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**How Do Intra-Rural Migrants in Uganda Attain Welfare Gains? Evidence from a Panel Survey**

**Kayenat Kabir, Purdue University, [kkabir@purdue.edu](mailto:kkabir@purdue.edu)**

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# How do intra-rural migrants in Uganda attain welfare gains?

Kayenat Kabir

Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University

kkabir@purdue.edu

## INTRO

Quite a few recent studies (Beegle et al 2011, de Brauw et al 2013, Wineman and Jayne 2016) on migration in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) reiterates the positive impact of migration on poverty reduction and consumption gains that exists in the context of not only rural-urban migration but intra-rural migration as well. The question however remains what are the contributory channels through which intra-rural migrants attain significant consumption gains? While the gains from remittance from an individual migrant household member as a transmission channel for increased household welfare are obvious, less obvious are the transmission channels when the entire household moves and in the rural migration context. I test the pathways of welfare gains from rural migration in Uganda through three transmission channels: i) land expansion effect (migrants may increase welfare through accessing more farmland-both through rental and land sales market), ii) climate-shock resistance effect (migrants may increase income and diversify risk by accessing irrigated land that is less vulnerable to climate shocks), iii) diversification effect (diversify income through off-farm opportunities)

## CONTRIBUTION:

First this paper contributes to the knowledge base for policy debates on welfare pathways of rural-migrants in general.

More importantly, I split migrant categories into split-off and entire household migration. I distinguish between the parent and split-off households in the case of households which do not migrate together. This is important because it distinguishes between each of these strategies as an adaptation mechanism by the household, and therefore looks separately at the welfare pathways.

## RESULTS:

The initial results of the study show that migration has significant impact on landlessness and share of on-farm income.

Rural migrants are less landless compared to non-migrants after migration and contrary to population notion; they become more involved in on-farm income after migration.

Instead of diversifying away from agriculture and into off-farm income, they become more involved in on-farm income which is significantly positive due to migration.



Contrary to popular notion, instead of diversifying away from agriculture and into off-farm income, intra-rural migrants in Uganda become more involved in on-farm income which is significantly positive due to migration.



## DATASET:

The dataset (Uganda National Household Survey 2005/06 and Uganda National Panel Survey 2009/10) that I use is panel in nature and involves a systematic effort to follow-up on a subsample of households that migrated, which should reduce the bias associated with migration estimates. Among the panel sample of 2975 households, 19 percent of the households migrated between the two waves of survey (2005/06 and 2009/10) and around 50 percent of the migration occurred within rural areas.

## ESTIMATION METHODS:

We use initial household fixed effect (IHHFE) model introduced in Beegle et al. (2011) to test the hypothesis of welfare gains by migrants. Migration within the household is treated as random. This model controls for baseline household and individual characteristics.

$$\Delta Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Migrant}_i + \beta_2 \text{Split}_i + \delta Y_r + X_i \gamma + U_{it}$$

Where  $\Delta Y_{it}$  is the change in the dependent variable i.e. quantity of total cultivable land, own land, rented land (land expansion hypothesis), irrigated land accessed, household income diversification measures etc of household  $i$  in the two time periods.  $\text{Migrant}_i$  is the migration dummy to indicate whether or not household has migrated between the waves of the panel survey.  $\beta_1$  is the parameter of interest which estimates the effect on the outcome variable due to migration by entire household. Similarly,  $\beta_2$  is the coefficient associated with households which have migrated by splitting off from parent household.  $Y_r$  is year dummy for the survey years. These could be macroeconomic shock, weather variables which vary over time but affect all households.  $X_i$  is a vector of other control variables at baseline that could affect the outcome) as well as migration decision itself, and  $\gamma$  represents the vector of corresponding parameters. Our outcome variables, which are concerned with land and income diversification, are arguably less endogenous than consumption related outcomes.