

Assessing the influence of Rural –Urban migration on human trafficking in Rwanda

Abstract

Throughout the world, movement of people has been taking place from the rural characterized by deprivation to the urban mostly endowed with social amenities and economic advancement. As rural-urban influx continues, urban infrastructure is put on strain and this culminates into urban poverty which is a favorable condition for human trafficking. The study indicates that there is a close relationship between rural-urban migration and human trafficking in Rwanda. This is clearly shown by domestic workers, girls and women who flock the urban with hopes for economic advancement but only to suffer prostitution and human trafficking at a later stage. Lee's migration theory which used push and pull factors was applied to explain the relationship between rural-urban migration and human trafficking. About 7,000 children left the rural to the urban and are potential recruits for human trafficking. Data was collected and analyzed by use of documentary method. Findings indicate there a very close relationship between rural-urban migration and human trafficking. To reduce human trafficking one needs to reverse rural-urban migration by applying rural development projects such as creation of basic social and economic infrastructure as well as promotion of non-farm income sectors in rural areas.

Keywords: push factors, pull factors, victims, traffickers, rural-urban migration

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Introduction

Worldwide, human trafficking is best explained using three constituent elements; the process, means and purpose. In some instances, each of the constituent elements can constitute a crime independently. Process entails recruitment, transportation, receipt of persons, giving and receiving of payments of victims of human trafficking. The means which victims of human trafficking are obtained includes; abduction, force, coercion, deception, threat, fraud, abuse of power, and abuse of a position of vulnerability, whereas purpose implies exploitation of victims in sexual, labor, illicit adoption, removal of body organs, military service, slavery and servitude.¹

On the other hand, rural-urban migration implies movement of people from villages to settle in cities in hope of gaining a better standard of living. Migration is influenced by economic growth and development and by technological change and possibly also by conflict and social disruption. It is driven by pull factors that attract people to urban areas and push factors that drive people away from the countryside.

Employment opportunities in cities are one of the main pull factors. Many industries are located in cities and offer opportunities of high urban wages. There are also more educational institutions providing courses and training in a wide range of subjects and skills. People are attracted to an urban lifestyle and the 'bright lights' of city life. All of these factors result in both temporary and permanent migration to urban areas. Poor living conditions and the lack of opportunities for paid employment in rural areas are push factors. People are moving away from rural areas because of poor health care and limited educational and economic opportunities as well as environmental changes, droughts, floods, lack of availability of sufficiently productive land, and other pressures on rural livelihoods. Poverty is a contributing factor in the operations of the trafficking trade and related migration.^{2,3}

Migration is a driver of urbanization and urban migration (both national and international) is on increase in the twenty-first century. It

is estimated that globally there are 740 million internal and 232 million international migrants. Accordingly, debates on the impact of migration flows and migrant dynamics on the social, economic, political and cultural relations of societies and cities have assumed increased prominence. Increased migration to urban centers is inevitable given the global realities of ageing societies, slow and uneven regional and national economic growth and environmental and political instability. Meanwhile, there are an estimate of 65.3 forcibly displaced persons worldwide. Approximately half of these seek refuge in urban areas, and in Jordan, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Pakistan and Iraq, between 60-95% of internally displaced persons live in urban settings.

Both international and internal urban migration involves increasingly different types of migrants, with varying motivations. These include those searching for better jobs, single women migrating to support family, women joining husbands, asylum seekers, students and trainees. Environmental disasters and conflict also contribute to urban migration nationally and internationally.

Moving to cities can enhance well-being, offering an escape from poverty and providing access to better opportunities, employment, health and education. Findings from Myanmar highlight that households migrate for many reasons, including insecure rural livelihoods, shocks that make subsistence difficult, and the desire for upward mobility. However, an influx of migrants strains the ability of cities to cope, meaning migrants may be unable to access social support or afford adequate housing. This makes them more vulnerable to deprivation, disease and violence and often exposes them to forced eviction. Migrant women, especially those who are undocumented, are more likely to experience labor market exploitation and are at greater risk of kidnap or trafficking.⁴

Poverty assures that an ample supply of innocent and desperate humans can be duped into becoming victims in the trafficking trade.² Despite the fact that rural-urban migration reduces pressure on the local labor market and increases investments from remittances realized from urban activities. The increase in urban population has its own

problems lack of employment opportunities either as a result of high migrant population, and this generates a vicious circle of scarcity and needs and subsequent new forms of migration. While conflicts in the rural setting can provoke rural exodus, migrants are likely to find new forms of violence and crime such as human trafficking.⁵ The rural-urban influx of low-income population is responsible for an expansion in informal settlement and therefore human trafficking in Kigali city by the names of Kangondo and Kibiraro of Remera sector, Gasabo district.

Human rights violation by human trafficking in different forms such as; Labor and sexual exploitation, illicit Child adoption, Child military service, trade in human organs and tissues, child harvesting and forced marriage.⁶ There are the many significant impacts of trafficking, and those include and not limited to physical, psychological, and social impairments. Informants observe high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder and a host of other psychological issues among victims such as self-condemnation, fear, guilt, shame, social withdrawal and low self-esteem. Exacerbating these problems is the fact that many victims do not report the trafficking or reach out to others for support. Research results also indicate that the effects vary depending on the type of trafficking. Females, in particular girls, who become pregnant as a result of sex trafficking face serious economic and health problems when they return home, in addition to social isolation.⁷

Trafficking victims often suffer from serious physical abuse and physical exhaustion, as well as starvation. Typical injuries can include broken bones, concussion, bruising or burns, as well as other injuries associated with assault.⁸

There has been notable constructive developments to combat human trafficking in Rwanda and among which has been on preventive outlook. Reduction of unemployment being at the center stage, but lack of scarce resources, insufficient testimonies, lack of capacity and cooperation continue to hamper human trafficking control.⁹

Statement of the problem

Article 13 of the Rwandan constitution advocates for protection of human rights that include none violation of fundamental rights of human beings who should not be treated inhumanly, cruelly and in degraded manner. The acts of trafficking in persons are a negation of the inviolability of a human being, which is a sacred constitutional right. To this end the campaign against human trafficking that has gone on in the Rwanda since the crime of human trafficking emerged in the country and has continued to do so but the crime has persisted despite crime combat mechanisms in place. The youth and especially the female under 30 years are prone to the menace of human trafficking especially those from the rural areas who venture to seek for jobs in the urban centers. In 2017, Rwanda prosecution authority handled 47 cases of human trafficking. By 2019, Rwanda security and migration officials were able to detect and prevented 85 girls from being trafficked, eleven of who were Burundians and three Congolese (Nkurunziza, 2019).

Girls between the age of 13 and 18 years have been sexually exploited in hotels. Labor exploitation has also been identified in domestic work, in the agricultural, mining, industrial, and service sectors bars, and restaurants, and exploit men and boys in forced labor in mines and plantations in Rwanda.¹⁰ Recent reports indicate that migrant workers migrated from rural areas to urban areas, specifically Kigali, in search of job opportunities and, consequently, became vulnerable to traffickers. Traffickers target vulnerable populations such as youth experiencing homelessness, orphaned children, children with disabilities, young women and girls, unemployed adults, and internally displaced persons.

International organizations reported traffickers entice young girls into domestic servitude and then force them into prostitution. Reports also indicate forced street begging as a new form of trafficking exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic.¹⁰

There are about 146,000 refugees who fled conflict and political violence in Burundi and the DRC remain highly vulnerable to trafficking in Rwanda due to an inability to secure legitimate employment. Some parents in refugee camps receive money in exchange for their daughters' work in domestic service. The harsh conditions in Rwanda's refugee camps predisposes refugees for human trafficking to Kigali or towns within neighboring districts. Reports indicate that most potential victims from refugee camps are young girls trafficked to work in Kigali and other centers as domestic workers, although some are forced to provide labor in bars or engage in sexual exploitation. Traffickers have resorted to the use of phones and social media to lure victims and no longer travel physically to Rwanda. This has hampered prosecution as traffickers are never intercepted because evidence is difficult to gather.⁷

Internal human trafficking primarily takes the form of rural–urban trafficking, with Kigali the main destination. Traffickers typically lure rural victims with promises of a better life and specifically target young girls and boys, some of whom are aged below 18 years. The internal human trafficking situation is propagated by limited public awareness and knowledge of human trafficking in general and child trafficking specifically. The state has an obligation to respect, protect, and defend this sacred principle of inviolability of the human being. In this regard, the state is required to put in place meaningful mechanisms to prevent trafficking in persons, protect victims from this crime, and prosecute those who commit this crime. This study therefore, seeks to determine the contribution rural-urban migration has had on human trafficking in Rwanda.

Research objective

To investigate the influence of rural-urban migration on human trafficking in Rwanda.

Theoretical framework

Lee's migration theory that was established in 1966 and provides one of the best models to explain the relationship between rural-urban migration and human trafficking. He begins his formulations with certain factors, which lead to spatial mobility of population in any area which are factors associated with the place of origin, factors associated with the place of destination, intervening obstacles, and personal factors. The decision to migrate is the net result of the interplay among all these factors.

According to Lee, each place possesses a set of positive and negative factors. While positive factors are the circumstances that act to hold people within it, or attract people from other areas, negative factors tend to repel them. In addition to these, there are factors, which remain neutral, and to which people are essentially indifferent.

Lee's migration theory describes the push and pull factors of migration which are basically reasons for emigration and immigration. A push factor is a condition that is unfavorable in a certain area that an individual or groups of people that simply cause them to leave the area. On the other hand, a pull factor is a reason that attracts individuals into an area. The factors could be Better wage rates, high standards of life, job opportunities, better education, medical services, etc.

Lee's migration model does not isolate certain push and pull factors, every location has a certain number of attributes of positive,

negative and neutral factors. Some examples of push factors could be war, famine, drought, unemployment, insecurity and poverty. On the issue of how migration has an effect on human trafficking Lee (1966) opines that every factor that shape and strengthen movements of people is considered either a “pull” or “push factor”. Push factors represent source country characteristics that trigger outflow of people or intensify the pressure to leave the home country. These factors also support human trafficking outflows, because the higher the willingness to emigrate, the more likely it is that an individual will come into contact with trafficking organizations.

In contrast, pull factors are characteristics in host places and countries that attract inflows of migrants. Trafficking flows also respond to such characteristic, because the main targets of trafficking organizations are vulnerable groups among the population that are highly exposed to exploitation.¹¹ Traffickers incur large costs in searching potential victims. In cases of well-established routes for migrants and refugees, the costs are greatly reduced that creates and ideal market for traffickers.¹¹ Trafficking organizations prefer to find victims where costs are lower, transporting the victims through less risky routes, and exploiting them where revenues are higher.

Conceptual frame work

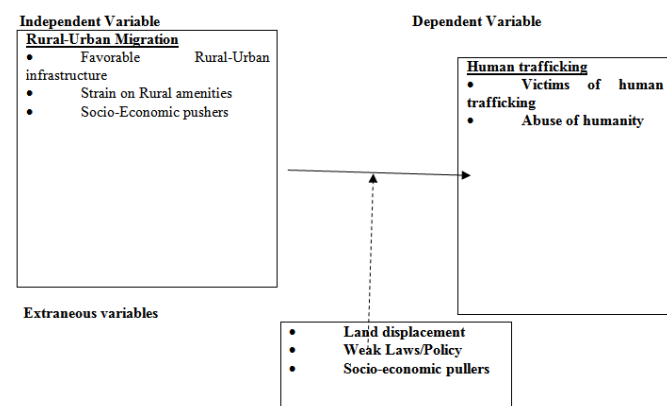


Figure 1 The rural-urban Migration-Human trafficking Nexus.

The relationship between rural-urban migration (Independent variable) and human trafficking (dependent variable) is that the rural areas deprived and have low income per capita when compared with urban residents. The rural area has low income which translates into little capacity to educate children, thus rural has little to offer for education and medical services. Further, there are few jobs and labor is absorbed at low wages compared to the urban. On the contrary, if the urban social amenities such as education and medical services and standards are better for life exist in the urban. Employees are offered better salaries and wages as well better opportunities for employment. Thus, these favorable conditions trigger rural-urban influx as a result of socio-economic opportunities in the Urban.

Amidst such rural-urban migration, Traffickers either prey on an economic crisis facing individual and families requiring money and select victims that they think will be most compliant. Traffickers also prey upon families in poverty, families in which parents are alcoholic and administrators of orphanages in the rural. Other targets of prey for traffickers are children who are victims of child abuse, who may be runaways or may have been forced into prostitution by a family member. An emerging pattern involves the recruitment of women working in prostitution who left the rural and live in the urban. This deliberate selection of women already having worked in prostitution before being trafficked ensures that the transition is easy for the

trafficked person and proves to be a strategic way for traffickers to mitigate some of the resistance of unwilling victims.

Literature review

Human trafficking is one of the most common social problem in South eastern Asia as well as south Asia. In the South Asia the hardest hit countries are India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Out of the 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked worldwide every year, about 250,000 are estimated to be from South-East Asia and 150,000 from South Asia. Common forms of exploitation in these countries are; sexual exploitation, forced labor, bonded labor, domestic servitude, child begging and the removal of body organs. A number of factors are responsible for trafficking in the regions are rural-urban migration, the effect of large population associated with chronic poverty and unemployment.¹²

Similarly, young girls who migrate to urban areas from the rural are subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking, Rural Bhutanese are transported to urban areas, generally by relatives, for domestic work, which at times involves forced labor. There are girls working as domestic servants and entertainers in ‘karaoke’ bars who may be exposed to sex trafficking, debt bondage labor trafficking and threats of physical abuse.¹³ (United states department of state,2015).

In South East Asia, rural-urban migration is on trend, there is both short and long run internal migration in the region. Labor migration is caused by rural poverty and differences in wages rates between rural and the urban and obviously people move where there are economic opportunities in the sub-region. Rural-urban migration is mostly carried out by women who are employed as domestic workers, childminders, in garment manufacturing and in the sex and entertainment industries. Many originate from poor rural areas and migrate for economic reasons, while others may move to the urban to access education. The major crime during such migration is human trafficking.¹⁴

International organization for migration¹⁵ highlights that Thailand is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking. It is a hub for exploitation in the Greater Mekong Sub region. Both internal and cross-border trafficking occurs in and from Thailand for sex and labor exploitation. Thailand continues to attract significant numbers of irregular migrants fleeing poverty, conflict and persecution; refugees and asylum-seekers; unaccompanied minors left alone as a result of conflict; women who are trafficked for sexual exploitation; and children for begging in its capital, Bangkok, and the county’s main tourist locations. Thais are trafficked to wealthier countries in East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Rural to urban internal migration contributes greatly to the amount of human trafficking that takes place in Thailand.

International organization for migration¹⁶ observes that it is common for low-waged labor migrants, especially those moving from rural to urban areas either within or outside their home country, to live in poor-quality and over-crowded housing which increases their susceptibility to human trafficking and infectious diseases. Migrant sex workers are routinely exposed to aggressive behavior, physical violence and forced sex as well as risks of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Indonesia has a big number of employed domestic workers in Jakarta and these are mostly young women and girls from impoverished rural communities in Indonesia There are over 600,000 child domestic workers in Jakarta of which at least 50 per cent of these domestic workers are female aged below 18 years and subject to human trafficking.

For the case of Kazakhstan which is in central Asia, human trafficking is a major issue and violation of human rights through human trafficking takes place and People are trafficked to do domestic service, prostitution and even labor in the agriculture industry. Domestic human trafficking takes place as people migrate from the rural to urban centers where they are attracted by better economic opportunities offered in the cities and more often fall victims of labor and sex trafficking. For this matter, the government of Kazakhstan is blamed for hundreds of trafficking cases opened each year and few perpetrators are prosecuted.¹⁷

In the Balkans, to take the example in the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia and Albania, young men and women have moved to cities especially to Skopje and Tirana respectively. Their migration has not only increased pressure on urban infrastructure, but also increasing the likelihoods of being trafficked.¹⁸ United nations population fund,¹⁹ reveals that rural-urban gap is largely responsible for human trafficking, but there are occasions where human trafficking can be there for other reasons other than extreme rural poverty. There is growing evidence from countries as different in the Baltic countries, the Ukraine, Moldova, and even South-east Asian nations that human trafficking is caused by unanticipated reasons such as longing for materialistic life styles and the wish to be fashionable and lure of opportunities to take part in urban night life. Human trafficking comes as a result of parents who send their children to work in the sex industry with the hope that remittances obtained back home are used for raising the standards of the family. Furthermore, women may enter prostitution in urban setting because of their inability to form thorough relationships, especially after enduring violence at home or at work with the end state of being easy targets for human traffickers.

International organization for migration (2016) also finds that rural-urban migration in Central America has contributed to the population growth of cities and consequent human trafficking and the region is today the second in the world to register the highest and fastest urbanization rates, with an average growth rate of 3.8 during the last two decades. Likewise, according to World Bank forecasts, by 2050 the region will have doubled its urban population, mainly due to rural migrants who come to the cities in search of economic opportunities and access to basic services. This has caused increase in urban poverty migrants to cities who fail to find work in urban areas and this generates a vicious circle of scarcity and needs. Whereas conflicts over natural resources can provoke rural migration, migrants to cities results in new forms of violence in cities alongside vulnerabilities of poverty, segregation, inequality and lack of opportunities and such a situation is ripe for both internal as well international trafficking of poor people.

According to Ribando,²⁰ Most countries are affected by human trafficking when they suffer political upheaval, armed conflict, economic crisis and natural disasters. When it is Internal trafficking people flow from rural to urban. He indicates that hundreds of thousands of Haitian children who were orphaned or abandoned after a catastrophic earthquake hit the country became vulnerable to human trafficking as they moved to urban areas.

In the case of internal trafficking, migration often occurs from poor, rural areas to more affluent urban areas. It is the search for economic security and the desire to improve one's life that often provides a large pool of potential victims. In the case of internal trafficking of young women who are promised love, marriage and a secure future, it is often a desire to seek economic security which places them at risk.²¹

Shelley⁶ indicates that rural -urban migration is contributing to the increase of human trafficking. Urban environment and the associated

strain weaken social and cultural norms originally possessed by migrants to the extent that the exposure to mass media and introduction to urban life promotes materialism. The expectations and aspirations for economic opportunities amid impoverished conditions migrants face are conditions suitable for human traffickers to act. It is common to find conditions characteristic of the people from the rural as homelessness, familial breakdowns, parental illness, divorce, death of a parent, and abandonment by the father often accompany rural - urban migration. Alcohol abuse often becomes more common within families, including violence and sexual exploitation of women and children who often run away. Familial exploitation often becomes a springboard to abuse by traffickers.

Globally, about 2.5 million people migrant to urban areas from the rural and for a variety of reasons every year, many including children move with their parents or even migrate on their own. Among the reasons which cause this movement can be disaster, conflict, unemployment, education, and even marriage. A good number of these rural-urban migrants end up being trafficked. Children who lack end up being trafficked because of lack of care for example in 2000 about 1.2 million children were trafficked into sexual exploitation and harmful child labor as they migrated to urban areas.²²

International Labor Office²³ indicates that most African domestic workers working in cities and towns are internal migrants from less developed and poorer rural areas within their own countries and such a pattern is also found in less developed parts of Asia and Latin America. Internal migrants face risks of human trafficking in terms of labor and sexual exploitation as they move from rural to the urban.

In some countries such as Zambia, rural job-seekers especially women are increasingly moving from rural to urban areas to seek for employments as domestic workers. Domestic work is a principal occupation that women migrants end up doing due to two main reasons for it offers an easy foothold into the urban economy as it does not require capital or particular educational preparation as well as giving the opportunity to live in employer's house means ready accommodation and safety and security.

In Tanzania, women living in cities have turned to informal forms of child care, such as engaging house girls from the rural villages, to perform their traditionally defined, unpaid, domestic roles within the home. In Swaziland, rising women's employment and better standards of living in urban areas have elicited a wave of female migration to towns from rural areas to fill new jobs in domestic work. This unregulated, highly informal labor market situation breeds potential problems for both domestic workers and employers. For workers, there are risks of fraudulent job contracts, exploitative working conditions and trafficking.

Global report of trafficking in persons,²⁴ opines that victims of human trafficking are trafficked from areas of lower economic active to wealthier regions, from rural to urban areas, from poorer suburbs to economically more attractive parts. This broad pattern holds for both internal and cross-border trafficking. Foreigners dominate among victims of trafficking in more wealthy countries, lower in developing countries, and very limited in least developed countries where domestic trafficking is more dominant.

Gacinya,²⁵ points out that 75 per cent of the youth living in developing countries are poor and live in rural areas. There is rural-urban migration as a result of rural deprivation and unemployment. There is high population growth and this puts strain on the countries' level of development. There is a high discrepancy between the available jobs and the labor force and unemployment rate that is above

33 percent among secondary school leavers is prevailing and this increases migration of people from the rural to the urban including migration to the wealthy countries.

Koettl²⁶ adds that victims of human trafficking mainly come from the rural and that human trafficking typically emanates from geographically isolated, poor rural areas where majority of trafficking victims are women. In rural areas gender inequality is a vital macro-risk factor and female victims trafficking usually coming from poor areas where women political and socio-economic place has declined and patriarchal traditions remain deep-rooted.

Most of the victims of human trafficking come from countries that have high rates of population growth and this puts strain on the countries' development. There is a high discrepancy between the available jobs and the labor force growth. Unemployment rate above 33 percent among secondary school leavers is current and this increases migration to the developed world to seek for employment. It is noted that 75 per cent of the youth living in developing countries are poor and live in rural areas. They are mostly unemployed and underemployed and start available hard labor during childhood. They are the victims of human trafficking through hard labor and sexual exploitation and are more vulnerable to being recruited by militant extremist groups. There is rural-urban migration as a result of rural deprivation and unemployment and subsequent. Sudan is characterized by diverse types of internal and international mobility. The majority of refugees in Sudan come from a rural background and have to compete for a job in Sudan's urban and semi-rural areas.²⁷

Internal Migration is impacting the population distribution in Africa in important ways, with rural-urban migration and the process of urbanization being its most significant feature. If not effectively managed, urbanization can have adverse consequences for migrants and other urban populations alike. Migrants use increasingly precarious routes, which render them vulnerable to abuse by smugglers and traffickers. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, and other risks. and this too undermines the human rights of migrants.²⁸

As the size of the farming land grows smaller due to the ever-increasing population followed by division of land by members of the families, many people are currently flocking big cities to look for new opportunities of life. Urban life becomes so complicated because migrants to the cities lose touch with traditional culture and values. Migrants to the cities are exposed to new lifestyles and the way they look at life (Barwitzki, 2014). Migrants change their values and customs due to mass media, greed and a lot effort applied in order to survive in the crowded cities full of crime. It is common to find family breakdown, divorce and runaway children who go on the streets. These are conditions ripe for human trafficking to take place (Barwitzki, 2014).

The finding afore mentioned are in line where population increase with the study and the current study intends to find out whether the increase in population in the Kigali are the determinants of human trafficking. In South Africa, girls are trafficked from rural to urban areas for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, while boys are forced to work in street vending, begging, agriculture, mining, and criminal activities.²⁹

Tanzania, as in most developing countries, the development gap between rural and urban areas is wide causing rural people to prefer urban life. Parents usually advise their children to seek for work and other means of living in urban centers. Poverty is single most factor contributing to movement of girls to find alternative life in city

centers. Dar- ES- Salaam is the major commercial destination city of rural-urban migrants in Tanzania.³⁰

In Kenya coastal areas, the assessment made by international office for migration¹⁶ in the counties of Mombasa, Kwale and Kilifi is that there is an increase in trafficking reported by media in the three counties. The counties have been identified as source, transit and/or destination counties for victims of trafficking due to their locations. Proximity to the ocean makes the target counties key international transit points and has facilitated a common destination for Victims of human trafficking. This is particularly true for forms of sexual exploitation such as forced prostitution and child pornography because the counties are popular tourism destinations. Further, the rural areas within the counties are sources of victims of human trafficking, particularly vulnerable migrants in search of lucrative jobs in urban centers, especially at hotels.

The promise of a city life is often a sufficient reason to convince children from rural to depart from their community with a relative to Nairobi. Going to Nairobi is an opportunity irrespective of the work involve. Even for the children who have never been in Nairobi, this is an opportunity of a life time. The promise of a better life, schooling opportunities and employment were identified as major reasons to lure children into trafficking, as well as to convince parents to participate. There is a lot of desperation. Many see Nairobi as their only hope to a better life.³¹

Internal trafficking affects the majority of African countries. In many cases, internal trafficking flows from rural to urban areas. In Eastern Africa girls are trafficked to urban centers. In Tanzania, for example, most of the girls in prostitution found in major cities were trafficked from rural regions.³² However, less research has been undertaken for internal trafficking.

Migration whether international or internal urban migration involves increasing different types of migrants, with varying motivations. These include those searching for better jobs, single women migrating to support family, women joining husbands, asylum seekers, students and trainees. This happens along with vulnerability to urban violence and criminality: Migrants are more vulnerable to urban violence and criminality, including human trafficking of women, men and children through labor and sex exploitation (William,2016).

Research methodology

In the present study, the researchers made use of documents available in various institutions as the main sources of data for the study. Most of the obtained data was from; books, brochures and minutes of meetings, electronic journals, press releases, diaries, scientific papers, event programs, letters and memoranda, newspaper articles, press, program proposals, radio and television program, institutional reports and public records among others.³³ the size of the sample became 133 respondents. The sampling techniques used were stratified sampling technique to increase statistical efficiency and provide adequate data for analyzing the various strata. Ten strata were used and comprised of 21 victims of human trafficking, 7 traffickers, 23 police investigators, 13prosecutors, 13 judges, 10 local authorities, 10 migration officers, 11 International transporters, 8 International migration officers (IOM) and 17 homeless. Research instruments comprised of a questionnaire for quantitative data (On a five-point Likert scale questions) and Unstructured as well as semi-structured interviews for qualitative research design.

In the case of quantitative research design, data was collected, processed and analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Statistical package of social sciences (SPSS version) Version 21.0 was used to in the study to obtain descriptive as well as inferential statistics.

Results and findings

According to Ndagijimana (2018), most urban cities like Kigali receive migrants from the rural and are mostly deprived in terms of economic resources such as food and shelter. Rural children start working early on in their life and are victims of labor exploitation. They can as well be recruited into militant groups. Mutandwa (2011) contends that rural-urban migration takes place in Rwanda and 67% of the young rural have migrating to the urban in the last decade. Kigali city accounts for 37% of the internal migrants. Nyabihu and Burera districts in the northern province typically send their migrants to Gisenyi and Kigali city respectively. Most of the youth who migrate are in search of jobs.

According to Kagoro et al.⁷ internal child migration for labor takes place in Rwanda. Children move from rural to urban areas such as Kigali. It is obvious that children who move to the urban unaccompanied are at higher risk for trafficking, child labor, and exploitation. The trend is that girls migrate to the urban for domestic work while boys work and live on the streets. Children living on the streets are at a higher risk for the worst forms of child labor. There about 7,000 street children in Rwanda and these children are often orphans, living in dangerous conditions, and experiencing exploitation and abuse.

Uwimbabazi & Lawrence³⁵ add that 60% of the Rwandan population has less than 0.5 ha for every individual and land per individual is likely to be less than what it is in the near future as the rural population grows. Moving to the urban has become another approach for the rural people to find work. Currently, Rwanda has an estimated population of 13 million and it is the most densely populated country in Africa, with about 551 inhabitants/ km². National institute for statistics of Rwanda³⁶ indicates that the population of Rwanda is expected to grow to be 20 million by 2042, which means that land per every individual for agriculture will diminish considerably and this far, people are moving to urban centers and subjected to urban life with associated vulnerabilities including human trafficking.

Rural urban migration trends may also be contributing to an increase in transactional sex among youth. Rwanda has experienced high levels of urbanization over the last two decades, with individuals moving from rural to urban areas like Kigali in hope of economic opportunities. Individuals aged below 25 account for 67% of the urbanizing population.⁷ Youth who move to an urban setting, however, face the harsh reality of a higher cost of living coupled with a lack of employment opportunities, thus increasing their risk for abuse and exploitation. As a result, a number of them turn to transactional sex as a survival strategy.³⁷

Sexual exploitation, especially sex trafficking of Congolese refugees in Rwandan camps, has received considerable scholarly attention. According to Kagoro et al.⁷ girls from Kigeme camp in the Southern Province, are trafficked for sex exploitation—a good number have been taken out of the camp and some of them come back to the camps pregnant or HIV positive. There are traffickers in Ruhango town who take young girls out the refugee camp after promising them work.

Domestic/internal human trafficking primarily takes the form of rural–urban trafficking, with Kigali as the main destination. Harsh conditions in Rwanda's refugee camps predisposes refugees for

human trafficking to Kigali or towns within neighboring districts. Traffickers typically lure rural victims with promises of a better life and specifically target young girls and boys, some of whom are aged below 18 years and hence considered as children under the law. The internal human trafficking situation is propagated by limited public awareness and knowledge of human trafficking in general and child trafficking specifically. Additionally, the informal labor sector, which includes domestic work and working in bars, is under-regulated, thus cases of human trafficking often go unnoticed.

Internal trafficking is found where the movement of girls and boys from rural areas to urban areas, typically to Kigali to work most often as domestic servants and to a lesser extent bar attendants.^{7,38}

Observers reported an increase in domestic trafficking, possibly due to the impact of the Covid -19 pandemic. International organizations reported increased vulnerability to trafficking among Rwandans due to the pandemic and a dwindling economy. Migrant workers migrated from rural areas to urban areas, specifically Kigali, in search of job opportunities and, consequently, became vulnerable to traffickers.³⁹

The City of Kigali being the capital city of Rwanda, offers the high street vending activities in Rwanda. Kigali city is the only cities in Rwanda where street vending is growing faster than ever and the sector is growing in an unorganized manner which make the street vendors face a number of challenges. The major causes of migration from rural area to Kigali is the increase of job seekers from the rural area. Youth expect to get better life in the city. In other cities of Rwanda, the sector almost operates freely mainly because the number of street vendors is still low. Kigali therefore offers the best opportunities for youth to survive the poverty and the vulnerability in trafficking is also high.⁴⁰

Gacinya²⁵ opines that young women and girls in the rural are driven to believe that jobs and other opportunities exist in the urban and as they reach become vulnerable to human trafficking. With an increasing in number of Africans migrating from rural to urban centers, especially women and children, human trafficking issues have increased and these put stress on infrastructure in the urban centers as a result of the urban growing population.⁴¹

Conclusion

Domestic human trafficking is on the increase as a result of rural-urban migration. Migration is happening because the rural can no longer support the increasing population. Land per capita has reduced in size because of land sub- divisions among family members such that the available land cannot economically be utilized. Poverty is a major factor contributing to migration to cities. Besides, the rural lacks capacity to offer employment opportunities. There is therefore rural exodus to the urban that can offer job opportunities offer reasonable wages. In an environment of poverty, lack of finance to cater for education and medical services individuals offer to migrate to the urban. As people transfer to the urban with a lot of vulnerabilities human traffickers divert their plans with promises good life and end them into slavery.

Recommendations

In order to tackle the issue of human trafficking one needs to reverse the trend of migration. This implies migrants have to remain in the rural and those whole left the rural and went to the urban should come back to avoid urban poverty which is a consequence of rural-urban influx. The solutions should be on a preventive than on reactive outlook. To reverse the flow of people who flock urban areas for socio-economic opportunities it is necessary to revisit the spatial differences

in wages and therefore incomes in order to balance income differences between rural and the urban centers. Here the minimum wage should be applied to the whole country so that conditions that create human trafficking do not occur.

The government of Rwanda can diversify economic activities in terms of rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and ecotourism that augment major agriculture and industries in the country. These can stimulate rural development while decreasing rural community dependency on wages obtainable in the urban sector as more jobs will be created. Further diversification needs to be done as most developing countries like Rwanda depend on one or two crops such as tea and coffee. Manufacturing sectors need to be set up in the rural in order to boost rural activities and increase employment opportunities. Manufacturing sector should not be seen as an activity set up for urban areas only.

A big number of trafficked people are women and girls, therefore women should be empowered and offered credit facilities in order for them to engage in production ventures. They should as well be trained in certain fields so that they obtain skills for business. This can reduce vulnerabilities that render them access to traffickers, especially when employed in off-farm activities. As the plots owned by individuals in the country are small to carry on mechanization, land consolidation should be implemented where people should congregate in villages, thus allowing big blocks of land for mechanization and application of fertilizers and pesticides to improve productivity per hectare. Social amenities can then be extended to the population once villagelization is carried on fully. Unemployment can be reduced once micro finance enterprises are in place to offer credit facilities for the rural population. This together with improved infrastructure will raise the standards of life for rural people and consequently reduce human trafficking.

Although, reasons why people still migrate from rural to urban areas are still significant today. The maintenance of dual home is associated with preserving of dignity among migrants in African countries, Rwanda inclusive. Rural areas continue to invoke images of a retirement home for many and, even as they lead hardship lives in cities, they build rural homes for their retirement. They also invest in livestock, land and other natural resources such as water. This gesture should be encouraged so that urban infrastructure is not strained and subsequently reducing urban poverty and the accompanying human trafficking.

The study recommends the following process in order to combat human trafficking in the country:

- Participation and communication with international communities to increase awareness campaigns and information sharing.
- The development of a more centralized systematic screening mechanism to identify victims.
- The provision of training to anti-trafficking units and divisions.
- Cooperation with the international community to boost education and employment opportunities.
- Work to ensure gender equality in access to education.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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