

MIGRATION IN THE MINING INDUSTRY OF SHAKISO, ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF MIGRANT STREET VENDORS

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Abstract

In the majority of cities located in the global South, the informal sector remains a significant option for rural-urban migrants due to the incapacity of the formal economy to accommodate the expanding labor force. The present study endeavors to comprehend the rationales for migration, the grounds for engaging in street vending, institutional responses, and the livelihood of migrant street vendors in the southern Ethiopian mining town of Shakiso. Qualitative interviews and observation were utilized to collect data from migrant street vendors. Thirty-six street vendors were chosen for in-depth interviews through purposive sampling. Key informant interviews were conducted with individuals from the police, revenue, and municipal departments of the town. In accordance with an inductive approach, the data that was collected has been analyzed thematically. The outcome demonstrates that the desire to find employment in the mining industry led participants to relocate to Shakiso. Although the town's mining industry, both large-scale formal and artisanal, is believed to provide job opportunities for migrants, they turned to street vending. Insufficient job opportunities, unfavorable living conditions, and a scarcity of agricultural land were the primary impetuses for migration to the town. Street vending not only functions as the primary source of livelihood but also serves as a temporary, transitory option for those seeking mining jobs or those aspiring to migrate to other locations. However, the town perceives vendors through a modernist conception of the city. The authorities should be cognizant of the significance of vending to migrant workers' livelihoods and respond appropriately.

Keywords: Rural-Urban Migration; Informal Sector; Street Vending; Mining Town.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a well-established and widespread phenomenon for individuals to relocate to areas with abundant resources. Specifically, young individuals tend to migrate to these regions in search of employment opportunities, many of which are seasonal in nature. The subject of resource-rich locations, particularly gold mining regions, and their role in attracting migrants has been extensively explored in global literature (Geofrey, 1992; Davies and Head, 1995; Bryceson and Jonssen, 2010; Bury, 2007; Nyame et al., 2009; Maclin et al., 2017; Jonssen and Brycessen, 2017). In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a significant influx of labor migrants to Ethiopia's Awash Valley State Cotton Plantations and Sugar Plantations (Kloos,

1982). Labor migration is a critical livelihood strategy, with profound effects on individuals, households, and regions (ILO, 1972; Hart, 1973). Development imbalances and the demand for migrant workers have greatly influenced this phenomenon, with seasonal migration being the most common outcome. Rural-urban migration, according to Mabognje (1970), is a sign of a spatial imbalance in a region's economic development. Additionally, limited employment opportunities in rural areas and poverty are driving forces behind young people's migration to urban areas (Bundervoet, 2018; Mansour-Ille, 2018). Due to their low skills and limited financial and human resources, many rural-urban migrants turn to the informal sector, particularly in developing country cities (Bezu and Holden, 2014; Gebre and Maharaj, 2011; Sidzatan and Maharaj, 2013). Once they arrive, migrants often turn to street vending as a means of generating income.

The phenomenon of urbanization in Ethiopia has been the subject of extensive analysis in the literature on migration and development. Scholars have devoted considerable attention to the largest urban centers, such as Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Hawassa, Bahir Dar, and Jimma, which function as key regional or national hubs. These cities have been the focus of numerous studies examining both formal and informal economies (Jonga, 2009; Yeneneh, 2012; Bezu and Holden, 2014). Conversely, small towns have received less attention, despite their significant role in the country's urbanization process. Nevertheless, research conducted by Baker (2012) on migration and mobility in the small hamlet of Kemise in northern Ethiopia provides an exception to this trend.

In addition to domestic migration, global migration patterns have also been a major theme in the literature on Ethiopian labor migration. Scholars have analyzed migrant flows to various regions, such as the Gulf States, Southern Africa, and Europe, and have identified important trends and patterns (Gebre and Maharaj, 2011). Similarly, the mining industry has been the subject of extensive research in the literature on migration, with a particular focus on South and West Africa, as well as Latin America (Geofrey, 1992; Bury, 2007; Nyame et al., 2009). Although mine migration has occurred in these regions since colonial times, recent studies have also explored the experiences of migrant workers engaged in gold mining in Eastern Africa (Bryceson and Jonssen, 2010; Jonssen and Bryceson, 2017).

Although the relationship between migration and informality has been a topic of extensive research in Ethiopia, particularly in relation to how most migrants end up in the unofficial sector when relocating to cities, studies have paid less attention to productive locations such as mining cities. Nevertheless, significant numbers of migrant workers in mining towns engage in both formal and informal employment. The majority of those employed in the unorganized sector, especially street vendors, are at risk, and their reasons for participating in diverse vending activities in city centers vary.

While the bulk of people who want to move to mining towns find interregional movement and migration the most challenging due to the ongoing political and ethnic conflict, mining plays a significant role in luring migrants who want to work in the sector either as formal or informal laborers in Shakiso. Thus, it is necessary to document the reasons why people migrate to mining towns, the reasons they choose to work as street vendors, and the difficulties of doing so informally, given the detrimental effects of ethnic federalism on regional mobility and the political reforms taking place in the country.

Despite the lack of thorough data on migrant street vendors, numerous studies indicate that migrants from rural to urban areas frequently engage in vending activities in different towns around the nation. This study aims to investigate the livelihood trajectories of migrant street vendors in mining cities and contribute to the body of scholarship that examines how resourceful regions, particularly mining regions, influence migration decisions and how migrants make a living once they arrive. We contend that migrants significantly contribute to the socioeconomic development of their destinations through their participation in the informal economy, in contrast to the widely held gloomy views on informality and street vending in particular.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Informal Sector and Street Vendors*

Keith Hart is recognized for coining the phrase "informal sector" in a study he conducted in Ghana in 1973. The International Labour Organization (ILO) also defined the characteristics of the informal sector in a research conducted in Kenya. According to the ILO (1972), the informal sector involves businesses that are easy to enter, depend on local resources, are family-owned, operate on a small scale, use labor-intensive technologies, require skills that are not acquired in a formal setting, and operate in unregulated and competitive markets. Hart (1973) further describes the informal sector as encompassing individuals who are not counted, the traditional urban sector, the underemployed and jobless reserve army, and the low-productivity urban sector. However, Amis (2005) warns that any definition of the informal sector must consider the sector's contentious relationship with state regulation, the small size of businesses, self-employment or survivalist livelihood strategies, and a dynamic and shifting frontier between these three ideas.

Although street vending has been present for as long as human civilization has existed (Bhowmik, 2010), conceptualizing street vending is a difficult task due to its complexity and diverse locations and activities. Street vending may refer to various groups of people who rely on the streets as their primary source of income, including those who conduct business on the streets. Alternatively, the focus may be on how street vendors interact with city officials and authorities to access and utilize public spaces for their

operations. Regardless of the idea, the conversion of public spaces into commercial or business districts due to street vending (Jonga, 2009; Chen, 2012) may result in issues with management, planning, governance, poverty, and gender inequality on a city-wide scale.

2.2. Migration, Development, and Informality nexus

The interplay between migration, development, and informality is much more intricate than it may initially seem. Migration is a constant occurrence that can have both positive and negative effects on both the place of origin and destination. These effects can manifest themselves in various forms such as environmental, social, political, economic, or demographic. Research has extensively explored the relationship between migration and development in various countries, both in the global north and south. Peberdy's (2016) study on the contributions of international migrants to Johannesburg's informal sector revealed that migrant entrepreneurs created employment opportunities for both migrants and non-migrants. Consequently, the informal economy has significant potential for development. Additionally, migrant business owners tend to have an advantage over their South African counterparts in terms of business expertise and experience. Bello-Bravo (2015) also advocates that migration has facilitated the economic empowerment of women in West Africa, as migrant women have made financial improvements and taken part in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, previous reports from the IOM suggest that migration significantly contributes to poverty reduction and economic growth (IOM, 2005).

In many developing countries, numerous articles have been written about the significance of the informal economy, the challenges encountered by its workers, municipal approaches to informality, and urban public use in general. Hart's study (Hart, 1973) provides a comprehensive portrayal of rural-urban migrants working in the informal sector in Accra, Ghana. However, there is a dearth of research on the relationship between migration to mines and subsequent livelihoods in the informal economy, particularly in Ethiopia. Some scholars (Davies & Head, 1995; Bury, 2007; Jonssen & Brycessen, 2017; Macklin, et al., 2017; Yendaw, et al., 2019) have examined the connection between migration and informality. For instance, migration to two mines in Laos (Jackson, 2017) and migration to the frontier of gold mining in the Amazon in Brazil could be examples of the connection between mining and migration.

Migration, both domestic and international, has garnered attention from academics, humanitarian groups, international governmental organizations, and governments worldwide. Forced and voluntary internal migrations are common in most developing countries. Typically, people move to cities due to dire circumstances in rural areas and the prospect of better opportunities in urban centers. In Sub-Saharan Africa, most people move to cities of different sizes to escape poverty and find lucrative employment, which is typically in the unorganized sector. Entry into the informal sector is straightforward because it does not necessitate significant human and financial resources to launch a business of one's own

preference (ILO, 1972; Chen, 2012). As a result, both men and women extensively work in the informal sector in emerging nations' cities (ILO, 2018).

Despite being the least urbanized among the East African nations, Ethiopia has been experiencing rapid urbanization. The driving forces behind this phenomenon are primarily natural expansion and migration, with administrative reclassification playing a lesser role. The trend of urbanization in Ethiopia is highly dependent on smaller communities, which are projected to comprise the majority of the country's urban population between 2020 and 2035. In particular, the nation's transition from rural to urban areas has been significantly influenced by internal migration, whereby the pursuit of employment opportunities constitutes the primary motivator (IOM, 2005; Bezu and Holden, 2014; Bundervoet, 2018). Various individual attributes and geographical circumstances also play a significant role. Rural-to-urban migration, in particular, has become increasingly prevalent in Ethiopia. While rural-to-rural migration has traditionally accounted for the majority of internal migration, the recent surge of state investments in industry, public services, and infrastructure, as well as the availability of job opportunities, has spurred rural-to-urban migration (OECD and PSI, 2020).

3. Research Methods

3.1. The study area

The present study was conducted in the town of Shakiso, which is located 494 kilometers to the south of the capital city of Addis Abeba. Shakiso is a small mining town that serves as the administrative hub for the Odo-Shakiso Woreda, Guji Zone, and Oromiya Region in southern Ethiopia. The geographical coordinates of the district lie between 50 45' 52.3" latitude and 38054' 43.2" longitude (Figure 1). As per the 2007 Census, Shakiso has a total population of 45,521, comprising 21,565 males and 23,956 females. However, the Shakiso Town Administration reports the current population to be 57,648, consisting of 28,347 males and 29,301 females. The town has a diverse ethnic composition, with the Oromo (43.52%), Amhara (33.33%), Soddo Gurage (4.12%), and Gedeo being the prominent groups, as per CSA (2007). The remaining population comprises of various other ethnic groups, accounting for approximately 11% of the total population. The majority of the residents in Shakiso follow Protestantism (38%), followed by Orthodox (25.96%), Traditionalist (17.12%), Catholic (6.78%), and Muslim (6.50%) faiths. Small and medium-sized towns, like Shakiso, offer migrants a plethora of opportunities, as suggested by Nchito (2010), but the quality of services they receive may fluctuate, which could either encourage or discourage migration.

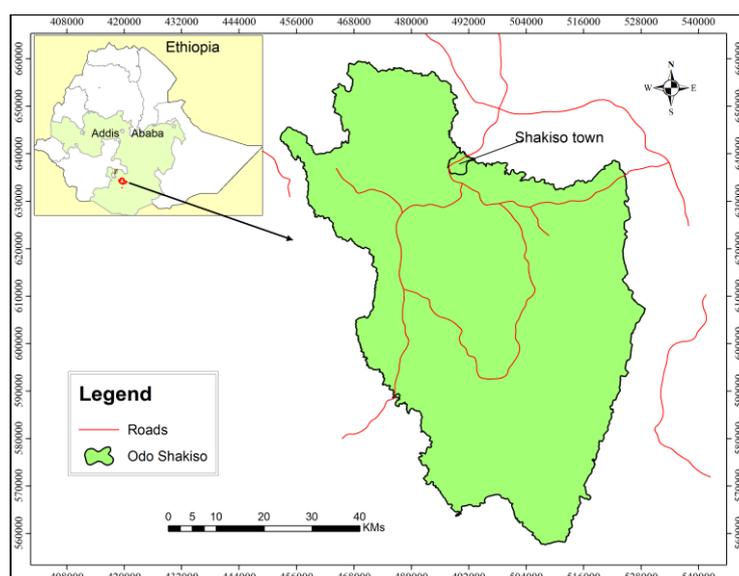


FIGURE 1 - MAP OF ODO-SHAKISOWOREDA WHERE SHAKISO TOWN IS LOCATED.

It is posited that Shakiso was established in the late 1930s to early 1940s, serving as a melting pot for various ethnicities due to the significant gold mining industry present (Metassebia, 2019). As such, this industry has become a vital source of livelihood, job opportunities, and income for many migrant workers, thereby playing a significant role in the local economy of Shakiso and its environs. The town is also home to the Kenticha tantalum mine, the emerald mine, and other gold mining industries. Migrants make up nearly half of the town's population (Ethiopia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative [EITI], 2016), and according to Maclin et al. (2017), artisanal and small-scale mining operations offer livelihood alternatives in areas with security issues. Migration could provide both economic and physical security in these areas. The gold mining industry in the town employs both formal and informal methods of mining.

Apart from small businesses, gold mining in Shakiso is also actively pursued by various government entities, private sectors, and other organizations. Examples of state-owned mining enterprises include Adola Mining Enterprises and Ethiopian Minerals Development Share Company. The region's most prominent gold mining companies are MIDROC Gold Mine Private Limited Company (PLC), Adola Gold Mine Enterprise, Leg-Dembi Gold Mine (which MIDROC purchased in 1997), and Sakaro (Metassebia, 2019). Furthermore, the town has micro and small businesses actively involved in gold mining (EITI, 2016). The retail industry and other micro and small businesses in Shakiso also contribute significantly to the area's socio-economic growth and employment generation. Given its urban function, Shakiso may be considered a mining town, with gold mining being its primary source of income.

3.2. Research Methods

The investigation took place in the town of Shakiso from October to December 2018. The study employed a qualitative research approach to examine the livelihoods of migrant street vendors in the area.

Qualitative research design is centered on exploring personal viewpoints by gathering and examining text and image data (Clark and Creswell, 2015). This study embraced a descriptive case study approach, following Robert Yin's guidelines (Yin, 2003), where multiple participants provided data. This design refers to a set of qualitative procedures for conducting in-depth investigations of bounded systems (Clark and Creswell, 2015). For this particular study, a system of street vending activities in Shakiso town, with a single migrant street vendor as the subject, was evaluated. However, one obvious limitation of this approach is that the findings are not universally applicable to all migrant street vendors in the town, as they would be with a positivist approach. Nonetheless, the results provide profound insights into the livelihoods of migrant street vendors in the town, contributing to the discourse. Thus, the study was based on qualitative data obtained from in-depth and key informant interviews conducted in informal conversational ways with 36 migrant street vendors working in Shakiso town, as well as relevant municipal authorities and non-participant observations.

Participants in the study were chosen based on the criterion principle (Yin, 2003). They had to meet specific requirements to take part in the research. They must be migrants to the town who arrived within the last six months and engaged in street vending in the town as itinerant, semi-mobile, or fixed locations with or without structures. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 36 migrant street vendors for the interviews. Vendors worked while the interviews were conducted on the town's main streets.

A total of 36 in-depth interviews lasting approximately 60-90 minutes each were conducted. The questions asked during the interviews were open-ended and conducted in informal and conversational ways. This helped establish a connection with the participants and obtain the necessary information. The interviews comprised a semi-structured segment that addressed the background characteristics of the participants and their reasons for migrating to Shakiso. The second part covered the livelihood strategies of migrant vendors, specifically the reasons for engaging in street vending, their social, financial, and human capital, and the prospects of their vending activity. The third part focused on the challenges that they have encountered while vending in different locations in the town. Participants were chosen with due consideration to ensure greater diversity and location. Diversity was based on the personal attributes of vendors, such as age, sex, educational level, and marital status.

In addition to conducting in-depth interviews, relevant individuals who have direct responsibility for managing street vending and urban public space in Shakiso Municipality were subjected to key informant interviews. The interviews, which were semi-structured, were conducted with five key informants. The questions posed during the interviews were aimed at eliciting their views on street vending in the town, the measures they have implemented thus far, and their future plans for street vending in the town.

Furthermore, observation was conducted in order to identify the hotspots of street vending activity in the town during the mornings and afternoons, both on weekdays and weekends. The observation was also intended to identify the spatial patterns of vending, vendor-customer interactions, and vendor-municipal authorities' interactions in the town. The data gathered was thematically analyzed.

The data collection process was conducted with major ethical considerations in mind. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the fact that the data they provided could be used for research purposes and kept confidential, with their real names not being reported. In order to conduct the interviews in a friendly and conversational manner, rapport was established with the participants.

4. Results

4.1. Participants

The examination of migrant street vendors' socio-demographic traits revealed that a significant proportion of them were young, unmarried females with a limited level of education. Specifically, out of the respondents, twenty were females and sixteen were males; the majority were between the ages of 19 and 28, with nine being over the age of 29 and three below the age of 18. Concerning marital status, twenty-two were never married, while fourteen were married. With regard to education, thirteen had no formal education, fourteen had primary education, four had secondary education, and five had post-secondary education. One of the participants who took part in the study in the town was a graduate who had hoped to secure formal employment in the public sector. However, as he expressed, it was unfeasible for him to obtain such a position in the public sector.

„As a college graduate, I obtained a diploma in accounting in 2015. Regrettably, I was unable to pass the Certificate of Competence (COC) examination, which led me to relocate from Dama Woreda to Shakiso with the aspiration of acquiring a better position. Upon reviewing the vacancies, I realized that the qualifications for public service positions were exceedingly rigorous. As I lack professional experience, finding employment has been challenging. Consequently, I opted to work as a street vendor, as returning to my family in Dama is not a desirable option.”

As elucidated by the informant, successfully passing the COC examination is deemed an obligatory prerequisite for entrance into the public sector. The inability to do so compels individuals to seek alternative avenues to remain as unemployed graduates.

As expounded upon in the methodology section, all individuals participating in the study were classified as migrants. Their migration was a result of resettlement either from the neighboring rural vicinities and diminutive towns within Guji Zone or from beyond its borders to other regions in the country. Of the aggregate number of participants, 26 hailed from regions outside of Guji Zone while a mere 10 emanated

from the zone itself. The study predominantly comprises of migrants from the most populous Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Zones. To be precise, twenty migrants originated from SNNPR (primarily from Wolayta and Guraghe Zones), six hailed from the Amhara region, and ten from the Oromiya region, particularly from the Guji Zone. The majority of the locales from which the migrants originated are densely populated and scarce in resources, thus prompting their resettlement to resource-rich areas, such as Shakiso.

4.2. Migration Motivations

Participants were queried regarding the reasons underlying their departure from their place of origin and subsequent migration to Shakiso town. The push factors identified were the challenge of fulfilling household needs, dearth of employment opportunities, rural living difficulties, lack of cultivable land, and exposure to natural disasters. Conversely, the pull factors were predominantly economic in nature within the scope of the study. The migration trend, from rural to urban areas in Ethiopia, reveals that the majority of economic migrants set their sights on resource-rich regions such as mining towns.

In light of the inquiry about their choice of Shakiso as their destination, a majority of research participants cited the prospect of securing a mining job as their primary motivation. The study revealed that participants migrated from rural to urban areas in search of better prospects, bypassing the limited opportunities available in rural areas. Vendors hold the view that urban areas offer a promising future in terms of income, education, and overall livelihood. One of the respondents expressed this sentiment:

„In my perspective, residing in an urban center presents several advantages over living in a rural locale. During my time in the countryside, I was solely responsible for tending to my parents' diminutive tract of land on an annual basis during the summer season. Conversely, inhabiting an urban locale affords me the opportunity to engage in activities such as acquiring an education, pursuing career prospects, and cultivating various skills and life experiences. Such prospects are not readily accessible within rural areas.”

As previously discussed, Migrant Street vendors have expressed that their migration to Shakiso was primarily driven by the anticipation of enhanced employment prospects. A number of them harbored expectations of securing opportunities within the mining sector of the town, where they aspired to earn a greater income. This was due to the fact that they had heard reports of prior migrant workers who had found employment in mining and were able to earn a substantial income. Hence, it is pertinent to consider the perspective of one of the interviewees who stated:

„I hail from Bore, located in the eastern region of Guji Zone. Initially, I had anticipated securing a formal salaried position either in the public sector or with private mining companies.

Nevertheless, upon observing the limited prospects available within the town, I came to the realization that this was not a feasible outcome. Following the counsel of a confidant, I commenced the peddling of both new and pre-owned apparel, as well as illicit clothing, situated on the thoroughfares of the township, so as to provide for myself and my kin. It is worth noting that these commodities are primarily introduced into the country via Moyale, a boundary town separating Ethiopia and Kenya, and are extensively accessible within the vicinity.”

The migrant street vendors who were the focus of this study made a deliberate decision to establish themselves in Shakiso town for a multitude of reasons, including but not limited to unfavorable living conditions and restricted opportunities in their respective places of origin. A significant proportion of these individuals were compelled to seek employment in the town as a direct result of rural impoverishment, population constraints, and the dearth of viable job prospects. As one participant aptly remarked, the situation is as follows:

„At the present time, I am 27 years of age and have arrived in Shakiso due to the absence of alternative options. The dearth of land in my native area is quite pronounced, as my family's modest landholding was insufficient to even provide sustenance for our household. To embark on this journey, I liquidated my humble dwelling. Despite my efforts to secure employment in my preferred field, my spouse and I have taken to street vending as a means of livelihood.”

The economic distress that signaled the limited prospects of life in their native places made the possibility of migrating to mining areas appear as a liberating experience, which could provide a meaningful future. The decision of most vendors to migrate to Shakiso represents a positive response to the despondency of life in their native places. For many migrant vendors, the final decision to migrate was influenced by the informal interactions with previous migrants returning to their native places, who narrated the contrasting tales of the town as compared to the rural life, and depicted the town as an exhilarating place of opportunity. Frequently, these previous migrants sent money, clothing, and belongings to the families they had left behind, and these possessions provided greater credibility to the notion that the town offered numerous opportunities and motivated the decision to pursue their aspiration for a better life in the town.

4.3. Why in Street Vending: Opportunity or Necessity?

The livelihoods of migrant vendors are determined by the context in which they operate, as economic, environmental, social, and political factors influence the assets available to them and their capability to sustain modest livelihoods. Urban areas present new opportunities for rural people in terms of employment and income generation, leading many migrant workers from vulnerable rural areas to seek work in the urban informal sector. The personal characteristics of migrants such as demographics, socio-

economics, and political affiliations play a significant role in determining their livelihood outcomes. However, in Shakiso town, unskilled and uneducated migrants dominate the informal sector due to high youth unemployment and migrant inflow.

The reasons for migrant engagement in street vending in Shakiso town are diverse, with employment being the most significant motivating factor. Street vending is explained as either opportunity-driven or necessity-driven, or a combination of the two. In Shakiso town, necessity-driven motivation is the primary factor driving migrant engagement in street vending, as most informants interviewed in the town attested.

„As a 14-year-old, I am gainfully employed as a shoe shiner on the streets of Shakiso town. My mother, a small-time merchant, also operates on the street, hawking fruits and vegetables. In the morning, my elder brother - a 9th grader - assists her by carrying the goods from home to the street. When he leaves for school, I take over to aid her, in addition to my shoe-shining responsibilities.

For the past five years, I have been peddling fruits and vegetables around Menaharia Sefer, near the bus station. I deliberately selected this location due to the high volume of foot traffic. My clientele is mostly composed of travelers and select Shakiso town residents.”

In the context of their economic activities, street vendors exercise their agency in order to optimize their income and minimize their exposure to hazards. An informant elucidates his daily management of earnings, outlining the following procedure:

„In order to increase customer acquisition, it is imperative to identify strategic locations within the town which exhibit high foot traffic. A methodical approach involving meticulous planning of daily sales operations and targeted marketing efforts is essential. As such, it is crucial to avoid settling in a single location and instead, adopt a dynamic strategy that involves changing locations to maximize sales and customer outreach.”

The livelihood of street vendors is consistently susceptible to the contextual surroundings in which they conduct their business. This susceptibility predominantly arises from their informal and unlawful standing in relation to the contemporary perspective of the urban environment (Chen, 2012; Njaya, 2014). Municipal administrations hold the belief that street vendors generate more issues than resolutions. In accordance with this, a survey respondent expressed, "I have been engaged in street vending for duration of four years. My commodities have been confiscated twice by the municipal authorities and law enforcement. It required two months for me to retrieve my confiscated products." This renders their subsistence precarious as it may occasionally cause turbulence in their lives. The reaction provided by one of the participants in the survey is evidently demonstrative of this.

„Prior to commencing my vending occupation, I was employed as a shoe polisher within the Kongo Sefer region of Congo. My decision to venture into the vending industry, specifically within the second-hand clothing sector, was motivated by the potential for increased financial gain. Over the course of the past three years, I have been actively engaged in vending activities, initially finding it to be a pleasurable experience. Unfortunately, our vending community has been subjected to recurring instances of harassment from town code enforcement officials. It is not uncommon to witness vendors fleeing from the authorities, which has, on occasion, resulted in unintentional accidents. Regrettably, one of my associates experienced a vehicular collision whilst attempting to evade police intervention.”

The information presented above indicates that the livelihood of street vendors in the town is precarious. Despite the persistent obstacles they encounter, migrant vendors bear a pressing responsibility of transforming their own lives and those of others, notably their parents, through the remittance of funds, clothing, and other essentials to their home regions. Hence, migrant vendors at their destination must exert themselves by laboring extensively to accrue additional earnings.

4.4. How the town is dealing with street vending?

The present study reveals that street vending serves as a source of livelihood for migrants in Shakiso town. This precarious means of subsistence has subjected vendors to various challenges. Among the obstacles enumerated during interviews are inadequate working space, harassment by local and municipal authorities, lack of financial capital, and the difficulties encountered by female vendors. The majority of migrant vendors involved in this study have expressed their dissatisfaction with the local or municipal government's failure to create a favorable working environment for them. Instead, the government concentrates its efforts on providing support for formally organized micro and small enterprises (MSEs), which benefit from provisions such as working space, business skills training, and loans. Thus, it is crucial to examine the stance of municipal authorities towards street vending activities.

Interviews with MSE officers reveal that they prioritize formal-sector MSEs over informal street vendors. The officers also regard the absence of demographic, socio-economic, and business data on street vending activities in the town as a challenge, and they perceive street vending as illegal. Another challenge facing vendors is harassment by municipal and local authorities. Most of the vendors interviewed confirmed that they have been subjected to harassment, eviction, and expropriation on multiple occasions. According to the key informant interview with officers in the Trade Department of the town, controlling and managing the town's trading space, footpath, increasing vending activities, and ensuring easy movement for pedestrians were the responsibilities of the office. They believe that street vending activities deteriorate the town's environment by increasing solid waste, overcrowding, and social

evil. They observed that street vendors in Shakiso town have been increasing in number over the last four years, from 2007-2010E C (2015/16-2018/19 G.C).

In response to the interview inquiry regarding the actions taken by the town's Trade Department to address the issue of street vending, the official stated, "We have effectively identified the fundamental causes that contribute to the phenomenon of street vending." These include unemployment, the absence of formal employment opportunities within the town, insufficient start-up capital, and rising rural-urban migration into Shakiso town. In order to attain formal Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) status, they are obligated to conserve twenty percent (20%) of the funds they obtain. Additionally, the Trade Department has devised a plan to offer training and facilitate connections with the Small and Micro Finance Office. The urban authorities intend to address the issue by providing vending space for the vendors and allowing them to operate as formal traders. The administrator also aspires to resolve the issue over the long term. When questioned about the primary challenges they have encountered, the official responded, "We are unable to accurately determine the number of street vendors as it constantly fluctuates." This clearly highlights the neglect of street vendors in the municipal statistics, rendering their status illegal and their livelihoods precarious. Hence, it is plausible to argue that given the limited opportunities in both the mining and other sectors, the surge of migration into the town will continue to pose a persistent challenge to the town administration in regards to street vending.

5. DISCUSSIONS

According to the present study, the majority of street vendors who migrate are young. The preponderance of women among street vendors serves as evidence of the feminization of migration to mining regions. Due to their inability to meet the requirements of the formal economy, those with inadequate educational backgrounds tend to work in the informal sector, with street vending being a popular option. These results align with those of Yendaw et al. (2019), who found that most migrant vendors were young, unmarried, and had low levels of education. In Southern Ethiopia, Tesfaye and Cochrane (2019) discovered that young people cease attending school to migrate both internally and externally. Furthermore, the paper argues that dropping out of school could have adverse consequences for the growth of human capital on both micro and macro levels. Nevertheless, a migrant street vendor who was interviewed in the town was a graduate anticipating formal paid employment in the public sector.

Migrant street vendors come to Shakiso from various parts of the country as migration serves as a means of livelihood. The majority of migrants originate from regions of the country that are sparsely resourced and densely populated. In Ethiopia, increased rural-urban migration is driven by a variety of factors, including rising household population pressure, loss of agricultural lands, inequities between urban and rural areas, rising unemployment, and particularly harsh rural life. This outcome is consistent with

Bundervoet's (2018) findings that individuals in high-density rural areas were more likely to migrate than those in low-density rural regions and with the Research and Evidence Facility's (REF) (2021) report that a "lack of productive employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in the agricultural sector" is a driving force behind the rural-urban migration of young people in Ethiopia.

As previously mentioned, the towns are viewed by migrants as a source of employment opportunities. For many impoverished migrants in Shakiso town, street vending has become a way of life due to their reliance on the informal economy for income, which is often the case for those with low formal education or training. One of the major challenges faced is the escalating rate of graduate unemployment, which is evident in both small and large locations across the country (Temesgen, 2017). Unemployment was also a significant issue in Shakiso, as the formal sector was unable to accommodate the labor force, particularly the migrant labor force from rural to urban areas. Consequently, unemployment has resulted in social exclusion, negative attitudes towards the unemployed, addiction, and alcoholism among affected individuals (Fraol, 2015).

The migrant vendors who came to Shakiso had diverse reasons for doing so, which could be categorized as the poor state of their origin, lack of job opportunities, and insufficient agricultural land, respectively. Migration, therefore, is perceived primarily as a means of escaping poverty and harsh conditions in mainly rural areas (Gebre and Maharaj, 2011; Bezu and Holden, 2014; Bundervoet, 2018), and is regarded as a crucial means of subsistence for particularly vulnerable groups, such as children, women, and young people. Rural-urban migration is a common phenomenon in many developing countries, with people from impoverished regions moving to resource-rich or prosperous areas. It is evident that migrants tend to have low human capital, including low levels of education and other essential resources.

Before becoming street vendors, the majority of migrants worked as farmers. Due to their lack of financial resources and their need for income, many joined the street vending sector. Shakiso was chosen as a place to work in the mining industry and other municipal areas, which is consistent with previous studies conducted in Latin America and Africa. A study in artisanal and small-scale mining locations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) describes the precise push and pull factors motivating migration to these areas (Maclin et al., 2017). According to migratory craftsmen and small-scale miners in the DRC, economic push factors are primarily responsible for migration decisions to mining areas. Moreover, in Amazonian research, Geoffrey (1992) suggests that migrants view gold mining as a viable alternative to farming. Economic pull factors such as education, employment, and business prospects influence mine migration (Maclin et al., 2017). However, upon reaching Shakiso, the migrants discovered that there were no mining job opportunities available. As a result, they were forced to turn to street vending in order to survive and earn a living. According to Davies and Head (1995), an increase in migration to mining regions

could potentially result in a loss of mining jobs in the areas in which they are situated, which could have a detrimental cumulative effect.

The various categories of street vending, including clothing, small durable goods, vegetables, fast food, and fruits and vegetables, are situated in the concentrated areas of the town where street vendors primarily operate. Street vending does not receive support from local and municipal authorities, who subject vendors to harassment, difficulty obtaining a location, insufficient funding, and gender-based discrimination. Despite this, municipal authorities theoretically endorse the formalization of street vending as micro and small enterprises. However, employees in the unorganized sector face challenges in acquiring bank loans. Migrant street vendors often begin their endeavors with their own savings or borrowed funds from acquaintances. If the formal sector proves advantageous and accessible, most interviewees prefer it over the informal sector, although many face obstacles in meeting the required qualifications.

The migrant participants in this study made significant contributions to the community's economy by providing goods and services that are often inaccessible to those unable to afford them at established, well-known stores. These vendors initially assisted themselves and their families by sending funds and possessions such as televisions, cell phones, shoes, and clothing. The importance of vendors in the urban economy is evidenced by their provision of essential services, the creation of job opportunities for the migratory population, and their substantial financial contributions. In Shakiso town, street vending has emerged as a source of income for a large proportion of migrant vendors, who invest in their basic needs, education, and remittances to family members and other revenue streams.

It is our assertion that street vending is not a problem but rather a solution, providing job opportunities for rural-to-urban migrants and access to affordable goods and services for the poor. Migrant street vendors, in particular, play a vital role in supporting the local economy by catering to segments of the population that the formal economy does not serve and offering goods and services at relatively lower prices. Moreover, street vendors utilize their earnings to support themselves and their families rather than engaging in illicit activities.

Despite the significant contributions made by migrant street vendors, local officials have yet to acknowledge or appreciate their efforts. As a result, it is apparent that migrant street vendors face numerous difficulties, as repeatedly stated by local authorities. Nevertheless, the study discovered that migrant vendors were able to increase their financial assets despite their lack of experience in the industry when they began. This is due to the knowledge and expertise they have gained from their vending experiences. Most importantly, migrant street vendors exhibit agency in their quest to earn a livelihood and overcome the obstacles they confront daily.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The investigation conducted an analysis of the migration to Shakiso, a mining town located in southern Ethiopia, focusing on the livelihoods of migrant workers in the unorganized sector, particularly in street vending. The study aimed to determine the extent to which the migrants' expectations were met upon reaching their destination. Findings from previous research indicated that immigrants did not engage in mining activities upon arrival but instead became permanent or itinerant street vendors. The outcomes of this research further enrich our understanding of the means of subsistence for migrants in small mining communities in emerging nations, thus contributing to the literature on mining migration and life in the informal sector.

This study reveals that resource-rich regions remain highly attractive to migrants, despite the lack of anticipated employment opportunities. The majority of migrant street vendors are young, as revealed by this survey. According to gender statistics, most vendors are women with limited education. Migrant street vendors come from various resource-poor and densely populated parts of the nation, driven to move to Shakiso as a means of making a living. The increasing pressure on household populations, loss of agricultural land, disparities between urban and rural areas, rising unemployment, and difficult rural living conditions are the primary reasons for their migration. As previously mentioned, migrants assess the work and income options available in the town. Uneducated migrant workers have found livelihoods in the informal sector, with street vending becoming a way of life for the poor migrants in Shakiso town.

The municipality and local authorities do not favor street vending; however, municipal officials support the formalization of street vendors in theory. Obtaining loans from banks is challenging for unorganized sector employees. This survey clearly demonstrates that most people would prefer working in the formal sector if support were provided. Street vendors offer a means for the underprivileged to access goods and services in society who cannot afford to purchase from formal established stores. Furthermore, they initially sent money and valuables to help themselves and their families.

We assert that vendors play a pivotal role in the urban economy, providing necessary services, access to employment and other opportunities for migrants, and promoting economic progress. For most migrants in Shakiso town, street vending has become a source of income. The majority of migrant street vendors invest in their basic needs, education, and send money to family members back home and other sources of revenue. Additionally, we contend that when local governments support street vendors, it creates job opportunities for rural to urban migrants, provides essential goods and services to the underprivileged at reasonable costs.

The conclusions drawn from the study suggest that municipal authorities must consider vendors as an essential part of the community and provide them with convenient working spaces to aid in vending as a community. Additionally, the Trade Department should instruct street merchants in business practices, similar to small and microfinance experiences, and provide designated working spaces. The town's Micro and Small Enterprise Department should also work with the Trade Department to make the working spaces for merchants more convenient.

It is important to acknowledge several limitations in this study. The lack of large representative surveys makes generalizations impossible. As an exploratory study, it primarily focused on an in-depth investigation using qualitative data collected from a small number of study participants. Therefore, it would be beneficial to further investigate the livelihoods of migrants in the informal sector using large samples and employing various quantitative analysis and mixed methods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors express their gratitude to the Shakiso Municipality, the Trade Department and the migrant vendors who participated in the study by providing the necessary information.

FUNDING

The financial backing for the research was provided by Dilla University.

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