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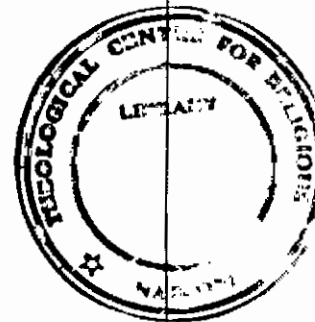
Institute of Social Ministry

**RURAL - URBAN MIGRATION IN
KENYA**

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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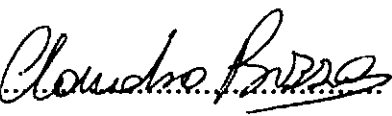
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INTRODUCTION

The process of rural-urban migration now under way in Kenya involves a rapid shift of people towards the larger towns, especially Nairobi and Mombasa. The movement is massive and involves all kinds of people-young, old, male, female, the educated and the illiterate, the landless, and those with large holdings. Moreover, in the last couple of years, the degree of migration has increased very rapidly with the level of educational attainment, and Nairobi attracts a very large share of those with secondary or higher education.

Robert Mc Namara former President of World Bank said: *“The cities are filling up and urban unemployment steadily grows... The ‘marginal men’, the wretched strugglers for survival on the fringes of farm and city, may already number more than half a billion, by 1990 two billion. Can we imagine any human order surviving with so gross a mass of misery piling up at its base?”*¹

And again, Edgar O. Edwards, reports on Employment in Developing Countries said: *“We are firmly persuaded that the most fundamental and promising attract on employment problems in development countries is in efforts to redress the present urban bias in development strategies”*.²

The issue of migration is not only a challenge to Kenya, but it is a real problem to all African countries as well. Kenya, one of the African nations, gives me an opportunity to research and reflect into the issue, and to analyse its repercussion on this important social phenomenon.

The dictionary of Social Science, defines migration as the spatial mobility or geographic mobility of individuals or groups of people, which has distinguishing characteristics such as: a change of usual place

¹ Todaro, Michal. *Economic Development in the Third World*, (York: Longman. 1977) p.263.

² *Ibid.*, p.263.

of residence across a defined administrative boundary or an origin and a destination, with an interval or duration of residence.³

The concept of migration excludes moves made by persons without a fixed place of residence i.e. nomads, or short-term trips which involve no change of residence, such as seasonal moves, journey to work or to school. Therefore, those who have moved from their place of origin or previous residence to other places are known as migrants, and those who remain at the original residence being non-migrants or stayers, are not considered migrants.

However, one may wonder why I chose this topic of rural-urban migration. Since I am a Missionary Brother in the Catholic Church and undertaking Social Ministry course, it is my duty and responsibility to understand and to reflect upon this social phenomenon which is affecting so many people in the country where I am called to work and serve as Social Minister. The other important thing to note is that the question of migration is a problem which affects our present generation; therefore, if it is not addressed now, we missionaries are not inserting ourselves into the reality of people we are living with. Such a mistake could be a disastrous social affair for next generation. On the other hand, if it is addressed today, there is hope that this problem can be lessened in the coming future and our participation as missionaries will be recognised by the people. These are the main reasons why I decided to delve into this issue of rural-urban migration in Kenya.

In addressing this issue of migration in Kenya, I am going to use the see, judge, and act methodology. Hence, to help myself applying this methodology: I have used some sources of information which fall, at any time in one or the other of the above categories. The first part of this paper shows the present situation and its phenomenon with the following sections: 1) the characteristics of the migrants 2) motivations

³ Bookcr. H., S., "Migration", in a *Dictionary of Social Science*, (New York: Free Press, 1965) p.428.

and causes for migrations 3) the impact of migration 4) general considerations regarding the impact of labour migration. From this general overview of the situation in Kenya, the paper focuses on the reasons causing the issue in presenting the aspects of 1) migration and urban unemployment 2) structural influence on rural-urban migration 3) urban informal sector and migrants. The third part of the paper is tries to identify some concrete aspects in order to promote integral rural development with the following sections: 1) reduce imbalances in rural-urban employment opportunities 2) elimination factor price distortion 3) integral rural development. Finally, I conclude with my own personal reflection and summary.

I am aware that this research paper does not address every aspect of the issue of migration in Kenya. However, this can be a starting point for myself and those who wish to do more research on this challenging issue.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE PHENOMENON OF MASSIVE RURAL - URBAN MIGRATION

Until the last century, many rural population had little connection with urban centres. All dimensions of social, economic, and political life were limited in quiet and self-centred societies. However, due to the expansion of the capitalist system and the explosion of the Industrial Revolution in Africa, rural population has been drawn into the urban centres. In this chapter, the subject is introduced by looking into the reality of Kenya as to understand better what is happening in this country.

1.1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIGRANTS

Three characteristics are the most evident: socio-economic background, age, and gender. These characteristics determine the prospects in the city and hence affect the decision to move or stay.

The socio-economic background: This aspect affects the migrants in their urban prospects. There are many migrants in Kenya who come from neglected and impoverished areas, such as Siaya and Kisumu districts. In both districts the majority of the population is rural and dependent on subsistence agriculture and fishing. Although agricultural land is principally used for production of food, two main cash crops - cotton and sugar cane - are produced in various parts of the districts. In addition to that, families in the rural areas of the districts depend on their livelihood from members of the family who have migrated to the cities to earn an income, part of which is remitted to the rural areas for consumption as well as for some productive investment. In turn, the rural stayers often send food items to their relatives / friends in towns,

not necessarily to augment their incomes, but more specifically to maintain social links.⁴

On the other hand, there are migrants coming to the cities from unusually developed regions, or better standard of living. They attend the best schools of the area, and advance their education sufficiently to get access to future careers in public administration.

Age: Young adults predominate among migrants in search of employment. They are usually unmarried; but even when married, they have less interest in rural areas than their elders. They frequently lack control over resources, land in particular, and very little influence in local affairs. To put it into more general terms, they are at a transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood, not yet firmly committed to an adult role in the local setting. In other words, these young adults enjoy an advantage in the urban economy. They are more adaptable to the urban environment.

A consistent number of them associate migration with completion of their educational studies. Nairobi's population is predominantly migrant, and the majority of migrants are moving there soon after completing formal secondary education. It is true that, some adult migrants are keen to bring their small children to town because more and better schools are available here than in the rural areas, while others send infants back to the rural areas when they reach school age because of pressure on places in urban primary schools. Much depends on the adequacy of educational provision in each city. For individual families this decision is also affected by the respective level of fees in urban and rural areas schools. Finally, in a survey by Rempel (1981) on migrants to the eight largest urban centres in Kenya, it was found that the peak age of migrants is between 20-24 years.⁵

⁴ Oucho, J., O., *Urban Migrants and Rural Development in Kenya*, (Nairobi: Nairobi University Press, 1996), pp. 52-53.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

Gender: The time variable for women to migrate to the cities was to stay there for a shorter or longer periods than the men themselves did. During the low agriculture seasons the women were going to the towns to join their husbands; on the other hand, if they were sent away from the rural societies they were staying there for a longer period of time. Another reason why women move now from the rural setting is because, in recent years, their educational opportunities have expanded. We must also remember that in the Traditional African societies men are still the main decision-makers for women's role in the family and their future. However, many women are in cities because they have moved independently with or without approval, and generally, those women who are in urban areas are not so much considered for their contribution in building the country.

Women constitute about half of the urban population, and they are under - represented at the top - level administrative positions in urban management, and as result of it, the problems and roles of women in urban areas have been given little attention by society in general.

The main problem experienced by women in urban areas is poor access to basic urban facilities such as water, electricity, sanitation, housing and child-care. Because of their role in the home, lack of access impacts on women more than on men: women have to fetch water for drinking, cooking and cleaning; they must gather the energy required for cooking, bring up the children, purchase household supplies, and carry out many other regular and necessary jobs in the house.

In conclusion, there is an increasing number of women headed households. One survey of urban areas found that 30 per cent of women between the ages of 14 and 40 have never been married.⁶ A substantial number of women, whether heads of households or not, are the single or major supporter of their households.

⁶ Ahawo, D.. O.. "Women and Housing in Kenya's Urban Arcas", in *Kanu Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organisation*, December 1988, p. 1.

1.2 MOTIVATIONS AND CAUSES FOR MIGRATIONS

There are several factors and motivations that influence the decision to migrate to the cities. The following points constitute some major aspects to the problem.

Economic factors: It is very true that the predominant motive behind most decisions to migrate is economic need and desire for better life. Greater earnings in cash and/or in kind are desired for a variety of purposes, such as the payment of taxes or of the bride price, provision of daily needs, the purchase of cattle or more sophisticated material goods.

The deteriorating economic conditions after the year 1979 have intensified the role played by the urban migrants in the survival and development strategy of these households ever since. The escalating oil prices, giving rise to inflationary conditions in the country, coupled with the decline in the prices of agricultural commodities, had a relatively more dramatic effect on the rural than on the urban population. In order to counteract the depressive economic situation, the household is organised in such a manner that it can simultaneously exploit the opportunities in the rural agricultural area as well as the urban wage employment.⁷

Socio-cultural factors: It is very much appropriate to include under the category of socio-cultural influences on migration certain motivations associated with modernity. For example, it has been claimed that migrants are as much attracted by the bright lights, happy life, and excitement of urban communities as by economic incentives. Perhaps, these motivations have probably been exaggerated, but I personally believe that there is something true in it.

Much more important is the desire to seek a better education for oneself or one's children. Even a basic primary education makes many young people dissatisfied with life in the countryside, and opens their

Oucho, J. O., *Urban Migrants and Rural Development in Kenya*, (Nairobi: Nairobi University Press, 1996), p. 53

eyes to the alternative provided by towns. Even more significant perhaps than education itself, is the socialisation process by which those who have been sent to school by rural parents are now expected to seek work in the city.⁸

On the other hand, the fact of receiving education has tended to stimulate more migration, some would say excessively, and there is no doubt that migrants to urban centres in most African countries have a better average educational achievement level.

It appears that very few Africans have the kind of love for land attributed to many peasants in Europe; many of those who in Africa receive even a primary education feel that farm work - or sometimes any physical labour - is no longer an appropriate occupation. Indeed some youth see the life of the peasant as the most miserable life that exists, one which subjects the individual to physical forces beyond his control, while town life appears to offer rapid social advance and liberation.

In addition, the problem of "school leavers" who migrate to towns only to find that there is no employment considered acceptable by them has become a serious one in numerous countries. It does not necessarily follow, of course, that there should be a cut back on education in order to alleviate this crisis.

- Another explanation of some migration to urban areas is sickness of some members of the family which result in the desire to move to a place where hospital care or other medical facilities are more easily available. Before more advanced medical treatment was developed there was also a partially enforced migration of persons suffering from leprosy to move to special, isolated leprosy centres.

Migration related to environmental conditions: People in Africa are very close to their physical environment, hence is not surprising that numerous migrations are caused or motivated by needs to adjust to this

⁸ O' Connor. Anthony. *The African city*, (London: Hulchinson & Co ltd., 1983), pp. 75-76.

environment. For example, migrations resulting from drought or flooding. Large parts of Africa are characterised by marked variability in the amounts and seasonal distribution of precipitation. It is not surprising, therefore, that periodic droughts, sometimes lasting for years, occur irregularly, but certainly in many areas, and that these influence migration to a greater or lesser degree. Excessive precipitation, which not infrequently succeeds a lengthy drought, may also lead to the forced evacuation of an area due to flooding.

Migrations resulting from soil exhaustion is the second type of physical motivated movement, which in many tropical soils deteriorate rapidly in structure and plant nutrients; once they are open to cultivation, the poverty of such soil is the main explanation for shifting agriculture to new types of jobs offered by the urban setting.

A further example of migration caused by exhaustion of soil is that of places where fragile soil was used monoculturally for growing peanuts, coffee, etc... in big proportion, which consequently have had to be abandoned, resulting in a gradual land ward shift in the production of these major crops. In some extreme cases, the land has led to severe soil erosion, which has forced at least a short distance migration of peasants inhabiting in the nearest centre.

Finally, we can not forget the aspect of excessive pressure on existing lands. Most land in Kenya has a low carrying capacity due to the aridity or semiaridity of its soil. As the population increases, pressure on the arable land becomes increasingly large. This pressure economically deteriorates the arable land and reduces its carrying capacity, a development that leads to rural unemployment, especially because Kenya is basically an agricultural country. Therefore, this force people to migrate to urban places with prospects of securing employment.

City pull factors: The city is very determining: mass media, the radio, brochures communication means, and expanding tourism bring the

country closer to the city, and convey the images of a different world where every thing is “easy and available”. Those who leave, keep in touch with the village or family of origin, and the letters and money sent back home become an incentive for more people to leave.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to see the urban migrant as simply a refugee from rural distress. The majority of families have relatives, friends or acquaintances in the city, thus giving them the security of the move. An accelerated rural migration connected with the “pull-factors” helps in the final decision of the new comers to go to the city. Aylward Shorter in his book wrote: “The pull factors are usually stronger than the push factors”.⁹ But the reality that the majority of these migrants will find is extremely different!

1.3 THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION

In the following section an attempt will be made to summarise the favourable aspects of migration as they affect the source areas, the destination areas, and the migrant and his family, and as they relate to more pervasive social and economic conditions:

Impact on the source areas: The rural areas are experiencing major transformations that have profound impact on migration. It has frequently been claimed that the loss of able young men from the rural areas may result in a reduction in the amount and variety of food produced and in a deterioration of the local agricultural system.

It is clear that the absence of males between the ages of 20-40, create a tremendous impact on the local farming and on the future development of these areas.

On the other hand, migrants often provide income and material goods which their home villages would not have. These goods permit at least a greater material comfort and, directly or indirectly, greater expenditures on education and other social needs.

⁹ Shorter, Aylward. *The Church in Africa City*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991), p. 17.

Impact on destination areas: The process of African Industrialisation has required the migration of workers to places where they were needed and hence the effect on destination areas weighs heavily in favour of the system, and it does not follow that there are no undesirable features associated with it

Consequently, the level of migration may be excessively high, resulting in unemployment, sometimes of serious proportions, in the destination areas. This has been an almost universal phenomenon in recent years as far as migration to major urban centres is concerned. The rise of a large class of unemployed workers in the cities places an unbearable load on the local and national governments and contributes to political tensions to stability and to the most effective employment of limited available funds.

Another effect of migration on recipient areas which has been criticised a lot, is the segregation of migrants into community squatters or slum dwellers, present even in small towns where a *foreigner* is anyone from outside the local ethnic group. Thus, while groups are brought together, they do not fuse, and divergence is maintained. This may result in resentment against those with superior skills, or against the influx of poor, unskilled workers, who may take away the little opportunities available to the local groups who are willing to accept the available unskilled jobs.

The frequent reliance on reciprocal migration has additional disadvantages. It leads to lower productivity because rapid turnover rates do not permit adequate selection or full development of skills, particularly in agriculture, and to a lesser degree in mining, or when several workers do the work of one higher-waged, more skilled person. But reciprocal migration is undoubtedly a detriment in numerous jobs, particularly in manufacturing, since it is not well suited to high turnover rates.

There are, however, advantages for some migrants - unfortunately only few - in some receiving areas, which for several reasons or likely situations, happen to positively benefit from their migration, and at the same time, financially support the family in the rural area.

Impact on the migrants and their families: The absence of large numbers of men for long periods of time, even after they are married, may affect the relationship among the members of the family and this provoking social repercussions. For example, children are the first to suffer and to be abandoned in the streets. Then, living for so long time away from the family, may contribute to the rise of prostitution and homosexuality. ✓

Another criticism to the migratory system is that the migrants may be subjected to unsatisfactory employment conditions, particularly in those cases where they have no freedom of choice about the type of work and where legal protection is not provided. This is the same experience of many young people who, either with elementary or post graduate diploma in hand, try to find a job in the city, among those already unemployed in these sectors, a place of work or a better future. In many cities, however, various *strange groups* have their own political associations and mutual assistance societies and the new migrants can move to such cities and still retain close ties with tribe and culture of origin.

Advantages to the migrant workers to a grater or lesser degree include the acquisition of new skills and experience, increased earnings, and the possibility of achieving vertical mobility for themselves and their children.

1.4 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE IMPACT OF LABOUR MIGRATION:

Migration has had both desirable and undesirable effects on health and the incidence and spread of diseases. Moving from one region to another may subject the migrants to new diseases to which they may have no immunity.

Migrants may also be exposed to occupational diseases such as respiratory ailments, which caused a large number of deaths among miners before precautions were taken. And the high and sometimes increasing incidence of venereal diseases is also, at least in part, related to migration. On the other hand some large firms, such as mines and health facility records indicate that employees frequently leave work in better health than when they arrived. In some cases, supplementary food is provided to improve the health and stamina of workers.

It is sometimes objected that migration subjects the worker to economic conditions which are less stable than in traditional life, such as the greater reduced job opportunities which exist in times of recession or in a bad crop year, or when a mine closes down upon exhaustion. While the assumption that rural life is stable is subject to question, there is little doubt that a modern economy is subject to greater dynamism and fluctuation than most subsistence situations do. But to move from the point of suggesting that migration to the modern economy is bad would be to uphold that it was better to have subsistence economy to assure stability. This consideration could be taken as a reason to sustain the circular migratory pattern, so to retain the security of the home farm while still participating in the modern economy; but this reasoning would be too simplistic indeed.

It is difficult to see how modernity could have or can continue to take place without migration. From the social point of view it has helped to break down some of the undesirable aspects of tribalism, and with some notable exceptions, to lower the barriers among ethnic groups.

From the economic point of view, it has stimulated the growth of the money economy. Even the reciprocal character of migration has advantages here in that it creates easier labour supply conditions and makes it easier for Africans to enter into wage employment without abandoning their interest at home. Furthermore, it tends to have a levelling influence, helping to counteract disparities which might lead to social and political problems later on if not now.

CHAPTER TWO:

URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT

In Kenya, the number of unemployed people is becoming larger and larger every day. A quick look at the following statistics will help us to understand how bad the situation of unemployment is in Kenya. It has been noted that in 1990, there were 18% of unemployed people in Kenya. Despite the government policies to fight unemployment, this situation has worsened, such that, by the end of 1996 there were 23% of unemployed Kenyans. 23% of 25 millions the current official population of Kenya, is 5.750,000. This means that there are 5.7 million idle and unproductive people in Kenya. What a waste of human resources. Worse than this is another statistics which say that 60% of the Kenyan population is comprised of youths. In this case, the statistics are saying that there are 14 million youths in Kenya. Let us look at it in this way. The total population of Kenya is 25 millions, and the population of youth is 14 millions, then we have 11 millions elderly people past the age of youth. If the number of unemployed people is 5.7 million, then we have 19.250.000 employed Kenyans. We assume that the number of the employed is shared equally between the youth and the old, then we shall have 9.5 million jobs for the youth and 9.5 million jobs for the old. This means that 1.5 million adult people are not employed. This means that 78% of the Kenyan youths are lacking employment.¹⁰

The majority of the unemployed people in Kenya are youths whom we always refer to as 'future leaders' of the societies and of the Church.

2.1 MIGRATION AND URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT

According to the World Bank report of 1988, there is a serious problem of unemployment in Kenya and it needs at least 4.5 million jobs

¹⁰ Bhushan, Kul, (ed.), *Kenya 95-96 Fact Book, Uhuru 32*, 14th ed. (Nairobi: Bhushan Newsread, 1995), pp. 6-69.

in order to control it. The majority of these unemployed people are the youth between 18 and 20 years of age. The report continues underlining that the fundamental reasons for the worsening of unemployment is the economic stagnation, the increasing debt burden, the reduced net of public resources since most Kenyans prefer to invest in foreign countries. Furthermore, the raising of standards of jobs requirements, such as five to ten years experience, even though a high skill is not needed in that job, plus the inadequate academic curriculum despite the recent innovation of eight-four four system are contributing to the pessimistic view of the present and future situation in the country.¹¹

The World Bank's report, though true, is somehow discouraging because no matter how hard the Government will make adjustments to create more job opportunities, it will never be able to create 4.5 millions jobs!! I would like to be proved wrong!

From the national press, unemployment continues to be identified as a potential time bomb which can explode at any time. Charles Kulundu of *Kenya Times*, on 3rd February 1995, reported that there are many people in Kenya chasing after few job opportunities and this is the main reason why we witness very high rates of corruption and crime in Kenya. Charles Kulundu also noticed that due to the pressure of unemployment in Kenya, some people have formed groups to counteract the situation. For example, the Maendeleo ya Wanawake is an organisation of women who are putting together their efforts to lessen the problem of unemployment. The women's group of Bungore hawkers, who, through harambees, came up with a common and well organised form of business and development projects for their living is a concrete example of such group. They were supported by their area Member of

¹¹ Dharam Ghai, *Promotion Youth Employment. Policies and Programmes*, article 3 (Geneva: UNRISD, 1988), pp. 2-8.

Parliament and by the President of Kenya who personally contributed fifty thousand shillings for starting these new projects.¹²

Another report coming from the International Labour Office, states that: “unemployment in Kenya is caused by the imbalance of the labour force, and the population in relations with the economic growth”.¹³ Certainly the given motivation could be seen in different perspective, because if the population is growing, then the number of people looking for jobs will also increase. If the number of job seekers is growing and job opportunities are stagnant, then there is an imbalance between them. Job opportunities can be increased if economy is growing. The economy cannot grow if there are very few people who are in the production sector and if there are very few people buying goods. And people cannot be productive or cannot buy if they have no employment!! So the international body is right when it addresses a serious situation which needs not to be ignored any longer.

Every social problem has its own effects on the people or on the country as a whole. Unemployment has its own effects on the people of Kenya. One will mainly find negative effects because unemployment is an evil thing in itself. The most obvious negative out-come of unemployment, from which other anti-social activities spring up is the denial of the rights of a person to participate in development himself/herself so that he/she can grow financially, socially and spiritually. In the socio-economic reality, the dignity and the totality of the human person must be honoured and advanced along with the welfare of society as a whole. Because a human person is the source, the centre and the purpose of all socio-economic life. And so every structure should aim at progressing the well being of a person and his/her community. Unemployment denies a person a possibility to interact with

¹² Charles Kulundu, reporter, “Unemployment? Not for Women”, in *Kenya Times*, 3 February 1995, p. 12.

¹³ International labour Office, *Employment, Incomes and Equity a Strategy for Increasing Productive Employment in Kenya*, (Geneva: ILO Publications 1972), pp. 1-5.

others; it denies human being the means to develop their relationship with God, and does not allow them to be financially stable. When people lack all these things they will have difficulties in physical growth, will have health problems and will not grow spiritually wholesome. In order to survive, the person will get involved in anti-social behaviours and at the end he/she will lose human dignity and life will have no meaning at all. In any society or nation, where unemployment is very high, like in Kenya, you will find that people start losing the sense of human values like such as love, peace and hospitality. That is why people revolt since they see that only a few people are benefiting from the national cake. Urbanization also causes unemployment and this causes the problem of slum areas where all sorts of bad behaviour can be found. That is why we have a lot of slums in the major towns of Kenya like, Nairobi and Mombasa, because there is poor distribution of wages between the rural and the urban areas.

The creation of more urban modern sector jobs without simultaneous attempts to improve rural incomes and employment opportunities can result in the paradoxical situation where more urban employment leads to higher levels of urban unemployment. Moreover, the imbalance in expected income-earning opportunities is the crucial idea. Migration rates are assumed to respond positively to both higher urban wages and higher urban employment opportunities. At the same time, it follows that for any given positive urban-rural wage differential, and normally urban wages are three to four times as large as rural wages, higher urban employment rates will induce higher rates of rural-urban migration. For every new job created, two or three migrants who were productively occupied in rural areas may come to the city. Thus, if 100 new jobs are created, there may be as many as 300 new migrants and, therefore, 200 more urban unemployed. Any policy that create more urban employment opportunities, may lead not only to higher levels of urban unemployment but also to lower levels of agricultural output.

2.2 STRUCTURAL INFLUENCE ON RURAL - URBAN MIGRATION

It is very interesting and at the same time very surprising, to know that the Kenya Government in 1967 established a special department named 'the Physical Planning Department' (PPD), in order to plan and to co-ordinate the process of urbanization in Kenya. In order to achieve its goals, the PPD formulated an urbanisation policy and strategy which gave guidelines to the Government for the 1974-78 Development Plan. The objectives were:

- 1. To achieve the maximum development of the rural areas so as to slow the rate of migration to urban centres.*
- 2. To establish a more even geographic spread of urban physical infrastructure in order to promote more balanced economic growth throughout the nation and a more equitable standard of social services among regions.*
- 3. To encourage expansion of several large towns in addition to Nairobi and Mombasa, thereby providing more alternatives for the absorption of the migrant population and avoiding the problems arising from excessive concentration in these two towns.*
- 4. To continue to develop a network of communication so as to link centres of economic and social development.*
- 5. To adopt standards for urban infrastructures in keeping with what the country could afford.*

The PPD recognised that its strategy for urban development required producing the necessary infrastructures at more than twenty times the speed achieved in the past. The major strategy to be followed was that of growth centres, with the hope that: "concentrating urban development in selected centres will promote the formation of small towns in rural areas. As these towns grow, they will form a level of urbanisation which is large enough to be economically served with

public water supply, sewerage disposal, electricity, postal and banking facilities, etc.¹⁴

Even though the Kenya Government showed the will in establishing a department of planning, of a balance development in the country, the reality of today is quite different. Hence, few urban areas are the centre of economic activities where the important sustenance in the development of the country is.

Because of their important economic role, it is necessary that cities work efficiently. Basic infrastructures should be maintained and improved, services provided regularly and at affordable cost. Cities also require a strong financial and institutional framework to cope with the demands of the population. By basic infrastructures I mean road network, water supply, sanitation, power supply, which are important and necessary elements for economic activity. The provision of these services should not be only sufficient but also regular. The irregularity of these services could result in substantial financial losses to industry and could discourage further investment. An efficient road network is also important. Well maintained roads reduce transportation costs and ensure the efficient delivery of goods and services.

Since independence Kenya has experienced rapid urban growth, with a concentration of economic activity in her two largest towns which are Nairobi and Mombasa, while the rural areas have remained rather undeveloped. Very little or almost nothing has been done by the government policy in order to cope with rural -urban unbalances.

The government should also develop policies in all regions to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor, to encourage productive interaction between regions while promoting the growth of secondary town centres, reducing the population concentration in towns in order to control rural migration not exceed urban areas capacity. This

¹⁴ Government of Kenya, *Development Plan 1974-1978*, (Nairobi: Kenya Government Printers, 1974), p. 120.

strategy had already been planned in the past. But without a strong determination from government policy, the rural areas will remain undeveloped.

2.3 URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR AND MIGRANTS

The informal economy is the people's spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs and the most elementary aspirations of the impoverished masses. The people have often shown more daring, effort, imagination and dedication to the country.¹⁵

In Kenya, men and women who through strong will-power, and at times super-human effort, without the least assistance from the formal sector of the country, have been able to create more employment and more wealth than the formal sector. They have often demonstrated more boldness, determination, imagination and profound commitment to the country. The peasant farmers as well as the small informal businessmen and women have created an enormous impact in the Kenyan national economy. These people offer goods and services at affordable prices, thus they cater for a very large population, both in the rural and urban community.

This spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the masses in Kenya is called Jua Kali. People are trying very hard to invent new ways of trade based on self-employment. Jua Kali in Swahili means 'hot sun'. But over the course of the 1980s, and perhaps a little earlier, it came to be used as the informal sector artisans, such as car mechanics and metal workers who were particularly noticeable for working *under hot sun* because of the absence of shelter and property. For example, the youths of Mombasa have invented a new method of trade called "money exchange". They

¹⁵ Ouma, Sylvester J.. *The Transformation of the informal sector. The co-operative Perspective.* (Nairobi: Shirikon Publishers, 1990), p. 16.

collect coins of Kenya shillings and exchange them with matatu conductors or with telephone callers who use telephone booths. If they are given a ten shilling note, they give matatu conductors or telephone callers, eight shilling coins making a profit of two shillings. For a twenty shilling note, they give sixteen shilling coins making four shilling profit, and so on and so forth. The question is whether this trade or initiative is helping the jobless youth of Mombasa. Lamburis Lonjinda, one of the traders, when he was interviewed by Kariuki Waihenya said: "I have been in this trade since 1993 and I have nothing to regret because I can buy my own food and clothes without depending on my parents". George Mbuka, another trader, when interviewed, stated: "my wife and I have never gone hungry for a day and yet my wife is jobless".¹⁶ Indeed, the main interest in the informal sector lies in its potential for creating employment opportunities. As the formal sector is unable to create new jobs in pace with the growing population, the informal sector is growing in importance. The Kenya Development Plan 1989-1993 shows that between 1981-1984, employment in the informal sector grew by about 3%, while in the informal sector it grew by about 8%. The Government policy is therefore to encourage and stimulate the informal sector directly by expanding credit for informal sector business, disseminating information on market opportunities, expanding youth polytechnic training and relaxing restrictions on informal sector activities.

A quick survey of the general situation reveals that, there is a wide range of informal activities being conducted by individuals or a group of individuals all over the country. These traders cover unlimited numbers of business, which include: handicrafts, sale of vegetable, shoeshine, maize roasters, charcoal sellers and furniture makers. This is a remarkable transformation of the Kenyan economic development, due to

¹⁶ Kariuki Waihenya, Reporter, "Mombasa Youths Invent New trade", in *Daily Nation*, 22 February 1995, p. 4.

the creativity, innovation and invention of the artisans in the informal sector.

The business in the informal sector is generally conducted along various strategic places. These include for instance, under trees, by the road side, in the open air, the Jua Kali under the shade, by the streets, in the markets, along the beaches, near schools, in homes and houses, in hotels, restaurants and in offices. In fact, informal traders of one kind or another may be traced at any place where prospective buyers of his/her commodities can be found, provided that the place is devoid of any restriction of any sort.

In Kenya, there has been a gradual change of attitude towards the informal sector. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the informal sector was subjected to a lot of harassment and discouragement, but its contribution has been increasingly recognised up to the recent years.

The following characteristics will help us to understand the major differences between the informal and formal sectors and the former popularity in the country. The informal activities are characterised by;

1. ease entry;
2. reliance on indigenous resources;
3. family ownership of enterprises;
4. small scale of operation;
5. labour-intensive and adapted technology;
6. skill acquired outside the formal school system; and
7. unregulated and competitive markets.

The characteristics of formal sector activities are the opposite of these, namely:

1. difficult entry;
2. frequent reliance on overseas resources;
3. corporate ownership;
4. large scale of operation;
5. capital-intensive and often imported technology;

6. formally acquired skills, often expatriate; and
7. protected market through tariff, quotas and trade licenses.

It is recognised by many people, that the informal sector plays a vital role in helping national development. These people, in fact, generate large amounts of money and are able to acquire large investments. Hence, due to its importance and complementary role in the national economic growth that the Government fully encourages development of the informal sector. In its Development Plan the Government states that:

“Since small-scale and Jua Kali enterprises are being called upon to create a large number of jobs and since formal training institutions may not necessarily need knowledgeable about the conditions obtainable this sector such institutions may not be as efficient as the apprenticeship schemes which already exist in this sector. It is therefore, proposed to explore ways and means of extending these apprenticeship schemes which already exist in this sector, including the possible use of training levy, in order to ensure that the skills of existing master craftsmen are not only extended to their peers, but also transmitted to future generations.”¹⁷

The Plan takes cognisance of the fact that small scale and the Jua kali businessman in the informal sector tend towards self-employment and autonomous. Furthermore, the informal sector forms the major training ground for the country’s entrepreneurs who are dynamic and who take great risk, with tremendous energy and enviable capacity to solve problems, as well as to think and work remarkable innovations. These attributes are prime elements in efficient job creation and in opening up new business areas. It is therefore vital that these people should be motivated, so as to further promote their innovative inventive and skills.

¹⁷ Government of Kenya, *Development Plan 1989-1993*, (Nairobi: Kenya Government Printers, 1989)

Promoting the informal sector is very important, but on the other hand, we must also consider its disadvantages. One of the major disadvantages according to Todaro's book, lies in the strong relationship between rural-urban migration and labour absorption in the informal sector. Promoting income and employment opportunities in the informal sector could therefore aggravate the urban unemployment problem by attracting more labour than either the informal or the formal sector could absorb.¹⁸

Moreover, in spite of the prospect of experiencing difficulties in obtaining employment, the migration process is partially self-perpetuating. The more people that migrate, the greater the number of promises from the relatives in towns which, in turn, includes more migration.

¹⁸ Todaro, Michal, *Economic Development in the Third World*, (New York: Longman, 1977) p.271.

CHAPTER THREE:

MIGRATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Development is meaningless unless it is focused on the human person. Hence, any development effort that tends to leave people worse-off than before is certainly irrelevant. But development initiatives which are aimed at improving the people's living conditions in a society must give priority to investing where the majority of people are and live. The majority of Kenya population is still living and working in rural areas.

I am truly convinced that the traditional sector has a very important potential for rural development since it consists of the majority of the people who form the greatest area of human resources. Not to forget that the greater proportion of the overall economy of the country is still rural based. Rural development policies, therefore, have to put such categories of the rural population into central focus, not only as agents of rural production, but also as the first beneficiaries of such production.

The process of rural development calls for just land tenure which ensures fair returns for labour wages and the small farmer's rightful access to means of production. The provision of subsidies and insurance schemes to minimise economic risks which have often prevented the small farmer from adopting technical innovations should also be included. What is urgently needed is an integral process of rural reconstruction.

3.1 REDUCE IMBALANCES IN RURAL-URBAN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The major difficulty in rural-urban development is the enormous imbalance in the range of opportunities, particularly the big differences in incomes and in the career prospects status. Furthermore, the

pleasantness of work in urban white-collar jobs in the formal sector, as well as the range of other occupations in the informal sector in the rural areas are added difficulties as which impair a positive solution to such a grave problem. Education and training interact with and reinforce these imbalances, particularly in two ways. First, the education and training imparted are of the wrong kind in view of the skill needs of the economy. Secondly, the attitudes, aspirations and expectations generated and stimulated by conventional educational systems are more and more out of line with the opportunities that the economy can provide. It is these interactions between imbalances in education, opportunities and incentives which create the surplus of job seekers, particularly among school leavers for highly desired jobs, while existing job opportunities are not being taken up.

Todaro in his book, - Economic Development in the Third World, develops a theory which explains the relationship between rural-urban migration in the context of rising urban unemployment. The essence of the theory is that the concept of *expected urban wage*¹⁹ is an instrument of explaining the situation of both urban unemployment and rural-urban migration at the same time. When one additional job is created in the industrial sector or even in the informal sector at the minimum wage level, the expected wage will rise and consequently more rural - urban migration will be encouraged to come in urban areas. Moreover, in a situation of growing differentials between people in the same industry or profession, and the rising rate of urban unemployment may never actually be able to make a great effort in reducing migration force in town. On the contrary, accelerated rates of urban migration can and will continue to exist, with levels of migration of the expected urban wage as perceived by the individual. Migration will continue as long as there is disparity between expected urban and rural earnings.

¹⁹ Expected urban wage are defined by a) the difference in real income between rural and urban areas and b) the probability of a new migrant obtaining an urban job.

In view of the above reasoning, it is perfectly understandable that the author of the book suggests an income and wage policy diminishing wage disparities as the most effective 'out-migration' policy. This appears to be not strictly an urban solution to the urban unemployment problem, but also a way out for the rural areas as well. The main thrust of this activity should be in the integrated development of the rural sector, the spread of small-scale industries throughout the countryside, and the reorientation of economic activity and social investments towards the rural areas.²⁰

3.2 ELIMINATION FACTOR PRICE DISTORTION

Establishing medium and small size enterprises promotes the introduction of labour-intensive techniques, which would enhance efficiency in production, since the organisation would not be complicated thus enhancing the smooth flow in business. However, there is a need to consider easing up such business pressures, like price distortions -which are unpredictable- and the limited resources of management and supervisory skills, in considering such a move.

Factor price distortion is an 'unfair' way of retribution to the workers. Usually the employers does not report to the Government the number of his employees, therefore the Government does not subsidize the employers. As a consequence, the employees are left to whims of the employers who may decide as they wish on regard to their salary, hours of working, working conditions, as well as any other subsidy, such as compassionate leave, medical assistance, etc..

The Kenyan investment deduction is making the capital cheaper which is the opposite in relation to labour. Every year, the manufacturing companies plant and machinery are depreciated at 12.5 %. Added to that, the companies can deduct 20 % of the value of fixed

²⁰ Todaro. Michal, *Economic Development in the Third World*, (New York: Longman, 1977) p. 284.

assets -land, buildings etc.- from gross profits before being taxed in their first year of operation. Considering these schemes, there is the tendency to be discriminatory in investment decisions towards capital-intensive techniques.²¹

Product markets are protected by tariffs, quotas and sometimes a total ban of imports but intermediate goods for processing are often allowed withdrawals and exemptions of duty. All capital goods are imported into Kenya duty-free no taxes, tariffs etc. Therefore, it would imply that the policy of removal of factor price distortions will stop duty rebates a refund of a fraction of the amount payable- and unnecessary under-pricing of capital.

An observation is made that suggests that the shortage of skilled and supervisory workers is more severe than that of the capital since capital is subsidised while skilled labour is not. There is the need to consider the possibility of introducing an employment subsidy. However, the fiscal incomes and wage policy that were proposed are intended to remove several of the current biases in favour of capital and against labour. Hence, there is no need for additional incomes.

The current shortage of skilled workers and supervisory should be overcome by training which also includes managers and supervisors. Care is needed to ensure that the implementation of the Kenyanisation policy will not make this shortage even more restrictive against the public interest instead of eliminating it. This shortage may even more likely be a major limitation also in the development of Kenyan ownership in large-scale enterprise, which would result to higher levels of capital intensity than might otherwise be the case.

In spite of these distortions, many large farms -especially foreign ones- use more labour-intensive methods than others do. A can manufacturing company used about 30% more labour per unit of output

²¹ International Labour Office, *Employment, Income and Equity. A Strategy for increasing Productive Employment in Kenya*, (Geneva: ILO Publications, 1972), p. 140.

than it would be in its home country. It ascribed some of this difference to lower labour efficiency. Sometimes, particularly in the assembly of commercial vehicles, the choice of labour-intensive techniques was dictated by problems of scale-market of the products at time limited leading to the implementation of one-off assembly techniques. This leads to the unit costs and prices being uncompetitive, which the industry requiring considerable protection. In this case, the plant and equipment are being reduced to a bare minimum.

Labour-intensive techniques are also implemented in operations where scale might allow mechanisation in activities like material handling. It was proven that the labour-intensive techniques were more economic under Kenyan conditions, in spite of the overhead costs of under-utilised semi-automatic machinery.

From all these findings in the Kenyan private sector, factor proportions tend to respond to changes in relative factor prices. Thus, the policy of connection of factor prices, through import tariffs on capital goods and abolition of investment dedications offers a wide view for greater use of labour-intensive techniques. In particular, the factor proportions, in additional operations in industry, agriculture and construction are likely to be changed as a result of such policy.

On the other hand, there is the feeling that no attempts have been made to check the use of various capital-intensive techniques in public construction. There has been a continued mechanisation of construction operation as a result of acceptance of unrealistic standards and designs for building, other constructions, and the lack of scientific project appraisal on the basis of shadow, instead of market prices.

3.3 INTEGRAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT

One concept which being concern and has attracted the attention of many people who are involved in development, is that of the vicious circle of poverty. The essential worry being that the peoples' poverty

may itself be one of the major limit to its growth and development. Because they are poor they do not develop and because they do not develop, they remain poor. The point is that under such cases, any delay of decision in form of salary and capital formation will necessarily be very difficult.

Capital formation requires an act of investment, as well as capacity to save. Financial resources have long been considered a vital, in fact, a very important factor in economic development. The development of rural economic is not an exception any more, in order to slow down rural-urban migration, especially for Kenya, where greater proportion of the overall economic is rural based. Consequently, one cannot think of rural economy for the peasant farmer, without adequate financial plan for them and for the traders. Credit should therefore be regarded as a most critical factor in the development of the rural areas sector of Kenyan economy.

Attempts to overcome the problem of lack of flow of credit to the peasant farmers, through various financial innovations and agricultural credit schemes are very important for the future of the sector. This includes for example, farm input supply schemes, small holder production service and credit project, as well as co-operative production credit scheme. Perhaps, one of the major reasons for failure of these Governmental and non-Governmental schemes to create impact, was lack of interest in the welfare of the rural economy by the field extension officers. Besides, failure to involve the participation of the people in making decision on these projects contributed a major limit.

The rural peasant farmers and traders must be involved in two forms. First, in mobilising their small savings and in investing valuable funds in the rural development projects. Secondly, by giving them opportunities to participate in decision making of these programmes. In this way, they will obviously take much interest and ensure the success

of these schemes, not only because they have their funds at stake, but more particularly, because it affects their own livelihood and existence.

Financial institutions which aim at extending credit to the rural community exist. These include several banks such as the Commercial Bank, the Agricultural Development Bank etc.. There are also other non-institutional financial and credit sources, such as produce buying agents, money lenders and so on. But these are restrictive on the type of loans they can offer to farmers. They usually prefer dealing with large-scale farmers, with adequate collateral security. Moreover, these institutions are neither within reach of the farmers, nor are the farmers aware of their existence in non-farming investments opportunity, which have high rate of return on capital investments and less risks.

It is therefore a critical factor that if the rural community is to be transformed to above subsistence level and to be self-reliant so as to raise their living standard, an effective organisation to improve their rural area-resources must be designed. Although it is true that the peasant farmers operate at a near subsistence level, not much saving can be spared from their little income. But it must be realised that a substantial amount of money is made up of small savings of the individuals and often kept under pillows or under-ground, at greater risk and no return on capital. These savings or rather these reserves, if mobilised and utilised productively, can increase agricultural output and therefore improve the quality of the rural community.

Another problem which prevents household savings, is the lack of suitable institution in the community within reach of the potential savers, whether peasant farmers or small informal business people. Moreover, most of the institutions that exist in the rural areas, do not inspire confidence and invite a sense of security among households savers, nor do they offer attractive rate interest on savings. In such a situation, farmers have no alternative but to maintain the traditional method of saving, keep their money under the floor, roof, or on top of

trees or in moving assets i.e. animals. In this case, the Church with its credibility can play a great role as a mediator between the farmer and the financial institutions in helping people to invest their money in a profitable way.

There are yet other aspects that we need to consider and to develop in the rural community. These arise from cultural traditions and tribal social structures. For instance, it is generally against tradition and customs of most Kenyan communities, for women or the young people to own land on their own names, except of course if the father or the husband are dead. Furthermore, the situation is even aggravated because of lack of title deeds for these small-holdings. They have neither economic nor civil right. In the circumstance, these people lack motivation or means to develop these farms, at maximum production. So the poverty circle continues.

The issue of education is indeed another aspect need of improvement. The general low level of literacy of the rural community often gives an attitude of acceptance of the peasant farmer situation without any commitment at all. In this circumstance, they are neither willingly, nor show interest in participating in major functions of rural development. Rather they continue to let these functions be performed by traditional leaders, chiefs or the more literate members of the community, with the results that the low standard of living persists. Such a reality is inevitably so precarious in some parts of the country that farmers are forced to engage in some other income generating activities in order to sustain their survival.

Finally, the question of rural infrastructure arises. The peasant farmers and the small formal business people are faced with poor conditions of communication net-work and lack of effective transport in the rural areas. In some places the roads may be impassable during long rainy seasons. Lack of electricity supply is a greater obstacle to potential promotion of cottage rural industries. Thus, possible development is

limited. There is also, the problem of availability of clean water and fire wood. The scarcity of these commodities forces the rural people to travel long distances in search for them. This situation deprives them of useful time, which should otherwise be spent on gainful socio-economic activities. It is therefore important to improve these facilities in order to allow for fast rural development and better living standard conditions of the people.

CONCLUSION

In this research paper I have attempted to outline the social phenomenon of massive rural-urban migration with particular attention to Kenya. Migration, although having special characteristics of its own, is only one symptom of the overall modernisation process taking place in Africa. Cities are the centres of such process where political and economic power are exercised. Moreover, the opportunities generated by urban development process provide labour and promote urban and economic growth. However, modern sector jobs have been created disproportionately in urban areas, and disproportionately in occupations for minimum job qualifications as a control filter for any job that becomes available. Many people who are unable to find a formal job find an opportunity -or refuge- in the urban informal sector.

All in all, the informal sector is a complementary path to national development which, in the recent years, has received an overwhelming support, both from the people and the Government. Indeed it is an area with great potentialities! Nevertheless, it is important that people operating business in this sector, should produce quality goods and services. They must aim at excellence, for this is the only way they can effectively compete with the more established counterparts in the formal sector. But, by the same breath, it is necessary that Kenyan should be advised and encouraged to change their colonial attitude towards local products. Most Kenyan people prefer to buy imported goods, under the protest that, locally produced goods are of inferior quality.

A solution to the problem of rural-urban migration calls for wide-ranging changes in social and economic structures and policies. Special rural schemes and programmes, where people have a special role to play in the battle for their rural development is extremely important. I personally agree with O' Connor vision that: "Most African Governments are conscious of the harmful effects of excessive rural-

urban migrations and wish to reduce it, but few have found effective ways of achieving this. Policies dealing only with the symptoms of the real problems include restrictions on entering the cities, such as the former Rhodesian authorities applied, and periodic efforts to round up unemployed migrants and to transport them back to rural areas, such as Tanzania and Mozambique have attempted. Policies which go closer to the root of the problems include efforts to provide jobs and to improve service provision within the rural areas".²²

Though it is known that, whatever answer might come up as a result of this study on rural-urban migration, the final solution will be somehow grounded in political choices and through political means. I do fervently hope though, that the Kenyan people, wherever they may be, may be offered the possibility to realise their life's potentialities to the best in the setting and through the means they desire most.

²² Anthony, O'Connor. *The African City*. (London: Hutchison & Co. Ltd. 1983), p.97.

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