The main factors driving migrants in Bale Zone, Ethiopia

Henok W/Yohannes

Migration is an integral part of human activity since the ancient time and become a global concern due to an increasing crisis of migration in which the same is true In Ethiopia. Unlike other parts of the country, Bale zone is also one of the areas with a high number of irregular migrants and returnees. So as to decrease principal cause and consequences of migration, conducting a research in Bale Zone is a need to be investigated but yet not.

Hence, in light of these points, the aim of this study is to assess the baseline information and contributing driving factors of migrant from Sinana, Robe and Goba Woredas. More specifically, the study try to identifies returnees socioeconomic status, the determinants of potential migrants, the skills of returnees to determine the kind of economic activity and the specific drivers in the decision to migrate.

In the baseline survey, descriptive study which adapts a cross- sectional type of design was used and instruments such as questionnaire (structured and semi-structured), interview guide and observation checklist were designed for data collection. Furthermore, with the use of sample size determination formula, the study took 32.9 % i.e. 259 sample from a total number of 785 i.e. 361 returnees and 424 Potential migrants of the three Woredas. Then after, Purposive Sampling Techniques employed to identify the Participants and the three Woredas due to their high magnitude of irregular migration and returnees, followed by Stratified Sampling to allocate representative Sample size from each Woredas and Simple random sampling Techniques to identify the respondents for data collection. Moreover, Descriptive Statistics were employed for analysis of the main responses obtained from the respondents.

Accordingly, the result of the baseline survey shows age and sex selective nature of migration. Male migrants constitute 57.3 %(86) the majority among the Returnee migrants of the three study site, Sinana, Robe and Goba district. Furthermore, majority (77.3%) of returnees found between 30 – 39 years of age, whereas, (68.8%) of the potential migrants were in the age group

between 20 – 29 years. Moreover, most of the potential migrants (35.77%) and returnee migrants (28.66%) come from 2 – 5 family size.

Concerning the current income level, the majority of sampled respondents, more than 53 % were found to earn an average income less than 1000 birr per-month followed by 10.20 % and 7.54% of the respondents earn an average monthly income in the range between 3001 – 4000 and 2001 – 3000 birr, respectively which could possibly be a driven force for migration in the future seeking for better income. Before migration, the Monthly income of returnees' migrants was found to be 300 ETB and 5700 ETB   as minimum and maximum per-month, respectively.

According to the Labour and Social Affairs Bureau of the Bale zone 2016, an increasing trend in the number of migrants were observed. For instance, the share of returnee's migrants of Sinana woreda from Bale zone, it increases from 11% 2012/2013 to 27% in 2015/2016 whereas Robe Town increases from 11% in 2013/2014 to 63% in 2014/2015.

Concerning smuggling network, the returnee migrant have used three channels for migration to Saudi Arabia. The first one is so-called 'public migration' that officially registered as migrant workers with the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the second channel through one of the legally registered Private Employment Agencies (PEAs) of which both of the above regular channels were already banned by the Ethiopian government. The third channel is irregularly occurs that the returnee migrant has used and using smuggling network: through Afar to Bossaso, Puntland, into Yemen (and from there potentially further on to Saudi Arabia) through and from Afar to Djibouti, into Yemen and from there potentially further on to Saudi Arabia in addition from Bale to Harar to Djibouti, into Yemen .

The other route and destination including the current migrant are using the smuggling network of Starting from Bale, the migrants will then move along Arsi up to Addis Ababa, from which they are moving in the direction Metema in Amhara region. Once in Metema these people go beyond the border with Sudan and then continue the journey towards Libya and finally Europe.

Moreover, the result of the baseline survey also revealed that unemployment and low paid job (58%) has contributed the highest proportion followed by poverty (56%), family pressure (28%),

peer pressure (23%), agricultural land scarcity (17%), scarcity of capital to start own business (17%), security (16%) and others (2%) respectively.

Concerning the "pull" factors of migration reveals that, job opportunities (57%) (Various job accessibility) contributed the highest proportion for illegal migration, followed by high income (43%), social network (26%) and smugglers (19%) at destination.

Regarding choices of passage for migration, the surveyed respondents in this base line survey in the three Woredas show a strong preference for irregular migration than regular migration, where more than 86 % of respondents consider the option of irregular migration.

According to survey result the reasons for preferring irregular migration in the study area includes: the cost of irregular migration will be lower (47.7%); low accessibility to regular channels (6.4%); the regular channel is more bureaucratic and high regulation (13%) are the most common reasons indicated by respondent in the study areas.

Regarding the consequences of migration in the study area, (62.4%) of respondents replied that migration has positive impact, (22.9%) respondents do not consider migration has positive impact and (12.8%) are not sure. Among respondents of the positive impact group, flow of remittance in the origin country (37%), followed by job creation opportunities (31%) and improvement of social services (30%)are replied as a reasons whereas loss of life (39%) , lack of interest to create job at home country (29%) and dependency on remittance (22%) as Negative Consequences.

Furthermore, in this baseline survey attempt was made to investigate respondents' job or business preferred most to do if get any support. Accordingly, the survey result shows, majority of the sampled respondents are preferred most to engage themselves in Small Scale Enterprise based Cafeteria and Restaurant Service, followed by poultry farming and investing in modern agriculture that is supported by machinery.

Hence, In line with the main findings of this research, economic development planners influence migrants into the scheme, expanding vocational training institutions, reshaping the attitude of the community, joint works of concerned bodies to minimize illegal migration and providing necessary arrangement and entrepreneur training are some of the possible forwarded recommendation for intervention.