Livelihoods, Youth Migration, and the Eco-Region Nexus in the Bale Eco-Region

SHARE Bale Eco-Region Research Report Series no. 5

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ABOUT THE SHARE BALE ECO-REGION PROJECT

Conservation of Biodiversity and Ecosystems Functions and Improved Well-being of Highland and Lowland Communities within the Bale Eco-Region (BER) is one of the European Union (EU) funded projects that stands for Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (SHARE). In Ethiopia, the project covers 16 districts (Districts) in West Arsi and Bale Zones of Oromia Regional State, around 22,000 km^2, with a population of about 3.3 million. The project life span is 42 months starting July 2014 and ending in November 2017. Five partners are implementing the project: Farm Africa, SOS Sahel, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) and Population Health and Environment (PHE).

Location of the Bale Eco Region (BER) in Ethiopia

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Addis Ababa University in collaboration with the International Water Management Institute as part of the SHARE Bale Eco-Region

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Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
BER	Bale Eco-Region
BMNP	Bale Mountains National Park
BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
BZMSE	Bale Zone Micro and Small Enterprises
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
DoFED	Department of Finance and Economic Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
MA	Master of Arts
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region

1 Introduction

As part of a broader Bale Eco-Region Project (BER Project), "Livelihood, Youth Migration, and Eco-Region Nexus in the Bale Eco-Region (BER), Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia" explores three inter-related issues. First, it explores minor and major livelihood strategies of the youth in the BER. Second, it investigates how migration (in and out) in the eco-region features as a livelihood strategy. Third, it explores how the youth livelihood strategies impact on the eco-region. The project consists of three team members: Dr. Desalegn Amsalu, principal investigator from Addis Ababa University (AAU), Dr. Takele Merid, co-investigator from AAU, and Letsa Lela, an M.A student from Arba Minch University.

The main objectives of the project are handled by the M.A. student. The student in his thesis addressed three key issues: migration, livelihood, and youth in the BER. It produced a comprehensive description of major and minor livelihood strategies in the BER, how migration features as a livelihood strategy of the youth, and how the livelihood affects the BER. The thesis maintains the title given to the project itself: "Livelihood, Youth Migration, and Eco-Region Nexus in the Bale Eco-Region (BER), Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia". The student is supervised by the AAU's Dr. Desalegn Amsalu and Dr. Liza Debebec, an IWMI researcher. Moreover, the principal investigator, apart from leading the overall project activities and advising the M.A. student, has done a research on a component of the project focusing on "Migration Policy in Ethiopia: Focus on Ecological approaches to Youth Migration". The co-investigator has also worked on "The Role of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises as Alternative Livelihood Strategies for the Youth in Bale Eco-Region", as another sub-component of the project.

The team members have collaborated on each stage of the research and writing of each other's work. This report is also a synthesis of the works done by the three team members. However, the report draws a large part of content from the MA thesis.

2 Methodology

The Bale Eco-Region (BER), lies mainly in Bale Zone (BZ) and partly in West Arsi Zone (WAZ), both in Oromia. It comprises a total of fourteen *woredas*, namely: Adaba, Dodola, Kokosa, and Nansabo, which are in WAZ, and ten other *woredas* in BZ, which are Agarfa, Gasera, Dinsho, Sinana, Gololcha, Goba, HarenaBuluk, Dello Mena, Berbere, and Goro (Farm Africa, SOS Sahel, and Frankfurt Zoological Society 2008). Ecologically, eight *woredas*, which are Gobba, Agarfa, Dinsho, Gasra, Sinana, Kokosa, Adaba, and Dodola, represent highland eco-region from contiguous areas of WAZ and BZ. The rest constitute to midland and lowland *woredas* in both zones. Out of the fourteen *woredas* of the BER, this study was conducted in three *woredas* (Dinsho, Goba and Dellomena) of Bale zone.

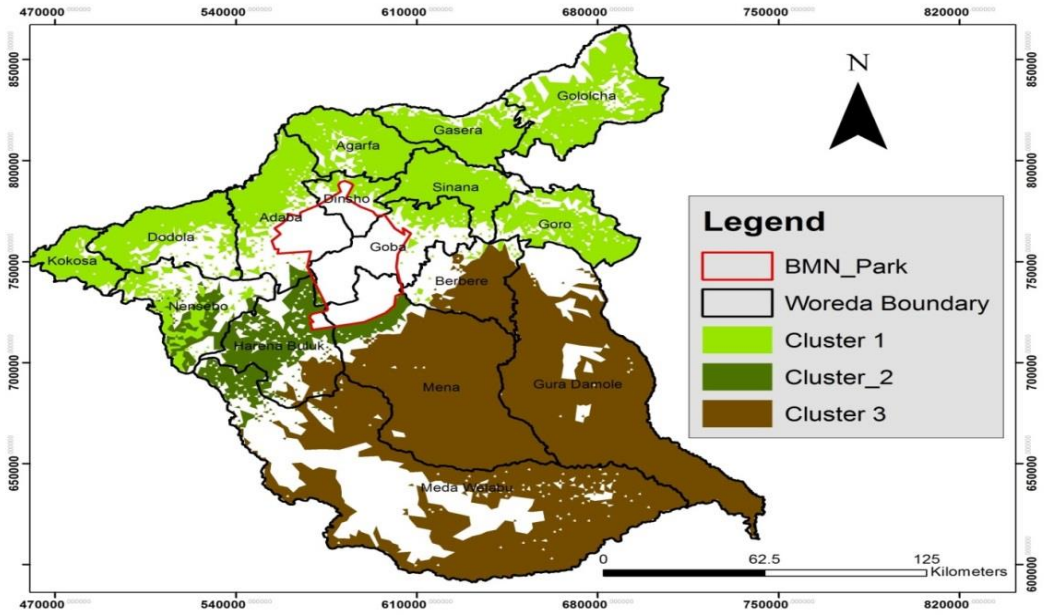

Figure 1. Agro-ecological clusters of the BER

Source: Farm Africa, unpublished

2.1 Sampling startegy for representative places

Selection of representative *woredas* was conducted through a multi-stage sampling method. First, six *woredas* that represent the three agro-ecological zones (highland, midland, and lowland) were shortlisted. The result was, Dinsho, Goba, Goro, Agarfa, Dellomena and Harrena Buluk were considred at initial stage. Second, three of the six *woredas* were chosen based on the inclusion critria of one woreda representing one agro-ecological zone *and* at least one *woreda* represenitng the youth mobility. The final result was Dinsho (highland), Goba (highland and middle land) and Dellomena (lowland) were selected. Third, the same procedure was applied to choose representative *kebeles* within the selcted *woredas*. At this time, the *kebeles* in each *woreda* were listed based on their agro-ecological characteristics, migration experiences, forest coverage and accessibility. Here two inclusion criteria were introduced: forest coverage to be able to see the relationship betweenb forested areas and the youth and that of accessibility to the fieldwork. The representative study places are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Representative *woredas* and *kebeles* of the study

S/N	Woreda	Number of *kebeles*	Selected *kebele(s)*	Main features of the selected *kebele*
1	Dinsho	9	Hora Sobba	Represents highland agro-ecology, non-forested ,youth out –migration experience, SHARE project intervention *kebele*
			Karrari (Dinsho 02)	Represents highland agro-ecology, forested, youth out-migration experience, close boundary to BMNP
3	Goba	15	Fasil Angaso	Represents middle agro-ecology, partially forested *kebele*, SHARE project intervention *kebele*,
			Wajitu Shabe	Represents middle agro-ecology, partially forested *kebele*, REDD+ project intervention *kebele*
			Aloshe Tillo	Represents middle agro-ecology, destination for seasonal migrants mostly from the southern region
3	Dellomena	14	Chiri	Represents the low land agro ecology, destination for youth migrants mostly from Shewa.
			Wabero	Represents the low land agro ecology, destination for youth migrants from Shewa.

Source: Researchers and administration offices of the respective *woredas*, 2016

The above procedure was completed from January 31 – February 21/2016 BER. It was done in the consultation with Bale Zone officials, Medawolabu University, NGO and Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP) staff in the area. All in all, for this purpose, 11 formal interview sessions were conducted with 12 officials from Bale Zone Administration, Bale Zone Culture and Tourism, Bale Zone Youth and Sport, Bale Zone Small Enterprises, BMNP, and SOS Sahel offices.

2.2 *Sampling strategy for the choice of represnettaive youth and data collection through survey*

Age and gender was considered as the key variables for representation of the youth in the selected *woredas*. According to the Federal Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture (2004), the youth category in Ethiopian is a population group within the range of 15 to 29 years. Furthermore, there are three sub-categories of the youth group: 15 - 19 (older adolescents), 20-24 (young adult) and 25-29 (adult), and the study ensured proportional representation of these age groups in the survey.

Furthermore, multi-stage purposive sampling procedure was used to identify the sample units (i.e. the youth). First, the youth total population of each *woreda* was obtained and examined. Second, a

population of the selected seven *kebeles* was obtained from the respective *woredas'* youth and sports offices. Third, the sample frame for the survey process was calculated using published tables for sample size determination of both male and female youth.

Table 2. Youth population of the representative *woredas*

S/N	*Woreda*	Youth Population			
		Male	**Female**	**Total**	**% out of the total population**
1	Dinsho	5,278	4,842	10,120	22.64
2	Goba	4,412	3,749	8,161	18.26
3	Dellomme na	12,497	13,919	26,416	59.10
	Total	**22,187**	**22,510**	**44,697**	**100.00**

Source : Youth and sport offices of the selected *woredas*, 2016

Table 3. Youth population of the representative *kebeles*

S/N	Kebele	Youth population				
		Woreda	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**% out of the total population**
1	HoroSobba	Dinsho	715	832	1,547	22
2	Karari	Dinsho	675	580	1,255	18
3	FasilAngaso	Goba	255	234	489	7
4	WajituShabe	Goba	229	221	450	7
5	AlosheTilo	Goba	262	258	520	8
6	Wabero	Dellomena	750	563	1,313	19
7	Chiri	Dellomena	771	583	1,354	19
	Total		**3,657**	**3,271**	**6,928**	**100**

Source: Youth and sport offices of the selected *woredas*, 2016

This particular study relied on published tables Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for determining the sample size. Accordingly, the sample size for a population of 6,928 (youth population of the selected seven *kebeles*) is 364 of these 171 (about 47%) were females.

Questionnaire was prepared and translated into Afan Oromo to administer to 364 youth from the seven *kebeles.* Fourteen enumerators (2 for each *kebele*) assisted the data collection process.

2.3 Selection of informants and data collection through qualitative method

Four techniques were used to obtain the qualitative data: in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), case stories and participant observation. Semi-structured open-ended questions were used to gather first-hand information from potential youth informants, relevant government and *kebele* officials, and other key persons. The interviews were conducted throughout the five months' (although with brief intermittent breaks due to security problems in the study area) fieldwork between February and June 2016. From the selected *kebeles*, 42 youth informants (25 males and 17 females) were interviewed in-depth about their livelihood strategies, challenges to their livelihood strategies and how migration features in their livelihood strategies. Out of these informants, 16 (11 males and 5 females) were migrants. The youth informants were selected based on snowball sampling technique taking into account age, sex, migration experience and agro-ecology (highland, midland, and lowland) as selection criteria. Accordingly, informants who match the criteria were selected who then recommend others.

Table 4. Youth informants from the representative *woredas*

S/N	Kebele	Participants			Remark
		Male	Female	Total	
1	Hora Sobba	3	2	5	All were natives
2	Karrari	4	3	7	All were natives
3	Fasil Angaso	3	2	5	2 were migrants
4	Aloshe Tilo	5	2	7	5 were seasonal migrants
5	Wajitu Shabe	3	2	5	All were natives
6	Chiri	4	3	7	5 were migrants
7	Wabero	3	3	6	4 were migrants
	Total	**25**	**17**	**42**	

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

In addition to the youth informants, 55 (47 males and 8 females) individuals representing different offices and organizations were also interviewed on issues of youth livelihood strategies, the role of migration as a livelihood strategy, and the impact of both on the BER.

Table 5. Informants from government offices and NGOs

S/N	Kebele/Organization	Informants		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Woreda & kebele administrations	11	0	9
2	Bale zone pertinent offices	9	3	12
3	Dinsho Youth & Sport Office	3	1	4
4	Dinsho MSE	3	0	3
5	Dinsho Labor& Social Affairs	3	0	3
6	BMNP	2	0	2
7	Dinsho Culture & Tourism Office	3	0	3
8	Dellomena Labor & Social Affairs	2	0	2
9	Dellomena Administration	3	1	4
10	Dellomena Agriculture	2	0	2

11	Dellomena Youth & Sport Office	1	0	1
12	Dellomenna MSE	2	0	2
13	SOS Sahel	1	0	1
14	Goba Labor & Social Affairs	1	2	3
15	Goba Youth & Sport Office	2	0	2
	Total	**47**	**8**	**55**

Source: Fieldwork data, 2016

In this study, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was particularly important to bring together youth and other individuals to debate mainly on whether migration is a viable livelihood strategy to the BER, challenges to the youth livelihood strategies, and the impact of both migration and livelihood strategies of both migrants and native youth on the BER. Accordingly, 3 successful FGDs with 26 youth representatives (19 males and 7 females) were conducted in the selected *kebeles*. Except Horo Sobba, females' representation in the FGDs was low because it was hardly possible to balance the number of migrant males and females. The FGD organized among male and female members together at Horo Soba aimed at getting the insights of the youth about the causes and consequences of migration (both in and out).This was done intentionally to learn whether the youth consider migration as an opportunity or threat. The FGD at Wabero, which involved only male migrant youth (day laborers), was an opportunity to discuss why most migrants are engaged in daily labor.

Table 6. Youth FGD Participants

		FGD participants			
S/N	**Kebele**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Remarks**
1	Horo Sobba	6	6	12	All were natives
2	Aloshe Tilo	5	1	6	All were seasonal migrants
3	Wabero	8	0	8	5 were migrants
	Total	**19**	**7**	**26**	

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Moreover, individual case studies were used to collect data on detail experiences of the youth, focusing on why and how the youth migrate to the BER and how they make livelihood in the place of destination.

Table 7. Summary of profile of informants used in qualitative study

Sex	Youth informants	*Kebele* and government officials	FGD participants	Case studies	Total
Male	25	47	19	5	96
Female	17	8	7	2	34
Total	42	55	26	7	130

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

A systematic observation was also made by walking through villages at different times of the day and by recording what the youth actually do. Two villages were selected (at Aloshe Tilo and Rira) in the BER and researcher spent some time with the youth so as to observe their daily activities.

2.3.1 Data analyses

Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses techniques were used. A thorough translation, transcription, and analysis, as well as interpretation of qualitative data were made. Descriptive statistical data is generated using the latest version of the SPSS (16.0). Result is presented in the form of tables, graphs, and pie charts.

3 Profile of respondents

As it is indicated in the previous section, data were collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Accordingly, out of 364 survey questionnaires distributed to the youth respondents, 359 were returned and filled in properly. Therefore, quantitative data analysis was based on this figure, and the qualitative data were obtained from 42 youth informants, 55 officials, 3 FGD participants (26 youth) and 7 migrant youth for documenting their life stories. As proposed in the research design, the study aimed for a gender disaggregated data collection. This was achieved as the final survey participants were 53 % (males) and 47% (females).

Table 8. Disaggregated data of survey participants

S/N	Kebele	Native youth			Migrants		Total
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
1	Horo Soba	36	45	81	0	0	0
2	Karari	36	30	66	0	0	0
3	Fasil Angaso	10	8	18	5	4	9
4	Aloshe Tilo	0	0	0	14	14	28
5	Wajitu Shabe	11	11	22	0	0	0
6	Chiri	19	21	40	20	8	28
7	Wabero	17	22	39	20	8	28
	Total	**129**	**137**	**266**	**59**	**34**	**93**

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

With regard to age category, the three age groups were significantly represented in the survey: 158 (44%) of the respondents is characterized by the age group 15 – 19 years (older adolescents), 122 (34%) by younger adults and 79 (22%) by the age group 25-29 years (adults)

The survey result shows that 79% of respondents were Oromo, 7% Amhara, and 14% others. Regarding the religious composition, majority of the survey respondents (261 or 73%) were Muslims. Representation of other religious groups is 17% Orthodox Christians, 7% protestant, and the rest 3%.

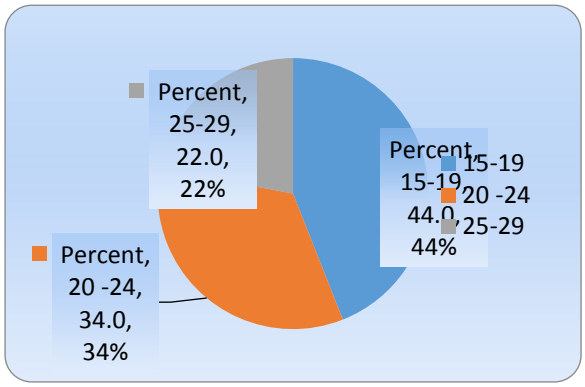

Figure 1. Age category of the respondents,
Source: Survey data, 2016

As can be seen from the chart below, the majority of the respondents (62.7%) have obtained elementary education (1-8 grades) and very few respondents (6. 8%) are at secondary and certificate level. There is also a significant percentage (16.4%) of youth in the sample who have never attended school. As to the qualitative information from our respondents, most of the youth migrants coming to the BER are those with low educational background or those who have dropped out of school at elementary school level.

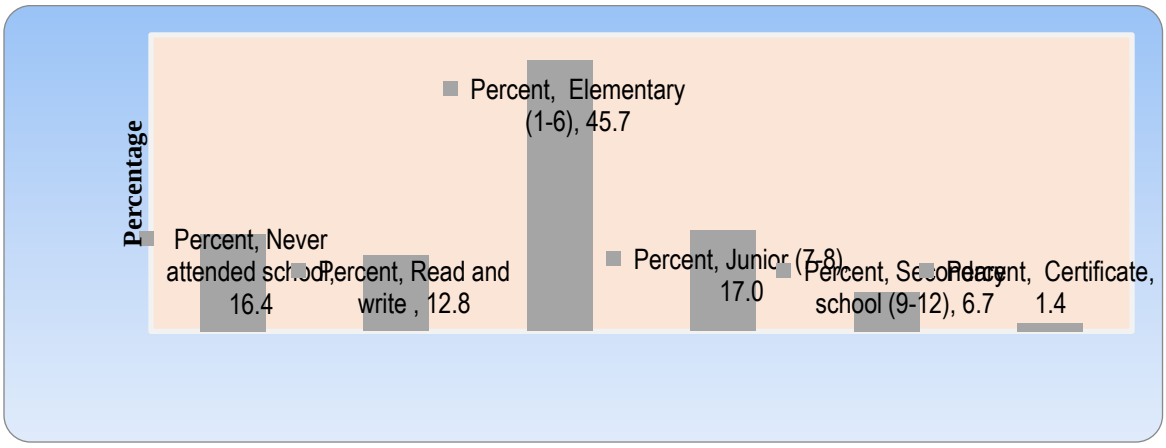

Figure 2. Educational status of the respondents

Source: Survey result, 2016

4 Youth livelihood strategies in the BER

Both qualitative and quantitative data obtained from informants of the three agro-ecological zones of the study areas indicated that the youth combine agriculture with other non-farm activities. However, there are also some peculiarities, as will be shown below, based on agro-ecologies.

4.1 *An overview of livelihood strategies based on agro-ecology*

4.1.1 Agriculture-based livelihood strategies

Highland (Dinsho woreda)

Key informants explained that the youth in the highland agro-ecologies depend on farming. Particularly those in Horo Soba and Karrari Kebeles of Dinsho Woreda depend on potato production. Moreover, a cattle rearing is an important agricultural activity in the highland agro-ecologies.

Midland (Gobba Woreda)

Agriculture is also important in the midland. The study participants from the three *kebeles* of Goba Woreda representing midland (Aloshe Tilo, Fasil Angaso and Wajitu Shabe) suggested that the major agricultural activity in the area is crop production. In the *kebeles* which were visited (particularly Aloshe Tilo), onion is produced in a large amount and as result most seasonal migrants come to these areas to be engaged in weeding. In the mid-altitude forested areas like Rira (on the way to Dellomena), the youths' livelihood strategies are partly associated with the forest where the youth keep beehives. These areas are also known for cabbage production in a large amount and as a result, there are many youths (mainly girls) who are engaged in selling the local variety cabbage as this picture shows. Government officials from the relevant offices of Dellomena Woreda argued that making a livelihood as a daily labor is also common particularly in coffee growing areas. The cattle rearing is also an important livelihood activity.

Lowland (Dollo Mena)

Although coffee is mentioned as the major cash crop in the lowlands as well, in addition to other crops such as sesame, sorghum, maize and teff, all informants agree that livestock rearing dominates crop production in the lowland.

4.1.2 Major and minor livelihood activities

To identify the major and minor livelihood strategies for the three agro-ecologies combined, all of the survey participants were asked to give ranks from their best choice to the least, i.e. 1st to 5th. The results are then summarized and analyzed accordingly.

Table 9. Rank for crop production

Rank given by the survey participants	Number of respondents (n=359)	Percent
1	132	36.77
2	72	20.05
3	79	22.01
4	59	16.44
5	17	4.73
Total	**359**	**100.0**

Source: Survey data, 2016

As can be seen from the above table, a few respondents (21.17 %%) ranked crop production as their fourth and last choice of livelihood strategies, whereas the majority of the respondents (78.83%) ranked first to third. From this, it can be realized that the youth's choice of livelihood strategies in the highland areas is, in particular, is crop production.

Interviews with participants showed that even those who do not rely on farming at the moment mentioned that they had the willingness to be engaged in crop production if they were given access to agricultural farmlands and improved technologies. The problem they could not conceal in this regard is the shortage of land in the study area, and even when a small amount is distributed, it's unfairly done. As explained by the informants, lack of good governance is the main reason for unfair land distribution. As a result, some farmers hold relatively large hectares of land and others have none. Particularly this is a serious problem in areas like Horo Sobba where the youth are forced either to migrate somewhere or pass the buffer zone of BMNP and use land that is part of the park. The challenge explained during FGD with youth representatives and interviews with *kebele* and *woreda* officials was the deforestation in the area. According to respondents from Horo Sobba *kebele*, the greater portion of the *kebele* was covered by forest some ten years ago. However, now it is one of the deforested *kebeles* in the BER.

Table 10. Rank for livestock production

Rank given by the respondents	Frequency	Percent
1	62	17.27
2	63	17.55
3	90	25.07
4	91	25.35
5	53	14.76
Total	**359**	**100.0**

Source: Survey data, 2016

As can be seen from the above table, majority of the respondents (59.89%) ranked livestock production is their livelihood strategy at first second or third level. Those who ranked fourth and fifth are mainly from the highlands.

Table 11. Rank for petty trade

Rank given by the respondents	Frequency	Percent
1	45	12.53
2	34	9.47
3	79	22.01
4	82	22.84
5	119	33.15
Total	**359**	**100.0**

Source : Survey data, 2016

Regarding ranks given for the petty trade, majority (55.99%) of the respondents ranked fourth and their last choice. Informants mentioned that they do not have money start up their business, which is in turn, due to due to their low access to saving and credit services to get a loan.

Table 12. Rank for daily labor

Rank	Frequency	Percent
1	119	33.70
2	45	12.53
3	48	13.37
4	74	20.61
5	71	19.78
Total	359	100.0

Source : Survey data, 2016

From the table 7, we can realize that the majority (59.6%) ranked daily labor as their first to third choices. This could be the case for migrants. When we combine the above four tables, we can get the following results.

Table 13. Summary of ranks

Livelihood activity	Number of respondents who ranked (1-3)	% of ranks (1-3)	Number of respondents who ranked (4th&5th)	% of ranks 4 &5
Crop production	283	78.83	76	21.17
Livestock rearing	215	59.89	144	40.11
Petty trade	158	44.01	201	55.99
Daily labor	212	59.05	147	40.95

Source : Survey data, 2016

Based on the above table it can be deduced that crop production and livestock rearing are the major livelihood strategies of the youth in the area. Daily labor and petty trade are the minor livelihood strategies. Overall, agriculture dominates the livelihood and economic activities of the youth in the study areas. However, the fact that the sector's carrying capacity is deteriorating from time to time, mainly because of land scarcity, the youth are obliged to search for alternative livelihood options either in the BER or outside, and the government is creating job by organizing the youth in what is called small and micro enterprises.

4.2 Livelihood strategies based on job created by the government

In addition, job opportunities created by government is also an important livelihood strategies in the two agro ecologies, more importantly for the youth around BMNP (around the Dinsho area). The youth here are organized as tour guides, scouts, horse renters, coffee makers, and cooks. However, many youth and expert informants agree that the number of youth for whom the job opportunity is created is by far less than those who seek job. Unfortunately, neither the woredas nor zonal offices could provide the exact number unemployed youth where, in particular, there are a number of undocumented youth migrants.

Table 14. Youth organized in groups to run non-farm activities (Dinsho)

S/N	Type of non-farm activity	Year of establishment of the youth association	Number of youth involved		
			Male	Female	Total
1	Horse rent	1999E.C	20	-	20
2	Horse parking	1998E.C	19	-	19
3	Food preparation	2005E.C	4	4	8
4	Handicrafts	2002E.C	-	10	10
5	Spring water packing	2005/2006E.C	29	4	33
6	Park guarding	2006E.C	25	5	30
7	Traditional coffee preparation	2006E.C	2	1	3
8	Tour guide	1999/2006E.C	19	1	20
9	Bee keeping	2006E.C	1	2	3
10	Fire wood preparation	2005E.C	3	-	3
	Total		**122**	**27**	**149**

Source: Dinsho Woreda Youth and Sport Office, 2016

Table 15. Employment opportunities created through micro and small enterprises (Dinsho)

S/N	Small business/Sector	Number of youth involved in SME from the study *woredas* (2015-2016G.C)		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Service delivery	52	6	58
2	Construction	59	8	67
3	Petty trade	111	103	214
4	Manufacturing	9	2	11
5	Agriculture	1,321	453	1,774

	Total	**1,552**	**572**	**2,124**

Source: Small Enterprises Development Office' of Dinsho Woreda

Table 16. Employment opportunities created through small businesses (*Dellomena*)

S/N	Small business/Sector	Number of youth involved in small enterprises from the study *woredas* (2015-2016G.C)		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Service delivery	578	585	1,163
2	Construction	66	36	102
3	Petty trade	554	587	1141
4	Manufacturing	220	248	468
5	Agriculture	1,105	956	2,061
	Total	**2,523**	**2,412**	**4,935**

Source: Small Enterprises Development Office' of Dellomena Woreda

4.3 *Emerging livelihood strategies*

From the different livelihood strategies of the youth in the BER, there are some activities that are growing and promise to have an alternative potential. Accordingly, working as daily laborer is being practiced by both migrant and non-migrant youth. This mode of livelihood gives an answer for the immediate need for subsistence. Moreover, working on a coffee farm as a daily laborer or cultivating coffee in one's land is also another emerging activity and identified as a minor livelihood strategy for the youth. Cultivation of cabbage is also reported to be a new and growing mechanism. Some informants mentioned that they cultivate cabbage for household consumption as well as for income generation.

4.4 *How migration features as a livelihood strategy*

The 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia shows that there were 248,692 migrants (127,115 males and 121,577 females) out of the total population of 1,418,864 of Bale Zone. This means 17.5% of the people in Bale were migrants. The same Census for the *woredas* this study focused shows that there were 4,560(11.7%) migrants in Dinsho (out of the total population of 39,124), 5,237(12.8%) in Goba (out of the total population of 40,757) and 15,306(17.1%) migrants in Dellomena (out of the total population of 89,670). The following table shows migration status of youth involved in the survey.

According to this study, many youth migrants are attracted today to the BER. From the *woredas* this study has considered, more migrants go to Dellomena due to its suitability for coffee production and presence of grazing land for livestock. Informants from Wabero and Chiri *kebeles* of Dellomena Woreda told that Magnete village and Chiri are the best destinations for migrant youths. Migrants come to these areas on a seasonal basis for coffee harvesting.

Table 17. Migration status of youth involved in the survey

S/N	Youth by birth	Total youth	Percentage
1	Native (born in the BER)	266	74.1

2	Migrants	Seasonal migrants	37	10.3
		Permanent migrants	56	15.6
		Total	**359**	**100**

Source: Survey data, 2016

As can be seen from the above table, the majority of the youth represented in the survey were born in the BER. This, however, does not mean that the issue of migrants should be underestimated due to their low representation in the survey. It should be noted here that the survey participants were drawn from the three agro ecologies where youth have different livelihood strategies and different degree of migration. Hence, the youth from Dinsho Woreda representing the highland agro-ecology are all native and it was hardly possible to get migrants in the area. Highland agro-ecologies have less agricultural lands to attract migrants and much of it is inside BMNP. As can be seen from the table above, 10.3% of the migrants are seasonal. The graphs below show months during which the youth come to the BER and return to their birthplaces.

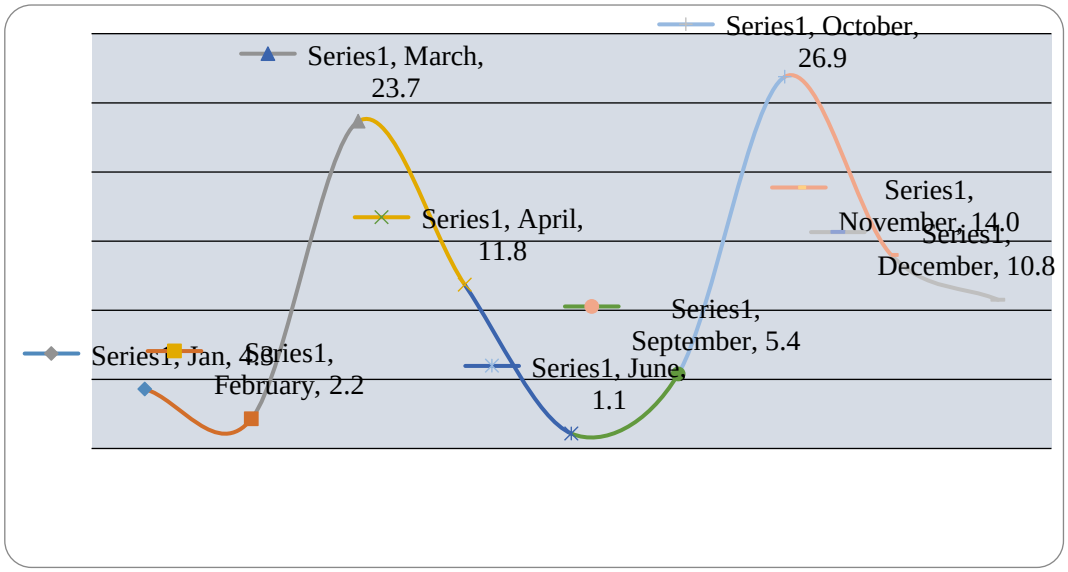

Figure 3: Months when the youth come to the BER
Source: Survey result, 2016

The above graph indicates that October and March are months with the highest percentage of youth migration, 26.9%, and 23.7% respectively. Those who come to BER in October engage in coffee harvesting in the lowlands (Dellomena) while those who come in March are seasonal migrants who engage in onion production activities in *kebeles* like Aloshe Tilo of Goba Woreda.

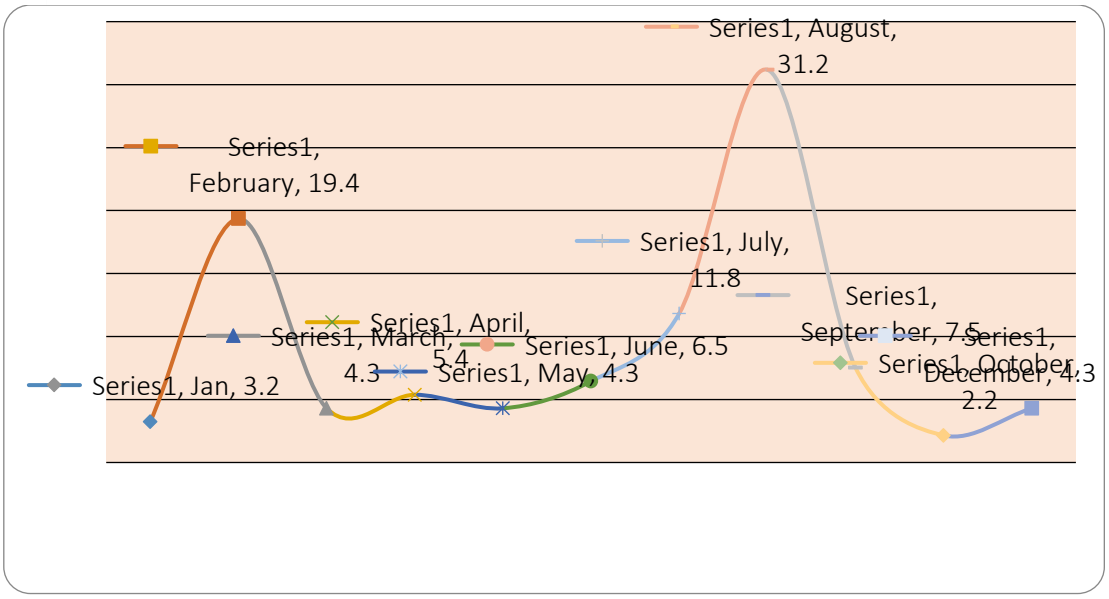

Figure 3. Months when the migrants go back home

Source: Survey result, 2016

From the graph, we can see that August and February are the months during which youth migrants go back to their home place. Based on the interview results, those who return in August are those who come to BER as seasonal migrants to do farming in the high and middle lands; whereas those who came for coffee harvesting return in February.

Regarding the areas where migrants come from, it was possible to understand that that migrants come from many areas in Oromia, and some even from Amhara and SNNPR. Shewa, Arsi, Gonder, Borena, Harar, Wellega, Ambo, SNNPR and Somalia are the major areas of departure. Migrants from SNNPR and Shewa come during coffee harvesting season, Somalis for trade and those from other areas come in search of better livelihood opportunities.

Though it was hardly possible to get secondary data from official sources about internal migration (migration to the BER), FGD results showed that the number of migrants is increasing from time to time. As mentioned under the first section of this chapter, out of the total population of 1,418,864 of Bale zone, 17.5 %(248,692) were migrants in 2007(CSA, 2007). Considering the 2.9 annual growth rate (CSA, 2007), the population of Bale zone is estimated to be 1,835,182 in 2016.Therefore, based on Census data, it can be estimated that there are at least 321,662 migrants in the zone. Lowland areas of BER and those in the middle altitude with good crop production trend are destinations for seasonal migrants and illegal settlers.

In the study areas, both male and female youth engage in farming, daily labor and small businesses. The case story below may help us understand this. The case is another example worth mentioning here is the case of a young girl who came to the BER with her parents in 1999 E.C.

According to different informants, *kebeles* in Dinsho Woreda where the study focused (Horo Sobba and Karari) are characterized by out-migration (migration to abroad) rather than in-migration (coming to the area). An official source from Dinsho Woreda Labor and Social Affairs Office indicates that there were over

29 out-migrants from the area in the last two years (2015-2016). According to the officials, poverty is the main driving factor for the out-migration in the area. Youth FGD participants at Horo Sobba Kebele elucidated that the youth migrate to countries in the Arab world to escape poverty and usually with a vain hope to earn a better living. In an extended discussion with the FGD participants, it was noted that there is a lack of awareness among the youth about the negative consequences of out-migration.

4.5 Triggers of migration

Both qualitative and quantitative data sources show that generally economic poverty is the major trigger for migration. In other words, economic reasons are given as deciding factors for migration by all informants. This means, other factors like ethnic conflict or political causes are not the major causes for the youth to migrate to the BER.

However, economy as the major cause of migration manifests in different ways. Both respondents and informants argued that they are migrating to the BER or out of it because of surge in poverty for different reasons. Hence, there are different economic causes for both seasonal and permanent migrants coming to the area.

Youth FGD participants(particularly at Dinsho Woreda), government offices' representatives at zonal and *woreda* levels and migrants from Muslim dominant areas (mainly Harar)elucidated that due to polygamous marriage allowed by Islamic tradition, a husband can have four and sometimes even up to six wives and more than forty children. Because of this, children have limited opportunity to inherit assets like land. This forces them to migrate out or lack necessities such as clothing and food while living at their birthplaces.

All informants agreed that scarcity of land in the place of origin is a common trigger of migration. Besides, FGD participants argued that, even when one has a small plot of land, the productivity is very low. They also explained that there is degradation of soil, deforestation, and climate change, thus, making crop production challenging. Moreover, they elaborated that there is gap between cost of inputs such as labor and fertilizers and the return they get from the land is wide. As a result, some youth choose to migrate even when they have a plot of land because they do not collect enough harvest.

5 Challenges to youth livelihood strategies

5.1 Population growth and land shortage

Population growth and ensuing land shortage is one major factor triggering migration both in the place of origin and destination, i.e. BER. As explained by FGD participants, this is aggravated by relatively a high population growth in the BER. Since Islamic tradition allows having up to four wives, some youth and expert informants stress, a man can have up to 15 children from all of his wives. As a result, there is specially a high population growth in areas where Muslim communities dominate.

Table 18. Fertility rates in the zones of Oromia

	Zone	FR		Zone	FR
1	West Wollega Zone	3.880	11	Bale Zone	5.845

2	East Wollega Zone	4.270	12	Borena Zone	5.950
3	Ilu Abab Bora Zone	4.590	13	Southwest Shewa Zone	4.760
4	Jimma	5.520	14	Guji Zone	5.855
5	West Shewa Zone	4.885	15	Adama Special Zone	1.690
6	North Shewa Zone	4.375	16	Jima Special Zone	1.875
7	East Shewa	3.550	17	West Arsi Zone	5.215
8	Arsi Zone	4.740	18	Kelem Wollega Zone	4.060
9	West Hararge Zone	4.915	19	Horo Gudru Zone	4.260
10	East Hararge Zone	5.470	20	Burayu Special Zone	2.485
	Regional average	4.845			

Source: CSA 2007

According to the CSA 2007 report, zones like Jimma Arsi, Bale, Borena and Guji have a high fertility rate. Bale Zone has 81.83% followers of Islam, Jimma Zone (85.65%), and Arsi Zone 59.33%. Moreover, Oromiya at large has also a higher fertility rate than the national average (4.160) and any other regional state in the country. The national summary can be seen from the following table.

Table 19. Fertility rates of Ethiopian regional states

	Region	**FR**
1	Tigray	4.440
2	Affar Region	2.075
3	Amhara region	4.175
4	Oromia Region	4.845
5	Somali Region	2.010
6	Benishangul	4.520
7	SNNPR	4.495
8	Gambella	2.885
9	Harari	2.885
10	Addis Ababa	1.485
11	Dire Dawa	2.985
12	Special numeration area	2.845
	Country average	4.160

Source: CSA 2007

The population density of Bale Zone is 32.10 per square kilo meter. According to CSA 1994, Bale Zone population was 1,217,864. And CSA 2007 reports that the population in the same zone was 1,418,864. However, after 1994 census, some part of Bale Zone and some part of Arsi Zone were taken to form a new zone known as West Arsi Zone. So, it is difficult to get the exact figure of population growth since the units of measurement for the two censuses were different. The point to be made here is as a result of relatively high population growth both in Bale Zone and elsewhere, shortage for land is inevitable triggering for migration. The socio-economic profile of Oromiya (2008) indicates that the average land holding size of a household is 1.14 hectares, which is still a bit greater than the national

average of 1.01 hectares. Yet, as elsewhere in Ethiopia, according to FGD and interviews results of this study, shortage of land is a serious problem for the youth in the region.

5.2 Lack of access to credit services

The youth informants mentioned that due to the prohibition of paying interests on debt by Islamic law, Muslim youth cannot access credit services on paying interest. There are no rural saving and credit services for the non-Muslim youth too, even when they have the need to access the service. Moreover, according to informants at zonal level, the one year time period for repayment of loans is too short and challenging for those who have access to the service.

5.3 Delay in attaining legal recognition to run business

There is also a long process to attain legal status for the youth who organize themselves into small enterprises. Some informants reported that it took 2 years to set up a small business. They complained that the local (*woreda*) offices are inefficient in organizing the youth into micro and small enterprises even though there is a great need from the side of the youth to get organized and get a work. In relation to this, the youth also argued that there is a lack of good governance. Local officials discriminate the youth based one nepotism, political affiliation, and religion.

5.4 Lack of recreation centers

There are also other problems reported by the youth. For instance, data obtained from Bale Zone Youth and Sport Office indicates that youth lack recreation centers both in towns and rural areas. The same source shows, from 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 (the First Growth and Transformation Period, GTP I), five youth recreation centers were planned for construction, but so far (until March 2016), only one is completed and opened for the youth in Bale Zone. As a result, youth are forced to be engaged in other activities (such as chewing "chat") and develop delinquent behaviors. Moreover, the youth informants reported that lack of awareness among the youth for diversifying livelihood opportunities, a tradition of prohibiting girls(females) from assets' inheritance, addiction to "chat" chewing (the worst case seen in Dellomena), and lack of life skills training are other forms of the challenges.

6 Impact of youth livelihood strategies on the BER

6.1 *Deforestation*

Based on personal observation (for example Rira *kebele*) and discussion with informants, it was possible to know that there is a deforestation going on in the BER. According to the informants, there is a widespread illegal settlement in the eco-region and this has further triggered deforestation in different ways.

Clearing of forest is made in the first place for farming. Almost all interviewed youth and government officials, confirmed that the prime motive of youth migration to the BER is in search of agricultural land. There is a competition amongst the migrants, the natives and the newly growing woodwork businesses and small scale enterprises in the small towns in the BER in which all of them need to make cash from the forests in the region. The informants argued that if there are no controlling mechanisms most of the migrant youth can undoubtedly "invade" the eco-region.

The increase in the number of population in the highland ecosystem in general and in the BER in particular increased the need for firewood and wood for construction, which can be taken as one of the major factors for deforestation. For instance, according to Demel (2001) in the highland of Ethiopia, forests contribute more than 70% of energy source for the households. This can be exacerbated by the fact that when every illegal settler aspires to create his own home and this is done by cutting woods. In addition, in the expanding towns, there is a high demand for firewood, which is attributed to lack of modern energy sources for the urban population in the region. This is also true in the BER, where we also observed new settlements which have but cut trees both for construction of their house and to clear forest land for farming.

There is also unsustainable timber extraction in the eco-region. Bamboo and other wood trees are cut down for making timber. Officials confirmed that in the towns there is a growing number of small scale woodwork enterprises owned by the youth. This in turn led migrants and unemployed youths in the BER to cut down and log the trees to supply to the enterprises. An informant espoused that, in most cases the youth cut down trees during night and sell them to owners of enterprises during night where there is no eye witness. Sometimes, it is also done in collaboration with local woreda or kebele officials and guards who are bribed by the enterprises runners in the towns, and thus makes it difficult to control.

Informants' statement about the level of deforestation is supported by a survey report done by Kinahan (2011). According to Kinahan (2011:18) "there are approximately 100,000 hectares of forest land in the Bale National Park. However, the forest has been diminishing at an average rate of 375 hectares per year over the past 32 years, a rate that has accelerated over the past six years to 1,500 hectares per year". From this we can understand that there is high rate of deforestation that migrants and natives have been contributing to. Even though the problem of deforestation through the above mechanisms is a problem common throughout the BER, the most serious degradation can be found in Rira, Chiri, Wabero, Karari, Horo Sobba, Gojo and Gofingira Kebeles.

Livestock rearing is one of the livelihood strategies of the people in the BER. It is considered as an alternative as well as supportive activity to the farming system. It is alternative because, as there is an increase in the reduction and also failure of crop production mainly related to overexploitation of the resources and climate change impacts, ownership of a number of livestock with encroaching on a new place is an alternative to crop production. Thus, many youth resort to own livestock particularly in highland *woredas* such as Dinsho. Livestock is also important in supporting farming livelihood because there are no other farm-based technologies that can substitute draught animals to plow land. With the increase in the number of human population in the eco-region, there is also a growing number of livestock. The problem of overgrazing is exacerbated by the poor management of the environmental resources of the area. It is indicated by informants and officials that there are migrants who occupied large yards of forested land and cleared the land with fire and cutting down the trees. In the past few decades native informants witnessed intensive clearing of forested lands in the BER, especially in the mountains of the region. For this, livestock rearing in the mountain has become a very attractive livelihood strategy for the migrants in the BER. Moreover, the increase in the number of livestock led to overgrazing and overexploitation of the land.

In addition to problems in relation to the eco-region, many informants have also equally insisted social problems as the result of migration. For example, informants reported security problems because of

the increase in number of migrants to Goba town and the surrounding rural *kebeles*. Misconducts such as theft have increased in the area. It was also reported that even some migrants with unknown origin and often with criminal record use the eco region (forests) as a place for hiding themselves and making their livelihood. However, here only those which have direct impact on the BER are summarized.

6.2 *Migration: an opportunity or a threat?*

The migrant youth and the natives share opposing views on the importance of migration to the BER. The migrant youth argued that their living situation have shown improvement following their decision to migrate to the BER. According to FGDs at Horo Sobba and other *kebeles*, migration to the eco-region is an opportunity to escape poverty in their place of origin. But from the point of view of the recipient youth (the non-migrant youth), migration to their eco-region aggravates the problems of the native youth in the BER. In other words, the vulnerable situation of eco-region will be aggravated as more and more migrants come to the area.

It is also reported frequently that seasonal migrants engage in some livelihood activities in the BER for some months of a year, and then go to their place of origin to work on their farm. Or, some non-migrant youth even argued that some seasonal migrants have land in their place of origin, even enough plot of land for their sustenance. However, they rent their land and migrate to BER to earn additional income.

7 Policy Context

Ethiopia, so far, does not have a policy on either intra country or external migration. This means that it also does not have a policy on ecological approaches to migration. However, there are different sectoral policies which need to be reviewed to see if an ecological approach to migration is incorporated. And to find how the youth, both men and women, are represented on those fragmented sectoral policies makes the search a needle in a haystack.

7.1 The 1997 FDRE Environment Policy

The Ethiopian Environment Policy which came into effect in 1997 makes a direct reference to neither environmental causes of migration nor youth migration and impact on the environment. The only instance the Policy mentions the issue of internal migration is in the case of rural-urban migration. Under its policy towards “Human Settlement, Urban Environment and Environmental Health” under subsection (a), it reads the aim of the policy is:

“*To incorporate rural-urban migration, human settlement and environmental health concerns which arise from urbanization created by social and economic development into regional, woreda and local level planning and development activities*.”

7.2 The 2004 FDRE Youth Policy

Likewise, the 2004 FDRE Youth Policy does not address the issue of ecological and economic self-initiated migration (internal or international). Only under its section on "Youth, Environmental Protection, and Social Services", it states the policy aims to

- Enable youth to have wide access to education, information and technological results so that they would be able to participate in environmental, natural and cultural heritages protection and preservation
- Create enabling conditions for the youth to participate in voluntary environmental protection and social services and thereby benefit themselves and the community at large

7.3 *Resettlement program*

The incumbent government of Ethiopia launched its resettlement program in 2003. As part of food security strategy, the program is aimed at resettling people from densely populated land-scare areas to that of lowlands with sparse population. The program has at least the following important elements.

The first is the program believed firmly that all resettlements must be made on a voluntary basis after conducting consultations with the people to be relocated through the resettlement program and the people in the areas to which they moved. It compares itself with the Derg resettlement program which was made without the consent of people and was doomed to failure. The program states that the current resettlement program aims at voluntary displacement of people. It also includes the provision that people can return to their original place if they are dissatisfied with the area to which they were moved, and can also continue to farm on their previous land. The second important principle of the program is what is called intra-regional resettlement. Resettlement is only carried out within the same regional state, people moving only from the same regional state. This is believed to be a lesson taken from Derg's approach to prevent inter-ethnic conflict. Fourth, the program also aims at integration of resettlers to the host.

However, the program mentions the youth only in the context of addressing landlessness through resettlement program. It does not mention about self-initiated migrants, which is ecologically the major problem in the contemporary population movement of Ethiopia.

7.4 *Micro and small enterprises development strategy*

Ethiopia adopted a national "Small and Micro Enterprises Development Strategy" in 1997. This strategy envisions development of small and microenterprises (the difference between 'small' and 'micro' is in the amount of initial capital to set up a business) as the major hub of job creation the youth both men and women. However, it does not integrate the issue of internal migration and job creation, or migration and environment.

7.5 *Efforts by the local government and stakeholders*

No matter what the policy context is, results from the discussion with informants at various levels and secondary data from some sources confirm that there are concerted efforts from various actors to conserve the biodiversity in the BER. Accordingly, we were told that Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise (OFWE) has started joint forest management activities with the community and NGOs. The informants also explained that the youth are involved in such interventions. Youth are organized in groups and associations both to protect their environment and to generate income from it. In the BER, it is observed that several youths engaged in "green enterprises" that can offer alternative opportunities for employment. In particular, there are at least six youth enterprises in the BMNP who comprise the youth engaged in tour guiding. However, many expert informants and the youth argued that the result of this exercise is not adequate. The endeavors of OFWE and youth participation is described as intermittent, which does not have systematic approach.

8 Conclusion and recommendation

8.1 *Conclusion*

The study shows that the majority of the rural youth in the study area depend directly or indirectly on the natural resources. Mostly they depend on farming (mainly crop production) and animal husbandry. As shown by the survey results, crop production, and livestock rearing are the major livelihood strategies of the youth in the BER, and daily labor and petty trade are their minor livelihood strategies.

Qualitative data obtained from different key informants and some survey data of the study revealed that youth migration to the mid- and lowlands of Bale, particularly Goba and Dellomena, is quite common and it is at an increasing rate. Out–migration from the highland and middle altitude areas is also common as official secondary data from the study woredas depict this reality. The study also showed that among the three study woredas, Dellomena hosts more migrants as shown by the survey participants 15.6% who represented this *woreda*.

Moreover, the study showed migration to the area is partly season-based where those migrating to the mid altitudes like Goba Woreda come during farming seasons whereas those migrating to the lowlands like Dellomena come during harvesting seasons.

The influx of migrants into the BER is mainly driven by limited economic opportunities and access to suitable agricultural land in the migrants' home areas and by the perceived availability of land in the BER. However, according to the survey data on the general living situation of immigrant youth, almost half of the respondents (49.46**%**) replied that their living situation in the BER is also challenging. As

almost all key informants (100%) mentioned, this is attributed to the unfair distribution of agricultural land, which in turn is linked with lack of good governance.

This study indicates that increase in human population, livestock overgrazing, preparation of farmland and non-sustainable fuel wood extraction have been the major problems in the eco-region. According to the qualitative information obtained from the key informants and some quantitative data, these problems are still there despite some measures like joint forest management activities with the community and NGOs are underway by the concerned bodies. As mentioned by informants from Dellomena Woreda, the main problem associated with migration to their area is illegal settlement.

The study also revealed that the youth migration and livelihood is having a predominantly a negative ramification on the BER. As witnessed by almost all informants, from the point of view of the recipient youth (the non-migrant youth), migration to their eco-region aggravates the problems of the native youth in the BER. This means with growing migration of youth to the eco-region where there is already a growing youth native population is not a good strategy to promote. As youth population grew, there is growing clearing of forest in search of land for both farming and animal rearing. This in turn leads to increased intervention in the eco-region for both domestic and commercial firewood.

8.2 *Recommendations*

The findings show that Ethiopia has neither separate migration policy nor meaningful integration of eco-regions and migration into sectoral policies. A migration policy is needed in order to address the relationship between environment and migration, and/or there should be a solid inter-sectoral integration concerning eco-regions and migration. Since policy making is the mandate of the federal government, it should develop a comprehensive policy guideline for migration. Central to the policy, if it were to be issued, is neither to restrict movement of people nor their choice to making livelihood at any part of the country since it is in their constitutional right. An option that exits is to figure out a middle-ground between respecting the youth constitutional right of free movement and making livelihood anywhere on the one hand and ecological sustainability of the BER.

The population policy of the country and its implementation needs to be also reviewed. In the BER and beyond in Oromia, there is a population growth. There is inadequate effort to control rapid population growth. In this regard, there should be a legal limit to the number of children for parents; or since the current policy implements fertility control on voluntary basis, there should be an enhanced campaign to access contraceptives and convince people to accept them. A major factor for population increase in the BER and other Islamic polities is Islamic etho of reproduction.

As witnessed by all informants and supported by secondary data, the problem of both in-migration and out-migration is serious in the study area; thus creating public awareness on the consequences of migration and/or human trafficking is essential. This could be achieved through scaling up the training programs that have been started by Labor and Social Affairs Offices of the respective *woredas* in the Bale Zone.

The qualitative results of the study showed that there are many children (under the age 15) and also adults above 30 years migrating to the area. Thus, studying migration aspects of the other sections of the society (children and adults) that often migrate to small and big towns is also important.

The awareness gap on access to saving and credit facilities should be closed or narrowed, and credit services should be facilitated for the rural youth in order to expand their livelihood opportunities. Moreover, alternative credit services without interest on loan should be considered.

Lack of good governance was mentioned as a major problem for resource use (land and forest) in the area. As the youth are also the prime victims of this problem, the efforts of the federal and regional governments, as we hear from the public discourse, to minimize the problem should continue until a meaningful change is observed.

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