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Challenges and Prospects of Migration of People From Neighboring Urban Centers to Yabello Town, Borana Zone, Southern Ethiopia

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CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF MIGRATION OF PEOPLE FROM NEIGHBORING URBAN CENTERS TO YABELLO TOWN, BORANA ZONE, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to assess the challenges and prospects of migration from neighboring urban centers to Yabello town in the Borana zone, Southern Ethiopia. Urban–urban migration has become an increasingly important demographic and socio-economic phenomenon, shaping the development trajectory of emerging towns such as Yabello town. To investigate this issue comprehensively, the research employed both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions, while secondary data were obtained from books, journals, and relevant documents. A total of 171 respondents were selected using purposive and stratified sampling techniques to ensure adequate representation of different social groups. The study adopted a mixed research approach within a descriptive research design. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data, while narrative analysis was applied to qualitative information. The discussion and findings primarily focused on the factors driving urban–urban migration, its effects on social and cultural characteristics, and the challenges faced by migrants and host community members in the study area. The findings indicate that urban–urban migration to Yabello Town has more positive than negative effects. Migrants actively participate in diverse labor-force activities, contribute to local income generation, and stimulate economic growth. Moreover, migration fosters cultural interaction, mutual recognition of differences, and the sharing of knowledge, skills, and experiences, thereby enriching the social fabric of the town. However, challenges such as security concerns, social integration issues, and pressure on urban services were also identified. The study concludes by recommending that the Yabello Town administration balance security considerations with humanitarian concerns. Policymakers should utilize these findings to anticipate future challenges, adjust policies, design appropriate development programs, and allocate resources effectively.

Keywords: Borana zone, migration challenges and prospects, socio-economic impacts, urban–urban migration, Yabello town.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history, migration has played a significant role in shaping the physical, cultural, social, and demographic characteristics of different regions of the world. Human movements across territories have transformed the distribution of populations, influencing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic composition of societies. For instance, the present map of Europe has been shaped by several major historical migrations, including the movements of Germanic groups, Slavic peoples, Turks, and other populations. Similarly, between the late sixteenth and twentieth centuries, European migration contributed to the colonization and settlement of the Americas, Australia, Oceania, northern Asia, and parts of Africa. During this period, approximately 60 million Europeans migrated overseas, creating profound demographic and social transformations across continents (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2023).

One of the largest migration movements in recorded history was the Great Atlantic Migration from Europe to North America. The first major wave began in the 1840s, particularly involving large numbers of migrants from Ireland and Germany. A second and even larger wave occurred during the 1880s, mainly involving migrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. Between 1880 and 1910, nearly 17 million Europeans migrated to the United States. Another significant historical migration was the forced movement of enslaved Africans through the transatlantic slave trade, which was organized by European traders from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. It is estimated that around 20 million Africans were transported to the Americas, although many died due to the extremely harsh and inhumane conditions during the Atlantic crossing (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2023).

Migration is a complex, multidimensional, and dynamic demographic process that has existed throughout human history at different geographic and social scales. It is influenced by a combination of economic, social, political, environmental, and cultural factors. According to the World Population Policies Report (2013), among 185 countries with available information, approximately 80 percent of governments had adopted policies aimed at reducing rural-to-urban migration, compared with only 38 percent in 1996. This trend was particularly evident in low- and middle-income countries in Africa and Asia, where rapid urbanization and demographic transitions are taking place. Historically, migration has been closely associated with industrialization, urban growth, and economic transformation (Adepoju, 2008).

Migration in Ethiopia takes different forms, including rural-to-urban migration, urban-to-urban movement, rural resettlement, and planned relocation programs. Internal migration is also commonly associated with social factors such as marriage, where one spouse moves to join the community or residence of the other partner. In recent years, the Ethiopian government has implemented various resettlement programs designed to encourage voluntary movement by providing support and incentives to individuals and households seeking new opportunities. These initiatives have contributed to making migration a possible livelihood strategy for many Ethiopians who aim to improve their living conditions and secure better opportunities for their families (Van Dijk & Fransen, 2008).

Beyond resettlement programs, the government has also introduced interventions aimed at improving rural livelihoods and reducing migration pressures. These efforts include expanding rural infrastructure, increasing access to essential services, and creating opportunities for economic development in rural communities. Therefore, migration in Ethiopia should be understood as a complex process shaped by multiple causes and requiring diverse policy responses. Continued efforts to support migrants and improve conditions in both rural and urban areas remain essential for managing internal migration effectively (Sander & Maimbo, 2005).

Migration can generally be defined as the geographical movement of people across a particular boundary with the intention of establishing a new permanent or semi-permanent place of residence. It is a broad and complex phenomenon that affects economic, social, cultural, and security dimensions of human life in an increasingly interconnected world. Migration is closely linked with globalization, international relations, trade, and cultural exchange, creating opportunities for states, businesses, and communities to benefit from human mobility (IOM, 2018).

Migration has contributed significantly to improving livelihoods in both origin and destination areas by providing individuals with opportunities for employment, education, economic advancement, and improved living conditions. Its contributions to economic development, human development, safety, and social progress ensure that migration remains an important global issue. However, migration does not always occur under favorable conditions. In recent years, increasing numbers of people have been displaced due to armed conflict, persecution, environmental degradation, climate-related challenges, insecurity, and limited access to livelihood opportunities (IOM, 2018).

Urban-to-urban migration has become an increasingly visible phenomenon in Yabello town due to the movement of people from surrounding urban areas toward the town. Various social, economic, and livelihood-related factors encourage individuals and households from neighboring urban centers to relocate to Yabello in search of better opportunities, employment, improved services, and enhanced living conditions. Therefore, this study focuses on examining urban-to-urban migration in Yabello town by investigating the factors that influence migration from neighboring urban areas, the experiences of migrants, and the implications of such movements for the social and economic development of the town.

Statement of the Problem

People are moving from one area to another area due to various factors. Some of the people are moved voluntarily and others are compelled to move from one area to another area due to different factors such as shortage of land, need for access to education, better infrastructure facilities, and unemployment in developing countries like Ethiopia. There is a problem of inequality in living standard of people in different area. In fact, industrial sectors, education, trade and other service sectors are concentrated in more urban areas then it became one of the pulling factors. Migration is very common phenomena for developing countries that strongly influenced by economic factors. Therefore, this type of migration is not exception for Ethiopia (Thirwas, 2006).

In researchers' empirical experience, migration has a significant contribution to population growth of Yabello town in Borana zone is relatively the populous towns that is facing different problems related to migration of people from the neighboring urban areas. High flow of migrants to Yabello creates large number of labor force and this has emphasized the problem of unemployment. The growing rate of the prostitution, crime and expansion of urban informal sectors are the major problems that have resulted in migration.

Like other towns, Yabello town is better center for education, trade, administration, health and other important services among districts of Borana zone and there is better job opportunity for laborers. As a result, more people move from the surroundings urban areas towards the town throughout the year. This brought burden in the municipality in planning, managing, and keeping the security of the town. In order to come up with appropriate solution to the problems of this urban to-urban migration, the researchers may assess the causes and impacts of neighboring urban migration in the Yabello town, Borana zone.

Based on this, researchers' information gathered from immigrants showed that the most of the migrants move from neighboring urban centers to Yabello town. In fact that many previously conducted researches focus on rural to urban migration. However, this research dealt with the challenges and prospects of urban to urban migration.

Basic Research Questions

At the end of this study, the following basic research questions are answered:

- What are the major push and pull factors that drive urban–urban migration to Yabello town?
- How does urban–urban migration affect the social and cultural characteristics of the host community?
- What key challenges do urban–urban migrants and local community members face in the study area?
- What prospects and opportunities does urban–urban migration create for economic development and social transformation in the town?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualization of Migration

Migration is multifaceted process that affects and affected by economic and demographic factors. Migration is a field of study for different disciplines such as Economics, Sociology, Psychology and Geography and such disciplines have their own different interest and perspective on migration. The theoretical explanation about migration has long history dating from 1980s when Regenstein first proposed law of migration. According to this law, migrants move from areas of low productivity to areas of high productivity. Migration is a permanent reallocation of people from one to place another place searching for better life (Todaro, 2003).

Lee (1966) developed a theoretical framework for analyzed force that stimulate or related migration. Lee divides the forces exerting on migration perceptions in to push and pull factors. It hypothesized that some migrants are primarily pushed out of place of residence by combination of unfavorable force that made a continued residence undesirable. Others are induced to leave their residence by attractive situations from their locations to their locations.

As Sajaastad (1962) presented a theory of migration which treats the decision to migrate as an investment decision involving individual cost and return over times. This approach assumes peoples' desire to maximize their net real income over their productive life by computing roughly their possible destination. Using this approach, the decision of not to migrate is viewed as the outcome of balancing benefits and comparing them with calculated costs. The potential migrants arrive at an estimate of the net gain and loss that come from migration.

The labor transfer is an equilibrating factor and mechanism from the agricultural labor surplus to deficit manufacturing sector. The concept of rural-urban labour transfer is based on agriculture and manufacturing sector distinction applied to the labor market differentials in rural and urban areas respectively. A subsistence low productive agriculture sector is characterized by underdevelopment productivity of modern high industrial sector characterized by full employment. According to Lewis, the marginal productivity in subsistence agriculture sector is zero. Individuals receive low wage equal to their cost of subsistence on other hand wage in the modern urban sectors are much higher (Lewis, 1986).

Potential migrants are individual decision makers who consider the various market opportunities available in between the areas and choose one who maximizes their expected gains from migration. Urban area is the main attracting pole of migration of the rural parts. Migration

divides the economic factors in to push and pull factors. The push factor is negative factor that tends to force people to leave the original area whereas pull factor is positive factor that attracts migrants to destination areas in expectation of improving their life (Todaro, 2003).

Non-economic Factors of Migration

Noneconomic factors of migration is other word of socio-cultural issues such as early marriage, death of spouse, divorce, and cultural barriers to rural-urban migration contributed significant in Ethiopia, particularly the young female grow. The primary motive of migrants is to free themselves from the restrictive social and cultural environment which is noted as the major underlying cause for migration (Lewis, 1986).

Economic Factors of Migration

Economic factors mostly lead people to migrate from one area to another area. Economic factors include pushing factors of shortage of economy and urban pulling factors of better economy (Todaro, 2003).

Pulling Factors of Migration

The main attracting factors for migration from their destination are real opportunity for money and better standard of living in towns rather than economic conditions by which migrants suffer from in their villages. The people who move from one area to another areas is for work opportunities and livelihood for male migrants include unskilled daily labor, work in house construction, sector loading and unloading of goods, urban vegetable growing, and lottery selling. When migrants are unemployed beginning from unmarried women, they migrate to be engaged in domestic works and carrying out a petty trading (Feleke, 2006).

In many developing countries, modern economic activities, social services and infrastructures such as health, education, recreation, and imagined or actual employment opportunities are concentrated in urban areas All of the listed social services are either insufficiently provided or non-existing in rural area. Thus, urban pulling factors have been among the contributing factors in the movement of peoples towards the town (ibid).

Pushing Factors of Migration

The pushing factors of migration in Ethiopia refer to the various conditions and circumstances that compel individuals to leave their places of origin and move to other areas in search of

improved livelihoods. In today's increasingly interconnected world, international migration has become a widespread phenomenon affecting almost every region of the globe. Advances in transportation and communication technologies have made migration easier, faster, and more affordable, enabling people to move in pursuit of employment opportunities, education, improved living standards, and a better quality of life. At the same time, challenges such as conflict, poverty, social inequality, and the absence of sustainable livelihood opportunities force many individuals and families to leave their homes in search of security and better prospects elsewhere (Hussein, 1994).

Migration can also contribute positively to inclusive and sustainable economic growth in both countries of origin and destination. Remittances sent by migrants often serve as an important source of household income, improving the well-being of families and communities through investments in education, healthcare, sanitation, housing, and local infrastructure. Similarly, destination countries benefit from migration because migrants frequently fill labor shortages, establish businesses, contribute to innovation, and provide financial contributions through taxes and social security systems. Many migrants become active contributors to the scientific, technological, and economic development of their host societies (Hunnes, 2012).

Urban Informal Sector and Migration

A considerable proportion of migration, particularly to urban areas, is associated with opportunities available in the informal sector. The urban informal sector emerged prominently in developing countries during the early 1970s when researchers observed that a large number of urban workers were not being absorbed into the formal employment sector. Instead, many newly arrived migrants created their own employment opportunities or became engaged in small-scale, family-owned enterprises. The informal sector is generally characterized by activities that are unorganized, unregulated, unregistered, and sometimes outside the formal legal framework.

For many migrants, participation in the informal sector represents a strategy for survival and income generation. Workers often depend on their own skills, local knowledge, and available resources to create employment opportunities rather than relying on formal wage employment. According to Todaro (2003), migrants are frequently motivated by the need to secure sufficient income to support themselves and their families, particularly when formal employment opportunities are limited.

The increasing concern of governments in developing countries regarding rapid urban population growth and rural–urban migration was highlighted in the 1988 United Nations Population Prospects Report. The report emphasized that accelerated urban growth and increasing rural-to-urban migration would become among the most significant demographic and development challenges of the twenty-first century, especially in less developed countries (ibid).

Sociological Aspects of Migration

Urbanization and internal migration are fundamentally social processes because their causes and consequences are closely connected with broader societal changes. These processes are influenced by social structures, economic conditions, cultural practices, and patterns of human interaction. At the same time, migration and urbanization also involve psychological dimensions because they influence migrants' perceptions, attitudes, aspirations, and decision-making processes.

Therefore, the causes and consequences of migration should be examined from a broader social perspective. For instance, when analyzing the influence of migration on political participation within a country, it is important to consider not only the number of people moving into urban areas but also how urban experiences shape migrants' social participation, political awareness, and attitudes toward governance and citizenship (Feleke, 2006).

Effects of Migration on Human Population and Development

According to the United Nations (2017), although migration generates significant social and economic benefits, many migrants continue to experience vulnerability and exclusion. Migrants are often among the first groups affected during periods of economic crisis because they may lose employment opportunities earlier than other workers. Some migrants are employed under unfavorable conditions, receiving lower wages, working longer hours, and experiencing poorer working environments compared with native workers. Although migration can provide individuals with opportunities for empowerment and improved livelihoods, many migrants still face violations of human rights, exploitation, discrimination, and social marginalization. Women and children migrants are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and other forms of abuse associated with migration.

In developed economies, international migration has contributed to economic growth by expanding human capital, increasing labor availability, promoting entrepreneurship, and encouraging innovation. Migration can also reduce labor shortages, support productivity, and contribute to economic stability during periods of rapid growth. Many scholars argue that the overall contribution of migration to development often outweighs its associated challenges (Blau & Hunt, 2017). Regarding economic advancement and social mobility, migrants frequently improve their socioeconomic status over time and may eventually contribute significantly to the labor force, human capital development, and knowledge exchange in host countries (Bevelander & James, 2022).

Furthermore, migrants who return to their countries of origin can play an important role in economic and political transformation by transferring knowledge, skills, and financial resources. Some migrants become transnational actors who maintain social, economic, and cultural connections between origin and destination countries. In this way, potential negative effects of brain drain can sometimes be transformed into brain gain through return migration and knowledge transfer. Remittances also remain an important source of foreign exchange and investment for many developing countries, although global health challenges and economic crises have occasionally affected these financial flows (World Bank, 2020).

Opportunities of Urban to Urban Migration

Urban migration, including both internal and international movement toward cities, has become an increasingly important trend in the twenty-first century. Although estimates vary, global migration has reached significant levels, with hundreds of millions of people moving internally and internationally. Consequently, discussions about the social, economic, political, and cultural impacts of migration on societies and urban areas have gained increasing attention (UNPD, 2009).

The continuous growth of migration toward urban centers is influenced by several global realities, including population ageing, uneven economic development, environmental challenges, and political instability. In addition, millions of people worldwide have been forcibly displaced due to conflicts and other crises. A considerable proportion of displaced populations seek

protection and livelihood opportunities in urban areas, creating new challenges and opportunities for city development (UNHCR; Skeldon, 2018).

Both internal and international urban migration involve diverse groups of migrants with different motivations and experiences. These include individuals seeking better employment opportunities in formal and informal sectors, women migrating to support their families or join spouses, students pursuing education and training, asylum seekers, and people displaced by environmental disasters or conflicts (ibid).

Migration to urban areas can improve people's living conditions by providing access to employment, education, healthcare, social services, and improved livelihood opportunities. Many households migrate because of insecure rural livelihoods, economic shocks, environmental pressures, and aspirations for upward social mobility. However, rapid migration can also place pressure on urban infrastructure and social services. As a result, migrants may experience difficulties accessing housing, healthcare, social protection, and other essential services, increasing their vulnerability to poverty, disease, violence, and forced eviction (IOM, 2015; World Bank, 2016).

Migrant women, particularly those without legal documentation, are more likely to experience workplace exploitation, abuse, trafficking, and other forms of insecurity. Despite the large scale of rural–urban migration, many urban development policies and governance systems fail to adequately recognize migrants as important urban actors. Instead of viewing migrants as contributors to urban development, they are often perceived as problems associated with pressure on housing, infrastructure, and public services (IOM, 2015).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Migration represents an important livelihood strategy in many developing countries as individuals and households seek improved living conditions and greater economic opportunities. The understanding of migration patterns is largely based on the interaction between push and pull factors. Urban areas often attract migrants because of better access to essential services, including electricity, piped water, transportation, education, healthcare, and other public facilities.

Although the reasons encouraging rural residents to migrate are important, the availability and accessibility of migration opportunities also influence migration decisions. Improvements in transportation systems, increased access to information through media, and rising educational levels have strengthened people's awareness of urban opportunities and encouraged migration toward cities (Birhan, 2011).

Historically, migration studies emphasized pull factors, suggesting that people moved mainly because urban areas provided better employment and income opportunities. However, recent studies indicate that push factors have become increasingly influential. Push factors refer to unfavorable conditions in migrants' places of origin that encourage them to leave. These include unemployment, limited employment opportunities for young people, extreme poverty, shortage of agricultural land, low agricultural productivity, large household size, recurring drought and famine, family separation, conflicts, cultural pressures, inadequate healthcare services, misinformation, and discrimination (Lavuri, 2018).

In contrast, pull factors refer to attractive conditions available in destination areas, particularly urban centers. These include better employment opportunities in formal and informal sectors, the presence of relatives or social networks, opportunities for education and training, improved housing conditions, access to electricity and water services, better transportation systems, security, improved lifestyles, access to modern goods, influence from previous migrants, and opportunities for political and religious freedom (Desta et al., 2016).

Push factors therefore describe circumstances such as poverty, famine, drought, unemployment, and poor living conditions that force individuals to leave their places of origin. Pull factors refer to opportunities available elsewhere that attract migrants, including employment, higher income possibilities, improved housing, and better social services. Migration decisions are usually shaped by the combined influence of these factors rather than by a single cause (ibid).

Beyond economic motivations, urban areas also provide opportunities for improved lifestyles and social advancement. Access to electricity, clean water, transportation, education, healthcare, and public services makes cities attractive destinations. Similarly, improved communication

technologies and media exposure allow rural populations to observe and learn about urban lifestyles. Success stories of individuals who migrated to cities often encourage others to follow similar pathways. However, such information may sometimes be unrealistic or exaggerated, contributing to excessive and unplanned urbanization (Jahan, 2012, as cited in Desta et al., 2016).

Therefore, migration should be understood by examining its underlying causes and consequences rather than treating migration itself as the problem. People move from one place to another because of various combinations of push and pull factors. Based on migrants' circumstances and motivations, migration can generally be categorized into five major types: primitive migration, forced migration, impelled migration, free migration, and mass migration (National Geographic Society, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

For several decades, scholars from different disciplines and interdisciplinary fields have attempted to explain and develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of migration. A wide range of theoretical and empirical studies have examined the nature, determinants, patterns, and consequences of migration at both internal and international levels. These theories provide important explanations of why people migrate, how migration decisions are made, and how migration influences individuals, communities, and societies. This section presents a review and critical examination of major migration theories, with particular emphasis on developing country contexts that share similarities with the Ethiopian experience.

The Push-Pull Theory

The push-pull theory is one of the most widely recognized approaches for explaining the causes and processes of migration. The theory argues that migration decisions are influenced by the interaction between factors that encourage people to leave their places of origin (push factors) and factors that attract them toward destination areas (pull factors). In other words, individuals or households decide to migrate when pressures in their current environment combine with perceived opportunities elsewhere.

Push factors refer to unfavorable conditions that motivate individuals or families to leave their original places of residence. These factors may include low agricultural productivity, shortage of farmland, unemployment, limited livelihood opportunities, and poor economic conditions. On

the other hand, pull factors are the attractive conditions available at destinations, particularly urban areas, such as better employment opportunities, higher wages, improved living standards, and access to various social and economic services (Gmelch & Zenner, 1996:190). In some situations, migration is mainly influenced by strong push factors, while in other cases, attractive opportunities at destinations play a more dominant role in encouraging migration (Hornby & Jones, 1993:102).

The basic push-pull theory consists of two important dimensions: migration selectivity and migration elasticity. Migration selectivity, also known as differential migration, refers to the tendency of certain individuals or groups, based on characteristics such as age, sex, education, social class, and economic status, to be more likely to migrate than others under particular conditions and periods. Migration elasticity, on the other hand, recognizes that individuals respond differently to similar push and pull factors because they perceive, interpret, and evaluate migration opportunities differently according to their personal circumstances and experiences (Witherick & Jansen, 1970:14).

Lee (1966) revised the basic push-pull theory by arguing that migration decisions cannot be explained simply by identifying push and pull factors alone. Instead, migration is the result of the interaction between the characteristics of the place of origin, destination conditions, intervening obstacles, and individual factors. According to Lee, both origin and destination areas contain a combination of positive, negative, and neutral attributes, and individuals evaluate these characteristics differently depending on their personal circumstances, including age, gender, education level, and marital status.

The conditions of the place where people currently live may be considered either advantages or disadvantages related to migration. Similarly, destination areas also contain positive, negative, and neutral factors. Positive characteristics at the destination encourage migration, while negative characteristics discourage movement. Neutral factors, meanwhile, may have little or no influence on an individual's migration decision.

Lee further introduced the concept of intervening obstacles into the push-pull framework. Intervening obstacles refer to barriers that make migration from one place to another difficult or prevent movement altogether. These obstacles may include geographical distance, transportation costs, lack of financial resources, limited access to information, and other social or institutional barriers (Lee, 1966).

Therefore, migration occurs when individuals are able to overcome both push and pull conditions as well as the obstacles between the place of origin and destination. After analyzing migration processes, Lee identified several important aspects of migration, including migration volume, the formation of migration streams and counter-streams, and migration selectivity. Migration streams refer to the movement of people from particular origins toward specific destinations, while counter-streams represent movements in the opposite direction, often involving return migration or alternative movements. Migration selectivity explains why certain groups of people are more likely to migrate than others based on their personal and socioeconomic characteristics (Aklilu & Tadesse, 1991:38–40).

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METHODOLOGY

Description of the Study Area

Yabello town is located at Southern part of Ethiopia about 565km from national capital Addis Ababa. Administratively, Yabello town is located in Oromia National Regional State, Borana Zone, Yabello District. The international road extends from a capital of Egypt (Cairo) to South Africa (Cape Town) cross the Yabello town.

The relative location of the Yabello town is found at the North Dugda Dawa district, the South Dubuluk district, the East Arero district and the West Telltale district. The name Yabello comes from **Yaa'a Bal'aa** which means large ritual settlement of Borana Oromo's Gada system. The total land area of the district is about 5909 km^2 of which 31 km^2 is cultivated, 338 km^2 is covered with forest, 681km^2 is bush and shrubs, and 4900 km^2 is wood land (CSA, 2007).

Astronomically Yabello town is roughly lies 4° 10' 02" North to 4° 52' 15" North latitude and 38° 04' 34" to 38° 10' 01" East longitudes. This astronomical location shows that the town is about 200km from extreme southern point of the country. Thus, its proximity to Equator on one hand and it is nearer to within great east African Rift Valley, thus, the condition makes the town to experience high amount of temperature all-round the year (CSA, 2007).

Population of the town was accounted 22,223, which 11,790 (53.1%) are males and 10,433 (46.9%) are females population. Livestock production is the major means of livelihood in the study area and contributes to the subsistence requirement of the population, among other, in terms of milk, and milk products and meat, particularly from small ruminants (Economic Development Office, 2011/2012).

Research Design

The study is employed mixed research approach. To attain the objective of the study, the researchers are used descriptive research design. In this design, the researchers are collected both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time during the study and then integrate the information in the interpretation of the overall results.

The main reason of choosing this method is to increase generalization ability of results and incorporate the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This method is used to

add insight and meaning that might otherwise be missed in mono-method approaches (Creswell, 2014).

Sources of Data

In this study, the researchers used both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data are collected from migrants using various data collection methods. While secondary data are gathered from both published and unpublished materials such as books, newspapers, dissertations, theses and journals, and licensed brokers' immigrants profile.

Sampling Size Determination and Sampling Technique

The study area, Yabello town is selected purposefully due to extensive practices of in migration. Based on the nature of the study, the researchers are used purposive and stratified sampling techniques to identify the migrants. By the help of the key-informants, the migrants that come across neighboring urban areas are identified from the Yabello town.

As long as this research is basically characterized by quantitative nature of a study, the sample size of the sample of immigrants experienced is determined based on the data nature of the responses. Various members of the immigrants are used as source of information during the data collection process. Furthermore, legal brokers who have license on the issue, concerned officials and experts related to the case are used as additional source of information to take part in the study.

For the quantitative, sample are determined to select respondents using the commonly used formula of Yamane (1967). Hence, the sample sizes are calculated in the following manner:

- n = $\frac{N}{1+N\,(e)2}$ where

  N- Indicates the total migrants

  e- Indicates the maximum margin of errors -------5% = 0.05

  n= sample size

- n = n = $\frac{N}{1+N\,(0.5)2}$ $\frac{300}{1+300\,(0.05)2}$

  n =$\frac{300}{1+300\,(0.0025)}$

  n= $\frac{300}{1+0.75}$ = 171. Therefore, the numbers of respondents are 171.

Data Collection Instruments

Since the researchers are employed qualitative and quantitative approach in order to conduct the study, the relevant data collection tools are questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion.

Interview

In the study, unstructured interview is used because it is flexible in order to arrange contents and structures of the question in what so ever manner. Besides, in-depth interview is used in order to conduct face to face encounter with informants during data collection. Both unstructured and in-depth interview are conducted with the 10 migrants, 5 experts, and 5 licensed brokers. The interview is undertaken through the languages of Afan Oromo and Amharic and later it is translated in to English. The total interviewees are 20 in number.

Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion is conducted three times by selecting 5 migrants with the researchers. Besides, it also will be conducted with 3 experts about the issue. The total participant in focus group discussion is 8 in number.

Questionnaire

In order to obtain purposeful and relevant information, the researchers are prepared structured questionnaires and distributed both open ended and close ended questions to the respondents who are selected by using simple random sampling method. The questionnaire is distributed for about 143 respondents out of these 44 community members, 14 office workers, 14 agents and 71 migrants are participated.

Data Analysis Methods

Since the research design is descriptive research design, the data are qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed qualitative data that are collected by observation and interview of the respondents about challenges and prospects of migrants can be analyzed using narrative data analysis method to convey the findings of the analysis. The descriptive statistics method of data analysis is employed to report the quantitative results in the form of percentage, tables and figures. The raw numbers are used to see the number expected and the actual migrants available in the town. Therefore, the qualitative and the quantitative data concurrently are analyzed and reported.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Pull and Push Factors for Urban-Urban Migration in the Study Area

There are a number of major factors that are believed to have strong influence on urban-urban migration from neighboring urban areas to Yabello town, Borana zone. Reasons for migration are the causes why individuals move from one residence to a new area. These factors are economic and employment opportunity, labour force participation, level of income generation and livelihood conditions, and concern for the environment.

Some of the main causes of migration are classified into different parts: Economic aspects of looking for better jobs, income, and living standards. Demographic features whereby people migrate due to population growth, maturity, and disparities in gender or ethnicity. Social characteristics are those issues that persons migrate to meet family members, escape discrimination, or get access to education. Political faces in which individuals migrate from a given place to another are to avoid disagreement, forcefulness, oppression, and human rights violations. Environmental features that result in people migrating are to manage natural difficulties, prevalence of drought, and material resource shortages.

Table 4.1: Causes of urban – urban migration in the Yabello town

No	Causes of urban – urban migration	Number of Respondents	Percent (%)
1	Poor living conditions	26	18.18
2	High unemployment	31	21.67
3	Low competition for work	24	16.8
4	Lack of concern for environment	19	13.28
5	Low income	43	30.07
	Total	143	100

Source: Survey, 2024

As shown in Table 4.1, the leading push factor for urban–urban migration is low income, reported by 43 respondents (30.07%). This is largely attributed to overpopulation in their areas of origin, which results in high population density, low levels of education among migrants, a shortage of small-scale industries, and limited ability of migrants to compete with elite groups in their hometowns.

The survey further revealed that 26 respondents (18.18%) identified poor living conditions as a push factor, while 31 (21.67%) cited unemployment. In addition, 24 respondents (16.8%)

pointed to intense job competition, and 19 (13.28%) indicated a general lack of environmental concern. These conditions collectively act as driving forces for urban–urban migration to Yabello town from neighboring urban centers.

Moreover, several pull factors attract migrants to Yabello town. These include the availability of relatively better employment opportunities, lower population density in the study area, prospects for international migration, and the town's accessibility in terms of proximity and lower transportation costs.

The Effects of Urban-Urban Migration on Social and Cultural Characteristics

According to the respondents, there are two broad categories of social and cultural impacts associated with urban-urban migration, for example: Positive and negative impacts. As a result of urban-urban migration, a number of negative impacts have been identified, such as the prevalence of criminal activity, sexually transmitted diseases, cultural degradation, drug abuse, conflict, increasing sanitation and hygiene problems, and the practice of sexual harassment as well as an increase in inflation.

Moreover, the respondents also pointed out that there are a number of positive impacts of urban-urban migration from neighboring centers to Yabello town, namely migrants participating in a variety of labour-force activities, generating income for the communities, and accepting and recognizing cultural differences. Urban-urban migration involves the sharing of knowledge, skill and experience, and exchanging cultural traits like language spoken, dressing worn, religious beliefs, or customary practices with one another.

Table 4.2: Positive effects of urban – urban migration to community members

No	Positive effects of urban – urban migration	Number of Respondents	Percent (%)
1	Labor force participation	87	60.83
2	Acquiring new skill and knowledge	20	14
3	Fulfillment of needs and wants	26	18.18
4	Providing services to the society	10	6.99
	Total	143	100

Source: Survey, 2024

As shown in Table 4.2, the most significant positive effect of urban–urban migration on community members in the study area is increased labor force participation, reported by 87 respondents (60.83%). In contrast, the least reported positive effect is the provision of various services to society, accounting for 10 respondents (6.99%).

The survey further indicates that other positive effects of migration from neighboring urban centers to Yabello town include the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, cited by 20 respondents (14%), and the fulfillment of needs and wants, reported by 26 respondents (18.18%).

Table 4.3: Negative effects of urban – urban migration to community members

No	Negative effects of urban – urban migration	Number of Respondents	Percent (%)
1	Disagreement and conflict of migrants with society	27	18.88
2	Increase of inflation of goods and services	45	31.47
3	Widespread of crime	55	38.46
4	Social unrest and insecurity within community members	16	11.19
	Total	143	100

Source: Survey, 2024

As indicated in Table 4.3, the most frequently reported negative effect of urban–urban migration on community members in the study area is the spread of crime, cited by 35 respondents (38.46%). The least reported negative effect is social unrest and insecurity among community members, which accounts for 16 responses (11.19%).

According to the survey results, other negative effects of migration from neighboring urban centers to Yabello town include disagreements and conflicts between migrants and local residents, reported by 27 respondents (18.88%), and an increase in the prices of goods and services (inflation), cited by 45 respondents (31.47%).

Challenges Faced by Urban–Urban Migrants and Host Communities

In Yabello town, both migrants and host communities face institutional weaknesses that complicate migration management. Informants highlighted the absence of an effective vital registration system, inadequate immigration records, weak border management, and poor coordination among responsible bodies. These gaps make it difficult to properly identify,

register, and support migrants. The imbalance between regular migration processes and human trafficking further intensifies insecurity and undermines trust within the community.

Respect for national laws and international standards are critical in addressing migration-related challenges. Migrants should not be returned to areas where their fundamental rights are at risk. However, weak implementation of legal frameworks and limited institutional capacity often expose migrants to protection gaps. Preventing forced displacement due to conflict and violence requires stronger legal compliance, humanitarian assistance, and coordinated policy responses.

Migrants frequently encounter low wages, exploitative working conditions, and limited access to education, vocational training, and health-care services. Rapid population growth linked to migration places pressure on housing, employment, sanitation, and other urban services. In addition, poverty, inequality, marginalization, and recurring conflicts continue to fuel migration, making sustainable solutions more complex. However, urban–urban migration may contribute to social insecurity, irregular cross-border movements, and human trafficking. Increased mobility can also heighten the spread of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Limited data and weak forecasting mechanisms further challenge effective planning and response strategies.

Prospects and Opportunities of Urban–Urban Migration

As informants, migrants often belong to economically active age groups and contribute significantly to the labor market. Their participation in trade, construction, and service sectors stimulates local economic growth and diversifies income sources. Urban–urban migration encourages cultural interaction, knowledge sharing, and skill transfer between migrants and host communities. This interaction can promote innovation, social cohesion, and broader perspectives within society.

Growing population movements can stimulate demand for improved infrastructure, including education, health care, electricity, and roads. When properly managed, migration can accelerate urban development and modernization. Given Yabello town’s proximity to international borders, migration may enhance cross-regional trade and economic integration. If supported by sound governance and balanced humanitarian considerations, mobility can become a driver of inclusive development rather than a source of instability.

Conclusion

Based on the literature review and discussion of the findings, the researchers conclude that migration is a complex and multidimensional process involving the movement of people from one area to another in search of better socio-economic opportunities. Migration decisions are strongly influenced by push factors such as rural poverty and limited livelihood options, as well as pull factors including higher income differentials, employment opportunities, and better access to services in urban areas. In Ethiopia, urban–urban migration is largely dominated by young and adult male migrants, many of whom previously engaged in agricultural activities in their places of origin.

The findings also indicate that migrants generally possess relatively good educational backgrounds, with male migrants showing higher levels of educational attainment than female migrants. Urban–urban migration plays a significant role in the transfer of labor, particularly involving economically active age groups. While this contributes to urban economic activities, it also produces adverse consequences. The rapid influx of migrants accelerates urban population growth and intensifies the process of urbanization, often overwhelming existing social services and limiting the capacity of towns to deliver efficient public services.

In the case of Yabello town in the Borana Zone, migration has significant economic, social, and environmental impacts. Although migrants contribute labor to sectors such as electricity provision, education, and road construction, the high population flow increases pressure on infrastructure and natural resources. Consequently, migration has led to rising living costs, inflation of goods and services, and various socio-economic challenges, including the spread of criminal offenses. Thus, while migration contributes to urban development, it also creates serious demographic and structural pressures that require effective policy responses.

Recommendations

Based on the data analysis and conclusions of this study, the researchers propose several recommendations to address the challenges and enhance the benefits of urban–urban migration. First, the Government of Ethiopia and local organizations should play a significant role in managing and mitigating the problems associated with migration. Comprehensive and context-specific strategies need to be designed to tackle the economic, social, political, and environmental factors that drive migration. Policies aimed at raising the income levels of migrants in their places of origin should be formulated to reduce excessive migration flows. In addition, the government should ensure equitable access to urban infrastructure, such as education, health centers, electricity, telecommunications, and clean water, in migrants' areas of origin, comparable to that of urban centers.

Addressing unemployment caused by urban-biased development strategies is also essential. Expanding small and micro-enterprise opportunities in migrants' original areas can promote local employment and reduce migration pressures. Furthermore, appropriate policies should be designed to reduce the spread of crime in destination towns. These measures should be undertaken to minimize the negative effects of migration while maximizing its positive contributions to overall economic development. Urban–urban migration remains a critical public issue requiring coordinated and committed action at local, regional, and national levels. Efforts should focus on improving people's livelihoods rather than restricting mobility or penalizing migrants. Therefore, security concerns must be balanced with humanitarian considerations. Migration scenarios, rather than predicting exact future flows, should provide policymakers with essential information to anticipate challenges, adjust policies, develop effective programs, and allocate resources efficiently.

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IV) Consent for Publication

Not applicable. This manuscript does not contain any individual person's identifiable data, images, or personal information requiring consent for publication.

V) Author Contributions

- **Tsalafo Chaka Chame:** Conceived the study, designed the research methodology, conducted the fieldwork, collected and analyzed the data, interpreted the findings, drafted the manuscript, and coordinated the revision and submission process.
- **Muluken Tenaw Ewnetu:** Contributed to the study design, supervised the research process, reviewed and validated the methodology, critically revised the manuscript, and approved the final version.
- **Dagne Tesfaye Dida:** Assisted with data interpretation, critically reviewed the manuscript for intellectual content, contributed to revisions, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Ethics Statement

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the College of Social Science and Humanities, Borana University, Ethiopia. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and the research ethics guidelines of Borana University. All research procedures followed the approved study protocol, and written informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection.

Data Availability Statement

The data used in this study were available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Requests for access were considered in accordance with ethical and confidentiality requirements to protect the privacy and personal information of the study participants.

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