

THE DYNAMICS OF RURAL –URBAN MIGRATION AND THE PROCESS OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN GONDAR TOWN, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT:

Gondar is one of the oldest cities in the Amhara Region which recently showing physical expanding at an alarming rate. The horizontal, unplanned and haphazard development of the city brought different social and economic problems to the city. The city infrastructural and basic urban service development cannot cope with these fast horizontal expansions of the city. This paper investigated the dynamics of rural-urban migration in Amhara region as a basis of understanding.

The main objective of the study is to identify the dynamics of rural-urban migration and the growth of informal settlement in Gondar town in Maraki and AzezoAyer Marefia sub-cities. Rural-urban migration mainly by poor and lack of clear comprehensive plan for urban development exacerbate urban social problems like accelerated growth of informal settlements and associated lack of provision of services. The paper seeks to propose alternative strategies to break the cycle of poverty and deepening urban poverty. Towards this goal from a total of 659 house holed heads in the two sub-cities, eight two samples household heads from Maraki sub city and 18 sample households from Azezo Ayer Marefia sub-city were taken respectively. The major finding of the study shows that the main causes of rural-urban migrations are Scarcity of farm land, Search of job and education and different conflicts (ethnic, political etc., Natural calamities and others factors. For the reason of growth of informal settlements high building standard of legally-built houses, delayed response and cumbersome procedural problems of legally built houses and high rent of houses in the city were identified by the respondents. In addition to this the laissez-faire response of the sub city administrators towards informal settlements, the practice of land sale by land speculators to get more profit and owner peasants also contributed their own share for the growth and development of informal settlements. With regard to the land size, informal settlers holding more land as compared to the legal provision by the government. And there are also undeveloped lands in the study areas. This implies lands in informal settlement areas are inefficiently occupied. Thus, vacant lands and more holding in the final analysis will lead illegal land holdings and land grabbing and unplanned and horizontal expansion of the city.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

The current African countries demography shows rapid change in urban population growth (World Bank document 1996). Urbanization is an inevitable phenomenon for developing countries as. The process of urbanization in developed and developing countries are not the same. In developed countries of Europe and North America, urbanization has been a cause and effect that comes as a result of industrial revolution and economic development. But the urbanization process in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it has occurred due to two factors- high massive rural-urban migration and natural increase in population size (Brunn and Williams, 1983:4). Since 1980, the average annual growth rate for cities in Africa was 6.2 percent while it was 4.2 percent for Latin American cities and 4 percent for Asian cities. Simon in 1997, figure out the major cities in Africa have grown by about 9 percent per year since 1980. Eventhough, the two documents show different figures within the same period, it is possible to generalize that Africa has got the highest urban growth among the World continents. The rapid urban growth has brought many economic and social problems for developing countries of Africa. Among the economic and social problem shortage in housing condition which is the clear indication of the housing problem in African countries which results a negative effect in the growth of informal settlements. In many cases, these settlements are growing even faster than the cities they surround (Obudho, 1989).

Expansions of cities in uncontrolled and unplanned manner are one of the manifestations of developing countries city. Such unplanned and uncontrolled expansion of cities horizontally brought about degradation of natural resources, segregation of poor people and lack of different social amenities and infrastructure.

The problems of development of informal settlement are the result of lack of appropriate policies and strategies not due to lack of land (Hardoy et al, 1995:175).

Gondar as one of the developing regional experiencing rapid rate of urban expansion which is spontaneous growth resulting in the emergence and development of informal settlements. The aim of this study is to identify the dynamics of rural – urban migration and development of informal settlement in Gondar town.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Ethiopia is one of the African countries which have least urbanization rate. The 2002 world population Reference Bureau's Data sheet states that Ethiopia had only 15 percent of its population living in urban areas while the average level of urbanization for Africa was 33 percent. Even with low level of urbanization and the

country is predominantly rural, there is high rate of urbanization growth. The estimation is 5.1 percent per year. According to 1998 CSA the urban population of Ethiopia was concentrated in few urban centers (CSA, 1998:14).

Gondar is one of the Amhara region towns which have about 258,178 populations by the year 2013 (Amhara National Regional State Finance and Economic Bureau and Gondar statistical Bulletin). The town also shows horizontal expansions due to various reasons. One of the reasons is uncontrolled horizontal informal settlement around the fringe zone of the town. The town has 12 sub cities. Of these Maraki sub city and Azezo Ayer Marefia sub cities are the among the sub cities that show rapid informal settlements. The town now is facing different types of social problems including emergence and development of informal settlement. In this study “informal settlements” refers to those residential house units built on publicly owned land without legal permission and authorization from the concerned bodies. According to the study by the city administration in 2014 the total area covered by informal settlers is 64.6 hectare and about 10,000 families were living in 2000 housing units. Major informal settlements are found in the peripheral area of the town. They are characterized by irregular shape, poor construction and large plot sizes. As a result, they are contributing the unplanned and rapid horizontal expansions of the built-up area. (Gondar city administration and service office, 2014 report) This study focuses on the informal settlements in the Maraki and Azezo Ayer Marefia sub city areas.

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ Identify causes of rural- urban migration and the emergence and development of informal settlements
- ❖ Investigate the demographic characteristics and the economic status of the squatters and their housing conditions
- ❖ Examine causes of informal squatting in the study area and the nature of land-acquisition process
- ❖ Make some recommendations to help to alleviate the problem of squatting and its negative consequences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

TYPES AND SOURCES OF DATA:

Data sources:

In order to have ample knowledge of the problem, the researcher has used both primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected from the sample household heads through questionnaire and interview.

Secondary data were collected from a review of literature, published and unpublished reports, etc.

Sampling procedure:

In Gondar town informal settlements are mainly located in the peripheral areas in the south and south eastern part of the town. Among all sub cities, Maraki and Azezo Ayer Marefia are selected for this study because they are one of the major expansions areas of the town and where the problem of unplanned and uncontrolled informal settlements are more prevalent and squatting magnitude is more than the other sub cities. And from the total of 12 sub cities these two sub cities in combination comprise 659 informal house units. Out of this total about 15percent sample was selected using systematic random sampling technique, and about 100 house heads of the informal housing units are selected as respondents. Thus, during the field survey house hold heads at every tenth unit are approached. First the settlement distributions of the migrant's house were understood by delineating the two sub cities. The total sample sizes were allocated to the two sub-cities proportionally. Then sample informal settlers are selected from each household using systematic random sampling technique (taking samples at a fixed interval. Regarding the qualitative study, those individuals who deem to give rich information about migration and informal settlements process are included in the study with purposive sampling. Accordingly, migrants, local leaders, town administrators, security officials, etc. were recruited to the in-depth interview.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**Causes of rural- urban migration:**

Most studies about the decision to migrate shows that, the decision to migrate is made by individuals or households make the move (Clarck, 1986:7). However, wives and children, do not make the decision to migrate (McGee 1975:236).

According to UN, 1980:30; Bilborrow et al, 1984:14; Gmlech and Zimmer; 1996:190, the decision to migrate depends on a variety of factors. As a result it is not an easy task to assess the influence of those factors affecting the decision to migrate and the choice of destination (McGee and Jansen, 1970:23). This is because migration occurs at a variety of development contexts that varies in type, composition and direction. Despite their complexity, causes of migration decision can be either 'push' or 'pull' factors. These pull or push factors of migration could be of economic or non-economic (demographic, social, natural, political etc.)

Emergences and Development of informal Settlements in Developing Countries:

In developing countries, the emergence of informal settlements dates back to the 1940s. For instance, illegal settlements first appeared in Istanbul in the late 1940s. The term Gecerkodus (landed by night) is the name for

squatter settlements in Turkey, referring to the fact that housing units with roofs had to be completed overnight and inhabited before government forces arrived in order to prevent demolition (Yonder, 1998:61).

Government investments and formal housing construction largely serve the middle- and high- income groups, leaving lower-income populations to address their housing needs through informal means. As a result, the urban poor in most cities of developing countries have occupied land illegally and have built their houses with their own resources, without following the building codes and other governmental regulations. This has led to the creation of illegal settlements (Cheema, 1993:5). However, Fernandes and Varley (1998:15) have stated that urban researchers should not forget that the phenomenon of illegality is not restricted to the urban poor. Many more privileged groups of the society are also observed in squatter settlements.

Illegal settlements are mostly concentrated in the peripheral areas of large cities, on steep hillsides, river gorges, and flood plains. The main reason for the expansion of illegal settlements on these fragile slopes and hazardous areas is that land there is very cheap or can be occupied without payment, and also there is less possibility of eviction from such sites (Hardoy et al., 1995:74).

Emergence and development of informal settlements in Gondar town:

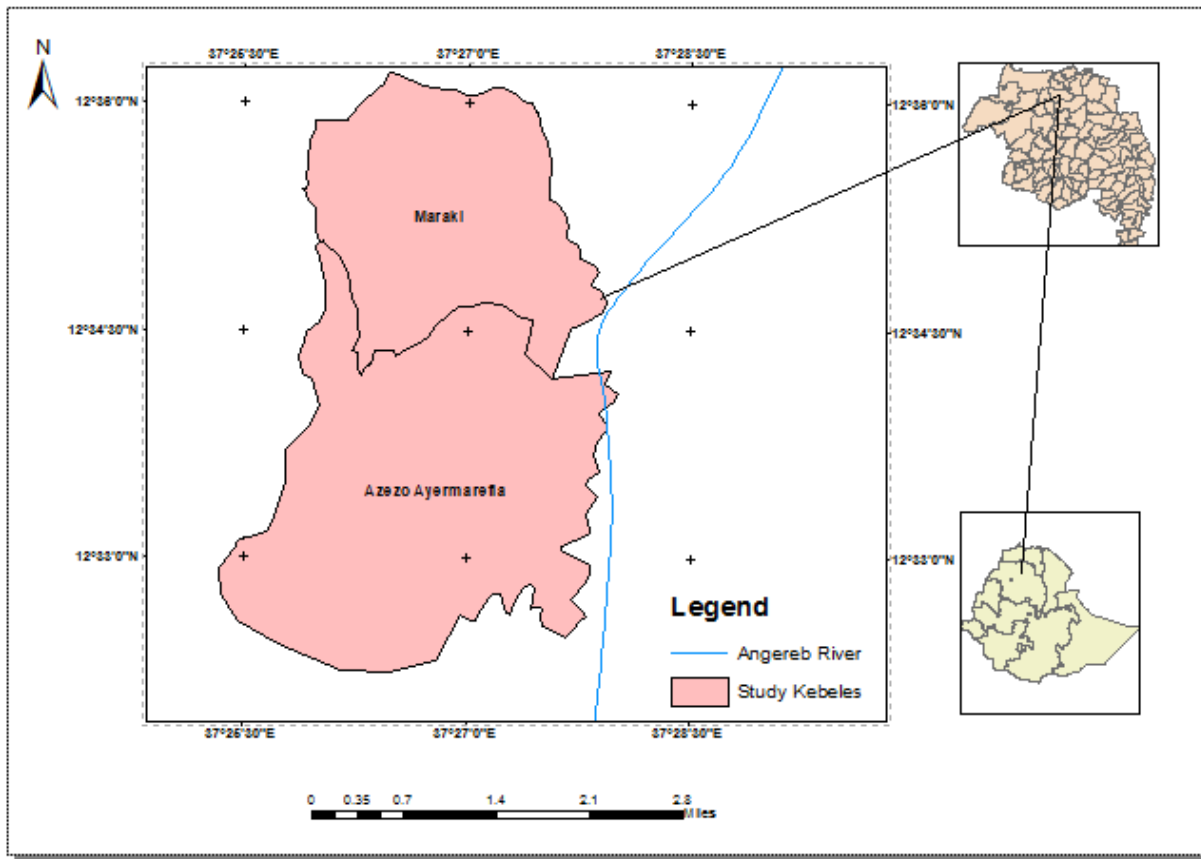
Description of the study area:

Geographically Gondar town is located 12⁰40' North and 34⁰45' east. It is a capital city of North Gondar administration zone of Amhara region. Gondar town is located at the distance of 748km from Addis Ababa, 60km from east LakeTana and 2300m above sea level (North Gondar administrative tourism office, 2003).

Gondar is found in Northern Amhara region, which was the capital of Ethiopia during the reign of Emperor Fasiledes (1632-1667), which was responsible for the building of a number of different castles (Carter, 1995). Gondar rose to prominence after Ethiopia went through a long period without a fixed capital and emerged in the 17th Century as the largest settlement in the country. It was an important political, commercial, religious and cultural center and was noted for the skill of its many craftsmen (Camera pix, 1995). Now it is the center of trade, tourism and investment area because of its accessibility to the North Sudan and commercial agricultural areas. Due to this people migrate from surrounding rural areas to Gondar town in search of different opportunities.

The projected population of Gondar town is about 258,178 by the year 2013 (Amhara National Regional State Finance and Economy Bureau as well as Gondar Statistical Bulletin). The city has 12 Sub cities (Units). The study areas Maraki and Azezo Ayer Marefa being the largest in magnitude of illegal settlements.

Fig . Location Map of the study area



Source: Prepared by the author

DATA ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION:

CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMAL SETTLERS:

Origin of house hold heads:

Most of the sample household heads of migrants (93%) are outside Gondar town from the surrounding Districts. From the total sample house hold heads (79%) are Orthodox Christian, (14%) are Muslim and (7%) are protestant. Of this (80%) of the sample house hold heads are male and only (20%) are female house hold heads.

Majority of the sample household heads of migrants (94 %) are from the Amhara Region. Limited numbers of migrants (6%) are outside the Amhara region, i.e. from Oromya and Tigray regions. During the survey migrants were asked about the reason why they left their place of origin. Their response to this question is (67%) is due to lack of farm land in their place of origin, (18%) to search for job, (9%) to get chance of education and (5%) because of different conflicts (2%) due to natural calamities and other factors. The push factor for migration to Gondar town from their original place is scarcity of farm land and the pull factor in urban area is job opportunity.

Economic status of the household heads:

As to the economic status of the informal settlers, self-employed (57%) of the respondents are engaged in different daily economic activities such as commerce. About twenty seven percent of the squatter settlers are private institution employees and (26%) are unemployed. From this data one can conclude that self-employed settlers are the major actor of illegal settlers.

Monthly income Household Heads:

With respect to their monthly income (35%) of the household heads earn monthly 1100-1200 birr (currently 1 US\$ = 19.87-20 Eth. birr); (30%) of the household heads earn 900-1000 birr; (25%) of the household heads earn monthly income of 700-800 Eth. birr; the extremes (10%) of the household heads monthly income lies 600-1300 eth. Birr respectively.

Reasons of squatting:

Among the reasons for squatting, delayed response and procedural problems of legally built houses, high building standard of legally-built houses and high rent of houses in the city were mentioned as the major reason for illegal construction of houses. About (36%) of the illegal settler's squat because of high rent of houses in the city, (31%) of the illegal settlers squat due to delayed response and procedural problems. It is obvious that legal provision of land has stopped in the region from 2008 onwards. Land provision is either by lease through bid or by negotiation procedure which cannot give a chance for the poor to participate. Furthermore, (34%) of the household heads reasoning high building standard of legally-built houses as a factor for their squatting. This is because poor cannot build houses of their own out of the master plan. Beside these factors mentioned by informal settlers, laissez-faire control of open area, unnecessary activities of the land sale by speculators to get more profit etc. can be mentioned as a weak point on the government side.

Methods of Land Acquisition:

The area colonized by informal settlers range from river side or bank to the steep hill side that can be recreational area or reserved for vegetation to be planted. The way the sample household heads get the land vary from buying from land speculators to buying land from neighboring peasants. Majority of them (76%) acquire land for housing by buying from the neighboring peasants and (24%) of the sample household heads acquire the land for housing by buying from land speculators. Thus buying land from the surrounding peasants is the dominant way of getting land for illegal house construction in the study areas.

Size of land holdings in the study areas:

The size of the land holding varies from 176m² to 501 and above. The major informal householders of land lie in between 201m² to 500² of land for house construction. As compared to the legal provision of land by the government, land in the squatter settlement area is cheaper. If one wants to buy land in legal provision lease system, it costs 350 Eth. Birr per square meter.

Majority of the informal settlements take place between 1991-2013. It is the time when legal provision of the land has completely stopped. During the field survey I noticed that the informal settlers' houses are generally poor in quality of material and amenities. Seventy eight percent of the house were made from wood and mud, (19%) of the house were made from stone and mud and (4%) of the house were made from stone and cement. With regard to amenities, most of the illegal settlement areas had no proper infrastructural development, such as potable water supply, electricity, and proper drainage and sanitation systems. As a result they use river water and bore holes as their sources of water; they shared electricity from a long distance power supply, others use traditional lamp and fire wood as their source of energy. Generally they are living in miserable condition as compared to the legal settlers.

Response of the government to solve the problem:

Since residents of informal settlements lack legal titles; they are usually suffering from the problem of uncertainty in tenure. They live daily with the permanent fear of eviction and demolition by authority. As a result of which there is no incentive to spend on housing improvements; hence they live in houses constructed with substandard materials' squatter settlement.

In the case study town Gondar, about 2000 house units were demolished by government authorities in 2014; each house unit had an average of 300 sq. where squatters bought the land from the surrounding peasants and

speculators on average of 20,000 Eth. Birr. The average cost each house unit owner invests for the construction of the house ranges 20,000-30,000 Eth. Birr. And if it were to be sold rather than demolishing, each house unit would have been sold on average of 80,380 Eth.birr (Gondar city administration and service report 2014).

After the demolishing process is accomplished, screening takes place and limited people have got 150m² each on other places where the master plan allowed constructing house for dwelling purpose. Generally, from economic, psychological, moral, social etc. point of view illegal settlement is destructive for both the illegal settlers and the government as a whole.

MAJOR CONSEQUENCES OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS:

Pollution of water resources:

Most informal settlers are found in peripheral and on both sides of the river banks. The illegal settlers do not have proper collection and disposal of waste and solid materials. When they fail to find solution to the problems, they dump their solid and liquid materials which could be toxic in to the rivers, ponds, and steams etc. which finally enter into Lakes. Most rivers that pass through the town are tributaries of the Lake Tana (the biggest lake in Ethiopia). In the final analysis it will bring about water and soil resources. In the case study town Gondar, about 2000 house unities were demolished by government authorities in 2014; each house unit had an average of 300 sq. where squatters bought the land from the surrounding peasants and speculators on average of 20,000 Eth. Birr. The average cost each house unit owner invests for the construction of the house ranges 20,000-30,000 Eth. Birr. And if it were to be sold rather than demolishing, each house unit would have been sold on average of 80,380 Eth.birr (Gondar city administration and service report 2014).

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Deforestation:

The country was ravaged by both manmade and natural disasters. The proportion of land with forest cover has been diminishing at alarming rates (the same as the loss of farmlands in the suburban areas). The land area covered by forests has gone down from approximately 40.0 percent at the turn of the century to approximately 3.0% at the present time. The annual rate of deforestation is estimated at 88,000 hectares per year while the rate at

which this loss is being replaced through a forestation is estimated at 6,000 hectares a year. As population increased the demand for land, food, fuel and construction materials increased, resulting in the practice of reckless tree felling. State ownership of forests and the exclusion of local communities from the management and legitimate utilization of forest resources may have contributed to the lack of any consistent effort to replace trees cut for various purposes.

Informal settlers also squat on the steep side of the hill and river banks which were covered by trees/forests. The clearances of trees/forests for settlement purpose bring deforestation and land degradation that will bring climate change.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Conclusion:

Infrastructure and basic urban services development in Gondar town cannot cope with the rapid physical expansion of the city. The actors for the rapid physical expansion of the build-up area in the city are the government, the squatter settlers and the land owners played their role jointly and separately. Since illegal settlers built their house out of the legal standard in peripheral areas with 'poor' quality materials, in irregular etc. they contributed for unplanned and irregular settlement areas of the city.

Emergence and development of informal settlement in Gondar in general, in the study area in particular is a decade phenomenon. Different reasons such as high building standard of legally-built houses, delayed response and cumbersome procedural problems of legally built houses and high rent of houses in the city, the practices of land speculators and owner peasants are the bottle necked reasons that contributed for the emergence and development of squatter settlements.

The response of the government body through demolishing, prohibition and relocation and the squatting of illegal settlers on the other side etc. will not stop the problem unless sustainable development plan is prepared to balance the demand and supply aspect of the squatters.

Recommendations:

Illegal settlement has economic, social etc. negative effects both on the city administration and the squatters. To avoid such economic and social problems the following recommendations are forwarded

- The city administrators need to formulate sustainable and preventive measures instead of demolishing after squatting.
- Most of the migrants come to the city in search of job opportunity. Majority of the rural small towns and rural areas surrounding the study area must develop with different infrastructure to enable those places to have job opportunities.
- For developing country like Ethiopia in general and the study city in particular, land is one of the most important resource. In order to utilize effectively this resource, the city government should have land registration and banking system
- Sub city governments should take accountability and responsibility to control the informal settlement and land grabbing from land speculators and owner peasants.
- The city governments also need to have alternative plan and building standards that can allow low income squatters to build their house.
- Detailed and comprehensive study of the cause and effect of rural-urban migration and development of informal settlement needs further study that enable policy formulation and implementations.

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