

Chapter 60

Impact of Rural–Urban Migration on the Food Consumption Pattern of Farming Households in Ibadan/Ibarapa Agricultural Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of rural-urban migration on the food consumption pattern of farming households. The study revealed that 73.8% of the households had migrants, while 80.2% of the migrants were male. The highest level of education of most of the migrants was secondary school (71.4%). The study showed that the major reason (63.3%) for migration was for job. The average remittance sent per year was ₦108,119.14. The study revealed that household expenditure on carbohydrate food group accounted for 54.4% of the total households' expenditure on food. The average dietary diversity indices for the migrant (0.345) and non-migrant (0.346) households were low. The study revealed that migration (short and long term) positively influenced per capita food expenditure of respondent. Despite the remittance from some of the migrants, the need to develop the rural areas in terms of provision of basic infrastructures by government is imperative in order to reduce rural-urban migration.

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INTRODUCTION

High poverty rate and lack of basic infrastructures in the rural areas have contributed to shortage of labour for farming activities in Nigeria (Ogun, 2010). The neglect of agriculture for the crude oil compels rural households to look for opportunities away from the agricultural sector as a way to escape from poverty. The migration of youths from rural to urban areas has contributed significantly to the decline in agricultural production (Maharjan *et al.*, 2013; Olayide, 2009). However, temporary migration to urban centre is undertaken by farmers during the dry season which affords farming households incomes that are invested in variety of production and consumption uses. Adewale (2005) affirmed that migration occurs as a response to economic development as well as social, cultural, environmental and political factors and effects on areas of origin as well as destination. Studies (Lewis, 2004; Osondu and Ibezim, 2001; Mbah *et al.*, 2016) have shown that rural-urban migration is associated with heavy drain on the supply of rural family labour and also pulls out the individuals who are vital for agricultural production. The studies highlighted low agriculture productivity, reduction in agricultural labor force, farm work mostly done by the aged, food insecurity in households, poor standard of living, high cost of labor, among others as the negative effects of rural-urban migration. Through migration, able bodied youth relocate to urban areas making the old farmers left behind to overwork themselves with attendant decline in health. According to Amrevurayire (2016), migration places a greater burden on farmers by compelling them to cultivate the same farm size as when he had enough farm labour, working much longer hours thus, depriving farmer's time for leisure or participation in various social activities. Rural-urban migration brings about rapid deterioration of rural economy leading to chronic poverty and food insecurity that arises mainly due to excessive drain of youth from the rural populace (Mini 2000)

Poverty has a strong relationship with poor nutrition, thus compelling households to consume mainly carbohydrate based foods (Harrington *et al.* (2009). Carbohydrates, fat and protein comprise the three principal sources of balanced diet in human nutrition. Individual foods contain different proportions of these three principal macronutrients. Animal products (meat and dairy) are rich sources of protein and fat, while cereals, fruits and vegetables contain a large proportion of carbohydrate (Kennedy, 2001; National Institutes of Health, 2019). The need for human dietary diversity cannot be overemphasized. According to Ruel (2003) and International Dietary Data Expansion Project (2015), dietary diversity is the number of individual food items or food groups consumed over a given period of time. Dietary diversity is an essential element of diet quality; consuming a variety of foods across and within food groups is associated with adequate intake of essential nutrients and promotes good health (Waswa *et al.*, 2015; Arimond *et al.*, 2010). However, limited access to variety of foods is a predominant problem among rural households. Their diets consist mainly of starchy staples with few or no animal products, fresh fruits and vegetables (Ruel, 2003; Torheim *et al.*, 2004; Henjum *et al.*, 2015). Consumption of poor quality diets and general lack of access to wide food diversity has been acknowledged as the major predisposing factors for low productivity among farming households in the rural areas (Moursi *et al.*, 2008; Arimond *et al.*, 2010; Headey & Ecker, 2013). A study reported by the National Bureau of Statistics (2007) showed that the farming households in Southwest, Nigeria consumed more of "Eko/Agidi", bread, yam flour, yam tuber, and garri..., consuming a nutritious diet can be a challenge for those struggling with poverty for a variety of reasons, including limited finances and resources, competing priorities, and stress (Braveman, 2011; Liu *et al.*, 2014; Stahre *et al.*, 2015; King, 2016). This is attributable to poverty caused by several factors including rural-urban migration.

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