

The Search for Livelihood for the Poor in Urban Life of Dire Dawa;- Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

The justification article was the researcher tried to investigate about “The **Search for livelihood for the Poor’s; Challenges and Prospect in urban life of Dire Dawa, Ethiopia**”. Poor’s are one the most important participant of informal economic activity in Ethiopia in general and in Dire Dawa in particular. The study attempted to examine the poor’s livelihood and the way to earn daily food consumption. The researcher used both primary and secondary data collection methods such as interview, focus group discussion and observation. The interview was made with Key interview informants who were elders and other residents of the city in general. The other important tool of data collection was FGD in which about fifty participants in four groups have participated. The stakeholders were advised to talk freely about their daily life in group. The observation was made as important to view and examine stakeholder’s life from the outsider view (etic view). Thus then, researcher made important observation in their daily life interaction in their natural setting. There were also secondary data sources in which the data obtained from written sources in which finally triangulated wit primary sources. The researcher used qualitative method of data analysis to investigate their daily earning for food and their socio-economic interaction and the support they made for their families at home. Therefore, this paper has exposed that the greater part of poor’s in Dire Dawa the study area where to see fundamental factors such as migration of back and forth and their cultural and economic support at their birth place. This study also further describe that the livelihood of poor in Dire Dawa who were vulnerable to wide range of poverty sometimes they face in the city. The researcher tried to show valid efforts that have to be made to evaluate the widespread problem of poverty that lead to migration and their social life, and social work in Dire Dawa. The finding of the paper shows that poor’s in Dire Dawa engaged in these occupations to support their family at their place of birth.

Keywords: Search for livelihood, Urban poor, Urban life, Challenges and Opportunities

1. Background

Many developing countries in the world are currently experiencing rapid rates of urbanization. By 2010, more than 70 percent of urban residents in the world were found in developing countries (UN-Habitat, 2012). It is also estimated that, between 2010 and 2015, 200,000 people will be added to the world’s urban population each day and about 90 percent of this daily increase is projected to take place in developing countries (UN-Habitat, 2012). The process of rapid population growth in the cities of developing countries is, however, mainly due to the high rate of rural-urban migration leading to a significant increase in the urban labor force. In nearly all developing countries, the rate of urbanization surpasses population growth rate of the national average demonstrating that migration is a major factor for the process of urbanization (UN-Habitat, 2012).

Rapid growth in rural-urban migration together with a slow expansion of employment in the formal sector has forced the largest share of the workforce into the informal economy (ILO, 2002; Lyons and Snoxell, 2005). In response to this, the International Labor Office (ILO) initiated a study on urban employment by organizing and allocating multi-disciplinary employment missions to different countries of the world of which Kenya was the first (ILO, 1972). The first ILO mission to Kenya recognized that the informal economy has not only persisted but also expanded in LDCs. Since then, the sector has continued to show significant growth and expansion in the LDCs of the world (ILO, 2002b).

The livelihoods of the poor are determined predominantly by the context in which they live and the constraints and opportunities this location presents. This is because context - economic, environmental, social and political - largely determines the assets accessible to people, how they can use these (Meikle, 2002:38), and thus their ability to obtain secure livelihoods. Rural people see new opportunities in the urban areas in terms of employment, physical facilities and others. As a result, rural landless agricultural workers had little incentive to remain in agriculture. Instead they choose to migrate to nearby towns or cities in search of more remunerative non-agricultural jobs. It is important to examine whether they get more remunerative jobs after migration or

end up swelling the ranks of unemployed in the urban labour market as predicted by Todaro (1976). But those migrants, who were working in the rural vulnerable situation, see themselves more beneficial working in the urban informal sector. Poor's livelihoods vary according to their level of education and the skills they have. Competent and skilled migrants may find urban formal jobs either in the government or in the private sectors.

The domination of unskilled and uneducated migrants creates poor's who are struggle to feed themselves and their family, who work in the informal sector. Among various informal activities, which engaged by poor's include is one which is growing in the recent years rapidly. Street vending has become livelihood strategy to those migrants poor in many urban centers of the world.

An anthropologist as the dealers in humanity and social sciences and as the disciple of studies covers a wide range of human activities and practices. One of these societal activities that immensely contribute for their survival and progress is the economy. Economic activities comprised of formal and informal sectors. They attempted to explore the seasonal migration patterns of lottery vendors in Dire Dawa, their socio- economic contribution to their relations with their families (Aptekar, L., 1991). Their vulnerability to this wide range of problems and hazards represents a major feature of their everyday life. This is also a determining factor in developing their abilities to be able to cope with urban life (UNICEF, 2007).

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Approach

In this study I had applied ethnographic qualitative research approach. These approaches have chosen to apply to this research in order to explore the life and work earnings of poor's, in search of daily food in Dire Dawa. The approach is helpful to recognize the trends, values, beliefs, their socio-cultural and economic relationships with their fellows, and describing events in their workplace.

Qualitative research type is relevant to explore a problem from the ground and hearing silenced voices rather than relying on literatures that applied predetermined information by Scholars like Creswell (2007:39) who explained this as pertinent method. It is important to study about poor's by creating trust between them and the researcher (Conticini and Hulme 2007:206). The prime goal of this study was to investigate their daily earnings and their experiences seeking for food to eat and its quantification. The methodology used in the study is a qualitative one which facilitates the understanding of the current socio-economic conditions of rural-urban migrants who are involved in search of new jobs.

2.2 Data Sources of the Research

The study is based on data obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected using interview, focus group discussion (FGD) and observation. This enabled the researchers to gather very important information on the poor's in Dire Dawa. Data collected from observation (both participant and non-participant observation) are important for the etic view of the researcher. The researcher has incorporated these methods to gain the root cause of poverty, and migration. However, since there was no place to find a previous livelihood life story or old poor's livelihood who has been working in any type of work for survival in the last past few years was not included. Secondary data were gathered from published and unpublished documents and the internet. These secondary sources helped us to secure information on the nature of rural-urban migration in Dire Dawa.

2.3 Instruments of Data Collection

Ethnographic research can roughly be divided into interview, focus group discussion and observation in the workplace (Kusenbach 2003:458). In order to collect qualitative data, the researcher has applied an interview, focus group discussion and observation as an instrument of primary data collection.

2.3.1 Primary Data Collection Methods

A. Interviews

Interview was a decisive and important in gathering a wide range of primary data for the study from the field. Formal and informal interviews were conducted with key informants and study participants. The key informants were interviewed as one key method to collect more useful information. This was done in order to get information about to get the search for livelihood of poor in Dire Dawa.

Additionally, an in-depth interview was conducted with seventeen participants of daily earner's on the streets of Dire particularly Sabean and Kezira Quarters. These interviews allowed the researcher to add an understanding of the living conditions of the poor societies their economic and social relations and their daily earnings. The interviews were conducted in their working environment helped the researcher to explore social and economic interaction that they had among each other.

Interview has been conducted in Amharic and Afan Oromo language later translated in to English, besides the interview with poor's, and with the officers of the city with regard to daily foods. These social groups of societies were interviewed in cafeterias and hotels by drinking coffee together, especially in their off time of work mostly on Sunday, when there were few customers. Like any other regular customer, the researcher has provided them tips and buys some lottery tickets in order to make them free bias. The discussion was interrupted while customers coming, discussions have been continued after customers leave. They are actively participating in their work place has provided the researcher a rich data from informal discussion with passersby and street workers around. Interview was also made with immediate customers in order to understand the perception of people regarding lottery vending children. The researched had discussed and ask questions with them, asked them to interview, took them to the cafeteria, invited those drinks and interviewed them.

B. Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion (FGD) was held with Eight poor's who were waiting for a new job , looking at different personalities for daily earnings. The FGD was employed in an attempt to look into the push/pull factors of migration of the worst poverty they experienced, their living conditions and the problems they faced in Dire Dawa. It also helped to validate the data gathered through the Focus group discussions which exposed that most poor's who tend to start their pity businesses after they left their original home or migrated far away from their home. Providentially, poor's who did not have fixed places of work except for their night residence. For this reason, the researcher's first task was to understand their relatively right and loose times in a day as well as a week. Selecting the participant of FGD was a time consuming task. They did not want to talk to any issue other than their business. In the attempts of the researcher to introduce himself, they felt uncomfortable and some of them were aggressive. Furthermore, the researcher purposefully selected 24 immediate of migrants and conducted within fifteen days, one group one day each. Informal discussions were also made in order to understand their perceptions about their work compared to others.

C. Observation

The researcher made sequence of observation for fifteen days in their workplace these societies. The observations were carried out at the streets of Dire Dawa city, which provides the service of daily labor working. The researcher made observation in which their socialization at home and work place was observed. The researcher also made intimacy with them and tried his chances, but they did not actively participate in discussions.

The work situation of respondents, the strategy to attract customers, the action and reaction with casual observer, and housing conditions has been intensively observed. The researcher did observations simultaneously as well as independently. The researcher spent many days to observe them and to ask questions for clarification of events. Events have been recorded using tape recordings and also there was note taking. In order to understand the working relationship of these societies, their actions, reactions with wanderers, the researcher walked on the streets that have been selected. In addition to primary data, the researcher has used secondary sources: academic literatures from these poor society livelihood and work', daily earnings, and their case studies.

2.3.2 Secondary Data Collection Methods

Secondary data were collected from documents on the subject of rural-urban migration in Ethiopia, informal economic sector in Dire Dawa Administration of Ethiopia was reviewed by the researchers. Secondary documents obtained and were helped as guidelines for exploring vital information while gathering data via interview and the FGD.

Then, proceeding to the interview, focus group discussion and after related literature on the issues of migration, informal economic sector and history (background information) of poor's in Ethiopia were reviewed and interview guide was prepared. The interview guide was used to ensure that all key issues are covered during the interviews. The interview was conducted in *Amharic* and Afan Oromo, tape recorded after gaining the informants' consent was also made.

2.4 Methods of Data Analysis

The data from primary obtained from interviews, observation and the Focus Group Discussion were analyzed as qualitative ethnographic study. Following the interviews, the tape recorded interview and the FGD were then transcribed and translated from Amharic and Afan Oromo languages into English. The transcripts were then organized and analyzed thematically and systematically.

Initially, data collected from interviews, informal discussions, observation, and focus group discussions were recorded on tape records and jotted down on notebooks and then processed drafting the works on paper after data collection process. The researcher has re-written the notes on the laptop every day. It was from this recorded data that final analysis has been made. By repeatedly reading the record, the thematically coded the data. It was translated from Amharic and Afan Oromo Languages into

English. During translation, ambiguous expressions have been put off not into English Language to make the analysis as close as possible to the original expression and material.

After thematic classification of data, interpretation has been made in relation to theoretical and empirical literatures. Analysis has been made by taking a combination of quotations and summarized notes of interviews, focus group discussion and observation. Quotations were cited by taking the pretender name of the interviewee and full date of first interview regarding a certain issue. Through repeated back and forth processes, the final processed data have been produced.

3. Ethical Considerations

Anthropologists need to have a concern about the ethical consideration for the society under study (the host society). Everything about the society under study should have to be kept secret or not exposed without the consent of these societies. Therefore, the researcher tried to establish rapport with the host community to get permission in order to get consent of the society under study to investigate the issue.

Ethics is about avoiding harm and performing well in host society which is very important to make rapport. Ethical principles include auto, beneficial, and justice. It contains at least procedural of getting approval to conduct research that involves humans and practical for every issue of ethics in conducting the research ethics (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). Similarly, Morrow and Richards (1996) have identified ethical guidelines when conducting research with these children.

These ethical issues have been considered in this study, procedurally, the researcher has gotten approval of methodology from the second reader before the fieldwork. The researcher has honestly requested the full consent of the respondents and discussants. Besides, this researcher has seriously considered how to speak, how to question and how to handle when there were emotions during interviews and informal discussions. The researcher has also kept the moral obligation to use very good relation not to reveal the identity of any respondents without their consent or approval.

The data was collected on the work conditions of the respondents and discussants. Great care was made to provide a relaxed atmosphere for the interviewees, so that they may feel comfortable when talking about themselves. Guarantees were given to the participants that the study was to understand the living and working conditions of these parts of the society only, and it was only for academic purposes. Guarantees that ensured confidentiality were also given. That is, no names would be used in documents without their consent.

4. Finding and Result Analysis

4.1 The Techniques used Search for Daily Food to feed family

4.1.1 Daily worker

From the interview, there may be job for daily consumption that make the poor's in urban dwelling more secure. Sometimes poor's in urban areas were government employees who got benefits by being employed in small microenterprise programs and as guards for investment areas. This exclusionary nature of the program leads the low paid government employees to be engaged in informal activities. Second, street vendors who need the support of microenterprise development programs should choose among the growth oriented activities set by the government.

This shows that these societies will get daily subsistence and do have the chance to choose what they want to do. The most important method in finding daily food was their involvement in microenterprise development programs. This allowed individuals for daily consumption based on a privately limited company. The common method in finding daily food was organizing urban poor's into microenterprise groups. Forming enterprise groups is another problem for poor's in Dire Dawa as group formation does not address poor's needs and priorities.

As hired by the microenterprise development programs, one interviewee has said the following:

I am working in the microenterprise as a guard for the last four years here. I have fed my six children's by the income from these programs. Even though there are challenges every day for the sustainability of programs. There are also challenges of low income and life become expensive now a days. I decided to take part in the microenterprise programs and went to the nearby branch office.

Additionally, another interviewee has said regarding the search for daily food by the urban poor's:

We as urban dwellers asked many microenterprise programs to earn our daily food, the nearby officers said to us that if you want to be employed you have bring guarantor of about five hundred thousand birr. I replied to the officer that if have 500,000 guarantee here, what I am doing here, I can invest in small enterprises myself.

The concept to the participation of many institutions in the implementation of the daily earning program was to meet the requirements of daily food. In relation to this problem, interviewee has said:

I am looking for daily food for my three children. I have been employed by the institutions to involve in implementing microenterprise programs. But the program for development paid us little amount of payment, that today's expensive life of urban life made us suffer more. The microenterprise institution program was good in helping poor like me, but the challenge is worse with regard to life earnings.

The preceding interview shows that there are many problems that force the poor's not to participate in microenterprise programs. The officials claimed that the government has arranged all the necessary facilities and it is up to the poor to benefit from microenterprise programs. The problem of getting daily food from the city administration, was full of bureaucratic deeds there is low participation of poor in microenterprise programs.

4.1.2 The Search for Employment

Employment in urban areas was a serious problem nowadays. The government and other private sectors employee workers based on their skills. The issue of employment in a formal private enterprises and government institutions claim that poor's have to be supported and proper strategies should be devised to make them legal employees. The interview writing below show the views of poor's. Supporting the poor for employment was good by both the private sector and the government. One FGD group said the following:

The private sector and the government has to employ poor to support their daily livelihood and has to open programs. The program should have to support the majority of them prefer to stay out of poverty and to obey government regularise. They also discussed that we, as a citizen of our country have to be supported to feed ourselves and our children, this is because nowadays, life get expensive and expensive. On the contrary, those legally registered entrepreneurs are unable to compete with street vendors for the street vendors sell products at cheap prices. We are in favour of the legal and formal organizations who are paying tax for the government.

Another assertion of the discussants was that the government and the private sector can get rid of problems and creating overcrowding in the city. Regarding this problem the discussants, has said the following:

Sometimes we are humiliated by police force while we are on the road looking for new jobs early in the morning, We usually travel along road side to look for different jobs in the city to earn daily food. Residents of the city are are looking for daily but always the road is crowded with people like us. We also think that the private sector and the government will also support the low income group of the city by providing lower cost products and services.

4.1.3 Migration to the Outside World

Urban poor are extremely poor who live a subsistence life or a life for daily hand to mouth. They work for daily subsistent that always existed such as daily labor, shoe shining, lottery vending, despite frequent efforts to repress them. Some of them argued that the poor can afford their daily subsistent, and others agreed that they can cover their health care and schooling for their children.

The generalized rural mass migration for a better life made everything expensive in urban areas of Dire Dawa. Majority of them are low skilled workers who moved towards cities for better life with poor background. Country's economic crisis and the lack of employment opportunities made everything challenging to these societies. Livelihood in urban setting is consequently difficult to determine if their numbers are growing faster than would be accounted for naturally by urban population growth.

Arab countries are the main destination for Ethiopian migrants. Majority of young female Ethiopians are now a days migrated to the Arab world in search for daily subsistence, to support their poor families. The young societies have no option to choose to support their daily livelihood for them and their families. One of respondents said the following about her migration:-

I immigrated to the Arab World 12 years ago to find a job there and to support my family here. I served Arabs for 12 years, but brought back nothing for myself. It is true that my family got better income while I was there but have nothing now. So what I am thinking again is turning back to the Arab countries and support my family for their daily food. I have tried it in my country, but payment is better there, even though they were not recognize us as humans.

4.2 Key Challenges

4.2.1 Living a Subsistence life /from Hand to Mouth/

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I have been living in Dire Dawa for 5 years with my three small children and mother in-law aged. Last year my wife went abroad (Lebanon) to earn but she has not sent any money to me. Since then, I have to bear all the responsibilities for my family. I have been working on this site from early in the morning to late evening and hardly been able to get livelihoods to my family.

4.2.2 Living in Severe Poverty

Poverty appears to be the major reason for Dire Dawa poors to crowded on the road every day along the road looking for daily labor. Poverty was/is a great challenge that made urban poor's life worse with regard to daily food. Nowadays life has become expensive throughout the world, but severely changed the life of poor in urban dwelling. Poverty has greatly contributed to the breakdown of the family structure as parents have practically resigned before their responsibility towards their children or have had to move out into the wider world to manage for this very family.

The living conditions of the children without food become a normal life for families or a single parent in search of daily food. These families are often living under conditions of virtual starvation and unable to feed their children some days. One of my informants has said the following with regard to poverty:

I am supporting my dependent children and myself of the income that I earn from daily labor. If there was no job only for one day my family would be starved. I do not have another option to feed my children here. The daily labor sometimes would be absent, it to mean that it had no continuity. I have to feed myself and my dependent children. It is the question of survival. Otherwise poverty is a great challenge that makes us not to think about tomorrow.

Moreover, some families live in urban areas working on the street as partial fulfillment for their livelihoods. Working only in other sectors such as taxi driving, lottery vending, micro-business and labour work in small industries of private sectors to support the survival of their families.

One respondent whose husband was driving who cannot cover all the household necessities, went on the street even if she was having small kids.

I was working on the street taking making a micro- business to feed her family. The lady said poverty is serious in urban livelihoods. She said our small kids who do not know what is going on in the real world. This is about livelihood dependent situation whose husband had pity business cannot afford the whole family food for survival of family and wellbeing of them.

4.2.3 Searching for Access to Normal Life

Another great challenge of the poor in urban life is their access to normal life. This is to mean they daily running for daily food earning, and sometimes out of normal life. They forget about socio-cultural activities while running for their daily income to feed their own family. The availability of urban public gathering for the sake of mourning, weeding and other social activities was forgotten by these parts of society.

The difficulties associated to these activities made the to be isolated from public activities, which linked them with other surrounding societies. This absence from access to normal way of life which make the situation more complex coexistence with other public societies in order to cope up with real conditions urban life. Urban life has become more difficult in carrying out their livelihood activities. During the field work, some families who were living in the city with their small children explaining the living situation like this one group of my FGD discussants said:

We were living with my our families here in urban area of Dire Dawa with poor family status in the city. They claimed that the situation is getting worse and worse after everything becomes expensive. Now, we do not know where to go with the worst living situation. We are Humans but right to live was violated, by unknown, we still suffer from poverty.

4.2.4 Searching for Access to Standardized Facilities

The poor's in urban life were suffer from poor access to services such as water, electricity and financial services and infrastructures such as schooling and etc. Poor's claim for standard facilities but no one respond to them. They are concerned with confrontation with police or municipal authorities, and frequently need to have access to facilities to be treated as a citizen of their country. No one knows where they are, even won't listen to what they are saying.

4.3 Opportunities

4.3.1 Access to Employment

The source of employment in Urban setting are many in number such as construction, road buildings, daily laboring, shoe shining, lottery vending. This opportunity provides affordable services to the majority of the urban poor in Dire Dawa city. Very poor people from rural areas of the surrounding who are migrated to the urban areas of Dire Dawa for survival are engaged in the above mentioned types of daily works to win daily food. These people who were living in urban areas of Dire Dawa have a little access to work employment whether it is permanent or temporary.

Therefore, these poor people of the society who are established in urban areas have an opportunity of employment in daily laboring works living a life from hand to mouth. It is also noted that some better people can create their own work such as shoe shining lottery vending and etc. Thus, Dire Dawa has become an opportunity for work and employment for both poor migrants and other urban poor.

4.3.2 Access to Education /Schooling

The urban poor's have also an opportunity to get schooling/education for themselves and their children. Even though the education sector is nowadays vast in every rural area the quality is better in urban settings. The education sector is important by providing labour forces and by marketing their products for the country's development in general and Dire Dawa in particular. Therefore, the poor's in Dire Dawa have a better opportunity in quality education when compared to the surrounding rural areas. Studies also show that a lot of poor and their children have better access to schooling government schools, with standard and quality education. The most important part of this survey is the overlooks of access to education in urban areas of Dire Dawa Administration. They attend school because of the high cost of education have little or no option but to fund for themselves on the schooling programs. In line with the general concern for the rights and welfare of children, the Government of Ethiopia would make sure that every child in every corner of the country are obliged to learn. International donors who fund on education also are making some efforts to make sure that the children of the land are taken care of timely and correctly.

4.3.3 Access to Health Care for Children's

Another important opportunity of urban poor's opportunity is, their access to integrate into health care of the society. The urban poor have better access to free health care in urban areas of Dire Dawa city. Their economy would not provide an essential service of health care and education, but the government gave an opportunity to health and education which is free. In addition to this, health care provided an opportunity for better work employment that attracts poor's from rural areas, those who have limited opportunities for obtaining formal employment or prestigious business, and minimizes the chances of social exclusion and marginalization.

On the other hand urban poor's can engage in an illegal and unproductive sector for daily food, the City authorities were not on a condition of taking care of them. Therefore, it is important for the poor to have health care in their livelihood securing sector for the urban poor. It provides seasonal employment to the rural poor and has become a source of economic earnings to them. Therefore, it can be accounted as an opportunity to poor communities.

5. Conclusion

The search for a better life for poor's in Dire Dawa in urban setting leads to better education followed by better employment and better health care. The have been engaged pitty works for making a living. Not only rural poor are getting livelihood opportunities in the informal economy, city residents are providing goods in expensive price to another section of urban poor that otherwise would be impossible to provide by the urban authorities or by the urban governance system. Migrants are dominant with low level of education and skills, are enforced to involve in the informal economy for their scanty livelihood. Small business activities has become an easy access to those migrants' poor's in Dire Dawa. These sections of societies had an opportunity for work and employment in the urban areas and make an earning of daily food, that opportunity and an opportunity to provide livelihoods to dependent family members.

The most disgusting challenges where poor suffer due to being poor in urban areas was the escalating price of food items nowadays. However, it has been difficult for controlling and managing the city environment, including managing pathway, controlling of increasing petty activities and providing easy movement to the uninteresting migration. In spite of increasing living cost small business activities are also in Dire Dawa, it has created several problems in the city such as overcrowding, invasion of public places, controlling pathway and increasing social problems such as theft, hoodlum, pick pocketing, felony, crime etc which have ultimately become challenges for urban areas of Dire Dawa.

Of course, living in urban areas by being poor is challenging for urban poor who have migrated from rural areas. The livelihood for urban poor's is challenging, especially for those who do not have permanent income for survival. Even though life in urban areas are challenging, there are also the opportunity of having access to education, better health care centers, marketing space with low expense in Dire Dawa eastern zone industrial City.

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