

Towards Breaking the Vicious Circle of Labour Migration in Tanzania: A Case of Makete District

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Abstract

This article examines the struggle of the people of Makete District in the South -West of Tanzania to break away from the vicious circle of labour migration. Since the early 1970s the people from Makete District made an attempt to opt out of subsistence agriculture and circular wage labour migration to business. This change brought with it better prospects of alleviating poverty which was a common feature during the colonial period, and early post-independence period. As a whole, this change in occupational and migration structures has raised their per capita income and social status in Tanzania.

Introduction

The origin of forced labour and creation of labour reserves in Makete District, as in other parts of Africa, undoubtedly started with the penetration of colonial capitalism in the nineteenth century (Mbonile, 1995). Nonetheless, as stated by Wilson (1977), Stichter (1985), and Zegeye & Ishemo (1989:1-2), in most African countries the destruction of the peasant economy began in the pre-colonial period with the penetration of merchant capital from Asia and Europe. In the colonial period it was reinforced through the introduction of taxation which promoted labour migration of male population to the plantations, mines and other economic activities linked with the metropolitan economies of developed countries.

In the case of Makete District, and Tanzania as a whole, the establishment of labour reserves started with the coming of the Germans who established plantations along the coast, and in the north-eastern part of the country. Besides cash crops, the settlers also produced food crops which were consumed locally or exported. In general, both the plantations and individual settlers required

large numbers of workers to cultivate these plantations. Initially, these plantations did not attract sufficient wage labourers because they paid low wages, and most Africans were not used to this form of labour. Therefore, in order to obtain this highly demanded labour, the country was deliberately divided into labour reserves. This strategy of recruiting labourers from up-country in areas such as Central, South, West and North-West was adopted because of a strong resistance of indigenous people near these plantations who were more informed about the poor working conditions in most settlers farms (Gulliver, 1995, 1957; Lwoga, 1989:181). When the British replaced the German colonial administration, they inherited and strengthened this economic structure because it was the only way which could ensure a constant labour supply to the plantations. On most occasions the creation and maintenance of these labour reserves involved the introduction of several coercive measures such as the introduction of poll tax which was not paid in kind but money (Iliffe, 1979; Sabot, 1979:19; Lwoga, 1985:121).

As stated by Zegeye and Ishemo (1989:2), it is meaningless to discuss labour migration in terms of people entering and leaving wage labour without incorporating the way this imposition of new form of production restructured the division of labour in peasant households. A number of studies have shown that, despite the strength of the colonial economy, it did not manage to destroy the peasant economy which was rooted on reciprocal labour and extended family relationships (Gulliver, 1955:33; Zeleza, 1989:159; Forster & Maghimbi, 1992). In fact, in Central Kenya and Kilimanjaro Region in Tanzania, the small-holder agriculture resisted settler opposition to growing cash crops. By the time of independence in both areas, the export economy was dominated by small-holder agriculture resisted settler opposition to growing cash crops. By the time of independence in both areas, the export economy was dominated by small-holder agriculture (Samoff, 1980; Lwoga, 1989:189). It is this prominence given to small-holder agriculture which motivated several progressive governments to adopt rural development policies in order to minimise labour migration which has been seen to be detrimental to rural development in former labour reserves (Kulaba, 1982:15; Brebner & Briggs, 1982; Riddell, 1992:61).

Unfortunately, the introduction of these policies in Tanzania coincided with the period when the country was undergoing severe economic recession resulting from a combination of high and increasing prices of oil, drought, lower food production and rapid population increases, and the weakening of overseas markets for primary products (Stren, 1982:67). This combination of recession and environmental conditions severely limited the prospects of gaining a good livelihood from land (Reed, 1992), for the prices offered to farmers for both cash and surplus food crops were most discouraging. Furthermore, opportunities

for income generation within rural areas for individuals were diminishing because of government interventions in all aspects of rural life (O'Connor, 1988:139; Booth, 1992). The most immediate response of both rural and urban households to unstable economic conditions was the diversification of the household economy by being multi-occupational (Jamal & Weeks, 1988). Other households migrated to areas where it was expected that the economic conditions were less severe or with better prospects of being employed. Nevertheless, faced with stagnation of rural economy, and with better prospects of being rich within a short time in the second/parallel economy which was strongly based in urban areas, most rural households drifted into urban areas where they established petty business, or were involved in racketeering (O'Connor, 1988:140; Bryceson, 1990:211-6; Maliyamkono & Bagachwa, 1990)

Another aspect of rural development which led to rapid urbanisation in Tanzania since the early 1970s is an increase in the proportion of children receiving schooling after the introduction of universal education in 1977, and overall expansion of secondary education. This overall rise in educational level among the people in Makete District and other places in Tanzania has made the rural population more aware of towns and the opportunities which they offer; and raised expectations in terms of both employment and life styles (Mbonile, 1993:268). As a result, a large proportion of rural-urban migrants are now recent school leavers (Kahama *et al.*, 1986:179; O'connor, 1988:141).

However, this high rate of expansion of both urbanisation and education enrolments was not accompanied by an equal increase in employment opportunities in the modern sector of the economy. The structural adjustment policies adopted by the government in the 1980s aggravated both urban unemployment and housing problems. In fact, by 1982 the unemployment crisis which was largely confined to primary school leavers had spread to secondary school leavers, and by the 1990s it had reached to university level, which sparked riots in several institutions of higher learning. Hence, with poor prospects of rapid industrialisation, it is more likely that more and more school leavers will be absorbed in informal business which seems to have the capacity to do so all over the world (Kahama *et al.*, 1986; Block, 1988:115; Roy-Campbell, 1992:160).

Despite all efforts of the government to emphasise rural development and decentralisation, this rapid and uncontrolled urban growth raised the concern of planners and policy makers who launched several campaigns to control urban growth. Although at national level the first campaigns started in the early 1960s, they were not as stringent as those in the 1980s. This is because during the early

period of independence the level of unemployment was low, and unemployment as such was not a major challenge to the rural development policy. The limitations of employment, coupled with the growth of parallel market in the 1980s, compelled the government to use more draconian measures which almost converted urban unemployment to an offence. To implement this urban anti-accommodation policy, strict controls of licensing petty trade (employing the majority of urban population) were introduced, and occasionally identity cards were checked (Armstrong, 1987). These campaigns ended with the Human Deployment Act of 1984, which was enacted to ensure that every able-bodied person in Tanzania was engaged in a productive activity or lawful employment. It specified which informal activities were allowed to operate in areas assigned by the urban authorities. Indirectly, it aimed at controlling the rural-urban migration so that rural areas would become more productive (Kulaba, 1982:16; Maliyamkono & Bagachwa, 1990:14).

Source of data

The main source of data for the study is the household survey (Makete Migration Survey) carried out between July 1991 and April 1992. Also, several post-surveys studies were conducted in September 1994 and August 1995 to see if there were any major changes in the employment pattern of Makete people. The household survey was conducted in both rural and urban areas where most of the migrants from Makete District reside. The rural stratum covered the whole of Makete District, including Makete trading centre, which according to the 1988 population census was categorised as mixed with urban and rural population (URT, 1988). The urban stratum included Dar-es-Salaam as a primate city, two regional headquarters (Iringa and Mbeya), and two district headquarters (Njombe and Tukuyu). These towns were selected by using the rural sample which indicated that more than 80% of migrants from Makete migrate to these towns. Both the rural and urban samples were selected by using the administrative structure of Tanzania. To get the villages and wards, all wards and villages were listed and then selected at random using the help of ward secretaries. Therefore, by using this method Kilanji (Kipaglo Ward), Iniho (Iniho Ward), Isapulano (Iwawa Ward), and Kinyika (Matamba Ward), agricultural villages were selected. The non-agricultural sample population was obtained from Makete, Bulongwa, and Matamba trading centres. Generally, the survey managed to interview 260 rural and 240 urban households. Among the urban households—which is the main base of this study—170 households were engaged in business, while 70 households were in wage employment. As a

whole Makete District was selected because, besides being a former labour reserve, it is among the major areas of out-migration in the country, and some households in the district have a long tradition in petty business.

Patterns of out-migration in Makete District

Figures 1 and 2 indicate that unlike in the colonial period when most migrants from the Makete District reacted to poor economic conditions by migrating over longer distances to the plantations and mining areas, in recent years more than 70% of households migrate because of business and other self-employment activities which provide the most immediate source of monetary income. When this is combined with those seeking for wage employment, more than 90% of the migrant households show that the need for more secure source of monetary income is of paramount importance. In fact less than 10% of households migrate because of other reasons such as the desire to settle elsewhere for agriculture, famine, and search for education (Mbonile, 1993:205-6).

Overall, the most remarkable change in migration during the post-independence period is observed in the direction or typology of migration. During the colonial period, rural-rural migration to the plantations, and international migration to the mines in Zambia and South Africa, was more predominant. However, during the post-independence period, there was a rapid increase of rural-urban migration largely to Iringa and Mbeya towns. Indeed, these changes were more associated with the rise of business households. In fact there is a remarkable drop of rural-rural migration to plantations and other areas with small-holder agriculture, such as Usangu Plains in Mbeya Region and Ruvuma Region. Concurring with Lwoga (1985, 1989) this indicates that not all former labour reserves adopt the same methods of breaking away from plantation labour migration. Furthermore, it shows the impact of macro-economic change in employment opportunities which affected areas producing primary products. The deep economic crisis from the early 1970s subjected households in major urban centres and long-distance migrants to food insecurity. This problem was exacerbated by the removal of food subsidies in the 1980s, coupled with overdependence on imported food. The rise in the cost of living and the breakdown of transport infrastructure compelled many households to return to the area of origin, or to neighbouring towns where they could get land to cultivate food to supplement their meagre incomes from wage employment or business.

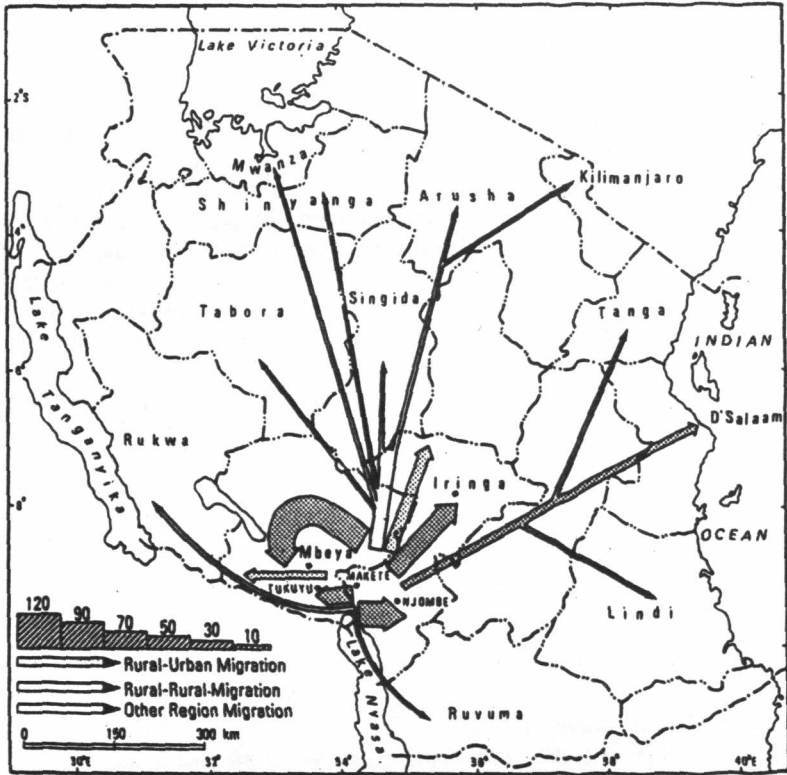


Fig. 1: Inter-regional Migration Flows From Makete District

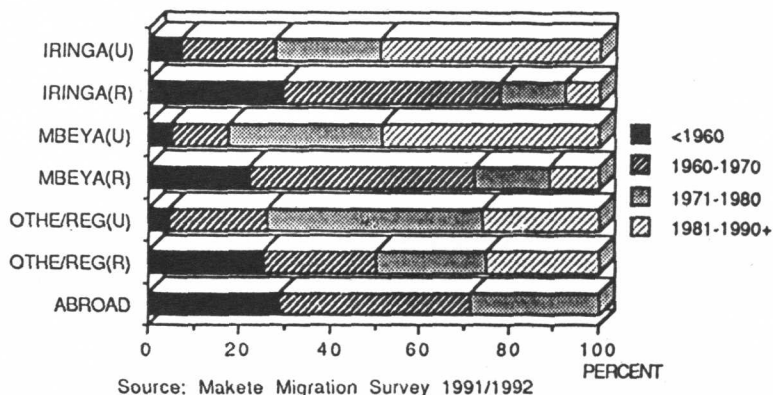


Fig. 2: Inter-regional Migration by Direction/Period of Migration

Those who could not get land to cultivate food or to have other supplementary occupations were either forced to rely on supplies of food from rural relatives, or to live on/below the poverty line (Bryceson, 1990:212-3). In addition, trade liberalisation which was adopted by the Government in 1984 promoted trade in major urban centres located along the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA), which acted as counter-magnets to long distance migration (Gleave, 1992:258; Holm, 1992:241).

Besides the economic motives outlined above, the direction of movements of migrants is also determined by the location of the ward in Makete District. The majority of migrants from wards in the east of the district—such as Lupila—migrate mainly to Iringa Region, while migrants from wards in the west and north-west of the district—such as Kipagalo and Matamba—migrate to Mbeya Region. Meanwhile, centrally placed wards, such as Lupalilo and Iwawa, send migrants to both Mbeya and Iringa regions (Mbonile, 1993:225).

The colonial legacy of unequal educational development in Tanzania is reflected in the out-migration for wage employment. Due to lack of higher education institutions in the district, the majority of households in wage employment belong to children of migrants born and educated outside Makete District. This legacy also emerges within the Makete District, for a high proportion of out-migrants in wage employment originate from wards where the

earliest educational institutions were built such as Bulongwa, Lupalilo, and Mlondwe.

Employment opportunities in the area of destination

Indeed the study reveals that a reasonable proportion of out-migrants from Makete District are rural-rural migrants, and are still engaged in agriculture. Nonetheless, when these migrants engaged in agriculture are further examined it is realised that most of them settle in areas with more familiar environment such as Iringa and Mbeya Regions (See Table 1). In fact, just about 23% of migrants have spread to other neighbouring regions such as Ruvuma and Rukwa where they cultivate both small and large scale farms of maize and beans on commercial basis. In addition, there is a proportion of about 17% migrants in other regions such as Arusha, Kilimanjaro, and Tanga where some long-distance lifetime migrants have settled permanently near large plantations. However, it is also important to note that agriculture employs several people in urban areas as a supplementary activity.

Table 1: Inter-regional Migrants Activity In The Region Of Destination

ACTIVITY	REGION OF DESTINATION					
	Iringa	Mbeya	Dsm	Others	N	%
Agriculture	28.3	36.7	0.0	30.5	130	30.9
Business	38.7	40.8	8.0	11.1	139	33.1
Wage Employment	29.1	19.4	88.0	52.8	135	32.1
Domestic Workers	3.9	3.1	4.0	5.6	16	3.9
Percent	100	100	100	100	-	100
N	127	196	25	72	420	-

As stated above, the highest proportions of out-migrants in major urban centres are engaged in business (33%). Out-migrants from Makete District started business first in Makete District where they sold traditional commodities such as iron tools, and gradually spread to the rest of Iringa and Mbeya regions, before moving to other neighbouring regions such as Morogoro, Ruvuma and Rukwa. For example, business households from Lupila Ward—regarded as pioneers in business in the district—started business in Njombe town, and have recently moved in large numbers to Mbeya town, while those from Kipagalo Ward who started business in the late 1980s in Tukuyu and Kyela towns are gradually spreading to Mbeya town. Nevertheless, despite the importance of Dar-es-Salaam as the main business centre in the country, very few migrants

from Makete have managed to establish business in this city due to high competition from other business communities such as the Asians. On the other hand, in wage employment where it is the government and other employing institutions which determine the area of destination where the migrants are supposed to work, the migrants are almost evenly distributed in various regions in Tanzania. Furthermore, although less than 5% of migrants are employed as domestic workers, the demand for domestic workers is high due to an increase of households in business and wage employment which need domestic workers for caring children during official or business hours, or who operate supplementary occupations (*miradi*).

Options for breaking overdependence on labour migration

As stated by Samoff (1980), Lwoga (1989:207) and Maddox (1991), it is very hard for people in less developed areas to escape from labour migration. However, MMS reveals that if the right options are chosen, there is a big possibility for people in the former labour reserves to escape from this vicious circle of plantation and wage labour migration. Indeed, the following are some of the basic options which can be used by farmers to liberate themselves from labour migration.

(a) Agriculture

Actually a rational choice to escape from this trap for any rural population would be to resort to modern agriculture. As observed by Mbonile (1993:232), the people in Makete District are not lagging behind in the adoption of modern agriculture which can be construed as a green revolution. There is a widespread use of hybrid in crops like potatoes where new varieties such as *alika*, *baraka*, *malawi*, *sasamua* and *kikondo* have completely replaced the old varieties such as *loti*. In wheat, the old varieties such as *kahesya* and *ngongile* have been replaced by new varieties such as *magunila* and *mabuge*. They are also used in crops like maize which has a new variety called Bulongwa No 19, and in sweet potatoes where the quick ripening variety called *dabaga* from Iringa (Rural) District has been introduced. After adapting this option, the farmers produced a surplus of cash and food crops which for a short period raised their per capita income and created better chances of remaining in Makete District. Nevertheless, cash crop prices in the world market have been unstable since the early 1980s, and so marred all the technological advances in agriculture (Lwoga, 1989:207-10). This option is also strongly affected by several structural adjustment measures such as

the removal of subsidies in agricultural inputs which has made most farmers relapse to traditional agriculture again (Mbonile, 1995:152).

(b) Wage employment

A second option for rural farmers is to break away from land completely and take up permanent wage employment. Unfortunately, this option is only possible through education, which in most labour reserves was deliberately suppressed by the colonial government so that they could provide cheap labour. The few who managed to have access to education are still marginalised by people from developed areas, for they had a better opportunity to penetrate the labour market immediately after independence (Kahama *et al.*, 1986). As in the colonial period, people from former labour reserves such as Makete are employed in more marginal jobs such as domestic servants and barmaids (Lihawa, 1995). Recently, this colonial legacy is perpetuated by a more widespread belief that domestic workers from Iringa Region as a whole are faithful and hard workers, and so are suitable for hard and marginal labour (Tanganyika, 1958; Iliffe, 1979). Therefore, since this belief lingers on in the minds of many urban residents in Tanzania, the hunt for house-girls from Iringa Region and other former reserves such as Dodoma Region is pursued vigorously. As observed by Samoff (1980:16-8) in Kigoma Region, and Maddox (1991:35) in Dodoma Region, the whole process has transformed from labour migration to more degrading marginal jobs than in the colonial period when domestic servants ranked high among people employed in wage employment.

In fact the marginalisation of labour from former labour reserves intensified during the period of worst economic recession in the 1980s and early 1990s when many girls drifted into urban areas to hunt for employment which could make them just survive. During this period it was very common to find many girls from Iringa Region boarding Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA) trains to Dar-es-Salaam with high expectations of being employed as house servants. On arrival at Dar-es-Salaam railway station, they were interviewed and hand-picked by people who needed house-girls. Those who were not picked were deeply frustrated and reluctantly returned to the area of origin. Even worse, others became mistresses of people they did not know, and so were subjected to all types of child or female abuse. Others opted to use the shuttle services of TAZARA as petty traders or racketeers. It was easy to use these services because there was a mutual understanding between them and the train conductors which enabled them not to pay train fares. Since they were always

shuttling with the train, they were nicknamed as *watoto wa TAZARA* (children of TAZARA). However, even more detrimental to Makete and other former labour reserves, most of these domestic workers are not paid regular salaries but in kind. It is very common to find most of them being integrated into the household which assures them of getting food and cheap second hand clothes (*mitumba*). If at all they are paid meagre salaries, they are forced to work from morning to midnight. They are not given holidays because employers fear that they would not come back. Also the few unlucky ones may be further subjected to more abuse by their employers who have resorted to turning their house-girls into mistresses (*zero grazing*) because of the current threat of Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and when these housegirls get pregnant they are forced to return to the area of origin, or discarded to find their own ways of living in a hostile urban environment. Moreover, the fear of house-girls breaking established marriages drives some households to employ very young house-girls, leading to an increase in school dropout rates in the area of origin.

Therefore, it can be concluded that permanent wage employment which requires a long period of investment in education cannot be the most attractive alternative to liberate people from labour migration in the former labour reserves. The MMS reveals that even after thirty years of independence, there are still very few people from Makete District in administrative and managerial jobs (See Table 2). Since there are few people in executive posts, they are known by almost everybody in Makete District. In technical and other professions such as teaching, the majority are primary school or secondary school leavers, while other areas in Tanzania such as Moshi (Rural) District have thousands of graduates which enables them to establish private secondary schools almost in every ward.

Table 2: Wage Employment Of Heads Of Households By Type Of Occupation

TYPE OF OCCUPATION	NO OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENT
Administrative/managerial	6	8.6
Teacher/Technical	35	50.0
Clerical	15	21.4
Messenger/cleaner	14	20.0
TOTAL	70	100.0

In absolute terms, the majority of people from former labour reserves are concentrated in clerical and cleaner wage employment. Generally, it is these low occupations which are highly affected by retrenchment, leading to most workers

from less developed areas to be made redundant. Once redundant, it is very difficult to find employment in the private sector without the help of people in executive posts or capital (Mbonile, 1993:298)

(c) Business activities

The discussions above suggest that agriculture and wage employment options perpetuate the marginalisation of former labour reserves. It also shows that most out-migrants from Makete District have turned to business as an alternative to both subsistence agriculture and wage employment. This option is the outcome of both internal and external revolutions among the people within and outside Makete District. Internally, the leading wards of out-migration due to business include Lupila (25%), Bulongwa (20%), Kipagalo (14%), Iniho (8%), Iwawa (2%) and Matamba (1%). These wards are leading in business revolution because of their proximity to both historical and current sources of commodities, and overall structural changes in other socio-economic sectors such as education (Mbonile, 1993:22). Externally, it came as households' survival strategy in the harsh economic conditions caused by recession and aggravated by structural adjustment policies imposed by the IMF and the World Bank as a panacea to stagnant economies. These household enterprises started business either as supplementary occupations to supplement meagre incomes earned in the modern sector, or as a means of employment for some members of the household who did not get employment in the modern sector, or were made redundant by retrenchment measures in government and public enterprises (Mamuya, 1991:1-4; Campbell & Stein, 1992; Mbonile, 1993).

To what extent is business a better alternative towards breaking the vicious circle of labour migration and poverty? To answer this question, a few indicators such as education, per capita income, remittances and house ownership are examined.

As observed by Mbonile (1994:255), since the majority of the migrants from Makete have peasant background coupled with low education, it is not easy to penetrate in wage employment in the modern sector. However, they have managed to penetrate into some of the most sophisticated formal businesses because, as stated above, some households have a long tradition of business. Furthermore, unlike the plantation labourers, these less-educated business households appreciate the role of education in the overall development of the household, and the country as a whole. As stated by Tuhate Sanga of Mbeya town:

I decided to send my children to school after realising that I have worked as a labourer in the plantations, mines and as a cook to both Europeans and Indians but my life was still poor. At least now my children are more educated and have built their own houses, as well as a nice house for me, and so at last the whole family has a bright future.

Undoubtedly, this appreciation for higher education acted as stimulus for business households to send large numbers of children and relatives to school, leading to enrolments in all cycles of education to be higher in business households when compared to those in wage employment and agriculture (See Table 3).

Table 3: Household Indicators Of Development By Occupation

ENROLMENT BY EDUCATIONAL CYCLE				
<i>Type Of Occupation</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	<i>N</i>
Agriculture	60.8	19.2	4.3	601
Business	93.3	76.3	64.2	201
Wage Employment	81.1	57.3	35.5	42
Household Per Capita Income (Tsh.)				
	0-99,000	100,000-499,000	500,000 +	Percent
Agriculture	96.7	2.2	1.1	100
Business	12.3	66.4	21.3	100
Wage Employment	46.4	49.2	3.4	100
Household Remittances				
	0-99,000	100,000-199,000	200,000 +	Percent
Agriculture	94.5	5.6	0.0	100
Business	3.1	79.2	17.7	100
Wage Employment	63.3	25.5	11.2	100
Household House Ownership				
	<i>Own House</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
Agriculture	95.4	4.6	100	
Business	82.2	17.8	100	
Wage Employment	43.8	56.2	100	

Besides education, the pattern of change seems to be strongly related to the income levels and economic performances of the households. Agricultural

households with per capital income concentration being less than Tsh. 100,000 have little capital to invest in the education of their children when compared to business and wage employment households. Nonetheless, intimate discussions with various households revealed that richer business households were even prepared to send their children abroad to acquire more specialised professions, such as computer science and hotel management, which have great demand both locally and internationally. Above all, since these business households have large capital, they can invest in subsidiary businesses where their children and relatives can be employed. A typical example of this type of household is the Konzo family in Njombe town who have established shops in both Njombe and Mbeya towns in order to create employment for various members of the clan. Overall, it is important to note that with the current unemployment level in the country, creating self-employment for household members appears to be a better alternative for the coming generations.

The contribution of business households towards the development of their areas of origin (the main source of migrant labour) is revealed in the average amount of remittances remitted by various households by occupation. As can be seen in Table 3, while the average amount of remittances for agricultural and wage employment is below Tsh. 100,000 per annum, those of business households lies above Tsh. 200,000. An in-depth study on remittances showed that despite the fact that most households remit consumer goods such clothes, radios, sugar and soap, recently business households are responsible for building schools, guest houses, hotels and other infrastructure like roads. They also contribute more in agricultural inputs such as fertilisers which they apply themselves in their places of origin, or by giving to relatives as remittances.

The other major indicator which shows that business is a better alternative towards breaking the vicious circle of labour migration is house ownership. The surveyed households revealed that although most agricultural households own houses, most of them are of very poor quality, or are generally built of temporary materials such as wood and grass only. Nonetheless, business households have built better residential and commercial houses, and so enabled migrant households from Makete District to change their social status by penetrating into the most expensive parts in urban areas such as the Central Business Districts (CBDs), or in streets where only a few years ago it was almost impossible for Africans to have business. Secondly, there is a rapid rise in social and residential mobility of business households. Actually, the most successful business households are residing in high residential areas such as Gangilonga in Iringa Town, and Block B in Mbeya Town, where they have built

several modern houses. Furthermore, unlike in the past when they were mere wage labourers residing in plantation camps or in servant quarters in the backyard of their employers, they have changed their status from being house renters to landlords by building their own houses in large numbers. This rapid change in social status is clearly stated by Habib Punja of Mbeya town:

A few years ago we were employing people from Makete as our watchmen in our shops and houses. Nowadays they have turned out to be our neighbours in both business and residential areas. If they continue with this speed, in the near future they will manage to force us out of business.

In fact this change in social status is accompanied by a change in jokes which showed that people from former labour reserves were of low class such as “*we are sixty passengers and one Mkinga in the bus*” are being substituted by other jokes such as “*Uvukinga vu ndikinga lakini di bōni tawuni Dar-es-Salaam hata Arusha na nakujua*” (although I am a Mkinga I was born in town and so I know places such as Dar-es-Salaam and Arusha); or “*acha kunichezea bwana baba yangu ana mashamba mengi huko Ismani na dada wangu wotē wako sekondari*” (do not joke with me, my father has very big farms in Ismani area (Iringa Rural District) and all my sisters are studying in secondary schools).

Nevertheless, jumping straight from a donkey back to a Mercedes Benz has got its own problems. Although more developed communities run their business without linking to myths, others still believe that people from Makete are rich because they killed mothers, wives or their beloved children. Others say that despite the fact that they are rich, they sleep on the floor or move without shoes simply because that is how they were instructed by their witch doctors. Actually MMs revealed that frugality alone was the key to prosperity.

Conclusion

This study explored a few options which people from former labour reserves such as Makete District can use to reduce overdependence on labour migration. It is quite obvious that with the current world recession, to opt for cash crop production does not liberate the rural population from the vicious circle of labour migration. This is simply because the price of primary products in the world market is very low, exposing farmers to perpetual poverty and hence migration. In fact this option becomes even more precarious when farmers in the former labour reserves are advised to diversify their economy with cash crops such as coffee which have run out of favour even in the traditional cash crop growing areas such as Kilimanjaro Region.

It is not possible to pursue the second option (wage employment) because it requires a long period of investment in education. Moreover, the harsh economic conditions exposes people from less-developed areas to more degrading jobs than was the case during the colonial period when occupations such as cooks were regarded as elite. In addition, with the current privatisation and retrenchment policies imposed by the IMF and the World bank as a solution to government budget deficit, employment in the modern sector is declining at an alarming rate.

The only option which offers a better opportunity to prosperity for people from former labour reserves is business. In fact, people from humble beginnings have managed to form very complex business enterprises and to penetrate high-class business and residential areas. With income which they have acquired in business, they have invested in the education of their children. Although very few have managed to penetrate into industries, the current trend indicates that in the near future they will do so. It is worthwhile to remember that even Asian communities which dominate business in East Africa came as railway labourers. Also countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Malaysia, cited by the World Bank as successful in development in the third world, began with the commercial revolution before moving into industries.

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