

Unveiling the Role of Rural Social Networks in Facilitating Rural-Urban Migration and the Survival of Self-Employed Youth in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract

Youth unemployment is a global challenge but more severe among developing countries such as Tanzania. In addressing the challenge, rural youth resort to migrating to urban areas in search of perceived vast economic opportunities. This paper explores how rural social networks facilitate youth rural-urban migration and migrants' survival in Iringa Municipality. It shows that cooperative values manifested in day to day socio-economic relations among village dwellers nurture long term social networks that are the potential to facilitate youth migration and their survival in urban areas. The paper unveils how earlier migrants support the newcomers to join them and access economic opportunities. They provide fare to travel, hosting assistance and connect them to urban income generation opportunities. As a survival strategy, youth migrants use their rural social relations to form economic groups to work together, exchange information about alternative sources of incomes as well as helping each other when faced with socio-economic crises. However, despite such accrued rural social networks benefits, some youth migrants fail to meet their expectations given urban life challenges as they earn insufficient income to cater for their basic needs. To avoid such urban vulnerability, the paper proposes some suggestions. Before migration, rural youth need to be informed to make proper decisions based on the correct information, and they should work hard while in the urban area to cope with a new working environment.

Keywords: *Rural social network, youth, rural-urban migration*

1. Introduction

Permanent youth unemployment is one of the main socio-economic challenges facing many African countries (Wilkinson et al., 2017; Budlender, 2017). In addressing the challenge, youth resort to migrating to urban areas in search of perceived relatively better socio-economic opportunities. According to McKenzie (2008), a significant percentage of migrants in developing countries are youth, and the major reasons for their movement (rural-urban) differ from those who are somewhat older than them. Gosai & Sulewski (2014) observed that internal migration in the form of rural-urban migration is one of the standard features in most developing countries. Salerno et al. (2017), Yusuph (2013), and Mtahabwa & Rao (2010) also pointed out several challenges that rural dwellers face that cause their movement to the urban areas. The challenges include inadequate and poor access to education and health services, as well as minimal economic opportunities. The role that social networks play in migration processes has received much attention in research in recent decades and has been one of the most important contributions to migration theory (Kalter & Will, 2016). The main reason posed here is that personal networks possessed by an individual are critical to facilitate the movement that eventually leads them to access various socio-economic opportunities. Kalter & Will (2016) substantiate this further by showing that migration is very much a "social process" that is why networks play an essential role in explaining migration dynamics over the last decades. The importance of rural social networks is said to be a result of available norms and values that, in turn, support stronger ties among rural residents as well as available institutions (Freire-Gibb & Nielsen, 2014). According to Long et al. (2017), the 2008 Chinese Rural to Urban Migration Survey unveiled that nearly two-thirds of rural-urban migrants got employment opportunities in urban areas through family members, relatives, and friends. In this regard, the importance of social networks established by rural dwellers by design or by default cannot be overemphasized in terms of facilitating long term and positive relations among community members.

Youths in Iringa Region have been facing a persistently high rate of unemployment for quite some time (Fischer, 2018; Larsen & Birch-Thomsen, 2015; Manyerere, 2016). Several rural-urban migration studies (Öztürk et al.,

2018; Long et al., 2017; Freire-Gibb & Nielsen, 2014; Li & Wang, 2001) have unveiled many youths in developing countries resort to leave their rural areas and move to urban areas to find relatively better economic opportunities. Although non-movers in Tanzania also tend to accrue some benefits from the migrants, it is the migrants who significantly gain the economic benefit out of their decisions, compared to their non-moving counterparts (Beegle & Poulin 2012). Despite the above-mentioned studies, there is still a scarcity of literature on how rural social networks contribute towards facilitating rural-urban migration of youth from rural areas and their survival while undertaking various IGAs in the urban Iringa. This study intends to fill that gap and recommend measures to be undertaken by various stakeholders while formulating policies, designing, and implementing various youth development initiatives. Specifically, this paper has three objectives, namely, to assess factors that facilitate youth rural-urban migration, examine how rural social networks influence youth rural-urban migration and finally evaluate how youth rural social networks support the survival of youth migrants in Iringa Municipality.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Youth and Migration: A Global Perspective

Both males and females practice migration at the local, national, and international levels. However, male migration is a common phenomenon around the world (Beegle & Poulin, 2013). As such, a study by Hertrich & Lesclingand (2013) noted that young male's mobility is more supported by family members due to the perceived benefits compared to their young female counterparts. Education plays a critical role in influencing rural to urban migration. The more education youth have the more likely, youth to intend to be non-farm workers (Yue et al., 2010). Hence leave their rural residence to the urban areas. Likewise, migration of children and youths for a long is manifested as part of a collective family strategy in search of educational and apprenticeship opportunities and, in some parts of the world, for child fosterage (UNFPA 2006) in Juárez et al. (2013).

Concerning age influence on migration, Beegle & Poulin (2013) claims that migration is prevalent in adolescence and young adulthood than for older

adults. During this time of life, youth experience massive forces on their physical growth, which goes along with their cognitive and social wellbeing that can easily facilitate emotional and interpersonal changes Juárez et al. (2013). Hence, youth tend to move more compared to other age groups, such as elders. In addition to that youth age group is a critical transition period shaped by the demand to work, sexual maturation, marriage, and childbearing, to mention but a few (Juárez et al., 2013). According to life-cycle theorists, the younger and older generations vary in behaviours and attitudes even though they live within the same socio-economic context. The theory further demonstrates that human life constitutes an age-related sequence of stages from pre-adulthood, early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood that come with different developmental tasks (Levinson, 1986). Therefore, different age groups are differently influenced to migrate.

2.2 Factors influencing Youth Migration

Several factors account for the migration of youth in both developed and developing countries. Economic, political, and social factors contribute to local, national, and international migration decisions among individual migrants (Garip & Asad, 2019). International migration between developing and developed countries is mainly caused by political processes that have produced economic interdependence between these world regions (Castells & Laserna, 1989; Morita & Sassen, 1994). For instance, increasing economic pressures on Mexicans influence their decisions to migrate to the United States, where they expect to address their socio-economic challenges. In this regard, migration is sometimes viewed as a short-term strategy to achieve a specific goal that would help to relieve economic pressure on either the individual or the household (Garip & Asad, 2019). A study by Mondain et al. (2013) found out that migration to Europe had become a significant source of financial and social resources for an increasing number of Senegalese men who are the primary providers for their home households. Along the same line, Diagne & Mondain (2014) observed that international migration has become a significant source of financial and social resources for an increasing number of men who have become the leading providers for their natal households.

In recent years rural-urban migration has increased in both volume and complexity given rural life challenges (Wang & Wu, 2010). Hertrich & Lesclingand (2013) suggested that one of the main factors for rural-urban migration is the challenge of a low level of income in the villages. Apart from that, lack of access to markets, transportation, education, access to electricity, running water, and health care push rural dwellers from villages. The growing disparities of economic development between rural and urban areas and between coastal and inland regions have facilitated rural-urban migration (Cai et al., 2002; Hare, 1999). This viewpoint is cemented by Miyao et al. (1980), who narrated that rural dwellers move to the urban areas if their expectations in of income and generally improved standard of living exceed those of their rural areas. Other motivations of migrations are marriage and external factors events such as civil wars, because of political persecution or environmental crises, or due to exploitation and trafficking (Juárez et al., 2013). Generally, it is push factors that facilitate the growth of migrant workers in many urban areas around the globe.

Concerning the above, several factors pull rural dwellers to migrate into urban areas, particularly in less-developed countries. Todaro (1969) pointed out several factors that push rural dwellers to urban areas like higher productivity jobs, access to health care, electricity, piped water, and toilet facilities. In Chinese society, social life and resource distribution are embedded in ties (*guanxi*). Hence, job allocation and stratification are closely correlated with personal networks, particularly during times of social change (Wu & Huang, 2015). As such, many people who had migrated into towns motivated and supported their fellow rural dwellers to migrate into towns to access urban amenities. Sander & Maimbo (2003) characterize migration in Sub-Saharan Africa as unique, since most people on the continent move intraregional and within-country, rather than overseas. As such, migration for many developing countries is not only within-country but may be reasonably local (Beegle & Poulin, 2013). Just like in other developing regions such as Asia, the main factors that explain the massive scale of youth migration in African are poor employment prospects for young people and meagre wages in rural areas (Fall, 2002; Diop 2008). According to De Haas (2010) in Mondain et al. (2013), these economic factors

are primarily related to the "push-pull" model, whereby poverty in the rural areas motivates youth migration. All these play central roles in facilitating youth rural-urban migration in Sub-Saharan Africa, Tanzania included.

2.3 Rural Social Networks and Youth Migration

The role of social networks in assisting individuals in various capacities cannot be overemphasised. Global empirical migration research shows that people are considerably more likely to migrate at international when they have connections to other individuals who have moved abroad before. These people include fellow community members, acquaintances, friends, or relatives (Boyd, 1989; Liu, 2013; Massey & Aysa-Lastra, 2011; Massey & Riosmena, 2010). According to Li & Wang (2001), migrants who obtain good jobs in urban China were those who had active and resourceful network support and connections from rural areas than those who did not have. A study by Arora & Sanditov (2015) unveiled that in South Indian village, caste act as an essential way to shape community structures that influence the village's social networks. Such networks play an important role in socialization and social control, using numerous collective activities. These include spending time together during family and ritual ceremonies, leisure such as drinking and sessions of farm labour. According to Hertrich & Lesclingand (2013), networks also ensure a high level of socio-economic homogeneity in the village and shape the pattern of social change. In communities with more established migration histories, information and assistance from current or returned migrants have helped to overcome potential barriers to making the journey successful (Garip & Asad, 2019). Therefore, the role of these social networks in influencing migration patterns is evident in various sending communities.

Further, the cumulative causation theory of migration highlights the importance of social ties between individuals in origin and migrants in the destination area for initiating and sustaining international movement (Massey, 1990). The multiple mechanisms underlying the social network effects on migration are also outlined by Garip & Asad (2016) and DiMaggio & Garip (2012). Their study found out that network peers provide information or help that reduces the costs and increases the benefits of migration. Further, networks generate a pool of shared resources that

increases the value and reduces the costs of migration (Garip & Asad, 2019). Social networks related to blood connections are vital in terms of facilitating migration among youth. Sibling ties that brothers and sisters have on each other stand out as being useful in facilitating the subsequent migrations of their siblings (Massey & Espinosa 1997; Massey & Aysa-Lastra 2011; Liu 2013 in Riosmena & Liu 2019). Individuals may be more likely to draw on social capital emanating from sibling ties since high expectations are common on brothers and sisters to help one another in times of need. As such, the norm continues to exist in most, if not all, societies, especially in low- and middle-income nations (Cicirelli, 1994 in Riosmena & Liu, 2019). Indeed, new migrants often choose destinations based on the presence of ties and, especially, in the expectation that some social ties will be more valuable than others in assisting during a moment of need (Sue et al., 2019). Hence, apart from community and friendship ties, relatives can provide information about navigating migration routes and gaining access to work and assist the logistics of daily life.

2.4 Urban Opportunities and Survival Challenges

As pointed out above, many advantages are said to be gathered in an urban area by youth migrants. The accrued benefits include but are not limited to regular meals and more abundant food. The quality, quantity, and diversity of the meals are one of the recognized positive aspects of city life. The attraction of "adventure" is also mentioned in accounts: "*When you are young, [that is] a time when you want to find out about the world*" (Hertrich & Lesclingand, 2013). Opportunity for formal education that is significantly available in urban areas makes youth have access to gain knowledge and skills potential to generate more income (Ibid.). Migration opens up the possibility of different individual contributions to the household economy that did not exist when they shared farm work as the only source of income. However, despite accrued benefits that youth gain in urban areas that accelerate rural-urban migration, most migrants still face several challenges. As such, the new living environment is also a source of vulnerability, often with less family and social support during the socio-economic crisis. Youth Stage is a period of life that is characterized by risk-taking and psychological stress and a higher likelihood of abuse and exploitation (Juárez et al., 2013).

For instance, over the years, Chinese migrant workers have been excluded from formal urban labour markets and 'the logic of urban development' (Du et al., 2005).

Generally, from the review of literature, it is found that numerous factors influence rural-urban migration. Search for better socio-economic opportunities is one of the primary reasons that influence youth to leave their rural areas. Networks of rural dwellers can be one of the facilitators of rural-urban migration among those who seek socio-economic opportunities in towns. With the above background, social networks provide a range of advantages to facilitate and sustain youth in urban areas. However, despite such benefits that youth and their close ties accrue from migration, several challenges face the youth migrants while in search for, undertaking various IGAs and survival in the urban areas.

3. Methodology

A qualitative approach was used to collect and analyse data in this study. The non-probability sampling (Snowball) technique was used to collect relevant data from youth migrants. In addition to that, purposive sampling was used to select government officials, village residents for interviews and youth migrants who participated in FGD (see Table 1). The two sampling techniques were useful, given the nature of data to be collected and respondents. Given limited data on specific numbers or the location of youth who migrated at Iringa urban from rural areas, snowball was a relevant technique to get correct and quick information. According to Denscombe (2007:16), non-probability sampling is relevant when a researcher does not have sufficient information about the population to undertake probability sampling. In this regard, youth migrants working in various IGAs (hackers, food vendors, sofa makers/carpentry motorcyclists/'bodaboda' and bajaj riders) were requested to nominate other youth who met the criteria of choice (age, previous rural residence) since they immigrated to Iringa Municipality.

Table 1 below indicates the respondents involved in the study. They include; government officials in both rural and urban areas like Village Executive Officers (VEOs), Mtaa Executive Officers (MEOs) in rural and urban areas

respectively, Village residents (VRs) as well as Community Development Officers (CDOs in both rural and urban areas. These are vital officials who interact with youth and the community in general in both rural and urban areas. Hence, they were purposively selected as key informants to provide relevant information about their experiences on youth rural social networks among rural dwellers and their influence on migration and their survival strategies in urban Iringa.

Table 1: Total number of respondents involved in the study (N=66)

Data Collection Techniques	District			Sampling Design
	Iringa Municipal Council (IMC)	Mufindi District Council (MDC)	Kilolo District Council (KDC)	
Interview (KII)	- Youth Migrants (18)			Non-Probability (Snowball)
	-CDOs (6)	-CDOs (3)	-CDOs (3)	(Purposive)
	-MEOs (6)	-VEOs (3)	-VEOs (3)	
	-VRs (3)	-VRs (3)	-IDI-VRs (3)	
FGD	Youth migrants (15)			Non-Probability (Purposive)

Source: Field data 2020

Key In-depth Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were conducted to collect data from study respondents. Data were collected from three district councils (Iringa, Mufindi and Kilolo) and twelve (12) wards. Youth migrants who worked in urban areas provided information about their respective areas of origin (wards and villages) where interviews were also conducted (included Village residents/VRs and officials). A semi-structured, face to face, one to one interview technique was used. All information from interviews and FGDs were recorded and fully transcribed and translated into the English language. The information obtained was organised into themes (nodes) and analysed through NVivo 12 software.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Factors Influencing Youth Rural-Urban Migration

The first objective of this paper was to identify the main factors that facilitate youth to migrate from rural to urban areas. In the interviews and focus group discussions conducted, many youth respondents insisted that they left their villages and migrated to urban Iringa because of life challenges experienced in rural areas. These included but not limited to low access to income and inadequate social services such as water, electricity and transportation. The following explanations from Village Executive Officer and youth migrants substantiate:

The main challenge youth face in rural areas is that money circulation is deficient and seasonal...the impact of this cannot be seen directly, but there are several negative impacts of this. Because the expenditure is minimal, even in terms of development, rural areas are lagging. One has to undertake development activities mainly during the dry season after selling the harvest. (KII VEO 03 KL)

Because in rural areas, we get seasonal income, so we come to urban areas where money circulation is relatively higher. Therefore, in the urban areas searching for money is a day to day activity. An individual can work and get money instantly. That is quite different from rural areas. (KII Y05 KH)

....there is a significant difference between rural and urban areas. The difference in economic opportunities is basically on low income in rural areas in a large percentage. It is because, in the urban areas, there are varieties of opportunities and alternative sources of money; this makes us opt for several options to get money instead of depending on agriculture only, which is seasonal. (FGD 01 KT P02)

The above explanations show how economic factors, limited money circulation, in particular, motivate youth rural-urban migration. It shows that fewer economic opportunities in terms of accessing income make rural dwellers leave their villages. What is missing in rural areas is what attracts people in urban areas. A study by Hertrich & Lesclingand (2013) also found out that youth preferred urban life and worked in the town where there is more money because when they work, they earn money. Indeed, access to money is a significant factor in attracting rural dwellers to live in the urban areas claiming that the village economy that focuses on food production is

inadequate. In rural areas, access to money depends on the sale of cereals or small crafts.

Furthermore, the study unveils that having more comfortable working conditions in the city than in the villages influences many youths to leave rural areas. In one of the focus group discussions, one youth migrant emphasized the challenge facing rural dwellers as follows: "*Let me add one thing, hardships experienced in rural areas in doing farming is another reason. In the village, most of us used hand hoes while cultivating*" (FGD 06 MV P05). As such, challenging working conditions due to reasons such as inadequate working tools because of limited economic capacity makes agriculture, the dominant economic activity in rural unattractive. Several hardships are always facing the agricultural sector, while in urban areas, there is relatively improved service and industrialised economy. These have facilitated the pace of urbanization to place in many cities in developing countries and accelerated rural-urban migration (Lall et al., 2006). It is an undeniable fact that accessibility to several amenities attracts individuals into urban areas. According to Hertrich & Lesclingand (2013), a city is a place where everything is more comfortable and more available. There is relatively better access to food, working tools and access to money. The below statements from village resident and youth migrant explain:

What pushes most youth from rural areas to urban areas, I think, is that they are trying to change the environment so that they can also take a chance and try to go to other areas and see if they can uplift themselves. That is why they opt to go to different places in search of a better life. (KII VR 08 MF)

For my personal experience of living in rural areas, there are meagre economic activities. For example, we were once involved in cultivating beans; beans grow well the problem was on the transportation. It was challenging to transport the products from rural areas to urban because of poor transport infrastructure like roads. (KII Y06 KH)

The above statements provide clear evidence on how economic factors account for rural dwellers to leave their villages. When such challenges facing rural areas are addressed, rural to urban migration among youth will

be reduced. Hence, the majority of youth would utilize available economic resources in their rural areas.

4.2 Rural Social Networks and Youth Migration

The second objective of this paper was to examine how rural social networks in its various forms influenced youth rural-urban migration. To understand the influence of rural social networks on youth migration, an examination of the available forms of socio-economic relations practised by the rural residents was crucial. Youth migrants and rural residents were requested to narrate how they relate to each other in their day to day social and economic life. They stated that village norms and bylaws embed important community values such as helping each other on social issues and supporting each other by working together in various economic activities. Such cooperative practices were manifested not only in rural areas but extended by youth migrants in urban areas. For instance, one of the main economic activities that instilled values solidarity among rural dwellers was farming together. It was practised during farm preparations, planting seeds and trees, weeding as well as harvesting. The below extracts substantiate how rural dwellers cooperate in many socio-economic issues:

Several ways show closeness among rural dwellers. People work together on undertaking their agricultural activities. Today we cultivate on one's farm and tomorrow to the other. We call it 'Mgohe' system. The system is also practised during harvesting, as well as the planting of trees. We can decide that today we are going to plant two of five acres or this person and move to the other. (KII Y04 KT)

...high percentage of people in villages live as relatives. And the main advantage of living as relatives is that in life there are failures and such kind of things. So, the benefit is that on days that one fails to get what he expects, other people can assist you. (FGD 01 KT P01)

As such, the 'Mgohe' system is one of the ways that portray how social bonds among rural dwellers are bridged and sustained. In turn, these social bonds tend to have a positive impact on the future in terms of accelerating youth rural-urban migration. Fellow village youth with previous social capital manifested in close networks make connections that facilitate their migration. The below statement narrates how these prior-established rural

social networks have helped youth to migrate into urban areas:

As I informed you earlier, there are several assistances we provide to our fellow youth individuals from the village. I have a friend who is an electrical technician he has come here since August (August 2019). I am the one who hosted him, I am still living with him up to now, but he works in another place. (KII Y02 MS)

One skilful sofa making youth, a long time migrant, who has been providing similar support to his fellow youth from the village narrated this during a focus group discussion:

There are so many youths from my village who have migrated to urban areas through my support. A large percentage (of supported youth) are now engaging in sofa making. There are also several others working in different income generation activities such as selling chips and several other activities. Many of these activities do not require any kind of skills or specialization to work. (FGD 02 KH P03)

Similarly, other youth respondents during focus group discussions stated:

I supported many people from the village to migrate into towns and accessed several economic opportunities. Most of them sustain their life from the support I provided to them. You just find someone from the rural areas calling you that brother here (in the village) life is so difficult, please help me to find any job in town. I tell him, don't worry, let me set things rights first, then you will come. You may be surprised maybe within six (6) of five (5) months after my support, one starts to work independently without my further assistance. (FGD 03 KT P02)

For us who are in town, we play a significant role in assisting our fellow youth from rural areas. For instance, a person who comes may not be familiar with the area he wants to go to. So, we use to receive him/her at a bus stand and direct him/her where one needs to go or hosted. (FGD 06 MS P03)

The above statements from youth migrants who provided support to colleagues substantiate clearly how previous rural social connections play a significant role in facilitating youth rural-urban migration. Apart from youth migrants hosting their fellows, they also provide bus fare and connect them to potential IGAs in towns. A study by Portes (1998) observed related findings noting that prior migrants provide general as well as the specific destinations of available economic opportunities in towns due to previously established social capital. In addition to that, Hertrich & Lesclingand (2013) found out that young people returning from Bamako influenced their non-migrants youth counterparts to be curious to go to the city. Similar cases have shown that migrants act as sources of potential or actual resources of information, job connections, or other forms of settlement assistance – that facilitate the migration of new arrivals to settlement and destination areas (Flores-Yeffal 2013; Menjívar, 2000). Generally, relying on rural social ties on the part of potential migrants reduced the costs of their migration to undertake the journey as well as facilitated, they stay in new urban settings.

Apart from the support of individuals, the current study has found out that institutions supported some youth from rural areas. Youth membership and connections to religious institutions played a significant role in providing them with potential information among those migrated to Iringa Municipal. These include socio-economic opportunities such as training and job vacancies during and after training attended. The below quotation from youth who migrated from the village to rural areas explains:

I came here (urban areas) through the support of religious institutions because I heard an announcement when I attended the mass. The information was that the Catholic Church at Iringa provides youth with opportunities to study in their Vocational Training Institution for any youth who would want to join. That is how I managed to come here in town and managed to employ myself after the training. (KII Y06 KH)

The statement above shows that social networks established by youth by their membership to various institutions enabled youth with limited information from other channels to access such economic opportunities. It influenced youth to move to urban areas in search of training and economic opportunities not available in the villages. Because migrating is costly and

demands mobilization of social networks, the support that some migrants get from various institutions is critical to enable them to migrate.

4.3 Rural Social Networks and Youth Urban Survival

The third objective of this paper was to analyse how previous rural youth social networks enables youth migrants to survive in urban areas. In other words, it sought to examine how social networks help youth to access various economic opportunities and able to address urban life challenges. This study unveiled that youth migrants in urban areas devise various measures to withstand urban challenges. Youth previous rural social networks helped to inform each other about potential economic opportunities, particularly alternative income sources when they fail to earn income from their routine jobs. Youth mentioned further their previous rural connections helped them to form economic groups that facilitated their access to loans from various supporting institutions such as local governments. The groups also assisted members during good times and difficult times, such as socio-economic emergencies. The below responses from interviews with youth migrants regarding how previous rural social networks helped them to survive in urban areas narrate in detail:

Here in town, we live together just like relatives, because we are coming from the same place (village). We do communicate often. We are concerned about our challenges and help each other. If your fellow has any problem, you help, economically. If a colleague is sick, you can assist him/her to get appropriate medicines/drugs if he/she is not economically stable at the time he/she gets sick/illness. (KII Y02 MS)

Sometimes I don't get work to do. I have friends from the village who are drivers here in town. So, if there is any work, they sometimes inform me and go to do the work, such as loading luggage or driving their cars because I have a driving license. (KII Y05 KH)

I formed a group with my colleagues from Kilolo; The truth is it is through this group we managed to get loans from the government. The good thing about the support we get from our government is that there is no interest rate. Since last year when we got our first loan, we have been working tirelessly to achieve our goals. This group has enabled me to I manage living in town. (KII Y08 MV)

As such, trust, respect and solidarity values developed through previous rural social connections have significantly enabled many youth migrants to struggle against urban challenges. These values helped them to consider themselves as close siblings to support each other in good and challenging times.

Despite that, this study also unveiled that reliance on rural social networks was not the only survival strategy applied by youth to mitigate urban life challenges. One of the main strategies was saving the little youth migrants who had managed to accrue. Below statement evidently, explain:

As I alluded from the outset, whenever you get a little amount of money, you have to set aside some savings. For instance, the nature of our works you may stay up to a week without any activity. It is crucial to use the little you get and make saving because it can accommodate you when there are no works. (KII Y06 KH)

Indeed, given life challenges in urban areas, expecting others' support during all difficult times may not be feasible. This finding is in line with the reality of urban challenges as explained by previous studies (Iwasaki et al., 2014; Valdez et al., 2011), noting that the youth cohort is one of the marginalised urban groups in terms of a high risk of poverty, homelessness and health challenges due to low income to enable them to cater for such basic needs. Not all urban youth are economically stable to provide reliable assistance to colleagues, especially in a situation where they are also challenged with similar problems. As such, despite opportunities accessed by many migrants, several difficulties are confronting them. For instance, during interviews with Community Development Officers working in both rural and urban areas, the following urban youth challenges and complexities facing many youth migrants were narrated:

In reality, according to my experience, life in rural areas is easier in urban areas. Because to access any service in town you need money. But here in the village you can cultivate and get your food or vegetables. But in the urban areas, without having money, it becomes tough; that is why you will find that most youths are forced to vacate houses they have rent because of failure to pay their rents. But in the village, youth have access to family houses. Even

building houses in rural areas, it is easy because the cost involved is less and plots are not so expensive as in the urban areas. (KII CDO 03 MF)

....but in my opinion, the way I compare this area (working station at urban ward), and where I come from (rural area, in the village), there are more opportunities in rural areas. If one is serious and committed to do a particular kind of work, interested in it and work hard can make outstanding achievements. You can work in irrigation farming or any other activity, depending on any special opportunity available. Because today's life needs us to change from time to time, depending on the available opportunity. (KII CDO 01 MS)

The above quotations clearly show that payment of rents and bills are some of the challenges that make youth living in urban difficulty as compared to that of rural areas. Concerning such challenges, Wang & Wu (2010) argues that being outsiders, migrants usually face a range of social, political, and economic disadvantages. In this situation, migrant workers' home villages, rather than the city, provide the basis of their economic and social security (Fan and Wang, 2008). Therefore, this advocates that when youth migrants fail to adapt to new urban challenges, the best option is to return to rural areas.

On the contrary, youth who still perceive urban life challenges are manageable given available benefits insist on the need to devise strategies to accrue available opportunities. Therefore, to ensure that youth gain out of rural-urban migration, several suggestions were provided by experienced youth migrants who lived in the Iringa Municipal for a relatively long period. The following suggestion is one of many provided by the youth migrants who managed to survive notwithstanding persistent urban challenges:

In the first place, if someone comes from rural areas, he has to have a direction. I will do a certain work. So, there are only a few people who just come and start seeking work or jobs to do in the street. These are very few, but most of those who come and succeed have a particular kind of goal or a plan. (KII Y05 KH)

Therefore, from the above findings, previous rural social connections established to play a significant role in ensuring youth migrants survive in

the new environment in urban areas. However, given life challenges experienced by other youth migrants, it is not always automatic for youth migrants to rely on help from colleagues on all challenging situations. For youth to minimize urban life challenges, they have to have a better plan and strategy before and after migrating in urban areas.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that life hardships in rural areas due to limited economic opportunities force many youths to migrate to urban areas for survival. It unveiled that rural life is embedded with values that support cooperative social relations useful to nurture social networks. These are, in turn, the potential to facilitate youth migration and their survival in urban areas. Through these social networks, earlier, youth migrants helped newcomers with bus fares, hosted, and connected them to various income generation opportunities. Despite economic benefits accrued by the migrants, such as accessing sustainable income from the large size of the market, urban life complexity makes some of them face marginalization. For instance, some are forced to vacate their rented premises due to failure to pay their due rents and bills and fail to help each other during a socio-economic crisis.

Based on the above findings, this paper suggests that for youth migrants to gain vast economic opportunities and survive in urban areas, relying on social networks is inadequate. It requires other strategies like saving, a proper plan and hard work. Youth development stakeholders should inform potential youth migrants about urban challenges to make the right choices before their migration so that they can make successful attempts. An understanding of socio-economic opportunities and challenges of life in urban areas is critical for youth to make an informed decision and is essential to anticipate the impact of such decisions. Policymakers and government practitioners from developing countries such as Tanzania should formulate relevant policies and interventions for youth welfare programs targeting both rural and urban areas.

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