

# Causes and Effect of Out-Migration in Rural Areas of Benue State, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** The study assessed the effect of out-migration from rural settlements in Benue State, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to examine the causes, effect and control of migration in rural settlements of the study area. A total of 1202 respondents were selected from rural communities in 5 Local Government Area of the State. The study used multi-stage sampling technique involving purposive, simple random, judgement and snowball sampling techniques in selecting the communities and the respondents. Data were obtained via questionnaire. Frequencies and percentages were used for data analysis while tables were used for data presentation. The study found that 60.1% of the respondents are male. Most of the respondents (23.7%) are within age 50-54 years. Majority of the respondents are married (79.8%) and have households that have migrated to other places in Nigeria and beyond. The major causes of migration include unemployment (99.8%), inadequate educational institutions (97.2%), village hardship and crises (69.2%), lack of social amenities (6.7%) and insecurity/crises in rural areas. The major effect of out-migration includes reduction in labour supply, increased in demand for labour (97.1%), high cost of labour (99.8%), decreased in farm size (99.5%), decreased in productivity (99.7) and decreased in income (99.7%) in rural areas. Migration also causes low social economic growth and development in rural areas. The study recommends some major strategies for making the rural areas attractive to minimise youth migration in the State. These includes mechanization of agriculture, establishing agro-based industries, creating employment opportunities, provision of social amenities and ensuring adequate security of life and properties in rural areas of the State.

**KEYWORDS:** Effect, Rural, Urban, Migration, Rural, Areas, Benue and State.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a complex phenomenon, and a common feature of both developed and developing countries. Humans have been migrating throughout history, and the pattern has change considerably over time from the search for space in early civilization to that of congestion in cities in modern days (Stephens, 2000; Ikwuyatum, 2016 and International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2018). According to IOM (2018), migration flows are steadily increasing globally every year. Globalization, economic development, and crisis have increased human mobility globally. Majority of the migrants crossed border in search of better economic and social opportunities. In 2011, statistics showed that 10.5 million people were refugees who fled armed conflict, natural disasters, famine, and persecution around the world. In 2013, a total of 214 million people (3%) of the world's population lived outside their country of origin (Commission on Population and Development (CPD), 2013). The number of migrants keep increasing year by year; international migration increased from 258 million migrants as at 2018 (United Nations (UN), 2018) to 281 million migrants (IOM, 2022) while, the volume of global internal migration was 740 million people in 2009 (IOM, 2018). This increased to 763 million people in 2021 (Food and Agricultural Organisation ((FAO), 2021). Migration is also going on in Nigeria. Though migration data are difficult to come by, a survey on internal migration in Nigeria by NPC (2010) indicates that the volume of internal migration in Nigeria was 25% in 2010.

People are on the move across the globe for several reasons. The causes of migration include physical, economic, social, cultural and political factors. These factors are usually categorised into push and pull factors, which operate at both areas of origin and destination (Mundi, 1998: Bhende and Kanitkar, 2003: Hassan, 2013: Dokubo, Sennuga, Omolayo, Bankole and Barnabas, 2023). Besides, conflict is gradually becoming a major driver of migration. Severe conflicts lead to flow of internally displaced people in various parts of the world. World Bank (2023) opined that conflict, violence, and persecution continue to

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drive large numbers of people out of their home countries while Ikwuyatun (2013) assert that conflicts and its consequences have increasingly become a major driver of inter-regional migration in Nigeria and other regions of the world. Violent religious extremism in Syria and Boko Haram in Nigeria is a typical example (UN, 2018). United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNCHR) (2023) revealed that there are 108 million forcibly displaced people in the world. More so, violence, insecurity and discriminatory attacks in Nigeria forced people to flee their home of origin for safety. As at 2017, statistics showed that there are about 2.1 million forced migrants in Nigeria (UNCHR, 2017).

The volume and pattern of migration have great consequence in area of origin and destination of migrants: influences on demographic, social, economic, cultural and political configuration of a society (Connell and Conway 2000; Adger, Kelly, Winkels, Huy and Locke, 2002; Ode, 2006). According to World Bank (2023), "Migration is a response to shock and global imbalances, such as massive gaps in income and well-being across countries." It has proved to be a powerful force for development, but there are challenges as well for the migrants, place of origin and destinations. The socio-economic effects of migration vary within the home of origin and destination; in the home of origin, migrants send money and goods to their respective communities. While such remittances can be used for development purposes, migrants are also involved directly in providing infrastructures in their communities (Umoh, 2001; Ajaero and Onokala, 2013), the negative effect of migration at the source region include decreased labour size, increased cost of labour, decreased farm size and productivity of individual farmers (Hwande 2003 and Suswam, 2003). At the destination region, migration enhances cheap/surplus labour and development while it creates unemployment, cultural dilution, and pressure on infrastructures at the receiving regions (World Economic Forum, 2017). Migration has the potential to contribute to sustainable development, skills transfer, and investment, in areas of origin (Wilson, 2001; CPD, 2013).

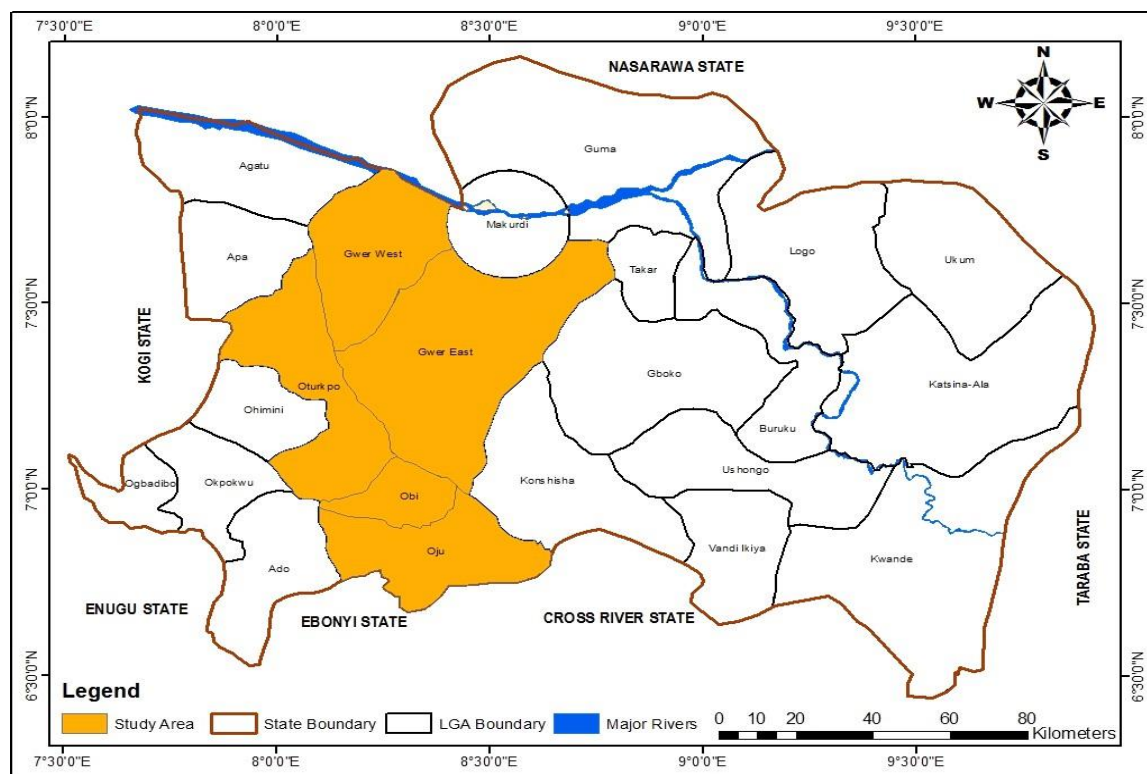
Out-migration has consequences on the elderly, parents, women, and children left behind. While, parents and siblings benefits from monetary and material remittances, the departure of young and able-bodied men (rural work force) constitute a loss of productive man power in the production system thereby affecting farm size, productivity, and family income in rural areas (Knodel and Saengtiechai, 2007). Rural-Urban migration are impacting food systems, bringing about upsurge in food prices and mounting hunger (World Bank, 2022).

Migration is a common phenomenon in Benue State. Every year, many migrants find it worthwhile to leave rural settlements and migrate to towns, cities and other places. A survey on internal migration in Nigeria by NPC (2010) indicated that Benue State has 280,427 out-migrants spread across the 36 States of the federation. This study was necessitate by the concern for continuous increase in out-migration of people from rural areas to urban areas in Benue State and beyond as well as its impending implications on farming activities, food security and the rural population in Benue State where Enefu and Orfega (2023) and Akighir (2023) opined that 75% of the working population and more than 85% of the active rural population are engage in agriculture and commerce. Thus, the objective of the study was to examine the causes, effect and strategies of making rural settlements attractive to minimise out-migration in Benue State.

## 2. THE STUDY AREA

The study area is located between Latitude  $6^{\circ}25'$  and  $8^{\circ}8'$  North of the Equator and Longitude  $7^{\circ}47'$  and  $10^{\circ}0'$  East of the Greenwich Meridian. It has boundary with Nasarawa State in the North, Kogi State to the West, Taraba State in the North East, Cameroun Republic in the South East, Ebonyi and Cross River and Enugu State in the South West. The area comprised 23 Local Government Area (L.G.A) and a landmass of  $32,818.43\text{km}^2$  as revealed on Figure 1 (Lyam, 2005; Ministry of Lands and Survey, 2021; Benue State Government, 2015).

In the year 2006, Benue State has a population of 4,253,641 persons with a density of 130 persons per  $\text{km}^2$  (National Population Commission (NPC), 2009). It has a projected population of 6,298,765 persons and a density of 192 per  $\text{km}^2$  in 2018. The ethnic groups in the State includes the Tiv, Idoma, Iggede, Jukun, Etulo, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. (NPC, 2009 and Benue State Ministry of Health, 2009). The State has three (3) Senatorial District namely Zone A, B and C: Zone A and B are dominated by the Tiv while the Idoma dominates Zone C.



**Figure 1: Benue State Showing the Showing the Local Government Area of Study**

**Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey, Makurdi (2021)**

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 3.1 Study Population

The study population include 1276 male and female household heads (respondents) whose occupation is farming and are within the age of 40 years and above in rural settlements in Benue State. The age category was chosen to enable the study collect data from the respondents who have households residing inside and outside the study area. The household heads were selected from 5 local Government Area namely Otuokpo, Oju, Obi, Gwer-West and Gwer-East. The study was stratified across three major ethnic groups in the State (Tiv, Idoma and Igede). The selected L.G.A forms 20% of the 23 L.G.As in Benue State.

#### 3.2 Sampling Techniques

Multi-stage sampling technique was used in selecting the L.G.As, rural settlements (communities) and the expected sample population in each settlements of study. The first stage is the determination and selection of five (5) L.G.As (20% of the 23 L.G.As) in the State. These include Oju, Obi, Otuokpo, Gwer West, and East L.G.As via purposive sampling technique. The basis for using purposive sampling technique was to enable the study to cut across the major ethnic groups (Tiv, Idoma and Igede) of the study area. The second stage involved the determination of the number of rural communities for the study. The study used 55 rural settlements (10% of the 548 settlements) in the five (5) selected L.G.As of study based on Gupta (2013) who stated that a minimum of 5-10% of a parent population is good for any study. The third stage was the selection of the 55 rural communities via simple random sampling technique using a table of random numbers. The fourth stage is the determination of the number of the respondents from the selected communities with a population of 25520 household heads. The total sample size (required respondents) for the study was 1276 respondents (5% of 25520 total household heads). The study used 5% because it was considered good enough for a study of this nature which is in line with Gupta (2013) who stated that a good sample size ranged between 5-10% of the parent population. The fifth stage is the subsequent selection of 1276 respondents (household's head) from the available households (25520) via judgement and snowball sampling technique. The justification for using judgement-sampling technique is that, it allows the study to decide and collect data from only the household heads that have at least one of their children out-side their home of origin as out-migrants since the study-involved people who must have out-migrants households based on the judgement of the study. The snowball sampling technique enabled connection and referrals to the unknown migrant's family by the family earlier identified. Through this method, few migrants' family were identified through inquiry, and those families helped to unravel the location of other migrants' family within the same community.

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### 3.3 Data Collection Tool and Analytical Techniques

The questionnaire was used for collecting data from the respondents. The data were age, sex, marital status, family size of the household heads, causes of migration, number of out-migrants, pattern of migration, effect of migration, and ways of managing migration in study area. The data obtained from the field were analysed via frequency and percentages. The results were presented via tables.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Age Category of the Respondents

The result on table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents (23.7%) were 50-54 years closely followed by 19.4% who were age 55-59 years. More so, the youngest respondents (7.9%) were 40-44 years while the aged 70 years above were 6.8%. The mean age of the respondents (farmers) in the study area is 56 years. This means that the farming population is relatively in active labour stage for farming activities in rural areas. The trend is almost the same in all the L.G.As as follows; Otukpo (57 years), Gwer-West (57 years), Oju (56 years), Obi (55 years) and Gwer-East (55 years). Thus, Obi and Gwer-West L.G.A has the youngest farmers. The implication of this on the study is that young farming population do better in farm work compared to the aged farming population when combined with the prevailing types of crude farm implements used in farming in rural settlements in the study area. This finding is consistent with Odozi., Adeniyi and Yusuf (2018) posited that the mean age of the farming population is 57 years in Nigeria.

### 4.2 Sex of the Respondents

The study used both male respondents (60.1%) and female (39.9%). Furthermore, in all the L.G.As, more males than females were also used for the study in Otukpo (58.9% and 41.1%), Oju (51.0% and 49.0%), Obi (58.5% and 41.5%), Gwer-West (75.6% and 24.4%) and Gwer-East (61.7% and 38.3%) respectively as indicated on table 1. The males dominate the study because majority of them volunteered to participate in the study compared to the females. The finding agrees with Ayiti and Adedlokun (2023) who used more male respondents (61%) compared to female (39 %) who availed themselves for the study in rural areas in Ekiti State.

### 4.3 Marital Status of the Respondents

The study indicates that majority (79.8%) of the respondents were married while 14.6% were widowed, and 2.7% were separated whereas 2.8% were either divorced/single as shown on table 1. Similarly, the study found that there is high proportion of married respondents in all the Local Government Areas; with Gwer-West having 85.6%, Obi (81.6%) and Gwer-East (80.9%) compared to Otukpo (77.4%) and the Least was Oju (76.2%). The higher the level of marriage among the respondents, the greater the tendency of having large household population as indicated on table 1. This study agrees with Mbah, N. E., Ezeano, I. C and Agada, O. M (2016), who opined that majority (91.2%) of the farming population Benue State were married.

### 4.4 Respondents' Household Size

The study examined the respondents' family size the study area. Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents (54.2%) had 4-6 children, 20.7% had 7-9 children, 19.2% had 1-3 children while 5.8% had 10 household and above. The respondents have 5.4 households each. This is slightly above the ideal mean number of children per family in Benue State (5.1 Children) in 2019. The mean number of children reported by this study is slightly less than the total fertility rate (5.9) for rural areas in Nigeria reported by NPC and ICF (2019). This implies that the population of the State is increasing irrespective of the on-going migration. Similarly, in all the L.G.A majority of the respondents have 4-6 children. The study found that the respondents had 6508 households. The mean numbers of household in the L.G.As are Otukpo (5.6), Obi (5.4), Gwer-East (5.4) and Gwer-West (5.3) while Oju has the least (5.3). The study established that the some household members (3425) are currently residing at the home of origin while 3083 were migrants at various destination areas in Nigeria and beyond. The ratio of migrants to respondent is 2.5 migrants. Large family size is important in rural areas because it provide farm labour for the respondents (farmers).

**Table 1: Demographic and Social Characteristics of the Respondents by L.G.A**

2.1 Demographic and Social Characteristics of the Respondents by LGA						
Variables	L.G.A					Total (%)
	Otukpo (%)	Oju (%)	Obi (%)	Gwer-West (%)	Gwer-East (%)	
Age Category						
40-44	8(3.2)	47(15.8)	14(9.5)	14(7.8)	12(3.6)	95(7.9)

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45-49	37(14.9)	40(13.4)	29(19.7)	28(15.6)	50(15.2)	184(15.3)
50-54	63(25.4)	49(16.4)	30(20.4)	37(20.6)	106(32.2)	285(23.7)
55-59	61(24.6)	32(10.7)	34(23.1)	22(12.2)	84(25.5)	233(19.4)
60-64	34(13.7)	67(22.5)	24(16.3)	42(23.3)	45(13.7)	212(17.6)
65-69	19(7.7)	38(12.8)	8(5.4)	22(12.2)	24(7.3)	111(9.2)
70 Above	26(10.0)	25(8.4)	8(5.4)	15(8.3)	8(2.4)	82(6.8)
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	146 (58.9)	152 (51.0)	86(58.5)	136(75.6)	203(61.7)	723(60.1)
Female	102 (41.1)	146 (49.0)	61(41.5)	44 (24.4)	126 (38.3)	479 (39.9)
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married	192(77.4)	227(76.2)	120(81.6)	154(85.6)	266(80.9)	959(79.8)
Single	1(0.4)	3(1.0)	0(0.0)	1(0.6)	2(0.6)	7(0.6)
Separated	10(4.0)	5(1.7)	2(1.4)	7(3.9)	9(2.7)	33(2.7)
Divorced	6(2.4)	6(2.0)	5(3.4)	4(2.2)	6(1.8)	27(2.2)
Widowed	39(15.7)	57(19.1)	20(13.6)	14(7.8)	46(14.0)	176(14.6)
<b>Household Size</b>						
1-3	29(11.7)	80(26.8)	26(17.7)	34(18.9)	62(18.8)	231(19.2)
4-6	152(61.3)	134(45.0)	85(57.8)	95(52.8)	186(56.5)	652(54.2)
7-9	45(18.1)	67(22.5)	28(19.0)	41(22.8)	68(20.7)	249(20.7)
10 Above	22(8.9)	17(5.7)	8(5.4)	10(5.6)	13(4.0)	70(5.8)
Total Household	1390	1586	801	985	1746	6508
Mean no of Children	5.6	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4
Household at Home	761	735	436	541	1042	3425
Total migrants	719	851	365	444	704	3083
Ratio of Migrants	2.8	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>248(100)</b>	<b>298(100)</b>	<b>147(100)</b>	<b>180(100)</b>	<b>329(100)</b>	<b>1202(100)</b>

Source: Field Work, 2019

### 4.5 Causes of Out-Migration in Benue State

The study reveals that migration is going on in the study area. Some of the major causes of out-migration in the study area as indicated on table 2 includes unemployment (99.8%), inadequate educational institutions (97.2%), village hardship and crises (69.2%), lack of social amenities (6.7%) in rural areas as indicated on table 2. Those who left the rural areas due to Fulani headers/farmers clashes (6.6%) and other reasons not clearly named by the respondents accounted for 2.3%.

At the L.G.A level, 100% of the respondents in Otukpo, Oju, Obi and Gwer-East agreed that the major causes of migration is unemployment in rural areas except in Gwer-West where inadequate educational institution is seen as the major cause of migration as indicated by 98.3% of the respondents followed by unemployment. In Gwer-West and Gwer-East people also migrate in order to avoid Fulani headers/farmers clashes in rural areas as indicated by 20.6% and 12.8% of the respondents respectively. The implications of this on rural settlements are decrease in cultivation, productivity and income, which in turn affected human welfare and development of the rural communities as indicated on table 2.

This study agreed with Mgbakor, Uzendu, and Osifo (2014), found out that migrants move to urban areas mostly to secure employment as opined by 50% of the farmers in rural areas in Delta State. Furthermore, this study also agree with Mbah, Ezeano and Agada (2016) who found out that migration in Benue State is majorly caused by inadequate employment opportunities in rural areas and the quest for better education. Similarly, Dokubo et al. (2023) found that lack of jobs opportunities and the quest for education were the major reasons for rural urban migration as indicated by 48% and 47% of the respondents. More so, Ayiti and Adedokun (2023) also established that desire for better education, urban jobs and income were



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the major factors affecting rural urban migration. Thus, unemployment not only in the urban areas but also in the rural areas is a very serious issue that deserved urgent attention in order to manage migration.

**Table 2: Causes of Migration by L.G.A**

Causes of Migration	L.G.A						Total(%)
		Otukpo(%)	Oju(%)	Obi(%)	Gwer-West(%)	Gwer-East(%)	
Inadequate Educational Institutions		247(99.6)	266(89.3)	146(99.3)	180(100)	329(100)	1168(97.2)
Unemployment in Villages		248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	177(100)	329(100)	1199(99.8)
Lack of Social Amenities		74(29.8)	233(78.2)	85(57.8)	94(52.2)	195(59.3)	681(56.7)
Boredom in Villages		36(14.5)	45(15.1)	18(12.2)	28(15.6)	67(20.4)	194(16.1)
Family reason		78(31.5)	133(44.6)	72(49.0)	83(46.1)	108(32.8)	474(39.4)
Fear of Witch Craft		4(1.6)	35(11.7)	0(0.0)	3(1.7)	9(2.7)	51(4.2)
Trade/Business		77(31.0)	83(27.9)	49(33.3)	80(44.4)	168(51.1)	457(38.0)
Transfer of Work		12(4.8)	8(2.7)	3(2.0)	3(1.7)	8(2.4)	34(2.8)
To Avoid Village Hardship/Crises		172(69.4)	198(66.4)	111(75.5)	122(67.8)	229(69.6)	832(69.2)
To Avoid Fulani Headers/Farmers Clashes		0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	37(20.6)	42(12.8)	79(6.6)
Others		6(2.4)	5(1.7)	0(0.0)	5(2.8)	12(3.6)	28(2.3)
Total Respondents		248(20.6)	298(24.8)	147(12.2)	180(15.0)	329(27.4)	1202(100)

**Source:** Field Work, 2019

### 4.6 Pattern of Out-Migration from Rural Areas in Benue State

The study found three major pattern of migration from the study area as revealed on table 3. Majority of the out-migrants moved to urban areas in Benue State and beyond as indicated by 100% of the respondents. Only 27.2% of the respondents indicated that migrants moved to rural areas whereas 5.7% stated that some migrants moved to foreign countries. This finding agrees with a study on the effects of migration on agriculture in rural areas in Delta State by Mgbakor, Uzendu, and Osifo (2014) which found out that 53.3% of the respondents agreed that out-migrants mostly end up in urban areas. Similarly, Odimegwu and Adewoyin (2020) established that, most migrants ends up in urban areas (67.3%) compared to rural areas (32.7%). The implication of out-migration is that agriculture is left in the hand of old people and children couple with use of crude implements leading to low productivity and income in the absence of migrants' remittances to boost agriculture as indicated on table 4. Although migration to urban areas can also give the migrants better and greater opportunity in terms of access to job, education, health facilities and other modern innovation which can better the life of the migrants themselves, migrants' family and community of origin through remittance.

**Table 3: Out-Migration Pattern by Local Government Area**

Out-Migration Pattern	L.G.A					Total(%)
	Otukpo(%)	Oju(%)	Obi(%)	Gwer-West(%)	Gwer-East(%)	
Rural-Rural Areas	65(26.2)	75(25.2)	31(21.1)	58(32.2)	98(29.8)	327(27.2)
Rural-Urban Areas	248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	180(100)	329(100)	1202(100)
Rural-(Foreign) Abroad	36(14.5)	10(3.4)	10(6.8)	2(1.1)	11(3.3)	69(5.7)
Total	248(20.8)	298(24.8)	147(12.2)	180(15.0)	329(27.4)	1202(100)

**Source:** Field Work, 2019

### 4.7 Consequences of Out-Migration on Rural Areas in Benue State

The study found that out-migration has several effects on rural areas in Benue State as indicated on table 4. The result revealed that 98.8% of the respondents agreed that rural urban migration leads to reduction in labour supply, inadequate labour

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supply (99.9%), increased in demand for labour (97.1%), high cost of labour (99.8%), decreased in farm size (99.5%), decreased in productivity (99.7) and decreased in income (99.7%). Migration also leads to reduction in rural population as indicated by 57.4% of the respondents. Whereas, only 45.3% of the respondents opined that migration causes low social economic growth and development in rural areas. Clearly, inadequate labour supply is the most common effect of migration on rural areas as revealed by the study. The result obtain is also similar across the local governments areas of the study.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also agree with Amrevurayire and Ojeh (2016) who established that migration mostly causes shortage of farm labour than any other effects in rural areas according to 57.4% of the respondents. This occurred mostly due to excessive drain of young people to areas of prosperity in urban centres (Braun, 2004). Similarly, a study on the effect of migration on agriculture by Mgbakor, Uzendu, and Osifo (2014) also found out that migration causes reduction in rural population, loss of agricultural labour force and decline in agricultural output. This study is also in agreement with Mbah, Ezeano and Agada (2016) who reported that migration causes reduction in agricultural labour force, high cost of labour, low agricultural productivity, and reduction of household income among others in Benue State. In the same manner, Gartaula (2009), opined that migration lead to loss of productive man power at the source region while Agwu, Anugwa, and Ifeonu (2021) opined that due to labour shortages, disrupted intra-household labour substitution patterns, and higher farm labour costs, the large migration of people, particularly youths, from rural to urban regions had negative repercussions for agricultural output in Nigeria, placing food out of reach for many. Similarly, Dokubo et al. (2023), Ayiti and Adedokun (2023), Igene, Onymekonwu and Ehiwario (2023) revealed that rural-urban migration mostly lead to reduction in agricultural labour, high cost of labour low productivity and reduction in household income.

**Table 4: Consequences of Out-Migration on Rural Areas by L.G.A**

Consequences of Migration	L.G.A					Total(%)
	Otukpo(%)	Oju(%)	Obi(%)	Gwer-West(%)	Gwer-East(%)	
Reduction in Rural Population	95(38.3)	248(83.2)	94(63.9)	113(62.8)	140(42.6)	690(57.4)
Reduction in Labour Supply	247(99.6)	298(100)	145(98.6)	180(100)	319(97.0)	1189(98.9)
Increased in Demand for Labour	246(99.2)	298(100)	147(100)	176(97.8)	300(91.2)	1167(97.1)
Inadequate Supply of Labour	248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	180(100)	328(99.7)	1201(99.9)
High Cost of Labour	248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	178(98.9)	328(99.7)	1199(99.8)
Decreased in Farmer's Farm Size	248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	177(98.3)	326(99.1)	1196(99.5)
Decreased in Farmer's Productivity	248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	180(100)	325(98.9)	1198(99.7)
Decreased in Farmer's Income	248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	180(100)	325(98.8)	1198(99.7)
Low Socio-Economic Growth and Development	55(22.2)	160(53.7)	70(47.6)	89(49.4)	170(51.7)	544(45.3)
Total	248(20.6)	298(24.8)	147(12.2)	180(15.0)	329(27.4)	1202(100)

**Source:** Field Work, 2019

### 4.8 Strategies of Making Rural Areas Attractive to Minimise Youth Migration in Benue State

The study revealed several strategies suggested by the respondents for making the rural settlements attractive in order to minimise youth migration and encouraged agriculture in rural settlements in Benue State as indicated on table 5. The major strategies suggested by over 98-100% of the respondents are mechanizing and providing agricultural machinery in rural areas, establishing industries in rural areas, creating and spreading employment opportunity in rural areas and the provision of social amenities in rural areas. The respondents also stated that migration can be controlled by providing credit facilities to farmers in rural areas and giving incentives to the youth to discourage out-migration of rural population. In addition, 47.3% of the respondents opined that migration could be controlled by ensuring adequate security of life and properties in rural areas while 42.7% of the respondents indicated prohibition of open grazing among the Fulani headers. Only 34.1% opined that granting easy access to improved seedlings and breeds of livestock could help in reducing migration whereas 22.7% suggested that people should be advised to reduce movement from rural areas. Also, 12.1% said laws limiting emigration from rural areas should be

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enacted. Other means of controlling emigration suggested by 2.3% of the respondents include giving scholarship to the youth in rural areas. These findings agrees with Mbah, Ezeano and Agada (2016) who established that migration can be reduced through provision of social amenities, establishment of vocational training centres for skill acquisition, provision of modern farming technology, establishment of agro processing centres, giving incentives to the youths and provision of farm inputs in rural areas to promote the interest of youths in agriculture. This study agreed with Dokubo et al. (2023) that migration should be reduce through provision of improved varieties of crops and animal species, provision of access to electricity, water and school facilities as well as establishing agricultural bank in rural areas to enhance agriculture.

Clearly, the least most popular means of controlling migration among the respondents is making laws to limit migration. This is because migration is not entirely a bad phenomenon. One of the remarkable finding of this study irrespective of the persistent attacks on the Benue farmers headsmen, only 513 (42.7%) of the respondents supported banning open grazing as a means of controlling migration and headers/farmers conflict in the study area. This ideological difference arise among the Idoma and Igede Ethnic groups because they are either hardly or less affected by the Fulani headers/farmers crises except in Agatu L.G.A. of Benue State compared to the Tiv ethnic groups of the study area. The proposed ban on open grazing is a positive development, which has attracted the attention of Benue State Government who has enacted and implemented an anti-open grazing law in Benue State.

**Table 5: Ways of Making Rural Areas Attractive to Minimise Youth Migration in Benue State**

Ways of Making Rural Areas Attractive	L.G.A					Total(%)
	Otukpo(%)	Oju(%)	Obi(%)	G-West(%)	G-East(%)	
Advice People to reduce Movement from Rural area	37(14.9)	151(50.7)	24(16.3)	23(12.8)	38(11.6)	273(22.7)
Provision of Social Amenities in Rural areas	246(99.2)	298(100)	147(100)	177(98.3)	320(97.3)	1188(98.8)
Creating and Spreading Employment Opportunities in Rural Areas	243(98.0)	298(100)	147(100)	180(100)	329(100)	1197(99.6)
Making Laws Limiting Out-Migration	12(4.8)	53(17.8)	21(14.3)	24(13.3)	36(10.9)	146(12.1)
Establishing Industries in Rural areas	248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	180(100)	329(100)	1202(100)
Given Incentives to the Youths to discourage Emigration	150(60.5)	238(79.9)	76(51.7)	92(51.1)	166(50.5)	722(60.1)
Mechanizing and providing agricultural Machinery in Rural Areas	248(100)	298(100)	147(100)	180(100)	329(100)	1202(100)
Ensuring Adequate Security in Rural Areas	41(16.5)	167(56.0)	18(12.2)	108(60.0)	234(71.1)	568(47.3)
Providing Credit Facilities to farmers in Rural Areas	155(62.5)	235(78.9)	93(63.3)	114(63.3)	198(60.2)	795(66.1)
Granting easy Access to Seedlings and Breeds of Livestock	87(35.1)	158(53.0)	33(22.4)	68(37.8)	64(19.5)	410(34.1)
Prohibits Open Grazing to addressed Fulani Headers/Farmers Clashes	26(10.5)	102(34.2)	3(2.0)	120(66.7)	262(79.6)	513(42.7)
Others	7(2.8)	11(3.7)	1(0.7)	0(0.0)	9(2.7)	28(2.3)
Total	248(20.6)	298(24.8)	147(12.2)	180(15.0)	329(27.4)	1202(100)

**Source:** Field Work, 2019



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### 4.9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that out-migration is an on-going phenomenon among the households in the study area. The respondents (household heads) are young and in active labour stage for farm work (mean age is 56 years). Majority (79.8%) of the respondents are married and have households that serve as source of farm labour. Though, some of the respondents' children (3425) are residing at the home of origin, others (3083) have migrated to other parts of Nigeria and beyond. The major reasons for migration were unemployment, inadequate educational institutions, village hardship and crises, lack of social amenities and Fulani headers/farmers clashes. The major pattern of migration from the study area is majorly rural-urban migration. This movement has effect on the household heads and rural areas in rural areas because the household members provide labour for agricultural operations. Thus, the major effect of out-migration on in rural communities includes reduction in labour supply/inadequate labour supply, increased in demand for labour, high cost of labour, decreased in farm size, decreased in productivity and decreased in income. Migration also leads to reduction in rural population low social economic growth and development in rural areas. To minimise the effect of out-migration, several strategies recommended for making the rural settlements attractive in order to minimise youth migration and encouraged agriculture in rural settlements in the study area. These includes mechanization and provision of agricultural machinery in rural areas, establishing agro-based industries in rural areas, creating and spreading employment opportunity in rural areas, provision of social amenities in rural areas and ensuring adequate security of life and properties in rural areas.

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