often exploited by their employers. They are forced to work long hours, sometimes in hazardous conditions, and are denied basic rights such as education and healthcare. Furthermore, the isolation and separation from their families can profoundly impact these young girls, leading to depression, anxiety, and other

mental health issues. Efforts must be made to provide families with alternatives to sending their daughters away, such as access to education and vocational training.

Additionally, measures must be put in place to protect the rights and well-being of these young girls, and it is also essential to engage with local communities and raise awareness about the dangers of this practice. Through education and advocacy, we can work towards creating a safer and more equitable future for young girls in South Wollo and beyond. Non-governmental organizations and community-based groups have been working to raise awareness of the issue and support affected families. These efforts have included establishing schools and other educational programmes in rural areas, as well as advocacy campaigns to promote the rights of young girls. However, progress has been slow, and the culture of female child migration remains deeply entrenched in many communities.

Consequently, the adverse repercussions of child migration, particularly on young girls, are severe. These include the exploitation of vulnerable migrants, the risks of violence and abuse during the journey, as well as the impact on the communities left behind. As a result, the negative consequences of migration are multifarious, encompassing various domains such as education, culture, religion, marriage, and children (Kumar, 2021). Accordingly, the culture of female child migration in South Wollo requires a multifaceted approach. While poverty is a major driving force behind this phenomenon, efforts must be made to provide families with alternatives that do not involve sending their daughters away to work.

Education and awareness-raising campaigns are also essential to promote young girls' rights and combat the cultural norms perpetuating this practice. To mitigate these adverse effects, a range of strategies can be implemented, including the cultivation of a robust work ethic, increasing awareness of the repercussions of illegal out-migration, establishing a coordinated network to combat the unlawful and inhumane practices of brokers, safeguarding the rights of migrants in host countries, and developing training and counselling programmes, as well as legal aid provisions for returnees, such as establishing Migration Law Clinics in Law Schools.

Notably, destination countries have a crucial role in creating the demand for irregular migration and are responsible for addressing this issue. More needs to be done, especially concerning irregular migration, to protect the rights of these vulnerable children. Therefore, potential solutions to the problem of irregular migration, such as engaging in discussions with destination countries to increase legal opportunities for migration, providing support for the communities left behind, and addressing the root causes of migration, are feasible and can be implemented. Finally, the international community must put pressure on receiving countries to improve their treatment of domestic workers, put pressure on the governments to address the issue, and ensure that those who engage in this practice are held accountable and ensure that these young girls are not subjected to exploitation and abuse.

Through awareness-raising, robust legal protections, and effective law enforcement, we can work towards decreasing, if not ending, the exploitation and abuse of female children in Ethiopia and elsewhere. Civil society organizations should also actively continue to create community awareness about the dangers of child migration to the Middle East. They can also support families to prevent them from sending their daughters and assist those who have already been affected by this practice. Ultimately, the goal should be to create a society where young girls are valued and given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Moreover, addressing the underlying factors that drive migration, such as the lack of job opportunities, access to training and finance, and the cultural and religious dimensions of migration, is equally crucial, given that these factors are the primary drivers of child migration. The significance of facilitating access to information, implementing gender-sensitive approaches, ensuring protection from violence, and emphasizing community-based interventions and support services cannot be overstated. It should be regarded as an essential measure to undertake (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2018). It is imperative to conduct additional research to present a comprehensive analysis of the matter and propose practical solutions to effectively address it.

In conclusion, Ethiopian female child migration is a concern that necessitates immediate attention due to its infringement upon human rights at different phases of the migration process, encompassing the nation of origin, transit, and final destination, ranging from violations of the right to life, justice, education, and healthcare. It must be addressed through a multi-sectoral approach involving the community, governments, civil society organizations, and the international community to take proactive measures to address the root causes of this problem, such as poverty and lack of education, and strengthen national laws and policies to prevent human trafficking and to ensure that those who engage in this practice are held accountable.

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Parental migration status and psychosocial well-being of children left behind in Southern Wollo, Ethiopia.

Dr Getnet Tesfaw

Dr Getnet Tesfaw works in the Department of Psychology, at the Institute of Teachers Education and Behavioural Science at Wollo University in Dessie, Ethiopia. Dr Getnet holds a BA degree in psychology and an MA degree in social psychology from Addis Ababa University. He recently completed his PhD in social psychology from Addis Ababa University. His research interests revolve around migration and childhood studies. Getnet has published articles in peer-reviewed journals on migration, childhood issues, and conflict.

Abstract

The major objective of this study was to investigate the psychosocial well-being of left-behind children (LBCs) as a result of parental migration in Southern Wollo, Ethiopia. A mixed-method approach was employed to address the objectives of the study. A total of 360 children whose mothers, fathers, or both parents were migrants were selected from two woredas in southern Wollo by using a stratified sampling method. As a comparison group 360 children living with both parents were selected in the same woredas. For the qualitative data 12 caregivers, and 13 LBCs were selected purposely to capture detailed accounts of the psychosocial well-being of children. The psychosocial well-being of children was assessed by using the strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ). Interview guides were also used to explore the perception of caregivers and experiences of left-behind children regarding parental migration. The findings demonstrated that a significant mean difference was found between LBCs due to the migration of parents versus those children living with both parents $t(718) = 24.64, p < 0.01$. A statistically significant mean difference in psychosocial well-being was also observed between the migration status of parents (the migration of fathers, mother migrants, and both parent migrants) $F = F(2, 357) = 19.18, P < .01$. The qualitative data from caregivers and children showed that LBCs experienced isolation, longing, sadness, and lack of motivation in schooling, following their parents' migration. To mitigate the problem, families, governmental and non-governmental organizations that have a stake in children's lives shall play an important role in providing psychosocial and related support.

Keywords:

Migration, Ethiopia, *left-behind children*, *parental migration*, *psychosocial well-being*.

Background

A child's personality development is significantly influenced by his or her parents' presence and parenting style. The role of parents and family in child development has been frequently emphasized by psychological, sociological, and family system theory (Bowlby, 1977; Bowen, 2004). Children are the most vulnerable to the psychological effects of parental absence since they are not mature enough to handle the impacts of isolation from their parents (Cassidy, 2008; Howard, Martin, Berlin, & Brooks-Gunn, 2011). Different factors may contribute to the separation of children and parents. Parental migration is among the factors that force children to be left behind.

Empirical findings and observations have also shown that Ethiopia is acquiring a huge sum of remittances as a result of migration which was estimated to be USD 3 to 3.5 billion in 2014/2015 (Isaacs, 2017). One of the most important advantages of migration is the decrease in poverty as migrants primarily contribute money to support the people they have left home (Binford, 2003). These remittances increase the family's forms of income and generate extra funds for ongoing expenses (Selmawit, 2013; Cortina, 2014; Binford, 2003).

For sending societies, migration can be beneficial financially but migrating overseas and being separated from parents in most cases resulted in a profound psychological cost (D'Emilio et al., 2007). Family disintegration, social network destruction, and psychosocial distress are all disadvantages of migration (D'Emilio et al., 2007; Lamb, 1977). Separation has been also found to be difficult since it is associated with psychosocial expenses to those family members who stay behind and the migrated ones (Samarasinghe, 1989).

At a family level, remittance-driven migration causes painful memories to those who remained at home resulting in transnational families in which parents tried to lead households and children from afar (Buck & Castaneda, 2011). Apart from the stress it causes, loneliness and the subsequent sense of vulnerability have serious consequences for transnational households. As a result of parental migration, it was found that left-behind children faced challenges developed poor self-confidence and lacked healthy interactions with parents and others (Ye & Murray, 2005). Following the migration of parents, children experienced feelings of abandonment (Dreby, 2007; Vanore, Mazzucato & Siegel, 2015), and faced emotional and mental problems when they were obliged to live with other caregivers (Smith et al., 2004).

In the case of Ethiopia, studies on labour migration are common (Adugna, 2019; Kefale & Mohammed, 2016; Tegegne & Penker, 2016; Dessiye & Emirie, 2018; Reinert, 2006; Abebaw, 2013) but studies focusing on its impact on families and left-behind children are scant. Ethiopia is also among the nations where overseas migrant parents are becoming more common. As a result, parents and their children are separated. The predicament of these children, unfortunately, has rarely been studied, and their condition in Ethiopia is not documented.

So, the motivation of this research is to contribute to policies and interventions for the benefit of left-behind children and families affected due to the migration of parents. Specifically, in the case of Wollo, Ethiopia, people continue to leave their country and travel via the 'eastern route' in large numbers despite numerous reports of abuse while migrating to and through the desert and upon arrival in the Gulf States. Migration research in the study area so far has mainly focused on its impacts on migrants themselves or the receiving communities, its contribution to development and the social networks used to facilitate migration (Abebaw, 2013; Adamnesh, 2006; Getachew, 2016; Fework, 2007; Fernandez, 2010).

The positive and negative impacts of migration have been mainly analysed in terms of migrants and the host community, failing to account for the gains and losses for left-behind children, the larger family, and the sending group. Thus, there exists a dearth of information and study findings that illustrate how children who are left behind due to the migration of parents behave differently than children living with both parents, particularly in the context of Ethiopia. Moreover, the perception of important socializing agents (guardians/caretakers) toward children left behind has not yet been researched.

Given the increased number of LBCs in the study area and the different predicaments these children face as articulated by sending communities, it raises one's concern and motivation to research this issue. Furthermore, there is a lack of intervention strategies that ensure the best interests of children following the migration of parents. The social and cultural aspects of child-rearing practices in Ethiopia may have also an influence.

Children, especially those of early ages, are seen as highly susceptible since they have minimal influence and decisions on remittances sent by the migrating parent(s) are concerning. Due to the migration of parents, the care of LBCs is shifted to others. Despite all odds indicated above, parents are migrating, claiming that their activities are for the good of their children.

This research, therefore, focused on left-behind children as a result of the migration of parents. As a result, the goal of this research is to address the following questions:

Research Questions

1. Do left-behind children's psychosocial well-being as measured by the Strength Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) differ from children of non-migrating families in Southern Wollo?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference in the psychosocial well-being of LBCs across demographic characteristics (parental migration status and gender)?
3. How do caregivers and children left behind perceive the impact of parental migration?

Material and Method

The general objective of this study is to investigate the psychosocial well-being of children left behind due to the migration of parent(s). To achieve the aforementioned objectives mixed design is used.

A mixed-methods design is utilized in this study, as examining the psychosocial well-being of children affected by parental migration presents a complex issue. This complexity requires gathering perspectives from both guardians or caretakers and the left-behind children themselves, using a combination of quantitative measures to assess their current situation and qualitative narratives to delve into their experiences. well-being (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Doing so helps to better understand the context of children left behind. Therefore, given the fact that the issue of the migration of parents is functioning in the context of social dynamics, these complexities need to be comprehended through the application of various methods of data collection. The particular mixed research design used in this study is concurrent whereby the quantitative and qualitative studies are conducted at a time.

Population and Settings of the Study

The study population comprises both LBC as a result of the emigration of parents, and children living with non-migrating parents. Caregivers were also included in the study. Based on accessibility and the researcher's familiarity with the area, the study's population is limited to two districts in South Wollo, Ethiopia namely Kutaber and Tehuledere. These districts (*woreda*) are 420 and 430km far from Addis Ababa respectively. Children who were expected to participate in this study are in the age range of 11-17 years old.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In this study, LBCs, NLBCs, and guardians/caretakers participated. The number of participants in each group and how each group is selected are described below.

A) Left Behind Children

In the context of Ethiopia in general and in the study area, Southern *Wollo* in particular, the proportion of parental migration as well as children left behind is not known. Thus, to select samples, Cochran's (1977) sample size determining formula when the target population is not known is used in this study. Based on Cochran's (1977) formula, the number of children left behind due to the migration of parents planned to be considered for this study was 384. For comparison purposes, 384 children who live with both parents were also planned to be included.

Finally, for this study, 360 left-behind children were selected in the two *woredas* of southern *Wollo*. In addition, 13 left-behind children were also selected for the interview. As an inclusion criterion children separated from either one or both parents for more than six months participated in the study.

B) Children Living with Both of their Parents

For comparison, 360 children from non-migrating parents were included in this study. Since a comparison was made, a stratified sampling method was employed to select these children matching the strata of the selected LBCs.

For the interview, caregivers and LBCs were also selected purposely. Specifically, only those caregivers caring for a child for more than six months are included in the study. In this study, 12 caregivers participated.

Instrument

For the quantitative part of this study, SDQs were administered for the two groups of children: LBC due to parental migration and NLBC. The psychosocial well-being of both LBC and NLBC was assessed and compared using SDQ. SDQ consists of 25 statements that can be put on one page for administration. Any of the statements/questions can be answered as true, partly true, or false. Each statement/question has a score ranging from 0 to 2 points. The answer “not true” is labelled 0, “somewhat true” is labelled 1, and “certainly true” is labelled 2. Questions 7, 11, 14, 21, and 25 are reverse scored. The statements/questions are separated into five sub-scales (behavioural problems, emotional problems, hyperactivity, peer relationship problems, and prosocial behaviour), each of which focuses on a particular ability or problem that can be completed by parents, teachers, and children themselves (Goodman, 1997).

Regarding psychometric characteristics of the instrument Goodman, Meltzer and Bailey, (1998) reported an internal reliability of 0.82 points for total difficulties, 0.72 points for conduct problems, 0.69 f points or hyperactivity, 0.75 points for emotional problems, 0.61 points for problematic peer relationships, and 0.65 points for prosocial behaviour.

For the qualitative part of this study, interview guides were prepared to ask caretakers/guardians about their interactions with a child under their care, and related information about parental separations due to migration. Some of the interview questions raised for guardians/caretakers were: What kind of relationship do they have with the child under their care and has the child's behaviour changed since the child's parents migrated and took over the caregiving?? What did the psychosocial well-being of LBC look like related to the migration of parents? Interview guide questions were also prepared for LBC to capture their voices and personal experiences concerning parental migration.

A pilot was done in the two *woredas* to check the internal consistency of items using 80 LBCs selected from four schools in the study area. In addition, 80 children living with both parents were also included in the pilot study for comparison. A sample size of 10 to 20 % of the sample size of the main study is a reasonable number of respondents to consider in enrolling in the pilot study (Baker, 1994). Thus 160 children participated in the pilot. The age of both LBCs and NLBCs in the pilot study ranges from 11-17 years old. Data management procedures (multicollinearity and outliers) in the pilot study were informative to use similar statistical analysis in the main study.

Methods of Data Analysis

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were applied. Quantitative data analysis was done using SPSS (version 23) software. In the quantitative aspect mean comparison between left-behind children due to parental migration and children living with both parents/or non-migrating parents was done. To describe the demographic characteristics of LBCs and NLBCs descriptive methods of analysis were employed. To compare the psychosocial well-being of LBC disaggregated by parental migration status, an independent samples t-test was performed. Moreover, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse and compare the psychosocial well-being of LBCs disaggregated by parental status.

Regarding the qualitative data analysis method, the data gathered through interviews were first transcribed. After a thorough reading, data categories, or codes, were made to reduce the data into manageable sets of themes. The analysis was done using NVivo 12 software.

Findings of the Study

In this part of the study, data collected and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics is presented. The qualitative findings are also presented. First, the analyses that show descriptive information regarding the characteristics of major study variables will be presented. In addition, relationships between the migration of parent (s) with the psychosocial well-being of LBCs are indicated to be disaggregated by gender and parental migration status. Second, interview results of caregivers, and left-behind children are also presented being organized in themes which is supported by direct quotes.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants of the Study (N= 720)

In this part, the sociodemographic characteristics of participants of this study are presented. Left behind children disaggregated by migration status and gender are described below the number and proportion of children with non-migrant parents are also present in the table below.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics

LBC, migration status of parents	n	per cent
LBC with migrant mother	135	37.5
LBC with migrant father	118	32.8
LBC with both migrant parents	107	29.7
Total	360	
Gender, LBC		
Female	190	52.8
Male	170	47.2
Total	360	
Non-LBC		
Female	190	52.8
Male	170	47.2
Total	360	

As shown in Table 1, the participants in the study consisted of 52.8% females and 47.2% males among the left-behind children. As the comparison has to be similar in demographics the same gender proportion is chosen for the non-LBCs i.e. 52.8% are females and 47.2 % are males. About left-behind children participants' parental migration status, the majority (37.5%) of them came from mother-migrant families. The proportion of LBCs with migrant fathers and both mother and father migrants were 32.8% and 29.7% respectively.

Parental Migration and Psychosocial Well-being of LBCs

The psychosocial well-being of children left behind due to the migration of parents and a comparison group of children with non-migrating parents are presented as follows:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Independent Samples t-Test of Reported Psychosocial Well-being of Participants (N=720)

Group Statistics					
	Child Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SDQ (psychosocial well-being)	LBC	360	17.44	2.98	.15
	NLBC	360	11.81	3.22	.17

Independent Samples t-Test

	<i>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</i>		<i>t-Test for Equality of Means</i>						
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Std. Error Difference</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</i>	
								<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Equal variances assumed	.06	.80	24.63	718	.000	5.63	.22	5.17	6.07
Equal variances not assumed			24.63	709.32	.000	5.63	.22	5.17	6.07

As indicated in Table 2 the independent-samples t-test was employed to compare the psychosocial well-being of LBC as a result of the migration of parent(s) and NLBC. The mean score of psychosocial well-being as measured by SDQ was higher for LBC ($M=17.44$, $SD=2.98$) than for children of non-migrating parents ($M=11.81$, $SD=3.22$). A statistically significant difference was observed between LBC and NLBC, $Mean\ Difference = 5.63$; $t(718) = 24.63$, $p < 0.01$. These findings indicate that the absence of parents due to migration influences the psychosocial well-being of children. Results showed that the migration of parents is associated with the occurrence of problems in the psychosocial well-being of LBC. In this study, analysis of the findings based on the dimensions of SDQ of the two groups is presented together in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviations of SDQ of the LBC and the comparison group

SDQ	LBC			Comparison group, NLBC		
Subscales	N (360)	Mean	SD	N(360)	Mean	SD
Conduct Problem		4.17	1.06		2.73	1.05
Hyperactivity		4.04	1.07		3.03	1.25
Emotional problem		4.58	1.04		3.22	1.37
Peer relation problem		4.38	1.02		2.82	1.03
Prosocial Behaviour		4.04	1.04		6.40	1.32

As depicted in Table 3, the mean scores of all subscales except prosocial behaviour were higher for the LBC than NLBC. This implies that children of migrant parents are exposed to conduct, hyperactivity, and emotional, and peer relationship problems compared to children living with both of their parents.

Migration Status of Parents and Behavioural Outcomes of LBC

The psychosocial well-being of children disaggregated by parental migration status (whether a mother, father or both parents migrated) is also analysed and compared.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviations of Psychosocial Well-being of LBC across Migration Status of Parents (N=360)

Psychosocial well-being measured by SDQ			
Migration status of LBC	n	M	SD
Migrant mother	135	17.91	2.54
Migrant father	118	16.16	2.81
Both mother and father migrant	107	18.25	2.93
Total	360	17.44	2.89

The mean of the overall psychosocial well-being of LBC as measured by SDQ was 17.44 ($SD=2.89$) as compared to children living with both parents ($M=11.81$, $SD=3.22$). As depicted in Table 4 the psychosocial well-being of LBC as measured by SDQ was analysed disaggregated by parental migration status into three categories: mother migrant, father migrant, and the migration of both parents. Table 4 shows which parental migration status has the greatest impact on psychosocial well-being. Children with both migrant parents had a mean score of 18.25 ($SD=2.93$), while those children with a migrant mother scored a mean score of 17.91($SD=2.54$). Children with a migrant father scored lowest which is 16.16 ($SD=2.81$). As a higher mean score of SDQ implies higher problems, children whose parents migrated have to deal with serious problems. Thus, interventions need to consider these differences.

Table 5: One-way Analysis of Variance of Psychosocial Well-being of LBCs across Parental Migration Status

Sources	df	SS	MS	F	P
Between groups	2	291.04	145.52	19.18	.00
Within groups	357	2707.73	7.58		
Total	359	2998.77			

In Table 5 psychosocial well-being of LBCs across parental migration status were compared by using a one-way analysis of variance. The result revealed that the mean score difference among the three groups was statistically significant $F(2, 357)=19.18, P<.01$. The results suggested that children with different migration statuses of parents showed significant mean differences in the score of psychosocial well-being. Further, comparisons of the means using Post Hoc Tests indicated a significant mean difference within the migration status of parents as indicated in the Table below.

Table 6: Multiple Comparisons of Psychosocial Well-being of Children with Parental Migration Status

Dependent Variable: SDQ, Psychosocial Well-being of Children						
Scheffe						
(I) Parental status	(J) Parental status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mother migrated only	Father migrates only	1.74 [*]	.34	.00	.88	2.59
	Both father and mother migrated	-.34	.35	.63	-1.21	.53
Father migrated only	mother migrates only	-1.74 [*]	.34	.00	-2.59	-.88
	both father and mother migrated	-2.08 [*]	.36	.00	-2.98	-1.17
Both father and mother migrated	mother migrates only	.34	.35	.63	-.53	1.21
	Father migrates only	2.08 [*]	.36	.00	1.17	2.98

As the Post Hoc Tests using the Scheffe test indicated in Table 6, the mean score of the psychosocial well-being of those children whose father only migrated was 16.16 ($SD=2.81$) demonstrated significantly lower levels of psychosocial well-being than the other two groups of children whose both parents migrated $M=18.25$ ($SD=2.93$) and mother only migrated $M=17.91$ ($SD=2.54$). The result showed no statistically significant difference between the

psychosocial well-being of children with mothers who only migrated and those with both parent migrants. The findings showed that children left behind as a result of their mother's or both parents' migration had a statistically higher mean score on psychosocial well-being difficulty compared to those whose fathers only migrated. Thus, the influence of both parents and mother migration on the psychosocial well-being of children is higher compared to children with father migrants.

Gender and Psychosocial Well-being as Measured by SDQ

Below, psychosocial well-being disaggregated by gender both for LBC and comparison group is presented.

Table 7: Gender and Psychosocial Well-being of Children

Psychosocial Well-being			
Gender of the LBC	n	M	SD
Female	190	17.75	2.68
Male	170	17.08	3.07
Total	360	17.44	2.89
Gender, NLBC			
Female	190	11.87	3.06
Male	170	11.74	3.41
Total	360	11.81	3.22

As shown in Table 7 above, the mean score of female left-behind children was 17.75 ($SD=2.68$) while the mean of male LBCs was 17.08 ($SD=3.07$). For the NLBC the mean score for females and males was 11.87 ($SD=3.06$) and 11.74 ($SD=3.41$) respectively. A statistically significant mean difference was found between males and females for the LBC; $t(358)=2.19, p < 0.05$. As a result, females showed a higher mean score of psychosocial well-being challenges compared to males. The results suggested that females experience more problems than males following their parental migration. However, the mean difference in psychosocial well-being between males and females for the comparison group was not statistically significant. The qualitative evidence presented below shows that one of the reasons is the burden and extra responsibilities given to females following the migration of their parent(s).

Results of the Qualitative Data

In addition to the quantitative results presented above, the findings of the interview data from the 12 caregivers and 13 LBCs are presented below.

Even if participants argued that the migration of parents overseas is associated with the needs of children and families left behind, it also revealed that the social and psychological consequences are tremendous. It was explored that children who remained behind were aware

of the driving factors for the migration of their parents, but they also expressed the impact of the migration of their parents on their emotional attachment leading to a feeling of separation. Regarding this, a 16-year-old girl who is living with her aunt following the migration of both her parents to Saudi Arabia expressed her dissatisfaction as follows:

'I missed my parents very much. It seems like all I see, particularly when other children are with their parents, is my loss. It brings back memories of my experiences with my parents. So due to my feelings of loneliness, I sometimes cry.'

The above quote elaborates on the child's apparent emotional attachments to a migrant parent, as well as the intense feelings and challenges that come with separation. It was explored that children left behind experience feelings of loneliness when they see other children living and cared for by their parents. Interviews made with left-behind children suggested that they faced various emotional and social problems following the departure and extended absence of their parents. Regarding this, a 16-year-old girl who was separated from both parents for 12 years said,

'Since I am living separately away from my parents since the age of childhood, I believe that I have had little parental care. I yearn to be with my parents for the deepest recesses of my heart.'

The above quote demonstrates the feeling of children left behind concerning their parental absence. Although these children are advantaged in terms of the remittances sent from their parents, their response showed that they received little or no affection from their parents due to migration.

Children also explained that they are missing migrant parents believing that parents are the primary ones who fulfil everything for them. While explaining their painful feelings over their parents' absence, LBCs shared both love and disappointment with an obvious emotional attachment. When exploring the influence of the migration of parents on the psychosocial well-being of children, it appears that the problems of LBC for those whose mothers migrated, mothers are intense. A 14-year-old boy reported his feeling as follows:

'I want my mother with me. I recall a time when someone offended me and no one intervened on my behalf. It's really difficult without my mother. I live with my father and stepmother, so I don't feel so alone, but I still have bad days because no one can replace my mother.'

The above quote vividly illustrates how the absence of a mother due to migration impacted the social and psychological well-being of LBC. The child's response suggested that experiencing a sense of security and well-being is possible in the presence of a mother.

An interview that has been made with a father caring for two children whose mother migrated described the psychosocial well-being consequences of parental migration as *'I feel that my two children (aged 13 and 16) are affected emotionally by their mother's absence for three years and they frequently asked about her return to home''*.

Caregivers were also asked if they think a child left behind has privileges as compared to children who are living with their parents. The caregivers mentioned that LBCs became more advantageous over their peers when their migrant parents frequently communicated from

afar and sent remittances to them consistently. But when migrant parents are not successful for different reasons left-behind children get frustrated. Regarding this, a grandparent who has been caring for two grandchildren expressed the situation as follows:

'My daughter (migrant mother) who left her two children with me was once deported from Saudi before working...but she returned to Saudi through the desert route and now stayed about a year. I did not yet get any information about her whereabouts. Her children /especially the younger ones/ are also worried and ask me now and then about her. In such cases, children could be affected a lot.'

When caretakers were asked to list specific disadvantages, LBCs are facing, they mentioned some psychological and social problems such as losing confidence to interact with others and lack of the confidence to disclose problems they are experiencing. A grandmother who is caring for a 15 years old girl whose mother emigrated for 14 years expressed her worries as follows

'My daughter left her child to me while the child was one year old. She returned and visited us twice but her child did not show any special attachment just like a mother since they were separated in the early years. The child already developed an attachment with me and does not want to talk about her mother. However, she is always silent and shows depressive behaviours to the extent that her peers get worried about her.'

In the interview, it was reported that girls experienced more problems than boys. Following parental migration particularly, the mother, girls became overburdened with household chores and the responsibility of caring for their younger siblings who are left behind.

Thus, it is possible to imply that providing remittances may not be considered as a guarantee to enhance the well-being of children and families left behind. From the results, it is possible to explain that the qualitative findings supported the quantitative data. For example, both the quantitative and qualitative showed that girls are more prone to psychosocial problems compared to boys because of the migration of parents (s). An important implication drawn from the qualitative finding is a good understanding of children understanding reasons for their parents' migration which will serve as a means for better coping.

Discussion

In this part of the study, the findings of this study were discussed with prior research findings. First, the migration of parent (s) concerning its impact on psychosocial well-being as measured by SDQ of LBC was studied in comparison with NLBC. The findings showed that the mean scores of behavioural outcomes for LBC ($M=17.44$, $SD=2.98$) and children of non-migrating parents ($M=12.00$, $SD=3.24$) were significantly different; $t(718)=24.63$, $p=0.01$. The mean score of problems of psychosocial well-being of LBC was significantly higher than the mean score of NLBC. Consistent with these findings, prior research on children left behind also reported problems such as loneliness, stress, and intense fear compared to their peers

with non-migrating parents (Reyes, 2007; Asis, 2006; Pissin, 2013). Mazzucato et al. (2015) in their research done in Ghana, Nigeria, and Angola, reported that children of migrant parents showed more psychological challenges than those whose parents have not migrated.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that compared to NLBCs, LBCs are paying the social and emotional expense of parental emigration which might not be compensated by remittances. The difference in psychosocial well-being between LBC and the comparison group demonstrates the importance of parental presence for children's well-being.

However, research on Filipino school children showed little data that LBCs experienced more emotional and social problems than NLBCs (Graham & Jordan, 2011; SMC, 2004). On the other hand, in contrast to the results of this study, research results on the social and emotional situations of LBCs in Ecuador were mixed (Rae-Espinoza, 2012) by which parental migration affected psychosocial well-being both positively and negatively.

In this study, the psychosocial well-being of children and the status of emigration of parents were also examined. Results revealed that the migration of a father, mother, and both parents influenced the psychosocial well-being of children. It was found that the mean of behavioural outcomes of children across parental migration status showed a statistically significant difference $F(2, 357) = 19.18, P < .001$. Multiple comparisons of the three groups further suggested that the mean score of children with mother migrants and both parent migrants was significantly higher than that of children of a father migrant. This implied that children of a mother or a child of which both parents have migrated are more disadvantaged than children of a father migrant. In this regard, previous research findings showed that the migration of a mother impacted children's social well-being negatively compared to the migration of fathers (Chen et al., 2019). Moreover, a study on 253 LBCs in Sri Lanka due to the emigration of mothers reported higher behavioural and emotional difficulties compared to children of father migrants (Senaratne, Perera & Fonseka, 2011; Parreñas, 2005). A research report on 385 children left behind by both parent emigrants also demonstrated psychological problems than children of father migrants (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002). Furthermore, left-behind children were found to face feelings of rejection when their mothers migrated as compared with children of father migrants (Graham et al., 2015). The migration of mothers was also found to be the major factor that leads children to develop behavioural problems (Bakker et al., 2009). In Jamaica, 80 % of socially unacceptable behaviour was reported with children of migrant mothers compared to 30 % for children with a father migrant (D'Emilio et al., 2007).

Furthermore, LBCs with the migration of mothers developed feelings of rejection and other psychosocial problems compared to the migration of fathers. It was also argued that children could develop positive relationships with extended families (Save the Children Sri Lanka, 2006) but difficult to replace the love and affection provided by a mother (Jampaklay, 2006). Therefore, in designing intervention mechanisms to support children left behind, it is better to see the emigration status of parents and the associated consequences on children.

In this study, the psychosocial well-being of children left behind was compared based on sex. The result indicated that a significant mean difference was found between males and females due to the migration of parents on behavioural outcomes as measured by SDQ $t(358) = 2.19, p < 0.05$. Findings showed that the mean score of females is higher in the SDQ scores compared

to males. The study reported that girls are more affected by parental migration since they are expected to accomplish household chores, particularly in mother-migrated families. During the interview, it was mentioned that the excessive burden of household activities and caring for their little siblings rested on girls which consequently stressed them, particularly when the mother migrated. Supporting this result, previous research regarding the influence of emigration of parents on gender reported that girls were found to be impacted more in terms of psycho-social well-being than boys (Catrinescu et al., 2011). Parrenas (2005) also explained that the emigration of mothers tends to give more duties to their daughters than to their boys, in terms of domestic responsibilities. Following the migration of mothers, it was mentioned that girls were more responsible than boys when it came to caring for younger children at home (Parrenas 2001; 2005). On the contrary previous studies in China indicated that boys showed a higher level of problems as compared to girls (Hu et al., 2014).

One of the reasons may be related to the social and cultural settings in which in patriarchal countries like Ethiopia, girls are more likely to be assigned home responsibilities than boys. Girls in Ethiopia, particularly in rural areas, tend to help their mothers at home in their spare time. In the absence of mothers, girls are given more responsibility for caring for siblings and undertaking domestic tasks than boys. As a result, boys may have the opportunity to play with their peers and cope with the psychosocial issues that arose as a result of their parents' migration. During fieldwork, I noticed girls caring for babies as a result of the mother's migration. Such pressures may lead young girls to consider emigrating to another country.

In sum, the positive aspects of the migration of parents might be related to the remittances used to support the socio-economic situations of the LBC while the negative impacts could be associated with the emotional costs. As a result, proper remittance utilization and management may contribute to better LBC livelihood situations, which are favourably correlated with social and psychological well-being. Because of socioeconomic circumstances, the focus on remittances rather than the impact of child separation from parents in sending areas may contribute to the overlooking of LBC's emotional and social difficulties. Assessing children's well-being by observing remittances in the form of clothes, smartphones, and other commodities sent from migrant parents may have an impact on the provision of psychosocial support. When people give much emphasis to remittances, the social and emotional costs of parental migration of the LBC might be downplayed. Understanding the reasons for the migration of parents as labour emigrants among sending communities, as well as accepting the problems of LBC, are critical to lowering risks and allowing adaptability for LBC.

The qualitative study unexpectedly implied that the culture of caregiving has changed. Previously it was normal for the grandparents, other extended families, and even neighbours to raise children when parents are away for various reasons. However, in this study, the LBC, and caregivers emphasized the role of a parent in children's development. This might be related to the social dynamics and the attitude of parenting and caregiving. This shift may help to design prevention and intervention strategies that address the circumstances to support the LBC affected by parental migration.

Conclusion

In this study, the psychosocial well-being of children due to parental migration in southern Wollo Ethiopia was explored using mixed research methods. In conclusion, a significant mean difference in psychosocial well-being as measured by SDQ was found between LBC due to the migration of parents and NLBC. A significantly higher psychosocial well-being problem as measured by SDQ was found in LBC due to the migration of parents compared to NLBC.

Among children with parental migration status (a mother, a father, and both parent migrants) a statistically significant mean difference was found in psychosocial well-being as measured by SDQ. LBC with a migrant father had shown significantly lower psychosocial problems compared to the other two groups. However, a statistically significant mean difference was not found between the LBC of mother migrants and both parent migrants. The results revealed that children relate their parents' migration abroad with their goal of providing a good standard of living for them, but they want to live with them. LBCs due to the migration of parents expressed feelings of longing, separation, unhappiness, emotional deprivation, and other social and psychological problems. Following the migration of parents, some LBCs showed a lack of motivation to attend school and thus they are exposed to the burdens of household chores, especially for girls.

Implications

The following implications are drawn from the study's findings. Regardless of economic advantages, parents must consider the psychosocial costs of migration on children left behind. Parents, caretakers, and those who have a stake in children's need to understand the problems that children who are left behind face. This is critical to develop relevant strategies to resolve the problems LBC faces. To mitigate problems, prevention and intervention strategies can be suggested as follows.

Policy Implication

The findings of this study have policy implications. As far as the issue of children is concerned it has been mentioned by different stakeholders that all children have a right to be cared for by parents and get the necessary support. However, the findings of this study indicated that many children are left behind and found to face psychosocial problems due to the migration of parents. Thus, the development and implementation of migration policies should first safeguard the "best interests" of children associated with their parents' migration decisions (s)

Intervention /Practical Implication

As identified in the findings there are children affected by the migration of parents. Particularly children whose mother or both parents migrated showed significantly higher psychosocial problems compared to children whose fathers migrated. To help LBCs who face psychological and social problems, counsellors, and mental health professionals are expected to provide support.

Besides, various forms of support from friends, families, caregivers, and teachers have to be implemented because children naturally seek social support from others. Thus counsellors, social workers, and teachers have to be involved to create conducive environments for the LBC to receive social support. Schools shall also allow the LBC to participate in extracurricular activities that would help them reduce stress and related problems.

Research implication

Children's understanding of the factors for the migration of their parents may help a as means to cope with some of the problems they encounter. However future research may focus on identifying the specific coping mechanisms LBCs are using whenever they face problems following the migration of their parent(s). The identification of coping mechanisms will help to prepare intervention strategies.

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Dynamics of Child Migration in the Context of Changing Climate: A Case Study of Rural Shashemene, South Central Ethiopia

Adane Alemayehu Tadesse

Mr Adane Alemayehu Tadesse is a Lecturer and Researcher at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Addis Ababa University. Mr Adane has more than ten years of teaching and research experience in Ethiopian higher education institutions. Since September 2019, Mr Adane has been a PhD research fellow in the Governing Climate Mobility Programme. Previously Adane was a Guest PhD Researcher fellow at the Danish Institute for International Studies and Roskilde University in Denmark. Adane is also an alumnus of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). Parallel to his academic engagements, Adane has served as Director of the International Relations Office at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. His area of research interests includes climate change and human mobility, access, and climate mobility, the political economy of adaptation, environmental politics, foreign policy, and peacebuilding. Currently, Mr Adane is a Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding (SVNP) Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

Abstract

In response to the repercussions of climate-related hazards, child migration from rural Shashemene to nearby towns and surrounding rural areas has become a growing trend. However, the practice has been considered unlawful by authorities leading them to mobilize existing administrative and political structures as well as social institutions to oversee and discourage such trend. Despite these efforts, child migration from rural Shashemene is still on the rise. Given this context, this study aims to investigate how climate change-related risks impact the decision-making process of households when it comes to migration. It also examines why the strict regulatory approach adopted by authorities has not yielded the expected results. As regards methodology, the study employed a mixed methods approach. Accordingly, key informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in six rural kebeles in rural Shashemene. In addition, survey data from 300 households is used to explore households' perceptions towards climate change trends and impacts. The findings revealed that, contrary to mainstream discourse and policies, rural households in Shashemene are considering child migration particularly rural-rural child migration as a coping mechanism for the impacts of climate hazards. It is practised both as a means of

financial gains, and a remedial measure taken to spare children from the precarious conditions that are exacerbated by climate change hazards. The study also found that child migration in the study area is influenced by the laxity of state-led climate adaptation initiatives that address the expectations of vulnerable households. Therefore, the study concludes that in the context of climate change coercive approach towards child migration is futile. Instead, addressing child migration in climate change-affected areas like in Shashemene requires empowering and transformative adaptation interventions tailored to the needs of vulnerable households.

Keywords:

Child migration, climate change, local authorities, adaptation

Introduction

In the context of changing climatic conditions, children are among the most vulnerable segments of society (Hanna and Oliva, 2016; Child Fund Alliance et al., 2016; Hub, 2020). In this regard, children are frontline victims of the negative repercussions of climate hazards like droughts, floods, and changing rainfall and temperature patterns (Sanson et al., 2019). Hanna and Oliva (2016) noted that children in the context of climate change are affected by displacement, migration, and resource-related violence.

Ethiopia is among the countries most vulnerable to rapid and gradual climate change disasters (Paul and Weinthal, 2018; FDRE, 2019). According to weather records dating back to the 1950s Ethiopia has experienced a rise in its yearly temperature ranging from 1.0°C to 1.3°C (Haileab, 2018). Climate change presents an obstacle for the country's economy as it heavily depends on agriculture that relies on rainfall. The impacts of climate change also include reduced agricultural productivity, crop and livestock losses, and increased food insecurity (Gebrehiwot and Van der Veen, 2013; Araro et al., 2020). In addition, rural communities face recurrent challenges such as frequent droughts, crop failures, declining livestock populations, loss of biodiversity, and recurrent famines (Mekasha, 2014). In response to such a setting, migration is employed by vulnerable communities as a coping strategy for the repercussions of climate change hazards (Groth et al., 2020; Dula et al., 2022). As such the changing climatic conditions have emerged as a critical factor shaping child migration patterns in rural Ethiopia.

In contemporary Ethiopia, the trend of outgoing child migration from rural areas is becoming prevalent. As stipulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, a child is a 'human being below the age of eighteen'. For this study, a child migrant is a person who is below eighteen years old. Studies indicated that rural poverty is exposing children to labour migration to rural and urban destinations (Yosef et al, 2006; Gebre, 2012). While urban centres have traditionally been the main destination, child migrants are also moving to rural areas and international destinations. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2020), child migrants constitute a significant portion of international migrants from Ethiopia. In this regard, a report issued by Save the Children Ethiopia in 2021 indicated that '*approximately 19,000 Ethiopian child migrants entered Yemen in 2018 and 2019 annually*' (Save the Children Ethiopia, 2021:5).

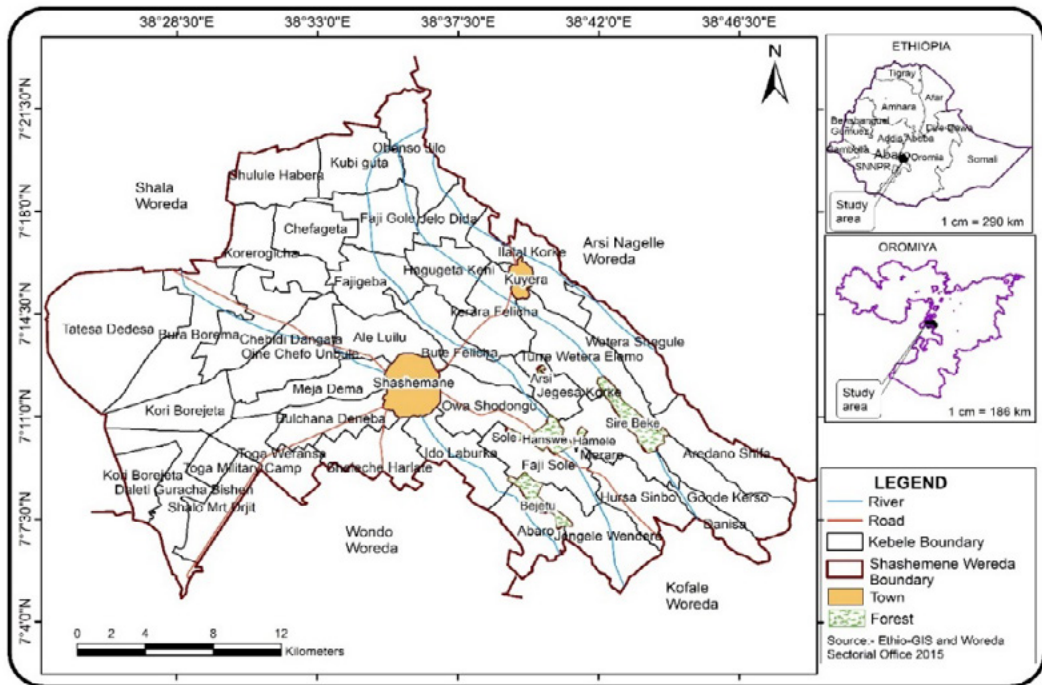
Child migration from rural Ethiopia is influenced by a complex set of factors. Studies indicated that economic factors, such as lack of employment and income inequality, often trigger child migration to urban areas or even abroad (Fework, 2007; Girmachew, 2009; IOM, 2020). Kelil (2015) noted that besides poverty the underdeveloped state of basic infrastructure in rural areas serves as a push factor for child migration. As regards social drivers, Melesse (2014) noted that family disagreements and separation facilitate outgoing child migration. In other cases, children might choose to leave areas because of conflicts or political instability. For example, the recent conflicts, in Northern Ethiopia led to a massive wave of child migrants who fled from areas affected by the conflict.

Given this context, this study examines how child migration is influenced by changing climatic conditions in the study area. Additionally, the study examines how local authorities respond to child migration and why their efforts are ineffective. The study employed a mixed methods approach. Accordingly, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were utilized. Qualitative data was collected through unstructured interviews and focused group discussions with household heads, experts, local government officials, and members of the community. On the other hand, a survey method was employed to collect quantitative data from 300 households in 6 rural kebeles to explore their perceptions of trends and impacts of climate change hazards. Moreover, secondary data was obtained from journal articles, books, policy briefs, official reports, proclamations, and policy documents.

This paper is organized into six sections. After the introduction, the second section describes the study area. Section three deals with the drivers and patterns of child migration in rural Shashemene. The fourth section explores how child migration becomes a way for households to cope with precarious circumstances. Section five delves into authorities' responses, to child migration. Finally, section six presents the conclusion of the study.

Description of the Study Area

Shashemene District is located in the West Arsi Zone in the Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia. It lies approximately 250 kilometres south of Addis Ababa, on the road to Hawassa, the joint capital of Sidama and the Southern Nations Nationalities and People's (SNNP) Regional States. Shashemene district borders the Arsi Negele district to the north, the Shalla and Siraro districts to the west, the Kore district to the east, the Kofele district to the southeast, and the Sidama Regional State to the south. The altitude of the district varies from 1500 to 2300 meters above sea level. With a total land area of 59,586 hectares, Shashemene District consists of different land cover types such as cropland, pasture, swamp, and forest. The main crops grown in the region for both food and cash purposes include potatoes, maize, wheat, barley, and *teff*.



Source: Commissioned GIS expert, 2022.

Shashemene has a temperate climate with annual temperatures ranging from 12°C to 27°C. The District Office of Agriculture classifies Shashemene into three agroecological zones based on altitude: Dega or highland, Woyna Dega or midland and Kolla or lowland. These agroecological zones have direct influences on the patterns of rainfall and air temperature. The kebeles (small administrative units) in the western and northwestern parts of the district, bordering the Kofele and Kore districts, are predominantly in the dega zone. These areas receive relatively high annual rainfall, have distinct cropping patterns, and grow a variety of crops. On the contrary, the kebeles in the eastern, southern, and northeastern parts of the district, bordering Shalla, Siraro, and Hawassa, are predominantly classified as lowland and often experience moisture deficits.

Drivers and Patterns of Child Migration from Rural Shashemene

Child migration from rural Ethiopia is primarily linked to the deteriorating living conditions of rural households (Save the Children Ethiopia; 2021). Rural livelihood is challenged by scarcity of natural resources like land, declining agricultural productivity, high population pressure and environmental changes (Girmachew, 2009). A study conducted by IOM (2020) also indicated that poverty, low agricultural productivity, landlessness, and high youth unemployment are economic drivers of child migration. As such child migration is viewed as a means of improving livelihood conditions in vulnerable rural households. As is the case with other parts of Ethiopia, child migration from rural Shashemene is driven by economic, social, and ecological factors.

Drivers of Child Migration in Rural Shashemene

Child migration decision is closely associated with the socioeconomic position of households (IOM, 2020; Save the Children Ethiopia, 2021). In rural Shashemene, poor households that are experiencing livelihood crises are the primary sources of child migrants (*Interview with Children Rights and Protection Unit Team Leader, Shashemene*). Most importantly the depletion of household assets and decline in agricultural productivity due to the changing climatic conditions are facilitating child migration (*Focus Group Discussion in ne Chefa Umbure Kebele*). Moreover, ever ever-increasing cost of living and the exploitative market setting are forcing rural households to resort to child migration practices. The absence of alternative sources of income like non-farm job opportunities also played a part in the household's decision to either allow or forcefully send children to move out from the area (*Interview with Social Affairs Unit Team leader, Shashemene*). In most cases, shortage of food and inability to send children to school are the common indicators that precede child migration (*Interview with Head of Community Conversation Committee, Faji Solee Kebele*). At the same time, scarcity of land is also serving as a pushing factor for child migration.

The data collected from the interviews and focus group discussions indicated that marriage-related practices particularly polygamy are linked with child migration trends in rural Shashemene. As the area is populated by dominantly a Muslim population it is common for men to have multiple wives and several children (*Interview with Social Affairs Unit Team leader, Shashemene*). As the resources of the husband stretch into three to five wives, often children are burdened with shouldering household responsibilities including the responsibility to support their mother and other siblings. Polygamy as a practice is also undermining the possibility of inheriting farmland from their father. The increasing rate of family breakups or divorce that is often connected with the inability of the father to cover household expenses is also identified as one of the pushing factors for child migration (*Interview with Children Rights and Protection Unit Team Leader, Shashemene*). On one hand, trauma from the children and their mother's side are leading to frustrations that in turn lead to migration decisions. On the other hand, the economic hardships created due to the absence of the husband are forcing single mothers to consider entering into child labour contracts (*Interview with Head of Community Conversation Committee, Faji Solee Kebele*). Most widow mothers are also forced to allow their children to leave home either in the form of labour contracts or desperate move to urban centres mostly to Shashemene town. Another social factor is related to education. The inability to succeed in schooling is identified by experts as one of the factors leading to child migration. Similarly, participants of focus group discussions identified failure to pass the grade 8th regional examination and the grade 10th national examination often followed by migration to either urban centres or to the Middle East (*Interview with Social Affairs Unit Team leader, Shashemene*).

Child migration trends in rural Shashemene are also influenced by climatic conditions. On one hand, child migration is influenced by the harsh living conditions in lowland *kebeles* where the rural community is frequently exposed to shortage of water, crop failure, and food insecurity. The ecological attributes of these *kebeles* make them susceptible to the repercussions of climatic hazards. On the other hand, the occurrence of climatic hazards like drought and rainfall anomalies in the area is positively associated with an increase in child migration rates (*Interview with Manager of Faji Golee Kebele*).

Patterns of Child Migration from Rural Shashemene

The patterns of child migration from the rural areas of Shashemene show distinct characteristics in terms of the destinations and the conditions experienced by child migrants. Three main forms of child migration are discernible: rural-urban migration, rural-rural migration, and international migration to Gulf countries.

Rural-urban migration is the most widely practiced form of child migration in rural Shashemene. Due to its proximity, Shashemene town is the primary destination of rural-urban child migrants. In the case of rural-urban migration, the decision-making process rarely involves the parents. Rather it is an outcome of the desperate decisions of children who viewed child migration as an exit strategy from the challenges that they face in the rural space in general and their respective households in particular. Information obtained from the Shashemene District Women and Children Affairs office indicated that household poverty, shortage of food, and family breakups are the most frequently stated reasons for rural-urban child migration. As regards their condition in the destination areas, the majority of child migrants in Shashemene town become street children and are forced to live in harsh living conditions (*Interview with an Expert at Shashemene District Labor and Social Affairs Office*). As a result, this form of migration seriously undermines their safety, well-being, and basic rights (*Interview with Children Rights and Protection Unit Team Leader, Shashemene*).

The second form of child migration from rural Shashemene involves migration to nearby and farthest rural destinations. Unlike rural-urban movements, in the case of rural-rural child migration, at least one of the parents is involved in the decision-making process. On the contrary, child migrants are forced to comply with the decision of their parents. Rural-rural child migration is facilitated by intermediate actors. Mostly, full-time brokers, or as they are called by local authorities 'traffickers' are responsible for soliciting and transporting child migrants. At the same time, members of the local community also serve as intermediaries whenever their relatives in the destination areas request their assistance.

Rural-rural child migration in the study area is geared towards relatively fertile areas where surplus production is still attainable. The most popular destinations for this form of migration are located in the Dodola district, Gedeb Asasa district and rural districts in the Bale zone. Rural-rural child migration is in most cases time-bounded and often ends after a year. But depending on the circumstances the contract could be extended. The amount of money paid to the parents of child migrants ranges from 3,000 to 8,000 birr (*Interview with Children Rights and Safety Protection Team Leader, Shashemene*). The contract that is established between the sending households and receiving households is informal and verbal because the practice is deemed illegal by government bodies. Compared to rural-urban migration, child migrants who are migrating to rural areas are in better condition at least in terms of accessing food and shelter. However, they are exposed to labour exploitation and deprivation of basic children's rights like the right to education. Depending on their age and physical strength, they are expected to conduct various kinds of farming-related activities. In most cases, male child migrants are needed to take care of the livestock of the host households. In terms of gender, both male and female children between the ages of 7 and 15 years old are mostly involved in the rural-rural child migration.

International migration to Gulf countries is the third pattern of child migration from rural Shashemene. International child migrants from the area are invisible due to two reasons. First, child migrants who are travelling through regular channels are obtaining passports with fraudulent documents like *kebele* ID cards and birth certificates. In rural Shashemene, children who are between 15 and 17 years old use the aforementioned mechanism to obtain a passport and travel to the Gulf Countries mainly to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (*Interview with Key Informant 3*). Second, as most of the international child migrants from rural Shashemene are using irregular channels, it is a daunting task to identify underaged migrants (*Interview with an Expert at Shashemene District Labor and Social Affairs Office*). In the case of international migration, brokers, traffickers, and smugglers are involved in facilitating the cross-border movement of child migrants. Given the amount of money required to fund this form of migration, in most cases, international child migration is practiced by better households.

Child Migration as a Coping Strategy in Rural Shashemene

Rural Shashemene is one of the hotspots of climate change and variability (Desalegn, Zerihun and Webster, 2020). According to the Shashemene District Agriculture Office, out of the 28 rural kebeles, 16 of them have been identified as drought-prone kebeles. The long-term climate data derived from Google Earth Engine (GEE) cloud computing platform, shows that the maximum temperature in Shashemene has risen consistently by 0.05°C per year since 1983. In addition, the district has experienced a corresponding increase in minimum temperatures of 0.03°C per year (Kefale, 2022). Similarly, the rainfall data from 1983 to 2019 shows that Shashemene district is challenged by rainfall fluctuation in which changes have been observed both in the amount and timing of the rainfall (Kefale, 2022).

According to the survey conducted on 300 households in six *kebeles* of Shashemene district, drought and rainfall irregularity are identified as the major climatic hazards that challenge rural livelihood.

Table 1: Perception of climatic hazards in ranking order

Climate change-related hazards	Most frequent hazard that endangered HH livelihood (ranking)
Drought	54%
Floods	2%
Rainfall irregularity (insufficient or too heavy)	41%
Noticeable change in air temperature	3%
	100%

Table 1 indicates that 54% of the respondents identified drought as the most frequent hazard that affected the livelihood of the respondents. Whereas rainfall irregularity is identified by 41% of the respondents as the most frequent hazard. On the contrary, only a total of 5% of

the respondents identified floods and rises in temperature as the most frequent hazards. It can be inferred from the table that though rural Shashemene is experiencing both slow onset and rapid onset hazards, drought and rainfall anomalies are undermining the livelihoods of rural communities in the Shashemene district. The data obtained from expert interviews also concurred with the aforementioned. An informant who has served in the Shashemene district Agriculture office for about 15 years stated that:

‘Rainfall irregularity is the number one challenge that is affecting the agricultural activities of the rural community. Previously the district was known for surplus production because it was possible to produce three times per year. However, during the last five years, the community has been struggling to produce even once in a year. Due to the shortage of rainfall, the area is affected by drought for three consecutive seasons.

In relation to the changing trends of rainfall and temperature patterns, the livelihood of rural communities in Shashemene is experiencing disruptions. Most importantly, recurrent climatic hazards like drought and rainfall anomalies are severely affecting the agricultural production process. For instance, during the 2020/21 fiscal year around 140,620 quintals of grain perished due to climate change-related hazards (Shashemene District Agriculture Office, 2021). Participants of the Focus Group Discussion from Oine chefa Umbure kebele stated that:

‘The rainfall pattern is not normal. We are unable to predict when the rain will start and stop. As a result, our agricultural activities are severely affected by the changes. During the last two seasons, most of us got nothing. Last year the rainfall started early but after we started farming the rainfall stopped before our crop matured as a result, we lost everything. Particularly, farming during the belg season [February-June] is becoming a risky endeavour.’

According to the results presented in Table 2, a significant proportion of respondents, 96.6%, reported reduced agricultural productivity due to climate hazards. In addition, 73.3% of respondents acknowledged that these climatic hazards had led to food shortages. Recurrent crop failures are another prominent impact of climate hazards identified by respondents.

Table 2: Impacts of Climate change related hazards in Shashemene district

Impacts of Climate Change Hazards	Percentage
Recurrent Crop failure	62.6%
High investment in fertilizer	16.6%
Decline of agricultural productivity	96.6%
Loss of livestock	20.3%
Shortage of food	73.3%
Crop pests/diseases	40.3%
Forced to rent out/sell land	9 %

In line with the adaptation strategies that are advocated by the federal government, state-led adaptation initiatives in rural Shashemene are focused on environmental rehabilitation works. The major adaptation schemes that are being implemented in the Shashemene district include area closure projects, climate action through landscape management (CALM), the green legacy campaign, and community-based conservation works. In addition, agriculture office is also implementing the climate-smart agriculture scheme. Moreover, the Disaster and Risk Management office is disbursing food relief to the drought-affected kebeles. Nevertheless, the aforementioned schemes hardly address the immediate needs of vulnerable households. Furthermore, neither the state-led adaptation schemes nor the short-term food relief programme focused on diversifying the livelihood of vulnerable households. Due to the limitations of government-led adaptation initiatives, many rural households are relying on their own adaptive capacity.

In response to changing climatic conditions in Shashemene District, rural households are employing different kinds of on-farm and off-farm strategies. While all households in the region are equally exposed to rainfall anomalies or drought, there are significant differences in their adaptive capacity. The effects of climate change vary among households. Some are more resilient and able to handle these impacts while others face challenges such, as food scarcity, depletion of asset base, etc. Moreover, differential access to resources and opportunities significantly shapes the adaptation responses of rural households.

Poor households with limited adaptive capacity often resort to child labour as a means of coping with their challenges. Among the various forms of child migration observed in rural Shashemene, rural-rural child migration is the most common coping strategy. Over the past four years, as drought and erratic rainfall have disrupted agricultural activities, rural households with limited adaptation options have resorted to child migration (*Focus Group Discussion in Faji Golee Kebele*). Three main factors make rural-urban child migration a preferred option for the most vulnerable households. First, the parents of child migrants receive financial support from the receiving households, typically between 3,000 and 8,000 Birr (*Interview with Children Rights and Protection Unit Team Leader, Shashemene*). This money is crucial to buy food for the remaining household members and to invest in agricultural inputs for the next farming season. Therefore, Child migration is viewed as an alternative source of finance to address food shortages and the agricultural needs of vulnerable households. Second, child migration is seen as a way to reduce the number of dependents within the household, thereby reducing the burden on limited resources and increasing the household's resilience to climatic shocks (*Focus Group Discussion in Chebi Dide Ngnata kebele*). Thirdly, parents see rural-rural migration as a better arrangement for their children, protecting them from the precarious conditions they would face at home.

Local Authorities' Response to Child Migration

The governance structure for addressing child migration in rural Shashemene operates through a two-tier approach involving both district and *kebele-level* authorities. At the district level, the main offices responsible for monitoring child migration are the Social and Labor Affairs Office and the Women and Children Affairs Office. These offices have a role in overseeing and dealing with matters concerning child migration in the district.

Moreover, child migration is monitored by a Task Force led by the district administration. The task force includes representatives from stakeholder offices, like the Women and Children Office, Education Office, Justice Office, Security Office, and District Police. Recognizing the importance of addressing child migration, the district-level Task Force conducts regular monthly visits and discussions with members of the kebele-level Community Conversation Committee. This is instrumental in fostering coordination between efforts made by *kebele* and district-level authorities.

At the *kebele* level, the Community Conversation Committee is responsible for creating awareness and initiating preventive measures against child migration. The committee is headed by a member of the kebele cabinet who is designated to coordinate children's and women's affairs. In addition, the head of the *kebele* administration and other members of the kebele cabinet are also involved in monitoring child migration-related activities.

As the case with federal and regional level authorities, local authorities in Shashemene deemed all forms of child migration as unlawful and contrary to existing policies. Consequently, local authorities have placed formal and informal structures that regulate the phenomenon of child migration. In the case of rural Shashemene, governance measures against child migration are founded on two pillars. On one hand, child migration raises the concern of the protection of children's rights. In this regard, addressing child migration is viewed as preventing the violation of children's rights. On the other hand, child migration from rural Shashemene is also viewed from a human trafficking point of view whereby the movement of children to other rural areas through the involvement of brokers is considered illegal. As a result, all laws and policy instruments that were introduced to fight human trafficking are also applicable to addressing child migration.

From the point of view of local officials, lack of awareness and laxity in law enforcement are responsible for the growing trend of child migration in rural Shashemene (*Interview with Head of Faji Solee Kebele; Interview with Manager of Chibe Dide Ngnata Kebele*). The strategies that local authorities are employing to address child migration can be grouped into three, namely strict control and punishment, awareness creation and social pressure, and forced return of child migrants.

Strict control and punishment

Strict control and punishment constitute the mainstream approach adopted by local authorities to discourage and prevent child migration. The realization of this approach involves various actors that include kebele and district administration units, law enforcement agencies, local party structures, and informal political networks. In practice, this approach is executed through three strategies. Firstly, the administrative units, at both the district and kebele levels actively engage in tracking and preventing child migration. Their close monitoring of the local space targets to discourage rural households from resorting to child migration. Secondly, law enforcement agencies, including the police, kebele militia, and the district judiciary, take legal measures against brokers involved in facilitating child migration. The facilitation role of the brokers involves connecting households that send children and those that receive them as

well as arranging the transportation of child migrants. Therefore, the sanctions and penalties imposed against the brokers by law enforcement bodies intend to disrupt the networks that enable child migration. Thirdly, the local structures of the incumbent party and informal political networks such as the 'ollas' play key roles, in overseeing child migration practices. These structures work closely with the Kebele administration to discourage households' child migration-related decisions.

Awareness Creation and Social Pressure

Parallel to implementing control measures and punitive measures, local authorities employ awareness creation campaigns and social pressure as strategies to discourage child migration. These approaches aim to shape the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of the local community towards child migration. The Community Conversation Platform serves as a platform for conducting awareness creation campaigns that inform and educate communities about the risks and negative outcomes associated with child migration. Experts from district-level offices such as the Social and Labor Affairs office, and the Women and Children Affairs office participate in the monthly awareness creation programmes.

In addition, members of the district level taskforce and the kebele Community Conversation Committee members made up of local authorities and community leaders, also use public meetings as an opportunity to shape community opinion and attitudes towards child migration. Religious organizations and social institutions such as *edirs* (community-based associations) also collaborate with local authorities by exerting social pressure on the rural community.

Forced Return

Another approach that is widely employed by local authorities is the forced return of child migrants. This approach is viewed by local authorities as a mechanism that rescues children from difficult situations, and as an act that sends a clear message to parents and brokers who are involved in child migration practices. Local officials believe that such measures discourage all parties involved in the child migration process. In the case of rural-rural migration, the forced return of child migrants is preceded by a payment-related conflict between brokers and receiving households. Whereas the process of forced return of child migrants is often initiated by municipal administrations, NGOs, and law enforcement agencies. Therefore, though local officials view the forced return of child migrants as a manifestation of their success in tackling the phenomenon, the return process is in most cases triggered by external actors.

Conclusion

To sum up, this case study of rural Shashemene sheds light on how the practice of child migration is influenced by climate change-related hazards. It also explores local authorities' response to the phenomenon. The findings of the study indicate that drought and rainfall

irregularities are the major hazards that are disrupting the livelihood of households in rural Shashemene. Recurrent crop failure, decline in agricultural productivity, and shortage of food are identified as the main impacts of climate change hazards. The study also underlines that the existing adaptation schemes are incompatible with the needs of vulnerable households.

As regards, child migration the study reveals that the phenomenon of child migration in rural Shashemene is increasing. Most importantly, the trend shows a significant rise during the dry seasons. Though local authorities are proactively engaged in deterring the practice, vulnerable households are employing it as one of the coping mechanisms to the livelihood crisis that is exacerbated by the changing climatic conditions. The strategies employed by local authorities include strict control, punishment, awareness creation, social pressure, and forced return of child migrants. Nevertheless, these strategies are futile in discouraging child migration.

Therefore, efforts to tackle child migration in climate change-affected areas like rural Shashemene should consider the peculiarities of such contexts. This study underlines that the traditional coercive approach towards child migration needs to be reconsidered. Instead, child migration in the context of changing climate could be better addressed through inclusive and transformative adaptation schemes. Most importantly, these schemes should duly consider the needs and expectations of the most vulnerable segments of the rural community.

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Count Regression Modelling on Number of International Migrants in Household

Dr Tsedeke Lambore Gemecho

Tsedeke Lambore Gemecho (PhD) is currently working as an Assistant Professor of Statistics at the Department of Statistics, Wachemo University, Ethiopia. He is a seasoned migration researcher at Wachemo University, wherein he has been serving as a Research and Community Service Vice-President of Wachemo University. He has a PhD in migration studies and extensive research experience in conducting and managing large-scale interdisciplinary research projects. With background study in applied statistics, he is interested in the application of statistical modelling in international migration. Exemplar par excellence is his PhD thesis, “*Generalized Linear Mixed Modelling of Determinants of International Migration from the Southern Ethiopia: Small Area Estimation Approach*”. With extensive experience in teaching and advising postgraduate students for more than a decade now, he has reviewed several books and published articles on out-migration. He has excellent communication and interpersonal skills, experience in grant writing and fundraising, and the ability to work collaboratively with team members from diverse backgrounds.

Abstract

Migration is a response of human organisms to economic, social, political, and demographic forces in the environment and symptom of social change in society. The main objective of this study is to identify determinants of the number of international migrants per household within survey time and to compare count regression models for count response. A total of 2288 data were collected from sixteen randomly sampled districts in Hadiya and Kembata-Tembaro zonal areas, Southern Ethiopia. The Poisson mixed models, as special cases of the generalised linear mixed model being explored to determine the effects of the predictors: age of household head, farmland size, and household size. Two ethnicities Hadiya and Kembata are included in the final model as dummy variables. Stepwise variable selection has identified four predictors: age of head, farmland size, family size and dummy variable ethnic2 (0=Other, 1=Kembata). These predictors are significant at a 5% significance level with count response number of migrants per household within survey time. The Poisson mixed model consists of the four predictors with random effects districts. Area-specific random effects are significant with a variance of about 0.5105 and a standard deviation of 0.7145. The results show that the number of migrants increases with head age, family size, and farmland size. In conclusion, there is a significantly high number of international migrations per household in the area. The age of household head, family size, and farmland size are determinants

that increase the number of international migrants per household. Regular community-based awareness of labour migration policies of people migrating countries from the study area should be provided to better regulate and manage people's outlook on migrating abroad.

Keywords:

Number of Migrant, Youth Migration, Household Head, Poisson Regression

Introduction

Migration is inherently a spatial phenomenon. It involves a change in an individual's usual place of residence from one migration-defining area to another over a given time. Migration models are an attempt to explain the causes of personal, family, or aggregate interregional migration or the consequences of it (Michael J. Greenwood, 2005). Migration is the component of population change influenced by the wishes of the persons involved. It is a response of human organisms to economic, social, political and demographic forces in the environment and a symptom of social change in society (Michael J., 2005; Kainth, 2010; Kefale & Mohammed, 2016). It affects local politics, and social, economic, and ecological structures of both sending and receiving countries (Chi and Voss, 2005; Abraham et al., 2014).

Most statistical analysis is based on the assumption that error is normally distributed, but many datasets are based on discrete data (like the case number of international migrants per household within survey time as a response variable). The theory developed by Nelder, J.A. and Wedderburn, R.W.M., (1972) of generalized linear modelling, where the response variable can take a variety of different probability distributions linked in one of several possible ways to a linear predictor. One of the common statistical techniques in special cases of generalized linear models with Poisson regression model, which has a Poisson-distributed dependent variable linked logarithmically to a linear combination of predictor variables. Poisson regression is an appropriate method when the dependent variable is constrained to be a non-negative integer, a count of events in certain categories, and each acts independently.

The number of international migrants per household within survey time is taken as Poisson count regression response variable. Sometimes many migrants do not move independently they may be influenced by the experiences of households or relatives who have moved prior. Usually, migration is engaged by household groups which makes the Poisson regression assumption invalid (Flowerdew R, & Boyle P.J., 1995). We assumed that individual migrants behave independently of one another per household. Therefore, we described the Poisson regression model in which the household members are assumed to be migrating independently and the expected number of migrants per household is given by the generalized Poisson regression model.

The key objective of this study was to identify determinants of the number of international migrants per household and to compare several count regression models to select the best-fitting model by handling over-dispersion and an excess number of zero counts in the dataset. The well-assessed specific objectives are to identify the determinants of the number of international migrants per household; to compare several count regression models to select the best fitting model by handling over-dispersion and excess number of zero counts; and to explore mixed effects of the best fitting model for the response number of international migrant per household.

Data Description

The primary data was collected from the Hadiya and Kembata Tembaro zones which are highly vulnerable areas by international migration in Southern Ethiopia. The data was collected with the primary interest of investigating the determinants of international migration from study areas and fitting different types of generalized linear mixed models. At each randomly selected household level, the interview was carried out by well-trained enumerators with household heads. These primary data on international migration matters were collected from July 2016 to October 2016. This household sample survey was conducted from a total of 2381 sampled households. This number was distributed randomly for non-migrant households and migrant households based on the proportion of the population living in the sampled local districts.

Multi-stage sampling is used: at the first stage 16 local districts, at the second stage 71 Kebeles, followed by the selection of 89 enumeration areas in the third stage, and finally 2381 households are selected. The selections of a total of 2381 households are done by systematic random sampling technique from each enumeration area. In this dissertation, the final filtered data are obtained from 2288 households from 16 local districts by capturing 86 enumeration areas with a 4% non-response rate. Out of 2288 households, 65.6% were from the Hadiya zone whereas 34.4% were from the Kembata Tembaro zone. The proportion of households that have at least one international migrant who has ever migrated abroad elsewhere is 39.4% and 60.6% have no such migrants.

The paper on the logistic mixed modelling of determinants of international migration from southern Ethiopia: small area estimation approach was focused on the binary response variable international migration status ($y_{ij} = 1$ if there is at least one migrant in the household ever migrated abroad and if not the outcome value, $y_{ij} = 0$) of as reported by the household head (Gemecho T.L & Goshu A.T, 2017). In this paper, the number of international migrants per household was considered as the count response variable, which ranged from 0 to 7. The predictor variables such as Gender, Age, Marital, Educ, Reside, Job, Land size, Hsize, Ethnic1, and Ethnic2 were considered. Gender is a categorical predictor variable with two categories (0=female, 1=male) indicating the gender of the household head. Age is a categorical predictor variable with five categories (0=19-30, 1=31-39, 2=40-49, 3=50-59, 4= ≥ 60) indicating the age of the household head. Marital is a categorical predictor variable with three categories (0=single, 1=married, 2=Divorced/Widowed) indicating the marital status of the household head. Educ is

a categorical predictor variable with five categories (0=can't read/write, 1=can read/write, 2=primary school (1-8), 3=high school (9-12), 4=higher education) indicating the educational status of the household head. Reside is a categorical predictor variable with two categories (0=rural, 1=urban) indicating the residence area of the household. Job is a categorical predictor variable with six categories (0=government employee, 1=farmer, 2=merchant, 3=student, 4=housewife, 5=other) indicating the occupation of the household head. Landsize is a categorical predictor variable with four categories (0=0-1, 1=1.1-1.5, 2=1.51-2, 3= ≥ 2.1) indicating the farmland size in hectares of the household. Hsize is a discrete predictor variable indicating the family size of the household. Ethnic1 is a dummy variable (0=others, 1=Hadiya) indicating the ethnic group of the household head. Ethnic2 is a dummy variable (0=others, 1=Kembata) indicating the ethnic group of the household heads.

Statistical Model

Modelling count response variables is a common task in different study fields such as econometrics and social sciences. The parameter estimation techniques for the classical Poisson, geometric, and negative binomial regression models to the count response variable belonging to the family of generalized linear models are available in the R software of statistical computing. The classical Poisson regression model for count data is often limited in use because the empirical count data sets typically exhibit over-dispersion and/or an excess number of zero counts. Both hurdle and zero-inflated models can incorporate over-dispersion and an excess number of zero counts (McCullagh, P. & Nelder, J.A., 1989).

Hurdle models combine a left-truncated count component with a right-censored hurdle component. Zero-inflation models take a somewhat different approach: they are a mixture of models that combine a count component and a point mass at zero. An overview of count data models including hurdle and zero-inflated models which are well explained (Kleiber C, Zeileis A & Jackman S., 2008).

Generalized Linear Model

The count data regression models can be represented and understood using the GLM framework that emerged in the statistical literature in the early 1970s (Nelder, J.A. & Wedderburn, R.W.M., 1972). GLMs describe the dependence of a scalar variable y_i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, n$) on a vector of regressors x_i . The conditional distribution of $y_i|x_i$ is a linear exponential family with probability density function:

$$f(y; \lambda, \phi) = \exp \left(\frac{y \cdot \lambda - b(\lambda)}{a(\phi)} + c(y, \phi) \right) \quad (1)$$

where λ is the canonical parameter that depends on the regressors via a linear predictor and ϕ is a dispersion parameter that is often known. The functions $b(\cdot)$ and $c(\cdot)$ are known and determine which member of the family is used. Conditional mean and variance of y_i are given by $E[y_i|x_i] = \mu_i = b'(\lambda_i)$ and $\text{Var}[y_i|x_i] = \phi b''(\lambda_i)$. Thus, up to a scale or dispersion parameter ϕ , the distribution of y_i is determined by its mean. Its variance is proportional to $\text{var}(\mu) = b''(\lambda(\mu))$ and this is the variance function. The dependence of the conditional mean $E[y_i|x_i] = \mu_i$ on the regressors x_i is specified via $g(\mu_i) = x_i^T \beta$, where $g(\cdot)$ is a known link function and β is the vector of regression coefficients which are typically estimated by maximum likelihood (ML) using the iterative re-weighted least squares (IRLS) algorithm. Instead of viewing GLMs as models for the full likelihood, they can also be regarded as regression models for the mean only where the estimating functions used for fitting the model are derived from a particular family. R provides a very flexible implementation of the general GLM framework in the function `glm(.)` contained in the *stats* package.

Poisson Regression Model

The simplest distribution used for modelling count data is the Poisson distribution with probability density function:

$$f(y; \lambda) = \frac{\exp(-\lambda) \cdot \lambda^y}{y!} \quad (2)$$

The equation (1) is Poisson distribution and thus, Poisson regression is a special case of the GLM framework. The canonical link is $g(\lambda_i) = \log(\lambda)$ resulting in a log-linear relationship between the mean and linear predictor. The variance in the Poisson model is identical to the mean, thus the dispersion is fixed at $\phi = 1$ and the variance function is $\text{Var}(\lambda) = \lambda$. Quasi-Poisson is another way of dealing with over-dispersion is to use the mean regression function and the variance function from the Poisson GLM but to leave the dispersion parameter ϕ unrestricted. Thus, ϕ is not assumed to be fixed at 1 but is estimated from the data. This strategy leads to the same coefficient estimates as the standard Poisson model, but the inference is adjusted for over-dispersion (Cameron A.C, & Trivedi, P.K., 2005).

Negative Binomial Models

Another way of modelling over-dispersed count data is to assume a negative binomial (NB) distribution for $y_i|x_i$ which can arise as a gamma mixture of Poisson distributions. One parameterization of its probability density function is:

$$f(y; \lambda, \theta) = \frac{\Gamma(y + \theta)}{\Gamma(\theta) \cdot y!} \cdot \frac{\lambda^y \cdot \theta^\theta}{(\lambda + \theta)^{y+\theta}}, \quad (3)$$

with mean λ and shape parameter θ ; $\Gamma(\cdot)$ is the gamma function. For every fixed θ , this is of equation (1) type and thus is another special case of the GLM framework. It also has $\phi = 1$ but with variance function $\text{Var}(\lambda) = \lambda + \frac{\lambda^2}{\theta}$.

Hurdle Models

In addition to over-dispersion many empirical count data sets exhibit more zero observations than would be allowed for by the Poisson model. One model class capable of capturing both properties is the hurdle model (Cameron AC, Trivedi, P.K., 2005). They are two-component models: A truncated count component, such as Poisson, geometric or negative binomial is employed for positive counts, and a hurdle component models excess zero vs. larger counts. For the latter, either a binomial model or a censored count distribution can be employed. More formally the hurdle model combines a count data model $f_{\text{count}}(y; x, \beta)$ (that is left truncated at $y = 1$) and a zero hurdle model $f_{\text{zero}}(y; z, \gamma)$ (right-censored at $y=1$):

$$f_{\text{hurdle}}(y; x, z, \beta, \gamma) = \begin{cases} f_{\text{zero}}(0; z, \gamma) & \text{if } y = 0, \\ (1 - f_{\text{zero}}(0; z, \gamma)) \cdot \frac{f_{\text{count}}(y; x, \beta)}{1 - f_{\text{count}}(0; x, \beta)} & \text{if } y > 0 \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

The model parameters β , γ and potentially one or two additional dispersion parameters θ (if f_{count} or f_{zero} or both are negative binomial densities), which are estimated by ML, where the specification of the likelihood has the advantage that the count and the hurdle component can be maximized separately. The corresponding mean regression relationship using the canonical log link is given by:

$$\log(\lambda_i) = x_i^T \beta + \log(1 - f_{\text{zero}}(0; z, \gamma)) - \log(1 - f_{\text{count}}(0; x_i, \beta)), \quad (5)$$

For interpreting the zero models as a hurdle, a binomial GLM is probably the most intuitive specification. Another useful interpretation arises if the same regressors $x_i = z_i$ are used in the same count model in both components $f_{\text{count}} = f_{\text{zero}}$: A test of the hypothesis $\beta = \gamma$ then tests whether the hurdle is needed or not.

Zero-inflated Models

Zero-inflated models are another regression model class capable of dealing with excess zero counts (Cameron A.C., & Trivedi, P.K., 2005). They are two-component mixture models combining a point mass at zero with a count distribution such as Poisson, geometric or negative binomial. Thus, there are two sources of zeros: zeros may come from both the point mass and from the count component. For modelling the unobserved state (zero vs. count), a binary model is used in the simplest case only with an intercept but potentially containing regressors.

Formally, the zero-inflated density is a mixture of a point mass at zero $I_{\{0\}}(y)$ and a count distribution $f_{\text{count}}(y; x, \beta)$. The probability of observing a zero count is inflated with probability $\pi = f_{\text{zero}}(0; z, \gamma)$:

$$f_{\text{zerinfl}}(y; x, z, \beta, \gamma) = f_{\text{zero}}(0; z, \gamma) \cdot I_{\{0\}}(y) + (1 - f_{\text{zero}}(0; z, \gamma)) \cdot f_{\text{count}}(y; x, \beta), \quad (6)$$

where, $I(\cdot)$ is the indicator function and the unobserved probability π of belonging to the point mass component is modelled by a binomial GLM $\pi = g^{-1}(z^T \gamma)$. The corresponding regression equation for the mean is $\lambda_i = \pi_i \cdot 0 + (1 - \pi_i) \cdot \exp(x_i^T \beta)$, using the canonical log link. The vector of regressors in the zero-inflation model z_i and the regressors in the count component x_i need not to be distinct—in the simplest case, $z_i = 1$ is just an intercept. The default link function $g(\pi)$ in binomial GLMs is the logit link, but other links such as the probit are also available. The full set of parameters of β , γ , and potentially the dispersion parameter θ (if a negative binomial count model is used) can be estimated by ML. Inference is typically performed for β and γ , while θ is treated as a nuisance parameter even if a negative binomial model is used.

Poisson Regression Mixed Model

Let y_{ij} be the count for level-one unit i in level-two-unit j , and λ_{ij} be the expected count given that level-one unit i is in level-two unit j and given the values of the explanatory variables. The natural logarithm is mostly used as the link function for expected counts. For single-level data, this leads to the Poisson regression model for the natural logarithm of the counts, $\log(\lambda_{ij})$. For multi-level data, mixed Poisson models are considered for the logarithm of λ_{ij} . Consider a two-level Poisson model by assuming the level-one units i are nested within level-two units j . Using the logarithmic transformation, the level-one model with P explanatory variables $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_P$ may be written as: $y_{ij} \sim \text{Poisson}(\lambda_{ij})$

$$\log(\lambda_{ij}) = \log(t_{ij}) + \beta_{0j} + \sum_{p=1}^P \beta_{pj} x_{pij}, \quad (7)$$

Where, β_{0j} is an intercept parameter and β_{pj} , $p = 1 \dots P$, are the regression coefficients associated with the explanatory variables x_{pij} . The optional term $\log(t_{ij})$ is included in the model as an offset. In our case we excluded $\log(t_{ij})$ as t_{ij} was not proportional to the expected count (Berridge, D.M., and Crouchley, R., 2011; Hilbe, Joseph M., 2011). The level-two Poisson model has the same form as the level-two model in the linear, binary and ordinal response models. Consider, for example, the random intercept model which is formulated as a standard Poisson model plus a random intercept for the logarithm of the expected count.

We have the random intercepts: $\beta_{pj} = \gamma_{p0}$,

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \sum_{q=1}^Q \gamma_{0q} z_{qj} + u_{0j}, \quad (8)$$

So that

$$\log(\lambda_{ij}) = \log(t_{ij}) + \gamma_{00} + \sum_{p=1}^P \gamma_{p0} x_{pij} + \sum_{q=1}^Q \gamma_{0q} z_{qj} + u_{0j}, \quad (9)$$

The variance of the random intercepts is denoted by σ_{v0}^2 . To transform the linear model back to the expected counts, the inverse transformation of the natural logarithm must be used. Therefore, the explanatory variables and the level-two random effects in the mixed Poisson regression model have multiplicative effects on the expected counts (Berridge, D.M., & Crouchley, R., 2011; Hilbe, Joseph M., 2011; Cameron, A.C. & Trivedi, P.K., 2005).

Parameter Estimation

Typical regression models often use ordinary least squares to estimate the parameters. For the count data, the regression model uses maximum likelihood (ML) to estimate the parameters. ML seeks to find values for the regression coefficients that have the highest probability of producing the observed data. ML usually requires an iterative set of procedures to find the parameter estimates, which can be problematic with models that use many predictor variables. If the ML estimation procedure converges, it means it found a unique set of values for each parameter, the combination of which returned the highest likelihood value of all parameter values examined. Thus, it will return parameter estimates, standard errors, and the maximum likelihood value. This likelihood value is used to compare the fit of competing models (Cameron, A.C. & Trivedi, P.K., 2005). As stated in Berridge, D.M., and Crouchley, R., (2011) the parameter estimation for the mixed Poisson regression model is using standard Gaussian quadrature or adaptive Gaussian quadrature (numerical integration). There is no analytic solution for this integral with normally distributed u_{0j} .

Statistical Computations and Implementation Procedures

Our data was recorded in the IBM SPSS Statistics 20 version. Statistical computing software R 3.4.3 version was used to estimate the count regression model coefficients. The data recoded in the SPSS file was imported into R by loading the package *foreign* in the library of R. There are numerous options for fitting GLM models using computing R. The function *glm()* was used to estimate the regression coefficients after loading the R package *lme4* in the library of R. The function *glm* provides the basic functionality necessary for fitting GLM models. The R package *lme4* is used to estimate regression coefficients and to explore the necessary results.

Main Findings

The focus of this study was to identify the determinant that increasing the number of international migrants per household and to compare several count regression models to fit the data using the best-selected model. The dataset contains 2288 household heads' interviews with international migration-related characteristics. The missing values in the dataset were excluded and the final data was analysed with 2279 household heads information.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics Results

The descriptive statistics analysis was employed using the data recorded in the IBM SPSS statistics 20 version. We used several newly built packages of statistical computing R 3.4.3 version. The number of international migrants per household within the survey was considered as a count response variable. We noted that the number of international migrants per household ranged from 0 to 7 and most households reported having no international migrant (with zero values). The value zero indicates there were no international migrants who migrated abroad from selected households. The assigned value of 1386 households has zero migrants, which indicates that there is an excess number of zeros in the values of the count response variable. The mean of 0.54 and variance of 0.64 are reported for the response to the number of international migrants per household within the dataset.

Table 1. Proportion of Number of International Migrant per Household

Number of migrants	Frequency	Percent
0	1386	60.58%
1	653	28.540%
2	183	7.998%
3	53	2.316%
4	9	0.393%
5	2	0.087%
6	1	0.044%
7	1	0.044%

Out of 2288 interviewed households 60.58% have no international migrant and the rest 39.42% of households have at least one migrant who ever migrated abroad. Therefore, in the study area, the prevalence of international migrant households was 39.42%.

Variable Selection Techniques

The main problem in any model-building situation is choosing variables from a large set of variables that should be included in the “best” fitting model. A decision to keep a variable in the model might be based on the statistical significance. In the Poisson regression model, the process of model building is quite similar to the one applicable in linear regression. The main aim of model building is to select as less predictor variables as possible, but the model still reflects the true outcomes of the data. Several variable selection methods are available in statistical computing software R 3.4.3 version. The commonly used methods are forward for forward selection, backward for backward elimination, and stepwise selection. In this study, the stepwise selection was considered as the better technique of variable selections.

Different Poisson regression model analyses are made to compare the models including predictor variables with that of the null model, which is without any predictor variables. The predictor variables: gender, age, marital status, education level, residence, occupation of household heads, farmland size, and household size were included in the full model. Stepwise variable selection in statistical computing software R 3.4.3 version has identified four predictors: *age of head*, *educational level of the head*, *farmland size*, and *household size*. These predictor variables are statistically significant at a 5% level of significance. Finally, these predictor variables were identified by stepwise variable selection and with two additional dummy variables: *ethnic Hadiya* and *ethnic Kembata*, which are included in the final model without variable selection techniques. The final model with 6 predictor variables is compared with the null model to check whether it is a good fit for the data or not.

Assessing the Model Fit

We can carry out hypothesis testing in maximum likelihood estimation techniques by using one of the two procedures, the likelihood ratio test and the Wald test. The likelihood ratio test is a chi-square test that makes use of maximized likelihood values and is computed by taking the difference between the log-likelihood statistics of both models. The log-likelihoods of the final and null models are 4529.4 and 4275 respectively. Thus, the likelihood ratio test indicates that the final model is a good fit than the null model. The chi-square statistic of 254.4 with the p-value $< 2.2e-16$ shows that the model was found to be significant at a 5% significance level.

The Wald test is a Z test; that is, the test statistic is approximately standard normal. The Wald test makes use of the standard errors listed with each variable. The Wald test statistic is

computed by dividing the estimated coefficient of interest by its standard error. The square of this Z statistic is approximately a chi-square statistic with one degree of freedom. The Wald test yields an approximate chi-square statistic of 28.975 with a p-value < 2.2e-16 was found to be significant at a 5% significance level. Thus, the Wald test indicates that at least one regression coefficient of predictor variables was different from zero.

We can use the residual deviance to perform a goodness of fit test for the overall model. The residual deviance is the difference between the deviance of the current model and the maximum deviance of the ideal model where the predicted values are identical to the observed. Therefore, if the residual difference is small enough which is less than 0.05; the goodness of fit test will not be significant, indicating that the model fits the data. We conclude that the model fits reasonably well because the goodness-of-fit chi-squared test with residual deviance 295.261 at 2272 DF was not statistically significant at a 5% significance level. This is why the P-value of 0.3617 is greater than a 5% significance level, which indicates that the model is a good fit for the data (see Table 2).

Table 2. Residual Deviance Tests of the Poisson Regression Model with Predictors

Test		χ^2	Df	P-value	
Overall model evaluation					
Likelihood ratio test		206.77	9	0.000	
Wald test		28.975	9	0.000	
Goodness-of-fit test					
Chi-square Test		295.261	2272	0.3617	
Analysis of Deviance Table					
Model	Residual df	Residual Deviance	Df	Deviance	Pr(>Chi)
Null Model	2278	2542.2			
Final Model	2272	2295.3	9	254.48	<2.2e-16 *

Analysis of the deviance table shows the deviance of the final Poisson regression model is less than the null model and p-value is less than a 5% significance level, which indicates that the final models are a good fit for the data. The predictor variables: age of household head, farmland size, household size and dummy variables (ethnic Kembata) in the final Poisson regression model was found to be statistically significant at a 5% significance level. Therefore, the overall fit of the final Poisson regression model with predictor variables: age household head, household size, farmland size, and ethnic 2 (1=Kembata, 0=others) were a better fit to the data.

Model Diagnostics

An important part of all regression analyses is to examine residual diagnostics, influential data points, and nonlinearity in the predictor variables. The common tools used to assess the model diagnostics of the count regressions, including standardized residuals, influence diagnostics (for instance, Cook's D), and predictor nonlinearity are explored. We also graphically examined the residuals distribution and their relation to the predicted values. We used deviance residuals for all the models excluding zero-inflated.

Assessing Outliers and Influence Points

The adequacy of the fitted model is checked for possible presence and treatment of outliers and influential observations. Cook's D is an index that reflects the amount of influence each case has on the model parameter estimates. A common criterion used for identifying cases that could be influential is whether an observation Cook's D value is greater than $4/n$. In addition, to assist with the identification of influential cases we plotted the Cook's D values for each observation and inserted a horizontal line at $y = 4/n$. Cook's D estimates in Figure 1 shown at y-axis are less than unity, indicating that observation had no overall impact on the estimated vector of regression coefficients.

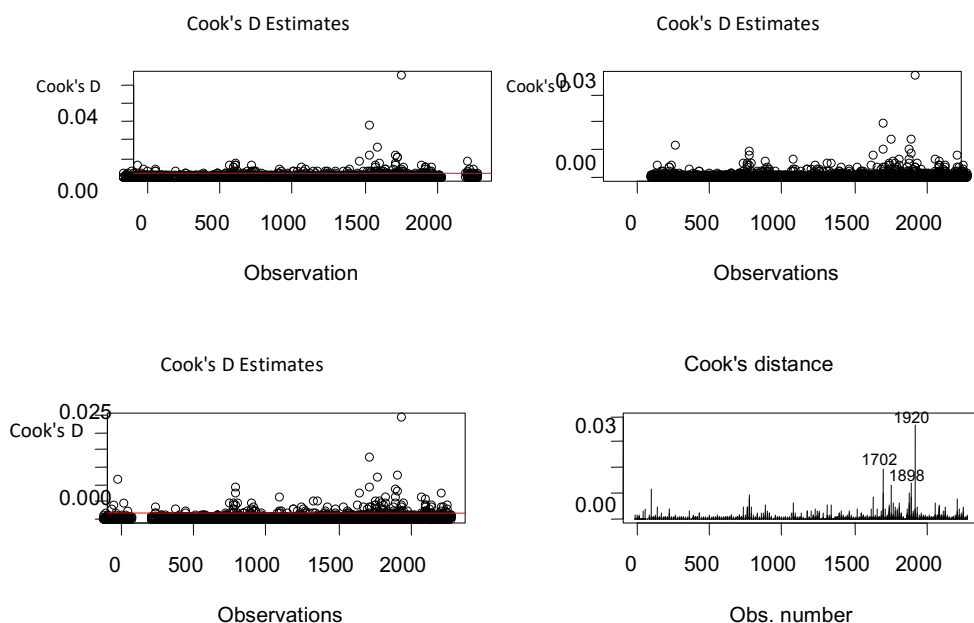


Figure 1. Cook's distance

Outliers are data value that lies a long way from the majority of the other data values. It is sample observations whose response y -values lie a long way from the predicted $\hat{y}$ -value from

the model. The analysis of influence points in Figure 2 at the y-axis shows that Studentized residuals, which are in the range less than -2 or greater than +3 show that there are probably no outliers in the dataset, and we can go on to the evaluation and interpretation of the model estimate.

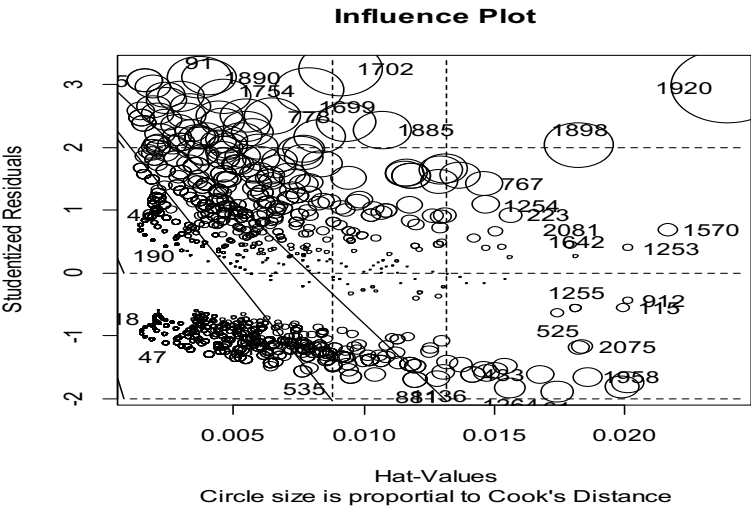


Figure 2. Influence Points

Comparison of Count Regression Models

Count regression model analysis computations were conducted using the statistical computing software R 3.4.3 version. The R package lme4 was used. The presence of over-dispersion in the dataset was checked. The mean and variance for the response variable the number of international migrants per household is nearly equal. The result of the dispersion parameter (ϕ) in equation (1) is equal to 1. Due to the absence of over-dispersion in the dataset, the Poisson regression model was fitted well. As a result, further analysis of the quasi-Poisson and negative binomial regression models to check overdispersion is not necessary. 1386 households have no international migrant in their homes. This indicates the household with no international migrants whoever migrated abroad is given a value of 0. Therefore, out of 2288 interviewed households 1386 households have no migrant in their home. We have to check the occurrence of over-dispersion due to the excess number of zeros in the response variable. Therefore, the regression models for count response such as ZIP, ZINB and hurdle models typically used to handle an excess number of zeros in the response are explored. Both zero-inflated Poisson (ZIP) and zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) regression models which were used to model the excessive number of zeros in the outcome variable were utilized. The hurdle model in addition to handling over-dispersion which accounts for excess zero counts in the count response variable was analysed.

An important aspect of count regression models is used to determine how well the model fits the data either by comparing the actual values with the model predicted values or by comparing a model to competing with models. A commonly used measure from the information-theoretic tradition is Akaike's information criterion (AIC). AIC balances the model's goodness-of-fit to the data and a penalty for model complexity. The general method for using AIC is to choose the model that has the smallest AIC value. Another model-fit measure that penalizes complexity models is the Bayesian information criterion (BIC). The general method for using the BIC is to choose the model that has the smallest BIC value. With small sample sizes, the BIC tends to be overly conservative (that is, prefers models with too few variables), but when the sample size is large it tends to select the correct model if a set of competing models includes the true model. In Table 3, the summary of fitted count regression models results for coefficient estimates from the Poisson regression model, zero-inflation models (both with standard errors in brackets), maximized log-likelihood, AIC and BIC are displayed.

Table 3. Comparison of Count Regression Models

Estimated Parameters	Poisson /Count/	ZIP Count	Logistic	ZINB Count	Logistic	NB-Hurdle Count	Zero hurdle
β_0 (intercept)	-1.719 (0.137)	-1.750 (0.167)	-0.106 (0.013)	-1.750 (0.153)	-9.434 (139.9)	-2.286 (0.389)	-1.578 (0.185)
β_{12} (AgeHHs, 31-39)	-0.005 (0.140)	-0.008 (0.141)	-9.427 (0.009)	-0.015 (0.142)	-1.890 (217.6)	0.006 (0.379)	0.0012 (0.180)
β_{13} (AgeHHs, 40-49)	0.353 (0.127)	0.467 (0.160)	8.088 (0.013)	0.517 (0.149)	7.273 (139.9)	0.637 (0.334)	0.354 (0.167)
β_{14} (AgeHHs, 50-59)	0.631 (0.133)	0.800 (0.148)	8.506 (0.013)	0.789 (0.153)	7.209 (139.9)	0.876 (0.339)	0.716 (0.183)
β_{15} (AgeHHs, >60)	1.034 (0.135)	1.033 (0.138)	0.128 (0.772)	1.012 (0.139)	-3.406 (194.7)	1.041 (0.341)	1.491 (0.204)
β_{21} (Hsize)	0.100 (0.012)	0.101 (0.022)	-0.040 (0.283)	0.100 (0.018)	-0.008 (0.153)	0.132 (0.025)	0.115 (0.020)
β_{32} (Landsize1.1-1.5)	0.188 (0.091)	0.303 (0.113)	1.340 (1.169)	0.306 (0.110)	1.133 (0.663)	0.431 (0.171)	0.115 (0.144)
β_{33} (Landsize1.51-2)	0.158 (0.078)	0.143 (0.098)	-0.493 (2.002)	0.145 (0.096)	-0.278 (1.084)	0.238 (0.147)	0.143 (0.127)
β_{34} (Landsize>=2.1)	0.149 (0.098)	0.307 (0.158)	1.435 (1.638)	0.266 (0.146)	1.000 (0.913)	0.376 (0.175)	0.055 (0.164)
β_{42} (Ethnic2Kembata)	-0.166 (0.063)	-0.167 (0.065)	1.241 (0.581)	-0.098 (0.090)	0.758 (0.590)	-0.079 (0.123)	-0.282 (0.099)
Model Comparison Techniques							
-2*log likelihood	4274.963	4260.905		4259.538		4256.829	
Model df	10	19		21		21	
$\sum_i \hat{f}_i(0)$ (Obs=1383)	1371	1393		1397		1383	
AIC	4294.963	4298.905		4301.538		4298.829	
BIC	4352.291	4407.828		4421.927		4419.218	

The $-2 \times \log\text{-likelihood}$ values of Poisson regression, ZIP, ZINB and hurdle models are given almost identical fits. This reveals the absence of over-dispersion in the dataset. However, the log-likelihood value of the hurdle model is slightly smaller than by other models. This reflects that the excess number of zeros in the data is captured better by the hurdle model than other models. Additionally, it is of interest how the zero counts are captured by the various models. Therefore, the observed zero counts of 1383 are compared to the expected number of zero counts for the likelihood-based models. In this regard, the expected number of zero counts in the NB-hurdle model matches the observed number. In brief, the hurdle zero-inflated model leads to the best results (in terms of likelihood) on this data set. The AIC, BIC and standard errors of regression coefficient values for the Poisson model are smaller than ZIP, ZINB and NB-hurdle models for count components, indicating that the Poisson model fits the data somewhat better than the zero-inflated models.

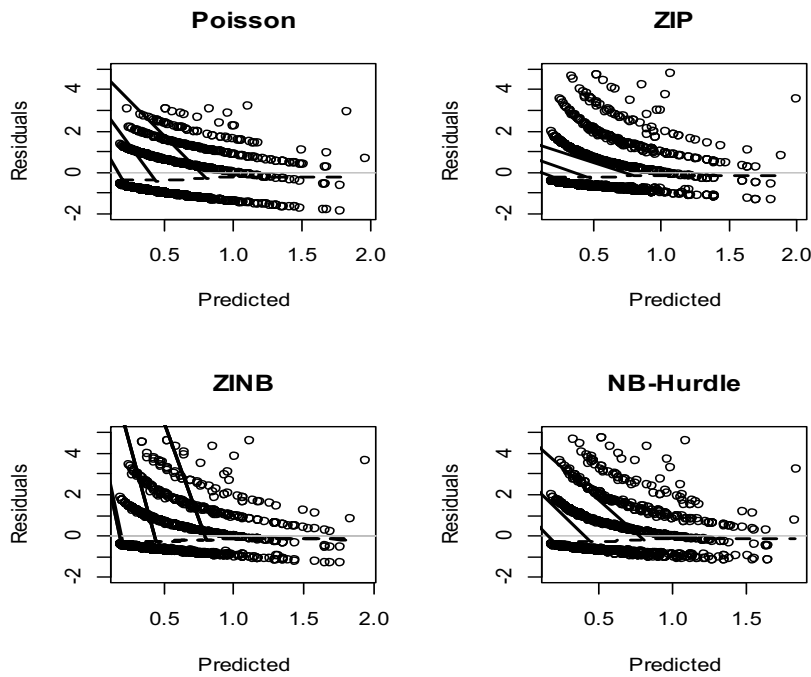


Figure 3. Predicted Values vs Residual Plots

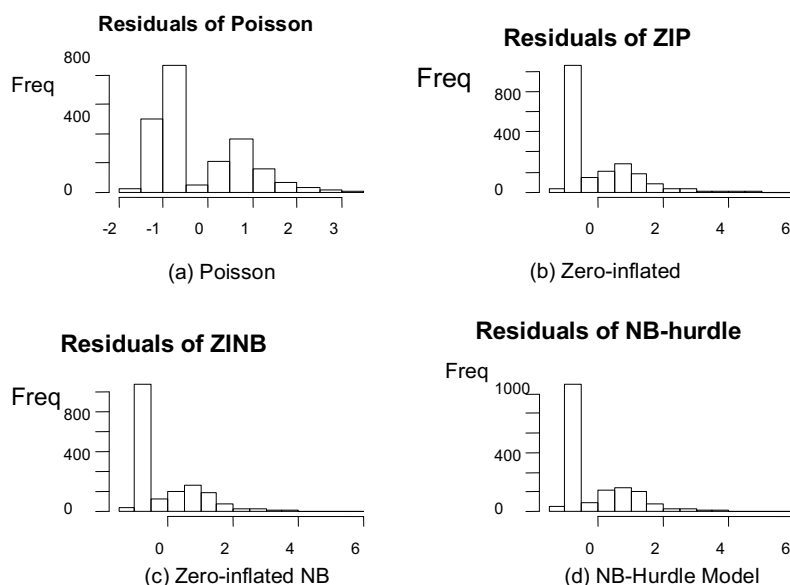


Figure 4. Histogram of Residual Distributions

A plot in Figure 3 is useful to examine and to compare the residuals to the predicted values. There should be no relationship between these two values, so the LOWESS line should be horizontal and close to zero (see Figure 3). The typical regression shows a slight pattern in the results as the LOWESS line is slanted downward. The other models all have horizontal LOWESS lines, with the ZIP, ZINB and NB-hurdle models having the lowest range of residual values.

Poisson Regression Model Analysis

As we observed in model comparison the Poisson regression model was found to be the best fit to the data. Therefore, the final analysis was done using this model. The number of international migrants per household was taken as a count response variable. This follows a Poisson distribution depending on the predictor variables and the Poisson regression model was well fitted. The Poisson regression model is given as:

$$\log(\lambda_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1i} + \beta_2 x_{2i} + \cdots + \beta_k x_{ki} \dots \dots \dots (7)$$

Where the Poisson parameter λ_i depend on the predictors of each household. Thus, the mean and variance of Poisson regression depends on the predictors. In equation (7), $\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1i} + \beta_2 x_{2i} + \cdots + \beta_k x_{ki}$ is the linear predictor and $\log(\lambda_i)$ is a log-linear relationship between mean and linear predictor. We computed the sample mean and variance of the dependent count response variable to check whether the mean and variance were equal or not. The average of the fitted mean is equal to the sample mean and it can be computed using statistical computing software R 3.4.3.

The computed sample mean and variance of the number of international migrants per household were 0.55 and 0.64 respectively. When these results are rounded into one digit place, it is approximately equal. A major assumption of the Poisson regression model of equal mean and variance is not violated, thus the dispersion parameter is fixed at $\phi=1$. Specifically, the conditional variance functions $\text{Var}[y_i|x_i] = \lambda_i$. In equation (1), the parameter ϕ is a dispersion parameter that is often known. Moreover, the dispersion parameter from the Poisson regression model analysis with four predictors was estimated, which is equal to 1. This confirms that there is no over-dispersion in the dataset. As a result, we also confirm that the mean and variance of the Poisson regression model is equal. Also, the value of the residual deviance statistic of 2295.44 at 2272 DF with p-value 0.3618 and the residual deviance divided by degree of freedom provided that the dispersion parameter value of 1.01, which is not much bigger than 1. Thus, the Poisson regression model does fit well the data and there is no over-dispersion in the dataset. We can't use the quasi-Poisson model to adjust for over-dispersion. The dispersion parameter for the quasi-Poisson model taken is 1.04, which is nearly equal to 1; this confirms no over-dispersion is present in the dataset. Therefore, dealing with the Poisson regression model analysis is adequate. The Poisson regression model coefficients for each of the predictor variables along with standard errors, z-values, p-values, $\exp(\beta)$ and 95% confidence intervals for the coefficients are given below (see Table 4). The regression coefficient interpretations for only statistically significant categories were done.

Table 4. Poisson Regression Model Analysis Results

Parameter	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	e^β	[95% CI]
β_0 (intercept)	-1.7191	0.137	-12.536	< 2e-16 *	0.179	[0.137, 0.235]
β_{11} (AgeHHs, 19-30) Ref						
β_{12} (AgeHHs, 31-39)	-0.0050	0.140	-0.036	0.97134	0.995	[0.756, 1.309]
β_{13} (AgeHHs, 40-49)	0.3533	0.127	2.782	0.00541 *	1.424	[1.110, 1.826]
β_{14} (AgeHHs, 50-59)	0.6312	0.133	4.750	2.03e-06 *	1.880	[1.449, 2.439]
β_{15} (AgeHHs, >60)	1.0344	0.135	7.649	2.02e-14 *	2.813	[2.158, 3.667]
β_{21} (Hsize)	0.1002	0.013	8.140	3.94e-16 *	1.105	[1.079, 1.132]
β_{31} (Landsize0-1) Ref						
β_{32} (Landsize1.1-1.5)	0.1884	0.0905	2.081	0.03740 *	1.207	[1.011, 1.442]
β_{33} (Landsize1.51-2)	0.1582	0.0975	2.037	0.04166 *	1.172	[1.006, 1.364]
β_{34} (Landsize>=2.1)	0.1486	0.0777	1.524	0.12746	1.160	[0.958, 1.405]
β_{41} (Ethnic2Others) Ref						
β_{42} (Ethnic2Kembata)	-0.1656	0.0629	-2.631	0.00851 *	0.847	[0.749, 0.959]

Age is a categorical predictor variable with five categories indicating the age of household heads. The last three categories of age of household head are statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval with the response number of international migrants per household. The effect of age is positive in the last three significant categories. The age category 40-49 is the expected difference in log count between category 3 and the reference category 19-30. Compared to category 1 of age, the expected log count for category 3 increases by 0.3533. The indicator variable AgeHHs, 50-59 is the expected difference in log count between category 4 and the reference category 1 (AgeHHs, 19-30). Compared to category 1 of age, the expected log count for category 4 increases by 0.6312. The indicator variable AgeHHs,>60 is the expected difference in log count between age category 5 and the reference age category (AgeHHs, 19-30). Compared to category 1 of age, the expected log count for category 5 increases by about 0.6312.

The predictor Hsize is the household size, which is a discrete variable. For the coefficient of Hsize, $\exp(\beta_{21} \text{Hsize}) = \exp(0.1002) = 1.105$ is the multiplicative effect on the estimated mean number of international migrants for a person increase per household. Therefore, a one-person increase in household size yields a 10.5% increase in the estimated mean number of international migrants per household.

Ethnic2 is a categorical predictor variable with two groups such as the reference ethnic group of others and Kembata ethnic groups. The indicator variable is shown as Ethnic2Kembata is the expected difference in log count between Kembata ethnic and the reference ethnic group of others. The expected log count for Kembata ethnic of Ethnic2 is 0.1656 lower than the expected log count for other ethnic groups in the two Zones.

The predictor variable **Landsize** is the farmland size of the household. It is a categorical predictor variable with four categories: 0-1, 1.1-1.5, 1.51-2 and ≥ 2.1 in hectares. Of these categories, landsize1.1-1.5 and Landsize1.51-2 are found to be statistically significant at a 5% significance level with the count response variable number of international migrants per household within survey time. Now the parameter interpretation is made only for two significant categories. The effect of **Landsize** is positive in the two significant categories. The **Landsize** category 1.1-1.5 is the expected difference in log count between category 2 and the reference category 0-1. Compared to Category 1 of Landsize, the expected log count for Category 2 increases by 0.1884. The indicator variable Landsize category 1.51-2 is the expected difference in log count between Category 3 and the reference category 1 (Landsize0-1). Compared to Category 1 of **Landsize**, the expected log count for Category 3 increases by 0.1582.

Poisson Regression Mixed Model Analysis

The results for the level-2 random effect variance term follow next to the standard Poisson regression model analysis. The two-level extension which allows for district effects is given by $\log(\lambda_{ij}) = \beta_0 + v_{0j} + e_{ij}$, where β_0 is the overall mean of response (across all districts) and $v_{0j} \sim N(0, \sigma_{v_0}^2)$. The null model with district-level random effects is analysed. The log (λ_{ij}) of the number of international migrants per household as an ‘average’ at the district level is estimated as $\hat{\beta}_0 = -0.860$. This indicates that the overall estimated mean of the number of migrants (across districts) is -0.860 considering all explanatory variables as zero. The mean for district j is estimated as $-0.860 + v_{0j}$, where the variance of v_{0j} is estimated as $\sigma_{v_0}^2 = 0.5105$. This is the estimated variation in the average estimates of the number of international migrants at the district level. The number of international migrants per household is analysed using the Poisson mixed regression model to observe the average variation of the number of migrants at the district level. The Poisson mixed regression model coefficients for each of the predictor variables categories along with standard errors, z-values, and p-values for the regression coefficients are given below (see Table 5). The regression coefficient interpretations for all statistically significant predictors are made.

Table 5. Poisson Mixed Model Analysis Results

Parameter	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
Fixed effects:				
Intercept	-1.8359	0.2324	-7.899	2.82e-15 *
Age 19-30 Ref				
Age 31-39	-0.06126	0.14043	-0.436	0.66266
Age 40-49	0.22081	0.12754	1.731	0.08339 *+
Age 50-59	0.45361	0.13570	3.343	0.00083*
Age ≥ 60	0.78033	0.13712	5.691	1.27e-08*
Farm Land size				
Landsize 1.1-1.5	0.05863	0.08177	0.617	0.53696
Landsize 1.51-2	0.09663	0.09966	1.182	0.23727
Landsize ≥ 2.1	0.20181	0.09966	2.025	0.04286 *
Family size (Hsize)	0.08877	0.02285	7.100	1.25e-12*
Ethnic2 Kembata	0.14677	0.17237	0.851	0.39450
Random effects:				
District level $\sigma_{v_0}^2$	Variance	Std. Dev.		
	0.4587	0.6773		

*significant at 5% significance level, *+significant at 10% significance level

The predictor variables: age of household head, farmland size, and family size are found to be statistically significant at a 5% level of significance. These predictor variables are the key determinants in increasing the number of international migrants per household. The last three categories of age of household head are statistically significant at a 5% significance level with the count response. The effect of age is positive in these last three categories. The result shows the expected difference in the log count among these last three categories and the reference category 19-30 is increased. The result regarding the predictor variable family size illustrates as a family size increase by a person, the estimated mean number of international migrants per household increases. The estimated variation with predictor variables in the average estimated number of international migrants at the district level is 0.4587, which is highly significant.

Conclusions

The main objective of this study is to identify the determinants of the number of international migrants per household and to compare different count regression models. The key predictor variables in increasing the number of international migrants per household are the age of head, farmland size, and family size which are found to be statistically significant at a 5% significance level. The number of migrants per household increases with the age of household head increase. Means the older household heads sent more migrants abroad. The number of migrants also increases with family size increases.

In terms of log-likelihood, the hurdle zero-inflated model leads to the best results on this data set. The AIC, BIC and standard errors of regression coefficient values suggested that Poisson model are smaller than ZIP, ZINB and NB-hurdle models for count components which indicates that the Poisson regression model fits the data somewhat better than the zero inflation models. Both Poisson fixed and random effects model results show that the predictor variables age of head, farmland size, and family size are found to be statistically significant at 5% level of significances, these are key factors that increasing the number of migrants per households. The estimated variation with predictor variables in the average estimated number of migrants at district level is 0.4587, which is highly significant.

Future Perspectives

In the study area the event international migration was begun at early 2000s. One of the importance of this study was application of generalized count regression model on migration issues that will contribute for development of statistical method by declaring its estimating power in social sciences. Because of the absence of exact number of international migrants at districts, and enumeration areas the true population proportion of migrants were not found. If any researcher could have access of reliable data on number of international migrants at districts and enumeration areas, then, this study will be base for further studies in the areas. We recommend that the regular community-based awareness on labour migration policies of peoples' migrating countries from the study area should be provided in order to better regulate and manage people outlook on migrating abroad.

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The Socio-economic Reasons for Child Trafficking in the Border Area of Ethiopia and Sudan (Metema), Northwestern, Ethiopia

Dr Getu Ambaye Teshale

Dr Getu Ambaye is a lecturer at the University of Gondar at the Department of Social Work and a visiting professor at Bahir Dar University. Dr Getu holds a PhD in Social Work and Social Development from Addis Ababa University. He has published articles in peer-reviewed journals. His research interests revolve around child migration, child trafficking, urban displacement, and development-induced displacement, among others. He has furthermore conducted extensive qualitative fieldwork research at Metema, the border-crossing point between Ethiopia and Sudan.

Abstract

This paper focuses on exploring the socioeconomic reasons for child trafficking in the Ethiopian context. It is really important to recognize child trafficking as a complex protection issue including the removal of a child from his or her family environment, the child's transportation, illegal reception and placement into an exploitative context. To this end, the qualitative method was employed to gather the necessary data. Interviews were conducted with child victims (13=8F and 5M), police officials (2), judges (2), and other concerned bodies such as brokers or traffickers (3), community leaders (4) and social service providers in organizations such as IOM (2). The major precipitating factors that enhanced the vulnerability of children to trafficking include poverty, lack of employment opportunities, peer pressure, lack of awareness, and misleading information. The demand for cheap labour especially demands for domestic workers in receiving areas is the major reason that precipitated child trafficking. The study also reveals that trafficked children recounted a range of risks that include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, work without payment, and discrimination. According to the study, developing viable legal and institutional frameworks are vital instruments to ensure effective protection. The major implication of the study, therefore, is related to policies and programmes in terms of designing preventive policies that would be important for advocacy works both in rural and urban areas to combat child trafficking in the country.

Keywords:

Brokers, Child Trafficking, Internal/External Human Trafficking, Migration

Introduction

This study is undertaken to explore the economic and sociocultural reasons for child trafficking in the border areas between Ethiopia and Sudan with particular emphasis on Metema town, Northwestern Ethiopia. Human trafficking is a complex, multifaceted, and involving criminal act that presents enormous challenges for governmental and non-governmental organizations. In the first place, defining what constitutes trafficking is one of the major problems faced by researchers, policymakers, and legislators in combating the problem. Due to the hidden and complex nature of the activity of human trafficking, researchers, policymakers, and other concerned bodies have difficulties in finding a concise definition which is common to all. The original definition of the concept of human trafficking has been given by an international organization which is widely mentioned in the trafficking literature. It was first defined in the international law through the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. This Protocol popularly known as the 'Palermo Protocol' or 'Trafficking Protocol' supplemented the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The definition is the most widely endorsed and provides the essential basis for national law reform (ILO, 2011). Broadly, it is defined as:

the recruiting transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, using the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion of abduction of fraud of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments of benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purposes of exploitation.

This broader definition in the above quote covers a wide range of issues and activities. 1) It covers the methods used across the process. 2) It also describes the different forms of exploitation inherent in it. 3) The definition describes the major activities that constitute trafficking 4) The definition also addresses the complex nature of human trafficking in terms of the power dynamics involved in the process it is voluntarily or forceful actions involved in it. In addition, Rafferty (2007) noted that human trafficking is an extended process that surpasses various phases throughout the operation. Therefore, each stage of the trafficking process can involve physical, sexual and psychological abuse and violence, deprivation and torture, the forced use of substances, manipulation, economic exploitation and abusive working and living conditions (Rafferty, 2007). According to Roby (2012), child trafficking is one of the most invisible groups of trafficked victims throughout the world. In Ethiopia, the rate of child trafficking has not been abated (ANPPCAN, 2008).

The other issue that makes the phenomena of human trafficking more complex is related to the decision to leave the place of origin. There is also a dilemma related to the question: Is human trafficking voluntary or forced migration? Migration is broadly categorized into two forms: voluntary or spontaneous and forced or involuntary population movements (Akokpari, 2000). Voluntary or spontaneous migrants are those who relocate within or beyond their countries of origin at their own discretion. This form of migration leaves full scope for individual initiative (Akokpari, 2000). In most literature, the prototype of voluntary individual migration is labour migration that can take place both internally and internationally. On the other hand, forced or involuntary migration is defined as individuals or communities compelled obliged, or induced

to move when otherwise they should choose to stay in their place of domicile. According to Cernea (2006) forced or involuntary migration is distinguished from voluntary or labour migration by the diminished power of decision in the former, sometimes reaching an extreme in which the forced migrants are powerless. By contrast, one can safely argue that academic research is far more advanced in the situations of voluntary/labour and involuntary/forced migration than in human trafficking (Cernea, 2006).

Given the various efforts made so far by governmental and non-governmental organizations, the trafficking of children is a growing problem in the developing world. In Africa men, women, and children are being trafficked both within and outside the continent and forced into situations of labour and sexual exploitation. Being the poorest region in the world, sub-Saharan Africa is the most vulnerable region from which a substantial number of victims have been recruited for both continental and intercontinental transactions (Adepoju, 2005; ILO, 2010). Child trafficking is a problem of both developed and developing countries in the world today (ILO, 2011; Rafferty, 2007).

Problem Statement

The study deals with the issue of child trafficking. Child is defined as anyone who is under the age of eighteen, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In the Ethiopian context, the child population is characterized by a high percentage of children belonging to the 5 to 11 age category. According to the survey made by the National Child Labor Survey (2015), 51% of children aged 5 to 17 years are engaged in economic activities and 64 % of them also live in the Amhara region. The same survey also noted that children often drop out of school to support their families and get employed as domestic workers. Some children also out migrate and become street children exposing them to child labour and suffering various kinds of abuse and exploitation. In response, there are several international and regional instruments exist to address child trafficking and protect the rights of children. These include treaties, conventions, parliamentary recommendations and resolutions, agreements, guidelines, and other instruments (UNICEF, 2011). Nevertheless, the various agencies have intervened in a limited way on child trafficking.

The trafficking of children is one of the gravest violations of human rights in the world. Since the problem has been noticeably acknowledged very recently, very limited studies have been done in the border areas of Ethiopia and Sudan so far (Yosef & et al, 2006). According to Roby (2012), for instance, research on child trafficking is in its early stages. As compared to other forms of human migrations, the situation of human trafficking (especially child trafficking) is underexplored, and yet little is known about this reality, especially given the fact that the practice is extremely rampant currently in the border areas of Ethiopia and Sudan. Most migration-related studies indicate that there has been limited academic research conducted on child trafficking in particular as compared to other forms of migration.

Of the existing trafficking research, a large number are carried out by international organizations such as IOM, ILO, UNICEF and the US Department of State. There are MA thesis reports that depict the various aspects of the negative experiences of the victims of women

trafficking in Ethiopia (Daniel, 2010; Asham, 2007 ;). In the study area, various assessment reports indicate the rate of child trafficking has been increasing (ANPPCAN, 2008). Although many initiatives are underway to protect against child trafficking in the area, gaps are observed in the growing problem of child trafficking in the study area. Therefore, there is an urgent need for understanding the phenomenon of child trafficking especially in the border areas that can involve different actors.

The study will, therefore, provide data that is relevant to consider legal and policy issues related to child trafficking. Why does child trafficking occur? Is child trafficking recognized as a serious issue or problem in the border area? Who are the main actors involved in the process? There is a lack of understanding of the different aspects of child trafficking in terms of the vulnerability contexts and the associated risks. How are victims lured into child trafficking? Understanding and explaining the various actors involved in the process is of paramount importance in the study context. What is being done to tackle this issue or problem? What strategies may work in the struggle against child trafficking?

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the economic factors leading to child trafficking in the study area
2. To examine the social factor of child trafficking involving various actors in the process
3. To suggest intervention mechanisms to mitigate/combat the problem of child trafficking in the border areas

Research Methodology

This study project is being conducted in the town of Metema lies between the border line of Ethiopia and Sudan. Metema town is an international border that stands between Ethiopia and the Republic of Sudan (North Sudan, afterwards). Being a border town, Metema is also one of the international trade routes through which the country's import-export exchange, especially with Sudan, has long been carried out. Metema town is also one of the pathways through which traffickers transit children to Sudan with harbouring houses. In this particular study, the qualitative research approach was employed with particular emphasis on narrative research involving various categories of study participants. (Creswell, (2009) noted that narrative research has many forms and uses a variety of sources with a specific focus on the stories told by individuals. The procedure for conducting this study focuses on studying individuals drawn from the concerned bodies and reporting about the experiences of child trafficking.

According to Berge, (2001) when developing a purposive sample, the researcher uses their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects. The reason for using purposive sampling is that interviewing experienced child trafficking is fundamental to getting deep information about the trafficking process, why children are trafficked within the community to the border areas and exploring their lived experiences. So, the required data

was gathered from various groups of purposively selected participants such as child victims (13=8F and 5M), police officials (2), judges (2) and other concerned bodies such as brokers or traffickers (3), community leaders (4) and social service providers in organizations such as IOM (2). My personal experiences in terms of providing intermittent training in the study area also paved the way for drawing samples from different people very easily.

The sample size is determined as a function of being large enough to accommodate a wide range of different experiences about child migration, yet small enough to be manageable for qualitative analysis. The most common means of data collection in the study was in-depth interviews to gather the participants' detailed descriptions of their experiences of child trafficking. In this study, the interviews were made through notetaking to collect the first source of data. Then, the field notes were translated from Amharic to the English language. The field notes were also reviewed again and again. Then, those translated data are reduced by organizing the most frequent words, phrases, sentences or quotes that occur in the interview transcriptions or field notes categorically. Finally, the categories were summarized into themes and subthemes.

Results of the study

The study identified several social, economic, cultural, or familial factors that render children and young people susceptible to being exploited through the trafficking process in the border area of Metema. According to the study, different but interrelated reasons are considered as push and pull factors for child trafficking in the border areas of Metema. The profile reveals that the trafficked children came from different parts of Ethiopia, especially from the Amhara Region (e.g. Metema rural areas, Debark, Dabat, Amba-Giorgis, Gayinit, Debre-Tabor, East Gojjam and West Gojjam and some also fare of places such as southern Region, Somalia, Oromia).

Poverty as widely Mentioned Reason

Poverty becomes the fundamental as well as the root cause of child trafficking in the study area. Almost all of the study participants provided different but interrelated factors that are considered as push and pull factors for child trafficking in the border areas of Metema. Of the factors identified, poverty becomes the fundamental as well as the root cause of child trafficking in the study area. One of the study participants recounts the situation as follows:

Poverty is the only reason I have. If my family were not poor, I could attend my education in my family's home. At that time my parents did not have any income, though my mother opened a small shop after I left home. My father's income was not sufficient to meet the family's basic needs. Although I was not that mature, I had the moral obligation to go out and work so that my family at least had something to eat

According to this particular study, children most often from poor families are becoming victims of trafficking. Economic poverty plays a major role in the engagement of children in migration. Almost all in-depth interview participants stated that poverty plays a vital

role in the issue of child migration. The poverty situation in the family resulted in different problems, particularly for children. It restricted them from fully meeting their needs including educational facilities. Children from economically vulnerable families, particularly girls are known to be more at risk of trafficking. This is closely associated with the fact that trafficked children are often expected to be a source of income for their families. They assisted their family at an early age by generating income from the migratory life. Hence, it is one reason that forced children to be the victims of trafficking.

Children turn to migration by aspiring for family support especially when families do not have enough income to sustain their family and are unable to fulfil basic needs for their children. In this regard, Asham (2007) stated that the major factors contributing to both the migration and vulnerability of Ethiopian children to trafficking include unemployment, poverty, lack of prospects, and the search for better opportunities and income to support themselves and their families. In such cases, children are even forced to drop out of their schooling and look for different ways to manage their own and their family life. One of the key informants also stated that family poverty is the prime role of child migration. For example, one child migrant in Metema reported reasons in the following way:

My parents are extremely poor so my only chance to support my family and adjust better future is to work on my own in street business activities. By taking the above reason into account I came to Metema and began working at a homemade working at homemade was comfortable and satisfying for me, and due to this, I started thinking of other kinds of work that I could do by myself that require high capital and skill. Fortunately, a friend of mine advised me to go to Sudan. She told me that the work is good, and she knew people who used to work as a housemaid and later could change their lives- buy a house. On the other hand, at that time didn't have enough cash to begin other kinds of work that required more capital and decided to go abroad.

Lack of Employment Opportunities

Availability of employment opportunities in the countries of destination was reported to be a major cause of child trafficking. Trafficked children move to Metema from different parts of the country through illegal local brokers who mislead and deceive them about the presence of promising job opportunities abroad. Similarly, Yosef & et al (2006) reported the major contributing factors for children to vulnerability of trafficking; these include poverty and lack of job opportunities. Most informants who participated in the interviews reported that there are no different opportunities for children and youths in rural areas. This is especially true of those who have completed formal education and are seeking employment opportunities in rural areas. One of the male respondents describes the reason for his out-migration in the following manner:

Mostly, children in my locality experienced migration to urban areas. The pulling factors that I migrated to, were the social support from my long-term migrant friend and his information about better employment opportunities in construction and domestic works and better pay for services that triggered me to come to Metema. Most of the migrants are low achievers in their education and I was the one among them. Because of my poor academic performance, my family's economic and health status and my friend's information about life in the city, I turned into a domestic worker and

experienced child labour exploitation here in Metema.

In addition, the other most commonly reported employment challenges facing most child migrants were that the plots of land available to each family member to use were too small to support them. Restrictions on the abilities of rural people to buy or sell land mean that it is difficult for many to use their capital, tied up in land for another purpose. One of the participants recounts the reasons for child trafficking about the challenges of acquiring farmland as follows:

First, scarcity of arable land is the major problem. When I got married, the parents of my wife promised me a plot of land. However, eventually, they refused to give it to me. I was annoyed with what they did. On my side, it was with my brother that I grew up with. It was difficult for me to ask my brother for arable land since he possessed too little land himself. This initiated me to migrate.

The other key informant drawn from the community members also linked the reasons for child migration with the lack of off-farm employment opportunities he describes the situation as follows:

There are not many alternative sources of livelihood in my place of origin. It is not a well-developed area rather the place is unproductive to create different sources of income and to lead our lives. So, no condition can keep me and all members of my family in our locality. So, there is a habit of moving out to cities. Most of the migrants in our area are female since they mostly are searching for livelihoods.

Misleading Information

A lack of awareness about the dangers associated with child trafficking may also influence the prevalence of trafficking. Often, recruiters visit villages and approach unwary parents with glamorous stories promising a better life, and tales of incredible job prospects are spun before unsuspecting parents. Recruiters and returnees from abroad often fail to mention the fact that the jobs waiting for them are hard manual labour or domestic servitude, where the children are likely to face abuse. Trust is a huge problem, as many trafficked people are victims of their own relatives, friends, and partners. Young women and girls especially are often lured by men who promise them a good life, work, or money, and then become duped into domestic servitude. Children are vulnerable to the influence of peer pressure and the attraction of the urban lifestyle and modern consumer items are also likely to entice them into going with traffickers of their own accord. In addition, children are unaware of their legal rights or are made to feel as though they cannot exercise their rights, which means that they do not fully understand that forced labour is illegal and that perpetrators can face criminal prosecution.

Perpetrators of child trafficking are from different walks of life, including relatives and peers of children. It also includes very influential people (some said it includes government officials) and has enormous resources. The child is also sometimes perpetrated with the full knowledge of parents and guardians. Brokers of child trafficking often take advantage of the vulnerable situations of children and their families and present themselves most helpful persons appealing to both parents and children by promising better lives. They also used to produce false identifications and support letters as indicated from documented files captured by police investigations on captured brokers in the study area.

The local brokers mislead by providing false birth certificates and documents facilitating the out-migration process. It seems legal activity in the border area of Metema. This is because Metema town is a pathway through which traffickers transit children to the Sudan. A project officer at IOM stated both internal and international trafficking occurs via Metema town as follows. According to the key informant, trafficked children come from different parts of Ethiopia, especially from the Amhara Region (e.g. Metema rural areas, Debark, Dabat, Amba-Giorgis, Gayinit, Debre-Tabor, East Gojjam and West Gojjam and also other regions such as Somalia, Oromia and southern regions). Besides, bar and restaurant owners, long-range vehicle drivers and illegal employment agents play a role in the trafficking of children in the border area of Metema.

More importantly, there is also a lack of awareness and sometimes child trafficking is considered by communities as a normal practice. This lack of full understanding and awareness, which exists among those supposed to protect children, increases the vulnerability. Child trafficking is considered by the community members as economically beneficial, through increased incomes and employment by trafficked children. Lack of awareness about the dangers or the risks associated with the child trafficking processes is reported by study participants. According to the study, having a passport and other fraud and sealed letters is assumed to be the legal warranty for travelling abroad. The community members especially parents are unable to understand, whether it is a legal or illegal process.

Peer Pressure or Influence

The study also indicated that the reason children leave their home environment and seek to leave abroad is not merely because of the problems in the family home life, but also due to peer pressure. Participants said that peer influence also headed them to the migratory life; those children were motivated by their peer friends who had prior experience. One of the child informants describes the situation as follows:

My birthplace is a small Kebele close to Ambagiorgis, North Gondar Zone. Many youngsters in our area move to urban areas, mostly to work as lottery ticket and mobile card sellers. One day, one of my best friends who had been abroad came back to our (village) area after 6 years to celebrate New Year (Addis Amet). My friend bought new clothes and some household goods for his parents at that time. His family and neighbours were happy because of what he did and (blessed him a lot) uttered many words of blessing to him. Then, I thought of moving abroad to work and help my mother who raised me without a father. I told my friend about my idea, and he agreed and promised me that he would support me in the migration process. Then, I came to Metema for this purpose.

Most key informants also reported that peer pressure inspires many children to run away from home. The peers may have told children at home about the adorable life found abroad. For instance, the information they obtained from their informal sources about employment opportunities abroad loading and unloading, better payment for service work, social support from the long-term migrants and support from their families were reported as the related factors. One key informant reported that children and their families are ensnared by the empty promises of the trafficking networks of a better life, of an escape route from poverty and every year, hundreds of thousands of children are smuggled across Metema and sold as mere commodities.

Suggested Strategies to Combat Child Trafficking

There is a wide range of suggestions forwarded by study participants of the study drawn from different categories of people in the study context. One elderly informant stressed that a community-based approach to combat child trafficking is essential, given the clandestine nature of the problem and its links to such sensitive issues as historic migratory traditions in the area. Recognize child trafficking as a complex protection issue, which includes the removal of transportation, illegal reception or sale, and placement of the child into an exploitative context. It is also suggested that community capacity building that includes community awareness-raising campaigns using various institutions is an important strategy to combat child trafficking. Most key informants suggested that developing viable legal and institutional frameworks to ensure the effective enforcement of national legislation is crucial. Establishing interagency collaborations, intercountry cooperation and establishing firm border controlling systems by understanding the trafficking flows or routes are also crucial to mitigating child trafficking through the Metema area.

Conclusion and Implications

Identifying the root causes is a prerequisite to understanding the challenges faced by victims of child trafficking which is similar to the saying that the prevention of disease is better than curing it. As opposed to causes of other forms of migrations, the root causes of child trafficking are complex to understand very easily. The study participants reported that the major precipitating factors that enhanced the vulnerability of children to trafficking include poverty, lack of employment opportunities, peer pressure, and misleading information. Poverty exacerbates child trafficking as the unfavourable living conditions and lack of necessities, force children to leave their homes in search of better lives. Some of the participants were pulled into the perception of relatively better employment opportunities.

According to this particular study, child trafficking must be seen as a major area of concern, requiring deep-rooted research investigation that would inform policies and legal instruments dealing with the protection of children. Good data enhances understanding of the phenomenon and strengthens the efforts of those working to protect children's rights. Partly, the complex nature of trafficking accounts for the inherent methodological challenges faced by researchers in terms of generating accurate data about the actual experiences of the victims. It is also a hidden practice that makes obtaining accurate data about the socio-demographic characteristics of trafficked children. In addition, trafficked children are not easily accessible and observable for getting access to relevant information.

The proper development of children is more powerful than the economic and natural resources of a nation in determining its growth and development. It is children who will shape and create the future of a nation. Hence, children's proper growth and development will ultimately determine the tomorrow's prosperity of a nation. One mechanism of ensuring children's welfare and development is developing appropriate child protection systems through establishing child-friendly policies, laws and programmes that apply to combating child trafficking and inform policy responses and interagency cooperation or collaboration in the border areas. The study also helps develop viable legal and institutional frameworks to ensure the effective enforcement of national legislation in the context of border areas.

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Child Trafficking in Ethiopia: Challenges and Opportunities for Prevention

Dr Haymanot Tesfaye

Dr Haymanot Tesfaye is an environmentalist who teaches, researches, and serves the community on various environmental issues at Wolaita Sodo University. Haymanot believes that environmental science is the key to sustainable development and natural resource protection. In addition, she works as associate dean of research and community services. Haymanot holds a PhD in Environmental science from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. Her passion as an environmentalist comes from a young age; she has always tried to study various natural resources and try to identify their interconnection with human beings. She found that living in harmony with the environment is crucial for human beings to achieve sustainable development. Having been an environmentalist, I explore various disciplines to broaden my pursuits, integrating natural resource conservation with development, industrialization, and human rights.

Abstract

Child trafficking is a heinous crime that violates the fundamental rights of children and undermines their well-being. Ethiopia is one of the countries that is heavily affected by child trafficking, with thousands of children being trafficked each year for various purposes. This review paper examines the challenges and opportunities for preventing and responding to child trafficking in Ethiopia. The review begins by defining child trafficking and exploring its forms, causes, and consequences. It then delves into the situation of child trafficking in Ethiopia, examining the factors contributing to the problem and the types of trafficking prevalent in the country. The paper also discusses the legal and policy frameworks in place to prevent and respond to child trafficking, as well as the preventative and rehabilitation measures being implemented. It highlights the challenges faced by stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other actors, in addressing child trafficking in Ethiopia. Based on the findings of the review, the paper concludes by offering recommendations for preventing and responding to child trafficking in Ethiopia. These recommendations include strengthening law enforcement and prosecution, increasing awareness-raising and community engagement, improving victim identification and support services, and enhancing cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation. Furthermore, this review highlights the urgent need for concerted efforts to prevent and respond to child trafficking in Ethiopia. By implementing the recommended measures, Ethiopia can protect its children from the scourge of trafficking and safeguard their well-being and future.

Keywords:

Child trafficking, Ethiopia, Legal and policy frameworks, Prevention, Rehabilitation and reintegration, Stakeholders

Introduction

Child trafficking is a global problem that affects millions of children every year. It is a form of modern-day slavery that involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, and harbouring of children for exploitation (Anderson and Davidson, 2002). The exploitation may take many forms, including forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced begging, domestic servitude, and forced marriage. Children who are trafficked are often subjected to physical and emotional abuse, as well as deprivation of their basic human rights (UN, 2000).

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022), an estimated 50 million people are living in modern slavery 12% of those are children, victims of forced labour, including trafficking, worldwide. Of these, approximately 0.35 million are trafficked each year. The majority of child trafficking victims are girls, and the problem is particularly acute in developing countries, particularly in Africa, where millions of children are at risk of being trafficked every year. According to the ILO (2022) report, Africa accounts for the highest number of child trafficking victims globally, with an estimated 3.24 million children affected. Despite the existence of international laws and policies that prohibit child trafficking, the problem continues to persist around the world (UNICEF, 2010). This is due in part to the complex and interconnected factors that contribute to the vulnerability of children to trafficking. Poverty, lack of education, conflict and displacement, discrimination, and weak legal frameworks are some of the key factors that increase the risk of children being trafficked (Abebe, 2009).

In the Ethiopian context, child trafficking is a pressing issue that poses serious threats to the well-being and development of children (Gashaw, 2017). Ethiopia is the origin, conveyance, and destination country for child trafficking. Children are trafficked both within the country and across borders and are forced into a variety of exploitative situations. These may include forced labour in farming, manufacturing, domestic work, and the informal sector, as well as sexual exploitation, forced begging, and forced marriage (Abebe, 2009).

The problem of child trafficking in Ethiopia is rooted in a complex web of social, economic, and political factors (Gecho and Werku, 2018; Gashaw, 2017; Abebe, 2009). Poverty is one of the main drivers of child trafficking, as families may be forced to sell their children to survive. Lack of education also increases the vulnerability of children to trafficking, as they may be more easily deceived or coerced into exploitative situations. Conflict and displacement also play a role, as families who are forced to flee their homes may be more susceptible to trafficking. Traditional practices, such as early marriage and the practice of sending children to work as domestic servants, also contribute to the problem. Finally, weak legal frameworks and limited resources for law enforcement and victim support hinder efforts to combat child trafficking in Ethiopia (Megento and Wolde, 2018; Gashaw, 2017; Abebe, 2009).

This review manuscript aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the issue of child trafficking in the Ethiopian context. Specifically, it will examine the forms and extent of child trafficking in Ethiopia, the impacts of child trafficking on children, the legal and

policy frameworks in place to address the issue, and the government and non-governmental responses to child trafficking. Through this review, we hope to shed light on the gravity of the issue and provide recommendations for strengthening efforts to prevent and combat child trafficking in Ethiopia. I believe that understanding the problem of child trafficking in Ethiopia is crucial for developing effective solutions that will protect the rights and dignity of children. I hope that this review manuscript will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on child trafficking in Ethiopia and serve as a call to action for all stakeholders to work together to end this egregious violation of human rights. By doing so, we can help ensure a brighter future for the children of Ethiopia and beyond.

Child Trafficking: Definition and Forms

The Ethiopian Civil Code of 1960 defines the word “child” as a “minor of either sex who has not attained the full age of 18 years” (i.e. attains the age of majority). Child trafficking is the trafficking of persons below the age of 18 years. Child trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons, is a serious violation of human rights that affects millions of children around the world (ILO, 2022). It involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of child exploitation. The exploitation of children may include forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced begging, forced marriage, and organ trafficking (UNICEF, 2010). Child trafficking is considered a modern-day form of slavery and is a global problem affecting every region of the world, including Africa, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2021).

The definition of child trafficking is established in international law, particularly the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which is a supplement to the United Nations Convention against Trans-national Organized Crime (UNODC, 2000). According to the protocol, child trafficking is defined as: *“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs”.*

The definition emphasizes that the act of trafficking is not limited to the physical movement of a child across borders, but also includes the internal trafficking of children within a country. Child trafficking is a complex and multifaceted issue that is driven by a range of factors, including poverty, inequality, conflict, and lack of education. Children who are vulnerable to trafficking are often from marginalized communities and face social, economic, and political exclusion (Megento and Wolde, 2018). They may lack access to basic services such as education, health care, and protection, and may be living in situations of extreme poverty, which makes them susceptible to exploitation (Bales and Soodalter, 2009; Potocky, 2010). The impact of child trafficking on children is profound and can have lasting consequences for their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. Children who are trafficked may experience physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and deprivation of basic needs such as food, water, and shelter. They may also suffer from mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Oram et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the consequences of child trafficking are not limited to individual victims but also have wider societal implications. Trafficking undermines the rule of law, fuels corruption, and perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality. It also deprives children of their fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to education, health, and protection from violence and exploitation (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2016).

In Ethiopia, child trafficking is a significant problem affecting both boys and girls, and all forms of child trafficking are prevalent, with labour trafficking being the most common. According to the United States Department of State (2021), children are trafficked for forced labour in agriculture, domestic work, and the informal sector. They are also trafficked for sex, forced begging, forced marriage, domestic servitude, and organ trafficking. Ethiopia is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking, with children being trafficked internally within the country and across borders to neighbouring countries such as Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti (UNODC, 2021).

Forms of Child Trafficking

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), child trafficking takes various forms, including labour trafficking, sex trafficking, forced begging, forced marriage, domestic servitude, and organ trafficking. In Ethiopia, children are trafficked for various purposes, and it is crucial to understand the different forms of child trafficking to better prevent and respond to this issue.

Labour Trafficking

Labour trafficking is the exploitation of children for forced labour or services. Children who are trafficked for labour are often subjected to long working hours, hazardous working conditions, and low or no pay. They may also be forced to work in situations where they are physically or verbally abused, and they may suffer from physical and mental health problems as a result of their work (ILO, 2017). In Ethiopia, children are trafficked for forced labour in various sectors, including agriculture, construction, and domestic work (Megento and Wolde, 2018). According to the United States Department of State (2021), children are forced to work in small-scale gold mines in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, and they are also exploited in the informal sector, such as street vending and begging. Children who are trafficked for labour in Ethiopia are often from rural areas and are brought to urban areas for various work.

Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is the exploitation of children for commercial sex acts, including prostitution and pornography. Children who are trafficked for sex are often subjected to physical and sexual abuse, and they may suffer from physical and mental health problems as a result of their exploitation (Bassiouni et al., 2010; Brown, 2002). They may also be at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections and may face social stigma and discrimination (UNODC, 2021). In Ethiopia, children are trafficked for sex within the country and across borders to

neighbouring countries such as Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti. According to the United States Department of State (2021); as well as Megento and Wolde, (2018), girls are particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking in Ethiopia, and they are often trafficked from rural areas to urban centres, where they are forced into prostitution. Boys are also at risk of sex trafficking, although to a lesser extent than girls. Children who are trafficked for sex in Ethiopia may come from poor families or may be orphaned, and they may be lured into trafficking through false promises of employment or marriage (UNODC, 2021).

Forced Begging

Forced begging is the exploitation of children to beg. Children who are forced to beg may be subjected to physical and emotional abuse, and they may be forced to work long hours in unsafe conditions (Goel, 2009). They may also suffer from malnutrition and other health problems as a result of their exploitation. In Ethiopia, children are trafficked for forced begging in urban areas such as Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (Temesgen, 2014). According to the United States Department of State (2021), some children are brought to Ethiopia from neighbouring countries, such as Somalia and Eritrea, to beg. Children who are trafficked for begging may be controlled by criminal networks or may be forced to beg by their families due to poverty (ILO, 2009).

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is the exploitation of children for marriage, often without their consent. Children who are forced into marriage may suffer from physical and emotional abuse, and they may be denied access to education and other opportunities. They may also be at risk of health problems associated with early pregnancy and childbirth (UNICEF, 2021). In Ethiopia, child marriage is a widespread problem, particularly in rural areas. According to UNICEF (2021), 40% of girls in Ethiopia are married before the age of 18, and 14% are married before the age of 15 (Megento and Wolde, 2018). Child marriage often results from poverty, gender inequality, and traditional practices that prioritize early marriage for girls. In some cases, girls may be trafficked into forced marriages, either within Ethiopia or across borders to neighbouring countries (Gashaw, 2017; Temesgen, 2014; Abebe, 2009).

Domestic Servitude

Domestic servitude is the exploitation of children for domestic labour. Children who are trafficked for domestic servitude may be forced to work long hours in households, often with little or no pay. They may also be subjected to physical and emotional abuse, and they may be denied access to education and other opportunities (Briere and Jordan, 2009)

In Ethiopia, children are trafficked for domestic servitude, particularly in urban areas. According to the United States Department of State (2021), some children are brought to Ethiopia from neighbouring countries to work as domestic servants. Children who are trafficked for domestic servitude in Ethiopia may be controlled by criminal networks or may be brought to Ethiopia by family members or acquaintances.

Organ Trafficking

Organ trafficking is the illegal trade of organs, tissues, or cells from living or deceased persons. Children who are trafficked for organ trafficking may be coerced or deceived into giving up their organs, or they may be kidnapped or killed for organ removal (UNODC, 2000).

Although there is limited information on organ trafficking in Ethiopia, there have been reports of children being trafficked for organ harvesting. According to a report by the African Child Policy Forum (2019), there have been cases of children being kidnapped and killed for organ trafficking in Ethiopia. The report also notes that there is a lack of awareness and regulation surrounding organ trafficking in Ethiopia, which makes it difficult to address this issue.

The Extent of Child Trafficking in Ethiopia

Child trafficking is a serious problem in Ethiopia, affecting children from all regions and backgrounds. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), an estimated 150,000 children in Ethiopia are engaged in child labour, with many of these children being trafficked for labour purposes (ILO, 2021). Additionally, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that Ethiopia is a source and transit country for human trafficking, with children being among the most vulnerable to trafficking (UNODC, 2021). The Ethiopian government has taken steps to combat child trafficking, including the enactment of laws and the establishment of mechanisms to identify and assist trafficking victims. However, there are still significant challenges in addressing this issue, including limited resources, weak implementation of laws, and the prevalence of social and cultural practices that perpetuate trafficking.

Factors Contributing to Child Trafficking

Several factors contribute to child trafficking in Ethiopia, including poverty, lack of education, conflict and displacement, traditional practices, and a weak legal framework.

Poverty is one of the main factors contributing to child trafficking in Ethiopia. Poverty is a complex phenomenon that encompasses a range of economic, social, and political factors. Poverty can be defined as a lack of access to basic resources and services, including food, water, housing, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities (Sheu et al., 2021).

In Ethiopia, poverty is widespread, with a large percentage of the population living below the poverty line. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate in Ethiopia was 25.6% in 2019 (World Bank, 2020b). Poverty in Ethiopia is often linked to factors such as limited access to education and healthcare, high levels of unemployment, and a lack of economic opportunities in rural areas.

Poverty is a key factor in the trafficking of children for labour purposes in Ethiopia. Many families living in poverty are unable to provide for their children, and as a result, may be more likely to send their children to work or to be trafficked for labour or sex. In some cases, parents may be deceived or coerced into sending their children away with promises of education or

employment opportunities, only to find that their children have been trafficked. Children who are trafficked for labour in Ethiopia may be forced to work in industries such as agriculture, construction, or domestic work. They may work long hours for little or no pay, and they may be subjected to physical and emotional abuse.

The link between poverty and child trafficking is complex and multi-faceted. Poverty creates conditions that make children vulnerable to trafficking, while trafficking perpetuates poverty by exploiting vulnerable populations and perpetuating cycles of exploitation and abuse. Efforts to address child trafficking in Ethiopia must consider the role of poverty in driving this issue (Beck et al., 2017). It also requires a focus on prevention, including efforts to raise awareness of the risks of trafficking and to empower vulnerable communities to resist trafficking situations. In addition to addressing poverty as a root cause of child trafficking, it is also important to provide support and assistance to children who have been trafficked (Temesgen, 2014). This may include providing access to education, healthcare, and psychosocial support services, as well as legal assistance and protection from further exploitation. Efforts to address child trafficking must take a holistic approach that addresses the complex interplay of economic, social, and political factors that contribute to this issue.

Lack of education is another significant factor contributing to child trafficking in Ethiopia. Education is crucial in providing children with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect themselves from trafficking, as well as in enabling them to access better employment opportunities and escape poverty. However, access to education in Ethiopia is limited, particularly in rural areas. According to Gezie (2021), the net enrolment rate for primary education in Ethiopia was only 63% in 2018. Additionally, the quality of education in Ethiopia is often poor, with a shortage of trained teachers and limited resources for schools. Children who are unable to access education are at greater risk of being trafficked, as they may not have the knowledge or skills necessary to identify and avoid trafficking situations (Beck et al., 2017). In many cases, children who are out of school may be more likely to be recruited into labour or sex trafficking, as they may be perceived as being more vulnerable and easier to control.

In addition to limited access to education, cultural beliefs and practices in Ethiopia may also contribute to low levels of school attendance, particularly for girls. Early marriage and early childbirth, for example, may prevent girls from continuing their education, as they may be expected to take on domestic responsibilities or may be unable to attend school due to pregnancy or childcare responsibilities (Megento and Wolde, 2018). Efforts to improve access to education and to promote the value of education in Ethiopia are crucial in combating child trafficking. This includes investing in schools and teachers, providing financial incentives for families to send their children to school, and working to change cultural attitudes towards education, particularly for girls. In addition to these efforts, it is also important to provide education and training to children who have been trafficked or are at risk of trafficking. This may include providing vocational training or job skills to help children escape poverty and build a better future for themselves, as well as providing education on their rights and how to protect themselves from trafficking.

Conflict and displacement are significant contributing factors to child trafficking in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has experienced several conflicts in recent years, including ethnic and political tensions that have led to displacement and insecurity for many communities (Desalegn et al.,

2023). According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), there were over 1.8 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Ethiopia as of December 2020, with many of these individuals being women and children (IDMC, 2021). Conflict and displacement create many vulnerabilities for children, including separation from families, loss of education and healthcare, and increased risk of exploitation and abuse. Displaced children may be targeted for trafficking due to their vulnerability and lack of protection (Desalegn et al., 2023).

Additionally, conflict may lead to the breakdown of social structures and traditional practices, leaving children even more vulnerable to trafficking (UNICEF, 2021). In addition to being a contributing factor to child trafficking, conflict and displacement can also exacerbate the issue by creating a demand for trafficked children. For example, children may be forced into labour or sex trafficking to support armed groups or criminal networks involved in conflict (BBC News Africa, 2021).

Efforts to address child trafficking in Ethiopia must consider the impact of conflict and displacement. Strategies should focus on providing support and protection to vulnerable children, including IDPs, and addressing the root causes of conflict and instability. Additionally, effective prevention and response measures should be put in place to address the increased risk of trafficking in conflict-affected areas.

One example of such an initiative is the Safe Schools Declaration, which Ethiopia has endorsed. The Safe Schools Declaration is a commitment to protect students, teachers, and schools from attack during armed conflict, and includes measures to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces or armed groups (Minor, 2021). This initiative can help to mitigate the impact of conflict on children, including the risk of trafficking.

In conclusion, conflict and displacement are significant contributing factors to child trafficking in Ethiopia and must be addressed through comprehensive prevention and response measures. Efforts should focus on providing support and protection to vulnerable children, addressing the root causes of conflict and instability, and promoting initiatives such as the Safe Schools Declaration to protect children during armed conflict.

Traditional practices

Traditional practices are deeply rooted in Ethiopian culture and have been passed down from generation to generation. While many of these practices have positive aspects, such as community solidarity and a strong sense of family values, some traditional practices can perpetuate child trafficking. One of the most common traditional practices that can contribute to child trafficking is early marriage. Child marriage is a prevalent issue in Ethiopia, with approximately 40% of girls being married before the age of 18 (Desalegn et al., 2023).

Early marriage can be a form of trafficking, as children are often forced into marriage against their will and may be subjected to sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Another traditional practice that can contribute to child trafficking is the use of child labour. In rural areas, it is common for children to work on family farms or in small businesses. While this type of work can be beneficial in terms of developing skills and contributing to the family's income, children are sometimes forced into labour situations that are harmful to their health

and well-being. Children may be forced to work long hours without breaks, carry heavy loads, or work in dangerous conditions.

Harmful traditional practices are often linked to gender inequality, which is also a contributing factor to child trafficking. Girls are particularly vulnerable to harmful traditional practices, such as early marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, which can increase their risk of being trafficked for domestic servitude or sexual exploitation (UNICEF, 2021; Boyden et al., 2013). Addressing harmful traditional practices is a complex issue, as it requires addressing deep-rooted cultural norms and beliefs. However, there have been efforts in Ethiopia to address harmful traditional practices and promote gender equality. For example, the government has implemented laws and policies to protect children from early marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, and there have been awareness-raising campaigns to educate communities about the negative impacts of these practices on children's health and well-being (Boyden et al., 2013).

It is important to note that not all traditional practices are harmful or contribute to child trafficking. Some traditional practices, such as community-based child-rearing practices, can be beneficial for children's development and well-being. Therefore, it is important to differentiate between harmful and beneficial traditional practices and to work towards preserving those that are beneficial while addressing those that are harmful.

A weak implementation of the existing legal framework is one of the factors that contribute to child trafficking in Ethiopia. While the Ethiopian government has taken steps to combat trafficking, including the enactment of laws and the establishment of mechanisms to identify and assist trafficking victims, the implementation of these laws is often weak due to limited resources, corruption, and lack of political will (Tolla, and Singh, 2018). The Ethiopian government has enacted several laws aimed at combating trafficking, including the Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, which was passed in 2009. This law criminalizes trafficking in persons and provides for penalties of up to 25 years in prison (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 2009). However, despite the existence of this law, there are still significant challenges in enforcing it and prosecuting traffickers.

One of the challenges in enforcing the anti-trafficking laws in Ethiopia is the lack of resources. Law enforcement agencies, including the police and immigration officials, often lack the necessary resources, such as funding, training, and equipment, to effectively investigate trafficking cases and prosecute traffickers (U.S. Department of State, 2021). Additionally, corruption is also a significant problem, with some law enforcement officials being complicit in trafficking or accepting bribes from traffickers (UNODC, 2021).

Another challenge is the lack of political will to address trafficking. The Ethiopian government has been criticized for its limited efforts to combat trafficking, with some human rights organizations accusing the government of prioritizing economic development over human rights (Tesfaye and Mekuriya, 2020). This lack of political will is reflected in the limited resources allocated to combating trafficking, as well as the reluctance to investigate and prosecute cases involving high-level officials or individuals with connections to those in power (UNODC, 2021).

However, as part of its international obligation, the UN CRC requires the concerted efforts of all governmental and non-governmental organizations, local authorities, religious bodies, communities, other civil society groups, family members, and every individual. More importantly, it imposes obligations on the federal government and each regional state to take all legislative, administrative, judicial as well as educational, social, economic, and policy measures regarding the enforcement of each right enshrined in the Convention.

Impacts of Child Trafficking

Child trafficking is a grave violation of human rights and has several negative impacts on the physical, emotional, social, educational, and economic well-being of children. Trafficked children are subjected to various forms of exploitation, such as labour and sexual exploitation, forced begging, and organ harvesting, among others (Wallace et al., 2022). According to Davy, (2015), this section will explore the immediate and long-term impacts of child trafficking.

Child trafficking has many immediate impacts on the victims, including physical harm, emotional harm, and social harm. Children who are trafficked are often subjected to physical harm, such as beatings, torture, and sexual abuse. They are often forced to work in dangerous conditions, such as mines, factories, and agricultural fields, which can cause injuries and health problems. Many are also exposed to hazardous chemicals and substances, which can cause long-term health problems, including respiratory problems, cancer, and reproductive disorders.

Child trafficking also has a significant impact on the emotional well-being of the victims. Many children are separated from their families and are forced to live in unfamiliar and often abusive environments. They may experience feelings of fear, anxiety, and depression, and may develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of their experiences. The emotional harm can have long-lasting effects on the child's mental health and well-being.

Child trafficking also has social impacts on the victims. They are often stigmatized and marginalized in their communities and may face discrimination and social exclusion. They may be unable to form social relationships or trust others due to their experiences of abuse and exploitation.

The long-term impacts of child trafficking can be even more devastating than the immediate impacts. The following are some of the long-term impacts of child trafficking:

Children who are trafficked may suffer from a range of physical health problems as a result of their experiences. They may have chronic pain, respiratory problems, and digestive problems. They may also be at risk of developing sexually transmitted infections and other diseases.

The psychological effects of child trafficking can last long after the child has been rescued or escaped. Victims may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems. They may also have difficulty forming healthy relationships and may struggle with trust issues. The trauma of their experiences can affect their ability to function in society and may impact their ability to hold down a job or pursue an education.

Impacts Child trafficking can have significant impacts on a child's education and future

economic opportunities. Children who are trafficked may miss out on critical periods of education and may struggle to catch up academically. This can limit their future career opportunities and earning potential. In addition, child trafficking often perpetuates a cycle of poverty, as children who are trafficked may struggle to earn a living wage or find stable employment as adults.

The impacts of child trafficking are not limited to the victims themselves. They also have broader societal impacts, including increased healthcare costs, lost productivity, and increased crime rates. Addressing the impacts of child trafficking requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, protection, and prosecution. Prevention efforts should focus on addressing the root causes of child trafficking, including poverty, lack of education, and weak legal frameworks. This may involve implementing social protection programmes, providing education and training opportunities, and strengthening laws and enforcement mechanisms. Protection efforts should focus on providing support and services to victims of child trafficking, including medical care, counselling, and safe housing. It is critical to ensure that victims are not re-trafficked and can reintegrate into their families and communities. Prosecution efforts should focus on holding traffickers accountable for their actions and disrupting trafficking networks. This requires cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies, as well as the development of legal frameworks that are robust enough to effectively prosecute traffickers.

In general, child trafficking has devastating impacts on the physical, emotional, and social well-being of its victims. The long-term impacts can be particularly severe, affecting a child's physical health, mental health, education, and economic opportunities. Addressing the impacts of child trafficking requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, protection, and prosecution. Efforts to combat child trafficking must be prioritized at the national and international levels, to ensure that all children are protected from this heinous crime.

Response to Child Trafficking

Child trafficking is a complex and widespread problem that requires a coordinated response from governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society. In this section, we will examine the legal and policy framework related to child trafficking in Ethiopia, as well as the government and NGO responses to the issue. We will also explore some of the challenges and gaps that exist in addressing child trafficking in Ethiopia.

Legal and Policy Framework

The legal and policy framework is a critical element in addressing child trafficking. It provides a foundation for the prevention, protection, and prosecution of child trafficking cases. In Ethiopia, the government has developed a legal and policy framework to address child trafficking. This section will discuss the domestic and international legal and policy frameworks in Ethiopia.

Domestic Laws and Policies

The Ethiopian government has enacted various laws and policies to combat child trafficking. The legal instruments include the Criminal Code, the Proclamation on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (Proclamation No. 1178/2020), and the Revised Charities and Societies Proclamation. *The primary legal document is the FDRE Constitution. The State of Ethiopia adopted a new Constitution in December 1995, which improved in many ways the legal protection of children. Article 36 of the Constitution pertains specifically to the rights of children and was drafted taking the provisions of the CRC into account. Article 36 of the Ethiopian Constitution: Every child has the following rights: the right to life; the right to obtain name and nationality; the right to know and be cared for by his parents or legal guardians; the right to be protected from labour exploitation and not to be forced to undertake work that may harm his/her education, health and well-being, and the right to be free from harsh or inhuman punishments that may be inflicted on his body, in schools or child care institutions.* These laws criminalize child trafficking and prescribe severe penalties for offenders. The Criminal Code, for instance, prescribes imprisonment ranging from five to twenty years for those convicted of child trafficking offences (FDRE Criminal Code, 2004).

In addition to the legal framework, Ethiopia has developed policies to address child trafficking. The National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2013–2023) and the National Child Policy (2013) are two critical policy frameworks. The National Plan of Action provides a comprehensive framework for combating the worst forms of child labour, including child trafficking. The National Child Policy aims to protect and promote the rights of children in Ethiopia, including the prevention and elimination of child trafficking.

International Laws and Conventions

Ethiopia has ratified several international instruments that provide a framework for addressing child trafficking. These instruments include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol). The UNCRC is a fundamental international legal instrument that outlines the rights of children, including protection from exploitation, abuse, and trafficking (Mbise, 2017; Reynaert et al., 2009). The Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography aims to prevent the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. The Palermo Protocol aims to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, particularly women and children. Ethiopia's ratification of these international instruments demonstrates the country's commitment to combating child trafficking.

In general, Ethiopia has developed a legal and policy framework to address child trafficking. The domestic legal framework criminalizes child trafficking and prescribes severe penalties for offenders. The country has also developed policies to address child trafficking comprehensively. Ethiopia has also ratified various international instruments that provide a framework for combating child trafficking. However, challenges and gaps exist in the implementation of the legal and policy frameworks, which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

Government and Non-governmental Response

In response to the issue of child trafficking, both the Ethiopian government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have implemented various initiatives and strategies aimed at addressing the issue. These responses can be categorized into three main areas: prevention, protection, and prosecution.

Prevention

Prevention efforts focus on addressing the root causes of child trafficking and reducing the vulnerability of children to exploitation. The Ethiopian government has implemented various policies and programmes aimed at reducing poverty, increasing access to education, and promoting economic development. For instance, the government's Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) aims to reduce poverty and improve economic development through targeted interventions such as expanding access to education, improving healthcare, and increasing agricultural productivity (US Department of State, 2016). NGOs also play a critical role in prevention efforts, particularly in raising awareness and providing education and training to at-risk communities. For example, the NGO Save the Children has implemented a child protection programme in Ethiopia that includes activities such as community mobilization, education and awareness-raising campaigns, and capacity building for local organizations (Save the Children, 2021).

Protection

Protection efforts focus on providing support and assistance to children who have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked. The Ethiopian government has established a range of institutions and mechanisms aimed at providing protection and assistance to victims of trafficking. For instance, the government has established shelters for trafficking victims and has provided funding for NGOs to establish additional shelters and provide services such as counselling, medical care, and legal assistance (U.S. Department of State, 2020).

NGOs also play a critical role in providing protection and support services to trafficking victims. For example, the NGO Terre des Hommes provides support to child trafficking victims in Ethiopia through activities such as counselling, rehabilitation, and reunification with their families (Terre des Hommes, 2023).

Prosecution

Prosecution efforts focus on holding traffickers accountable for their crimes and deterring others from engaging in trafficking activities. The Ethiopian government has established various laws and regulations aimed at prosecuting traffickers, including the 2014 Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (Proclamation No. 909/2015) and the 2015 Child Proclamation (Proclamation No. 1110/2019), which criminalizes all forms of child trafficking.

The Ethiopian government has also established various institutions and mechanisms aimed at investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases, such as the Federal Police Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit and the National Task Force on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants (U.S. Department of State, 2020). NGOs also play a role in supporting prosecution efforts through activities such as providing legal assistance to trafficking victims and advocating for stronger laws and regulations to combat trafficking. Despite these efforts, there are still several challenges and gaps in the response to child trafficking in Ethiopia.

Challenges and Gaps

Despite the efforts made by the government and non-governmental organizations, there are still challenges and gaps in responding to child trafficking in Ethiopia. These challenges and gaps can be attributed to limited resources, weak implementation, and limited awareness and coordination.

One of the major challenges in responding to child trafficking in Ethiopia is limited resources. Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, with limited resources allocated to social services such as education, healthcare, and social welfare. As a result, resources for combating child trafficking are also limited (Megento and Wolde, 2018; Beck et al., 2017). The government has not allocated sufficient funding to the prevention, protection, and prosecution of child trafficking cases. According to the United States Department of State, the government of Ethiopia has not provided adequate funding to support the National Council on the Coordination of Human Trafficking, which is responsible for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts across the country. Furthermore, non-governmental organizations that provide services to trafficking victims also face financial challenges. Many NGOs rely on foreign donors for funding, and the availability of such funds can be unpredictable. Additionally, due to limited resources, NGOs may not be able to provide adequate support to all trafficking victims, leaving some without access to necessary services.

Another challenge in responding to child trafficking in Ethiopia is the weak implementation of existing laws and policies. Despite the existence of laws and policies aimed at combating trafficking, their implementation remains weak due to a lack of resources, inadequate training of law enforcement and judicial officials, and corruption (Beck et al., 2017). The United States Department of State notes that the government of Ethiopia has not convicted any individuals under the anti-trafficking law since 2014, and the number of investigations and prosecutions is very low. Furthermore, there is a lack of coordination and communication between different government agencies responsible for combating trafficking. This can result in duplication of efforts, inefficiencies, and gaps in the provision of services to victims.

A third challenge in responding to child trafficking in Ethiopia is limited awareness and coordination among government agencies, NGOs, and the general public (Beck et al., 2017; Ephrem, 2008). Many Ethiopians are not aware of the nature and extent of child trafficking in the country, and therefore may not be able to identify or report cases of trafficking. Additionally, some government officials and law enforcement officers may not have sufficient knowledge and training on how to identify and respond to trafficking cases. Coordination among different government agencies and NGOs working on trafficking is also limited,

which can result in gaps in the provision of services to victims. There is a need for improved collaboration, communication, and sharing of resources among these actors to effectively respond to child trafficking in Ethiopia.

Conclusion

Child trafficking is a heinous crime that affects millions of children worldwide, including in Ethiopia. The practice robs children of their childhood, exposes them to various forms of abuse and exploitation, and has long-term impacts on their health and well-being. Despite the efforts of governments and non-governmental organizations to combat child trafficking, it remains a significant challenge, particularly in countries with weak legal frameworks, widespread poverty, and limited resources. Based on the review of the literature, it is evident that child trafficking in Ethiopia is a complex problem with deep-rooted causes. Poverty, lack of education, conflict, traditional practices, and weak implementation of legal frameworks are among the factors that contribute to the problem. Children who are trafficked are exposed to various forms of harm, including physical, emotional, and social harm, and the impacts can last a lifetime. The Ethiopian government has taken some steps to address child trafficking, including enacting laws and policies to prevent and prosecute the crime. However, there are still significant challenges, including weak implementation, limited resources, and coordination, and insufficient awareness of the problem among the general public.

Recommendations

To address child trafficking in Ethiopia, several recommendations can be made:

1. The government must expand capacity-building training of all levels of law enforcement officers who have been engaged in the prevention, investigation, prosecution and sentencing of an offence of child trafficking.
2. The government must establish a specialized bench in the existing police, prosecution and judicial system to entertain child trafficking cases and to increase efforts to investigate and prosecute alleged traffickers for both transnational and internal trafficking crimes.
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive and centralized database to accurately report the government anti-trafficking statistics.
4. Strengthen the legal and policy framework: The government should continue to strengthen the legal and policy framework to prevent and prosecute child trafficking. This should include reviewing and updating existing laws and policies to ensure they are in line with international standards.
5. Increase resources: *The Convention on the right of the Child which the Ethiopian government has adopted provided “ The Right to Respect For the Best Interest of the Child (Art.3): “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the “best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration” Hence, the government must ensure the availability of adequate resource to establish victim fund from any source to combat child trafficking.*

6. Enhance awareness and coordination: There is a need for increased awareness of child trafficking among the general public, including parents, teachers, and community leaders. The government should work with civil society organizations to raise awareness and develop community-based prevention and protection programmes. Additionally, there is a need for improved coordination between government and non-governmental organizations to ensure a comprehensive and effective response to child trafficking.
7. Address the root causes of child trafficking: Addressing poverty, lack of education, conflict, traditional practices, and weak legal frameworks is critical to preventing child trafficking in Ethiopia. The government should prioritize investments in education, economic development, and conflict prevention and resolution efforts to address the root causes of child trafficking.
8. To effectively combat child trafficking, it is necessary to address the root causes of poverty, such as limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This requires a comprehensive approach that involves government policies, international cooperation, and community-based interventions.

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Challenges and adaptive responses of rural-urban migrant children in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia

Dr Aschalew Abeje Lakew

Dr Aschalew Abeje Lakew has been an associate professor of migration and diaspora studies in the Department of Anthropology at Bahir Dar University since 2002. He has published some important works in the area of migration and transnationalism. He is a member of many professional associations, including the Ethiopian society of sociologists, social workers, and anthropologists.

Abstract

The migration of children from the rural Wag Hemra Zone of the Amhara Region, Ethiopia, has been prevalent for the last few years. This article analyses the effects of migration on migrant children in towns in Amhara. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and archive analysis in Bahir Dar City to which children predominantly migrate. Analysis of triangulated data revealed that the effects are multi-faceted involving intersecting negative psychosocial and economic ills. The study showed that food shortages are the principal effect of migration on migrant children. As the negative economic effects were considered, the phenomenon was not simply about food shortages but also the starvation of migrant children. The findings revealed broad effects involving health that migration subjected migrant children to diarrhoea and pneumonia. Anxiety arising from the undesirable effects and the pessimism of improved status was a further vital detriment of migration. Hence, the positive framing of migration as a basis of socioeconomic upgrading does not work in all contexts and policy objectives should be supporting people that migration is not always a proven means. I further conclude that the complexity of migration processes, migrant categories, and agencies means the phenomenon could constitute much more complex effects across contexts and, thus, the need for contextual analysis.

Keywords:

Rural-urban migration; Amhara region; children, effect

Introduction

Migration is defined as a change of residence of people for a relatively long period. As regards the effects of migration, some authors argue that the phenomenon negatively affects people migrating to towns in many fields. Indeed, it leads to sexual and labour exploitations and physical as well as verbal abuses in urban contexts. In addition, rural-urban migration subjects migrants to stress when they fail to remit families left in rural origin (Abereha 2011; Ralph 2012; Gedefa 2013). On the other hand, rural-urban migration helps migrants supplement their rural income and enhance their livelihood as it provides employment and better incomes in urban centres where the price of labour is comparatively high (Atnafu et al. 2014). This is in addition to the new skills and technologies migrants acquire in urban destinations and the support to facilitate their rural productivity and improved life (Afsar 2003; Anh 2003).

The findings from this work support that rural-urban migration is detrimental to people migrating to towns. In effect, migration in most cases causes undesirable ends and brings migrants to food shortage and starvation, diarrhoea, and pneumonia, in addition to emotional stress. With the need for context-specific analysis of the effects of migration, this study was conducted on the migration of people from Wag Hemra (one of the poorest areas in Amhara) to towns in the region that, unlike existing trends, largely involve women and children as prime actors. Thus, while migration has been much researched (Morrissey 2007; Aderaw 2013; Shiferaw et al. 2017), there is still a need to analyse the complex effects of this phenomenon in Amhara.

Two contesting views dominate the debate on the effects of the phenomenon of rural-urban migration (Kumar 2004; Deshingkar & Grimm 2005). For the pessimists, rural-urban migration victimizes the health of migrants with HIV/AIDs, addiction, and stress (Amrevurayire & Ojeh 2016). It is argued that rural-urban migration carries migrants to urban contexts where contagious diseases are common and exposes them to sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDs (Abeje 2021). In their study of seasonal migration in the Amhara, Asfaw and his colleagues unearthed a similar finding that migrants are ill and victims of contagious HIV/AIDs and then they carry it to rural areas where they originate (Asfaw et al. 2010). Also, the phenomenon carries the cost of addiction. Unsuccessful migrants in urban texts subsequently find themselves addicted to alcohol and drugs. This lowers the social esteem that, in the end, puts the migrant in a vicious circle of migration (Abeje 2021). What is more, the phenomenon carries emotional stress. For other authors, failure to deliver remittances in contexts of lack of jobs in towns leads migrants to stress. This is in addition to the stress arising from the homesickness of migrants staying away from their families for a long (Bhugra 2004; Abereha 2011). It is subsequently argued that rural-urban migration is a process that leaves migrants with varied forms of abuse, wage cuts, work overload, and physical as well as verbal attacks in the destination ends (Gedefa 2013; Gebremedhin 2016).

However, migration is a positive outlet for socioeconomic well-being (Conlon 2011; Rao 2014; Fernandez 2020). Some argue that migration is a means for improved livelihoods and a driver for the development of those involved (de Regt & Felegebirhan 2020) because they earn money in their destination towns and invest it in small businesses and agriculture (Nida 2006). Also, migrants buy necessary items with the money earned in migration and improve their lives

(Anh 2003). This means migrants move up to the upper social strata and reduce their gap with the rich (Yang 2004).

This study argues these effects are by no means exclusive and supports the notion that the effects are context-specific and multifaceted involving compound costs of both economic, physical and psychosocial. It underlines that the roots of migrants' vulnerability are multiple and diverse, and the effects are so complex that they require contextualised analysis.

Methodology

The study used qualitative data collected in 2022 through ethnographic inquiry. The migration of children from Wag Hemra to Bahir Dar, Woldiya, and other towns of the Amhara has been outstanding for the last few years. Bahir Dar was purposively selected to represent destination towns in the region. To represent diverse voices, I stratified them based on their origins and purposively selected migrants from the most important origin woredas of Sekota, Dehana, Abergele and Zequala with a rather high magnitude of migration of children to towns and destined in the temporary encampment in Minelik II Sub-city of Bahir Dar. The data required for analysis were collected in interviews, direct observations, and document analysis.

A total of 36 interviews were conducted with 16 migrant children, 12 migrant mothers, and eight people from residents of Bahir Dar City. The interviewees were from diverse groups to benefit from the virtue of heterogeneous views relating to the topic of research. Sixteen migrant children who encountered varied challenges were interviewed after informed consent was obtained from their mothers. How they tried to make life in Bahir Dar and related issues were elicited from interviews with these children. Also 12 mothers, the interviewees were all selected based on their familiarity and knowledge regarding the topic. Observations were made of 15 selected families and useful data related to the nature of houses in which they reside and their access to urban services were extracted. Besides, I traced them when wandering along villages and churches to document the items obtained from begging in photographs. Data about the demographics of the migrants were obtained from documents kept in the Amhara National Regional State Women, Children, and Social Affairs Bureau.

The data were then analysed after a series of recording rehearsals. They were transcribed after which readings were carried out to have a clear picture of what each transcript constituted. Then the transcript was coded and reviewed, and thematic schemes were produced, and analysed inductively.

Findings and discussion

Migration in the context of the present study seems to cause varied effects on migrants referred to that range from economic, and social to health and psychological (discussed subsequently).

Food Shortage, Starvation and Hunger

I argue, that drawing on data from this study, is a very important aspect of analysis. Food shortage starvation and the ensuing frustrations emerged in the accounts of all the migrants involved in the study. In describing their experiences, the migrant children in the interviews all reiterated these issues as the major problems they encountered in Bahir Dar City.

The migrants got no adequate support from their co-emigrated mothers, the city administration, and the regional state so they were left with food shortages. Making incomes of their own was the foremost target of the migrant mothers. However, this was not possible for them. This is because labour privileges masculine force (Pankhurst 1990) and the women referred to are demanded less in the market of the destination city. Also, these women are in less demand in domestic work which is absorbing larger numbers of women. It emerged in the interviews that rural women are less equipped with the 'basics of urban domestic chores. This, in addition to the prejudiced notion against these rural women as 'culturally rustic' and untidy, made these migrant women less legible to seize opportunities in the urban context. Thus, they were not able to make presentable incomes so they could not afford the support their children need most. Likewise, the support from the city administration and the regional state was negligible. Hence, food shortage lingered as a salient feature and a source of daily frustration for migrant children under study.

The account highlights the frustration caused by food shortage and how the bid to deal with the lack of food prompted migrant children without alternative livelihood options into begging. Indeed, the participants' accounts revealed food shortage as the most common predicament and begging as their most important survival strategy. When they find their life frustrated by food shortage, the option for these children is begging and complementing subsistence needs.

However, migrant children encountered more life-threatening hunger and starvation than just food shortages. This has been the case mainly in low-festive seasons (Christmas-Lent and Easter-June). Begging has been so seasonal that the alms from it are negligible in the aforementioned seasons. The amount of the alms, which seem reasonably excessive in high-festive seasons, falls essentially in low-festive seasons given cultural/religious festivities where begging is undertaken are rare. This leaves migrant children with acute hunger, subjecting them to undernourishment in low-festive seasons, as the accounts from many of the migrants illustrate.

However, as accounts from many of the research participants highlight, hunger and starvation are phenomenal not only because of the decline in alms but also due to the shared commitment, a commitment which seems more important in times of crisis to get esteem as a loyal member, of helping and protecting vulnerable members of the migrant community from imminent hunger. Per se, standing apart from their mainstream and that other options are lost, loyalty to the group has been the norm, rather than the exception, among the migrants under study. Hence, sharing what is at disposal with those at risk of famine seems to be normally needed in low-festive seasons when access to food is quite critical. This leaves the already vulnerable to food shortages with hunger and starvation as they necessarily minimise daily intakes to save some for bequest as well as for their survival.

Diarrhoea, Pneumonia, and Crises of Health

Arising from a precarious state of living, crises related to health have been common in the lives of migrant children in Bahir Dar City. Studies on health-related effects of migration depend on a linear view of vulnerability to and victimhood of HIV/AIDS and migrants' agency of the spread of the disease to rural settings where they originate (Asfaw et al. 2010; Abeje 2006, 2021). However, this study contributes to existing insights that rural-urban migration carries broader effects such as diarrhoea and pneumonia than HIV/AIDS. Migrant children under study contract are ill with diarrhoea, which is dubbed by migrant interviewees as the commonest, if not deadliest, effect they encountered at the destination city, Bahir Dar. According to informants, the people referred to have only rare access to clean water as they reside in a temporary shelter without access to basic services. In contrast, buying clean water is not affordable for migrants without their own sources of income. Per informants, a small household with a family of four needs five folds of this amount a day means it needs *Birr* 50 to get adequate water. This is so unaffordable that the migrants rely on groundwater and draw on rivers/streams in critical junctures. Thus, diarrhoea has been prevalent and challenges the migrants to a great extent. It seems to be common among these migrants as they are exposed to a further issue, i.e., consumption of leftover foods. It is stated that the migrants consume leftover foods that are collected in villages and churches. Therefore, migrants are naturally subjected to diarrhoea, as most participants reiterate.

Furthermore, diarrhoea is common among migrants as they lead a congested and communal way of life. Data reveal that the number and size of the shelters is much less than the number of migrants in the temporary camp and at least four individuals reside in a three-by-three meters hut. The lack of medical care adds complication to the mix. The migrants sought medical checkups, follow-ups, and treatments, but they were not able owing to a lack of money to be dispensed and cover fees of even the less expensive state-owned health centres.

The mechanisms causing health-related effects are diverse and the illnesses contracted by the migrants are not just one but varied. The migrants with whom I worked explained that their migration had carried another serious effect: pneumonia. Migrant children, according to interviewees, undertake begging early in the morning, sometimes over long distances, to catch more before people leave villages for their workplaces and ensure an amount enough for a day is gathered. Also, the migrants normally live in what could be described as dilapidated houses made of old corrugated sheets, while others in unfinished constructions and verandas of private residences to decrease pressures on vulnerable members. This meant the migrants were subjected to cold weather and subsequently to pneumonia that only condemned them to a life of misery. Indeed, migrant children in particular those who lived outside a 'proper home', have suffered an endless cycle of pneumonia that practically led them to profound medical costs.

The accounts from migrants converge on the fact that migrants lack both the means to defend vulnerability and the mechanism to deal with crises as a result of which they wonder why they should worry about life in the city but new choices, including returning to rural areas as a final resolution. Thus, the difficulties of life in the destination made decisions to consider a return to rural origins a necessity to escape the negative effects of migration on migrants.

Emotional stress and the desire to return to a rural home.

Emotional stress is one of the prevalent effects of rural-urban migration in Amhara. Per the findings of the study, the entire migrant that participated in the research mentioned emotional stress as one of the major problems facing them in their destination. Thus, as most of the research on the effects of rural-urban migration in Ethiopia and elsewhere (Aberheha 2011; Ralph 2012) suggests, stress is found to be a major problem encountered by migrants in the Amhara Region.

In their discussion of emotional stress as an outcome of rural-urban migration, authors such as Aberheha linked the issue to nostalgia and migrants' sense of failure when remitting families is not possible (Aberheha 2011). However, the phenomenon leads to stress in much more complex ways. Based on evidence from rural-urban migration in Amhara, stress is a normal facet in that migrants are subjected to realistic challenges that create difficulties. Residents of the city insult these migrants as 'beggars' and 'filthy or dirty' due to their rustic untidy sets of clothes and muddled hairdos. Subjected to verbal abuse, the migrants endured stress. However, there is a far more plausible issue of the question of survival that seems to have made stress inevitably common. According to informants, while food shortage is critical, sustaining life through begging is no longer easier for the migrants. Although the residents were so considerate of the migrants initially, this did not last long owing to opposing notions, expectations and enactments between the two. Facing critical shortages of labour, the residents predictably needed to take advantage of the services of the migrant children, especially as domestic workers. For migrant mothers, however, this is a bet that will ruin children's long and short-term prospects. Such employment leads to sexual and labour exploitation and subsequently to miscarriages of careers, so the migrant mothers reject the bid to protect their children from risks. To the extent, that these women are so curious that they still reject those who promise to educate and help their careers. But the residents deem this as maladaptive and the migrants as burdens and, thus, they steadily declined to support the migrants. This created stress endemic to the daily life of the migrants.

These migrants situated at crossroads predictably tend to return to their rural homes. Indeed, the participants' accounts underlined return as the only outlet to end psychosocial and fiscal troubles encountered at the destination. There is logic to it that the indignities of life encountered in Bahir Dar led the migrants to face up to different questions as to why they migrated, what they gained from migration, and what it means to be a beggar. It seems, they compared the current state of life in the city with the one they had in their rural home before their migration. They find not only the 'bright lights' envisaged before their migration unattainable but also their present life more miserable when assessed especially in light of their living that is heavily relied on begging. Hence, the migrants wondered why they should continue to stay in Bahir Dar and decided to return to their rural homes. While they fear things that drove them out might not be improved and that they may not get what they expect, the migrants are hopeful the misery of life in Bahir Dar will not happen to them in their rural origins.

Conclusion

Existing studies on the effects of the phenomenon on migrants generally take psychosocial issues as a starting point, portraying migration as positive that in essence allows women to flee oppressive gender norms in rural settings (Fernandez 2020) and as harmful that inherently causes psychological strains (Gedefa 2013; de Regt 2016). In Amhara, however, the effects of migration on those migrating to towns could be said negative, but are psychological, economic, and social. In the debates about the negative psychological effects of the phenomenon, it is too narrowly conceived to acknowledge the multifaceted ways in which rural-urban migration may become a cause for emotional stress. Two frequent conceptions characterise the debates: first, stress is conceived as an outcome of the failure of remitting families back to their origins and, second, it is seen as a result of homesickness resulting from separation and absence of care and guidance of families. In Amhara, emotional stress is a central facet of migration in that the migrants are subjected to practical challenges including, but not limited to, starvation, diarrhoea, pneumonia, and social mortifications tailored towards or against their rural identity.

Such a typology of the negative effects, however, obscures migrants' diversity and the variability of migration across contexts. Drawing on data from migrant children in Amhara, this article presents a more critical reading of the multi-dimensional economic costs of rural-urban migration than psychological ones. It argues, that by uprooting from rural livelihoods and situating in urban contexts where their labour is not demanded or wasted, the phenomenon leaves migrants with acute hunger or, at least, food shortage that makes life in the destination considerably difficult. In this case, the migrants were neither able to attract employment nor support from concerned bodies. The migrant children under these circumstances remained famished and therefore took begging greatly as a survival strategy—with the making from the trade unable to offer enough supplements to their precarious living due to subdued relationships with residents of the city. These migrants, in particular, failed to put into effect the notion of mutual support: contributing to and receiving support from people in the destination. Unsurprising, they received alms that were not only insignificant but unreliable. Hence, adaptation has important implications for how migrants both contribute to and receive support from residents in the destination ends.

On the other hand, against a too narrow conception, the findings of this study acknowledge the multi-faceted ways in which rural-urban migration affects migrants' health negatively. Unlike the scholarly works on the negativity of the phenomenon of migrants' health that argue that rural-urban migration is an affair that victimizes them with HIV/AIDs (Abeje 2006, 2021), this study revealed additional costs other than HIV/AIDs; not only this syndrome is the effect of the phenomenon on migrants' health. In Amhara, children migrating to towns faced a multitude of physical hazards and were, for instance, vulnerable to incessant diarrhoea and pneumonia. Such an effect is rarely recognized, which could perhaps be read as an indication that there is an assumption that all migrants are able-bodied individuals with deft adaptability and that all migrations are voluntary. The study challenges such an assumption, noting that migration involves vulnerable involuntary groups that wield little power to be adaptable to the urban milieu. In the Amhara, where the migrant children were normally forced to live exposed to an extremely hazardous setting, there was a visible vulnerability to an unhygienic

lack of food and harsh weather that ultimately subjected them to diarrhoea and pneumonia, issues complicated by the inability to cover costs and get medical treatment.

These challenges provided the migrant children a basis from which to contemplate their future and in this trajectory return to rural origins was the precedence for this group. I have examined the perception of these migrants regarding their state of life in Bahir Dar and the idea of return; and just only one uncontested notion, 'return', prevailed in their accounts. So far, the return has been favourably viewed as the decision of successful migrants to invest the money earned from migration to diversify rural livelihoods, alleviate poverty or accrue wealth (Anh 2003; Al-Ali 2004; Asfaw et al. 2010; Abeje 2021). However, this study provides evidence that the effects of migration are negative, such that return to rural areas might be viewed as an enactment to end the threat of life in the exceedingly unwelcoming urban environment. Generally, it seems that return from migration in Amhara is a means by which the migrants can respond to the lack of adaption in the destination and re-engineer and sustain life in the rural world to which they are in tune. It could be said that migration is a process that could offer the migrants nuisances. In this context, the life earned in it dismantled migrants' economic, psychosocial, and physical capabilities, making a return inevitable. Thus, return needs to be seen as an outcome of negative adaptation or failure rather than migration success. So, policymakers should establish support systems that will assist with information about the richness of challenges on the other end or of the scalar mismatch of the reality imaginations, and aspirations of prospective migrants, and creating awareness about opportunities for making effective life in rural areas and about migration as not the surest means to an improved career, perhaps using the coincidences of unsuccessful return migrants.

Grasping the complexities of migration based on one category tends to obscure the distinctive roles of contexts in limiting or enhancing migrants' adaptive capability to specific destinations. Studying beyond a single category of migrants and migratory experiences could thus be more consequential in figuring out the full portrayal of the phenomenon. Hence, the negative framing of the effects of the rural-urban migration should be read with caution and imaginings of how they could differ across contexts.

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South-South Child Migration and Decision Making; the Ethiopian Experience

Dr Meron Zeleke

Meron Zeleke is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Human Rights, Addis Ababa University. She has years of teaching and research experience at renowned academic institutions in Ethiopia, Canada, Germany, Singapore, and the USA and is a member of several international academic associations. She has rich research experience on numerous gender-related international and national academic research projects including ongoing research on migration, gendered labour markets and violence against women. Meron has extensively published in internationally renowned peer-reviewed journals on a wide range of topics such as religion, local institutions of dispute settlement, gender and migration. She has authored books on migration, gender and dispute settlement and contributed chapters to several edited volumes. She is an international editorial board member of journals published by Brill, Michigan State University and is the Editor-in-Chief of the Ethiopian Journal of Human Rights.

Background

The contribution presents an analysis of the socio-economic profile of child migrants, the driving forces for irregular child migration, their migratory routes and decision-making processes. Furthermore, it elaborates on the vulnerabilities of unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs) and the various protection risks faced during their migration journeys, in countries of transit and upon arrival in the destination countries. The empirical basis of the contribution is a qualitative study conducted within the framework of the Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ) Project. An extensive ethnographic study was conducted in Hadiya Zone, from 2019-2022 whereby in-depth interviews and FGDS were held with child migrants in different sites including Hosanna, the zonal capital and Addis Ababa, the national capital and different district towns in Hadiya Zone. In-depth interviews and FGDS held with children aimed at capturing the complexity and nuances of the migration experiences of children and the various elements associated with it. Hadiya Zone is one of the zones in SNNPR divided into eleven districts with Hosanna as its capital. It is one of the hotspots for child migration in Ethiopia.

Profile of Children on the Move

Discussions on child migration need to start from a basic and underlying question of who a child is. In the zone, government officials and community members understand that legally speaking one is considered to be a child as long as he or she is below the age of 18. When it comes to social and economic understandings, however, other considerations than biological age feature prominently. The average age of child migrants ranges between 13 to 17, while in a few cases, children as young as 10 years old migrate on their own. Most child migrants are school dropouts and children coming from large size households. The study found that the majority of Ethiopian child migrants leaving the Hadiya zone for the Republic of South Africa are children from impoverished backgrounds. One aspect of social age definition observed from the analysis of the field material relates to defining age based on the strength of a person to perform tasks. If one is old enough to engage in some laborious tasks (depending on his/her physique) he/she will not be considered a child. This, according to most informants, is above 15 in many cases but could be as low as 12. In the study area, the use of child labour is also acceptable from an early age, at least during off-school hours and seasons. This is more so in the poorest households, for a child to meet basic needs and expenses related to schooling. In economic terms, a child is considered a family member with little responsibility for making a direct contribution to the household economy. However, children from poor economic backgrounds in all study sites are often forced to drop out of school to support the subsistence of their families.

Reflection on Factors Accounting for Child Migration in the Hadiya Zone

The study went beyond a monocausal analysis of factors influencing the migration of children and accordingly addressed the multifaceted factors ranging from individual factors, community-related factors (including those at the household level), and structural to other triggering factors. The push and pull factors tend to be subjective and include individual, household, community and structural factors. They include economic factors (absolute and relative deprivation), and culture of migration, etc. poverty, low agricultural productivity, landlessness and high youth unemployment are the common economic push factors raised by informants. The poverty in the study sites in most circumstances relates to the difficulty of having a reliable means of livelihood, owing to land scarcity and landlessness. This is pronounced in the case of Hadiya, which is one of the zones in Ethiopia which has the highest population density in the country. Even though absolute poverty and the associated sense of deprivation of basic needs appears to be a push factor for the largest majority of children migrating from the Hadiya zone, the study also found out that for a significant number of children, the relative sense of deprivation plays a quintessential role. The migration success stories, which tend to be visible, whereby families with children overseas are seen benefiting from the remittances, create a sense of relative deprivation which in some circumstances contributes as a factor for child migration from the zone. The most important pull factors, mentioned by most child respondents, include the possibility of earning an income, getting a better life in the destination country, and existing possibilities to find a job and the very

strong belief that migration offers a better life. The community-level factors identified in the study include disinterest in rural life among the younger generation, aesthetic attractions, and cultural compatibility. There is a strong culture of migration in the Hadiya Zone whereby migration is socially accepted and pervasive in society, and migration decisions are rooted in everyday experiences. The stronger networks between the sending districts in the zone and the destination often facilitate the flow of information, ideas, money and migrants. As such, in a district, that is part of a migration system, migration will be culturally sanctioned and accepted by the majority as a viable alternative in life as the finding of the multisided ethnographic research in the Hadiya zone clearly shows. Low performance in education and addiction/substance abuse are individual-level factors for child migration. The household-level factors identified in the study include large family size, low household income, migration histories of parents and family members, and family dynamics such as divorce or death of a parent. Other contingent factors affecting the migration dynamics include the availability of smuggling services and the accessibility of information technologies. In locales where migration is deeply rooted, socio-economic conditions and lived experiences are heavily influenced by migration. This could cover all aspects of socio-economic life (food, clothing, school expenses), and contribute to increasing the inequality between migrants' families and others; further fuelling migration. The other aspect of the engrained culture of migration relates to the fact that children interviewed have confirmed the presence of at least one migrant from an extended family, or relatives or neighbourhood giving migration the status of the new normal.

The findings of this study shed light on current trends and developments in the rural Hadiya zone, which mirror the situation in many rural areas across Ethiopia. These findings reveal a notable shift in the "value for money" equation, with a significant move away from investing in children's education towards investing in migration, as the perceived value of education diminishes. Hence, an investment in migration is considered a wise investment as it relates to "value for money". There is also the commonly held position that one cannot change his/her life through education and employment within the zone. This is situated within the broader crisis in the education system.

As the analysis of the study findings shows, aspirations are no longer attached to land or agriculture in broader terms. Hence, generational low interest in joining the rural sector by the youth is one of the major community-level factors accounting for migration. Conceptions of modernity justify the influx of young people to urban areas; while the infrastructures are not there to create jobs and help the youth make a successful transition. This in turn is leading to a reduction in interest to pursue education and to view employment as a preferable means of livelihood in many cases.

The role of communication technology especially the telephone is described to be quite as the data collected from different research sites in the Hadiya zone shows. The information exchanged about the positive dimensions of life overseas based on *selective narratives* (and the widely displayed 'benefits' of migrating), on top of high unemployment, contributes to changing life aspirations at the local level.

Protection Risks Faced by Child Migrants

The findings of the study also show that children's journeys from their place of origin in the Hadiya zone to their respective destinations in RSA are rife with protection risk and exploitation. The multifaceted risks faced involve; being held by criminals against their will, being forced to work without pay; anxiety due to fear of detention and deportation, living on streets under abysmal conditions, and lack of access to services. The study found compelling evidence regarding the fact that child migrants are often exposed to multifaceted protection risks of different natures at various phases of their journey. Child migrants face numerous risks in their country of origin, enroute, in transit and at destination countries. As the empirical data clearly shows, unaccompanied child migrants often face detention, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, and in some instances vulnerability of smuggled migrants to sex trafficking. The risks faced also involve those caused by smugglers who are part of the trafficker's networks, exposing children to hazardous and exploitative situations, especially in cases where the migrant children and their families incur debts to pay smugglers' fees and requested ransoms. Furthermore, child migrants could be victims of violent crime, including sexual and gender-based violence (GBV).

The most common risks faced by child migrants are hunger, thirst, physical exhaustion from long travels under very hot climates, disappearances/death, contracting diseases etc. As the analysis of the case studies clearly shows the length of the journey and the prolonged duration of migration increases the exposure of children to risks of abuse

In the context where there are few or no opportunities to move legally, children resort to irregular migration which involves moving through dangerous routes often engaging smugglers to help in crossing borders. These routes involve several internal and international transit points. Male child migrants from Hadiya zone often use the southern route destined to South Africa while female children often travel to the Middle East.

Conclusion

The brief contribution has presented the diverse socio-economic background of child migrants from the Hadiya zone destined for South Africa and discussed the complex factors accounting for this growing phenomenon. This short contribution does not purport to be exhaustive but would serve as a preliminary study that contributes to identifying the key trends of child migration in and from the study area, factors affecting the decision-making, and the protection risks involved in child migration. The assessment of factors of migration went beyond a monocausal analysis of factors influencing the decision-making of potential young migrants and rather attended to the interplay between different factors ranging from individual, household-related, and community level to structural factors. Hence child migration is situated within broader societal issues involving a more complex decision-making process although economic pressures are commonly cited about poverty, unemployment, lack of land and limited access to saving and credit services. The migration routes followed by the child migrants involve several stopovers at different transit points. Despite some positive actions to address the protection concerns of child migrants and to combatting smuggling and trafficking, the challenges remain immense and complicated.

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**REGIONALPROGRAMM SICHERHEITSPOLITISCHER
DIALOG OSTAFRIKA /
REGIONAL PROGRAMME SECURITY DIALOGUE
FOR EAST AFRICA**



📍 24, Kololo Hill Lane, Kololo
P.O.Box 647, Kampala. Uganda

✉ sipodi.east@kas.de
🌐 www.kas.de/en/web/sipodi-east