

Perspective

The Impact of Rural-Urban Migration on Food Security in Burkina Faso

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Abstract

This article examines the complex relationship between migration and food security in Burkina Faso, focusing on the impact of migration on agricultural production. Burkina Faso, a country facing significant challenges in food security, experiences substantial internal and external migration. This study explores how migration, both within and outside the country, influences agricultural production, impacting food availability, access, and utilization. The article analyzes the role of remittances, labor mobility, and knowledge transfer in shaping agricultural practices and outcomes. It also explores the potential for migration to contribute to food security through diversification of income sources and improved access to resources. By examining the multifaceted effects of migration on agricultural production, this article sheds light on the intricate dynamics between human mobility and food security in Burkina Faso.

Keywords: Burkina Faso, Migration, Food Security, Agriculture, Agricultural Production, Climate Change, Rural Development, Poverty, Livelihoods, Food Systems.

INTRODUCTION

Burkina Faso, a landlocked country in West Africa, faces significant challenges in ensuring food security for its growing population. The country is highly vulnerable to climate change, recurrent droughts, and poverty, which exacerbate food insecurity. Migration, both internal and external, is a prominent feature of Burkina Faso's social and economic landscape. This article explores the intricate relationship between migration and food security, focusing on the impact of migration on agricultural production.

Migration Patterns in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso experiences both internal and external migration. Internal migration is driven by factors such as drought, land degradation, and limited economic opportunities in rural areas. People migrate from rural areas to urban centers or to more fertile regions within the country. External migration, primarily to neighboring countries like Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, is driven by the search for better employment opportunities and higher wages.

Impact of Migration on Agricultural Production

Migration has a multifaceted impact on agricultural production in Burkina Faso.

Remittances and Agricultural Investment

Remittances sent by migrants to their families in rural areas can play a significant role in supporting agricultural activities. These remittances can be used to purchase inputs, such as fertilizers, seeds, and tools, or to invest in land improvement and irrigation systems. This financial support can enhance agricultural productivity and contribute to food security.

Labor Mobility and Agricultural Labor Force

Migration can affect the availability of labor in rural areas. The departure of young and able-bodied individuals for work in urban centers or abroad can lead to labor shortages in agriculture, particularly during peak seasons. This can hinder agricultural production and impact food security.

Knowledge Transfer and Innovation

Migrants often acquire new skills and knowledge during their time abroad, which they can bring back to their communities. This knowledge transfer can lead to the adoption of new agricultural practices, technologies, and innovations, potentially enhancing agricultural productivity and food security.

Migration and Food Security

The impact of migration on food security in Burkina Faso is complex and multifaceted.

Food Availability

Migration can influence food availability by affecting agricultural production. Remittances can support agricultural investment, potentially increasing food production. However, labor shortages caused by migration can hinder agricultural production, potentially reducing food availability.

Food Access

Migration can impact food access through remittances and income diversification. Remittances can provide households with additional income, enabling them to purchase food. Migration can also lead to income diversification, as migrants often send back money from their jobs abroad, improving food access.

Food Utilization

Migration can influence food utilization through knowledge transfer and dietary changes. Migrants may bring back new knowledge about food preparation, storage, and nutrition, potentially improving food utilization. However, migration can also lead to changes in dietary patterns, as migrants may adopt new food preferences and consumption habits.

Policy Implications

Policies aimed at addressing food security in Burkina Faso should consider the role of migration. This could include initiatives to promote agricultural technologies

that reduce labor intensity (IFAD, 2013) and strategies to leverage remittances for agricultural investments (World Bank, 2015). Additionally, policies should aim to diversify economic opportunities within rural areas to reduce the push factors for migration (OECD, 2013).

Conclusion

Migration has a significant impact on agricultural production and food security in Burkina Faso. Remittances, labor mobility, and knowledge transfer are key factors shaping the relationship between migration and food security. While migration can contribute to food security through increased agricultural investment and income diversification, it can also pose challenges related to labor shortages and changes in dietary patterns. Understanding the complex dynamics between migration and food security is crucial for developing effective policies and interventions to address food insecurity in Burkina Faso.

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