



RURAL LABOUR MIGRATION IN TEMIDIRE, OYO STATE: CONSEQUENCES ON THE ELDERLY LEFT BEHIND AND COPING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Rural-urban labour migration in Nigeria is still on the increase in changing family structure of the left behind household members. This study examines the consequences as it affect elderly abuse and stress of the elderly left behind as a result of the migration of a family member in a rural settlement of Temidire. This explorative descriptive study is based on the administering of a questionnaire and a session of Focus Group Discussion on 21 left behind elderly aged 60 years and above. The findings showed that the major challenges facing the elderly left behind categorized as elderly abuse are lack

Introduction

Labour migration which is the movement of persons from one state to another or within their own country of residence for employment (International Organization for Migration-IOM, 2011) is an age-old phenomenon that has affected communities globally. The multifaceted nature of migration makes it complex and is also being influenced by a variety of socio-economic factors and mobility scenario in all regions of the world (International Dialogue for Migration-IDM, 2014).

The National Population Commission (NPC, 2010) posits that labour migration was the most prominent form of migration in Nigeria. Labour migration being a feature of rural-urban migration in Nigeria has been fueled by several factors such as inequality between the settlements especially in areas of the socio-economic and political environment, unfavourable economic conditions. Thus, motivating residents from the rural areas to move, in order to seek for prosperity, better opportunity and better life in the area of employment. When a household member migrates, they more often leave behind in their areas of origin most members of the household; their spouse, children and parents (UNWomen, 2013). Those left behind particularly the older parents bear the consequences which can be social, psychological, physical and health challenges.

Globally, ageing of a population is an issue experienced by virtually every country in the world and the older population has been growing dramatically (United Nations, 2019). As of 2019, 703 million persons are classified as aged, that is, those aged 60 years and above. In the year 2050, these estimates are projected to double to 1.5 billion. Also, in the global scene, there was an increase of the aged



of visitation (38.1%), medical neglect (28.6%), verbal abuse (14.3%) and general neglect of elderly and not being comfortable with their living condition (9.5% each). Further, increased economic stress is the most pronounced among the elderly (33.4%). The study also found a variation in the coping strategies adopted between the left behind male and female. For the males, all the respondents (100%) adopted playing local games as the most important coping strategy, followed by working in the farms (90.9%), with the least being “trading” (28.6%). The female left behind adopted trading activities (71.4%) as the most significant, followed by attending/engaging in religious function (46.2%), with the least being working on the farm (9.1%). Based on these findings, the study recommended among others the need to promulgate, and implement policies that will adequately cover the needs and daily care of the elderly most especially in the rural areas that are bedeviled with poverty and menace of rural-urban migration.

Keywords: Rural-urban migration, Labour, Elderly, Left behind and Temidire

from 6 per cent in 1990 to 9 per cent in 2019. Although the oldest population profiles are found in more developed countries, the majority of older people are in less developed countries (World Health Organization-WHO, 2011). In 2015, 52 per cent of the world’s older population lived in the urban area, with roughly equal proportions residing in less developed and more developed regions. However, the rural areas of the less developed regions were home to nearly 40 per cent of the world’s older population while only about 10 per cent in the rural areas of the more developed regions. Further, in the majority of the countries, the proportion of the population aged 60 years and above is higher in rural than in urban areas. This is because young adults have migrated to the cities in search of employment, thereby leaving many rural areas with a high number of both children and older persons relative to the working-age population (United Nations, 2015). Moreover, in the developing countries, the increasing rate of aging has been a challenge to both the social institution and public that are responsible for their care. In addition, the high increase in population aging and the lack of institutional support to meet the needs of the elderly poses a burden to these countries (Wong and Monica, 2007 in Adhikari, Jampaklay and Chamratrithirong, 2011).

In the Nigeria context, ageing is defined as the continued increase in age and both women and men are regarded and treated as elderly on getting to age 60 years and above (National Bureau of Statistics-NBS, 2017). Further, those aged 60 years and above make up about 4.3 per cent of the total population in 2006 (NPC, 2006). The total number of older people, that is those age 60 years and above went up slightly from 8,741,292 in 2013 to 9,622,056 in 2016 (NBS, 2017). This shows a 1.8 per cent increase in the male ageing population between 2013 and 2014 compared to 1.4 per cent increase in the female ageing population for the same year (NBS, 2017). Further, it has been shown that as at 2012, the elderly in Nigeria make up 3.1% or 5.9 million of the total population of 191 million which represent an increase of 600,000 during the 5 years between 2012 and 2017 (Population Reference Bureau, 2017, National Council on Ageing, 2017). This increase among others is due to the decreasing Crude Mortality Rate (Adebowale, Atte and Ayeni 2012). Also, ageing is on the



increase despite the socio-economic hardship, widespread poverty, the rapid change in the traditional extended family care structure (Adebanjoko and Ugwuoke, 2014). Other factors adduced to the increase in ageing is as a result of the declining fertility rate (although still one of the highest in Africa). For instance, in 2017, the total fertility registered at 5.5% compared with 6.8 % in 1980 (Population Reference Bureau, 2017); improved health and sanitary condition have also contributed to the risen life expectancy especially of persons over age 60 (Mudiare, 2013). However, despite the increase in the level of poverty in Nigeria, the ageing population is projected to be on the increase over the next two decades. Specifically, it was projected that by the year 2020, Nigeria ageing population will double (United Nations, 2015).

Amidst these realities demographically, are the increase in rural-urban migration and the consequent breakdown and disappearance of the traditional family support system for the elderly in Nigeria (Okoye, 2012). This has resulted in grandparents increasingly being left behind as a result of the migration of a family member. In Nigeria, it is more common to see older men and women in rural areas farming as a result of the migration of able-bodied youth within the country or outside the country for employment or a better life. Again, the care of older relatives is a value which has been culturally entrenched in the past (Awosika, Odunbaku, Olley and Baiyewu 2016). However, there has been a shift in function away from this old traditional family value system due to economic problem, migration and influence of foreign culture.

Again, policies on care provision in Nigeria have been focused on young people and children neglecting the older population. Also, social policy for old age, especially in the aspect of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) that has recently been reformed, does not take into cognizance many older persons who work in the informal sector of the economy. Even those designed for the formal sector is yet to make an appreciable impact on the lives of older people.

In Nigeria, while considerable attention have been expanded on a number of issues with regards to rural-urban migration such as effects of migration on rural communities as regards to development (Ajaero and Onakale, 2013; Ogunmakinde, Oladokun, and Oke 2015; Oketayo and Olaleye, 2016; Amrevurayire and Ojeh, 2016); rural-urban migration and urban opportunities and unemployment (Okpara, 1986; Aigbokhan, 1988); and factors affecting rural-urban migration of youths (Alarima, 2018); the consequences of rural-urban migration of adult children on aged care and support (Eboiyehi, 2010); and on health, economic and emotional related effect on the elderly (Odaman and Ibiezugbe, 2014; Animasahun and Chapman, 2017). Despite these growing body of research on different aspect of rural-urban migration in Nigeria and health, economic and emotional wellbeing of the elderly, there is still a limited mixed method researches on consequences of migration of elderly children on left behind elderly especially in rural areas where youths who engages in rural-urban labour migration is still on the increase due to varied factors among which are social, economic, geographical and political. This has great consequences on the elderly left behind in the rural communities who are characterized with non-formal employment with menial and manual work with its attendant meagre earnings as long as their physical strength can afford (Animasahun and Chapman, 2017). Besides, the breaking down in the traditional structure of aged parents relying on adult children for care and support after rural-urban migration may greatly affect the elderly left behind especially in the rural areas (Eboiyehi, 2010). It is this gap in knowledge that motivated this study which is aimed at providing a better understanding of the



physical, health and social wellbeing of the left behind elderly in Temidire, a rural settlement in Oyo South Senatorial Districts of Oyo state, Nigeria. In the aspect of policy, the fact that this study collects, process and report data on elderly persons in the migration context will help in improving policy and planning. This will further help in supporting the achievement of ageing-related United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as protecting the human rights of all people of all ages by “leaving no one behind” (Global Migration Data Portal, 2019).

Research Questions

The following research questions are put forward for a guide:

1. What are the socio-demographic differential of the elderly in Temidire?
2. What are the consequences of migration on the elderly left behind?
3. What are the coping strategies adopted by the elderly left behind in this settlement?
4. Are there any differences in the coping strategies adopted by the males and females elderly left behind?

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the challenges of rural labour migration on the left behind elderly in Temidire, Oyo state.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the socio-demographic differentials of the elderly in the study area
2. Identify the consequences of migration on the elderly left behind
3. To examine the coping strategies of the elderly left behind in the settlement

Study Area

The study area is Temidire in Ibarapa East Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. It is a rural settlement in Oyo South Senatorial district of Oyo state, located between latitude 7°25N to 7°45N” and longitude 3°20E to 3°40E (Fig 1). The community is a small farming settlement close to Eruwa with a population of 333 (164 males and 169 females) and projected to 384 total population for 1996 according to the 1991 population census (NPC, 1991) and a total household population of 227 (Authors fieldwork, 2018). The reasons for using the 1991 population census is the absence of disaggregated census data for Temidire in the 2006 census figure. The major ethnic group is Yoruba with other ethnic groups such as Hausa/Fulani, Nupe and Igbira. The people are mostly farmers, artisans, Okada riders and traders. Although, farming activities in the area is largely subsistence (with the production of food crops such as yam, maize, and cassava) in nature, however, cashew crop is a major cash crop found in large scale in the area. Petty trading also thrives in the settlement with women as the traders. The major form of transportation is by roads and it is through the means of a periodic motor and regular okada to the nearby towns of Eruwa and Olola. Migration in Temidire is mostly (6%) internal with a majority (4.9%) of the flows to the southwestern states of Lagos, Osun and Oyo (Authors fieldwork, 2018).

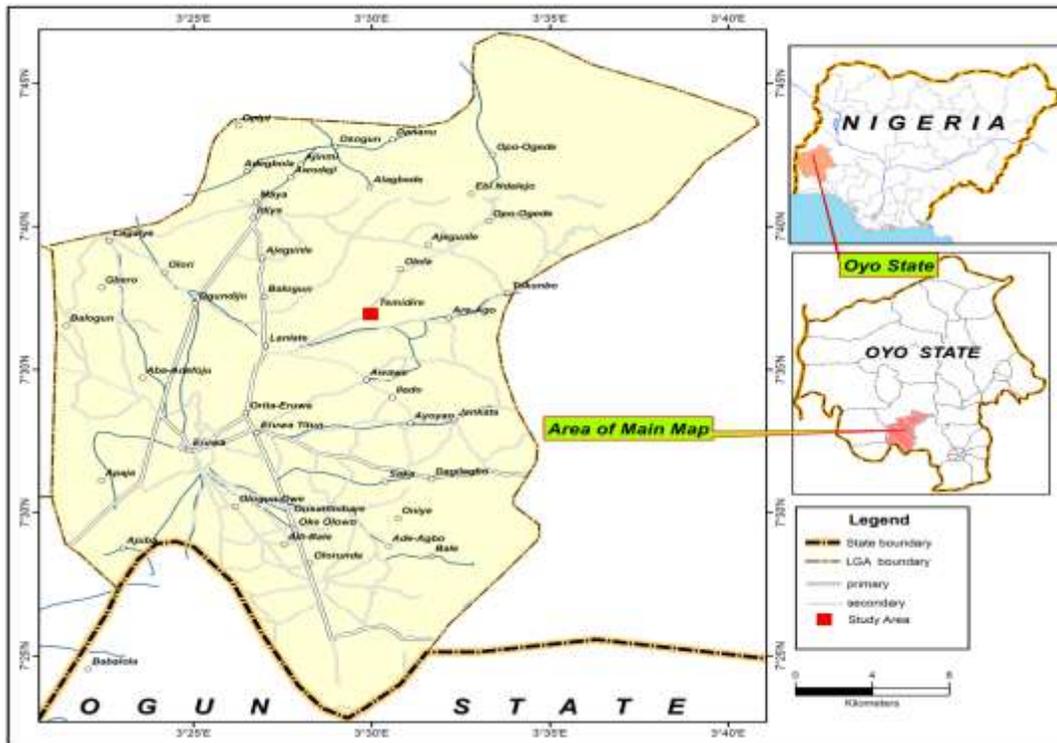


Fig 1: Study Area: Temidire, Ibarapa East Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria
Source: Author's Initiative

Review of Related Literature

Literature on socio-demographic differentials of elderly in Nigeria revealed that the total number of older people of aged 60 years and above went up from 8,741,292 in 2013 to 9,622,056 in 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics, NBS 2017). This indicates an increase of 1.8 per cent in the male aging population between 2013 and 2014 compared to 1.4 per cent increase for female (NBS, 2017). Also, research has shown that elderly in Nigeria make up 3.1 per cent or 5.9 million of the total population of 191 million. This statistics represent an increase of 600,000 during the five years period of between 2012 and 2017 (Population Reference Bureau, 2017; National Council of Ageing, 2017)

Many studies have assessed the emotional health implication of adult children migration on the left behind parents. Yao, (2011); Zhang et al, (2005) and Zhang and Li, (2004) in their studies identified effects such as loneliness and feeling of powerlessness on the elderly left behind. Lower health outcome was also found for elderly interviewed in Mexico (Antman, 2010). However, studies carried out in Moldova, Indonesia and Tonga reveals that the migration of an adult child does not worsen an elderly parent's health (Bohme, Persian and Stohr 2015; Kuln, Everett and Silvey 2011;) and Gibson, Mckenzie and Stillman 2011 respectively). Another study carried out by Xiang, Dewei and Zhao (2016) using the rural-urban migration China data based on the linear probability model to empirically investigate the effect of adult children migration on the health of left behind parents revealed that an additional adult child's migration to urban areas increases the probability of the left behind elderly parents being in poor health conditions by about 8 per cent.



Also, the study showed that those affected more are parents having one child from low-income households or aged above 60 years. In a comparative study that empirically evaluates the wellbeing of elderly individual aged 60 years and older left behind by their adult migrants children and those with adult children in Moldova (using data from the Nationally Representative Household Survey conducted in 2011-2012) showed limited consequences in the four dimension of wellbeing investigated such as physical health, housing social and emotional (Waidler, Vanore, Gassmann and Siegel 2017).

Thapa, Visentin, Kornhabor and Cleay (2018) revealed that the left behind older persons shows a higher level of mental health problems compared with non-left behind older persons. High depressive symptoms, loneliness, lower life satisfaction, lower cognitive ability and poorer psychological health were also identified among the left behind older parents in the study. Conditions such as living arrangement, gender, education, income, physical health status, physical activities, family and social support, age, rural residence and frequency of children visits were identified risk factors that influence the identified consequences among the left behind elderly. The previous study in China among the elderly revealed reduced happiness (Chyi and Mao, 2012). Also, Scheffel and Zhang (2019) study revealed a reduced rate of happiness with 6.6 per cent and loneliness with 3.3 per cent as a consequence of internal migration on the elderly left behind. Further, on emotional health outcome, Antman (2016) investigation in Mexico revealed a worsened level of emotional wellbeing as a result of migration. In Ireland, documented evidence showed that elderly mothers left behind have greater emotional health compared to male (Moscca and Berett, 2016).

United Nation (2002) posited that in many developing countries, the ageing population is more in rural areas owing to the exodus of young adults. As a result, older people are left behind with no traditional family support. This was corroborated in a study carried out in Ghana which revealed a declining support for older people in the urban study area of Ghana as a result of the migration of children (Aboderin, 2004).

Chang, Dong and Macphail (2011) study on time-allocation pattern of the elderly and children left behind in a multivariate analysis revealed an increase in time spent on the farm and domestic work by the left behind elderly and children in rural China after the migration episode. When differentiated in terms of gender, the results showed that elderly women had an increased work time than elderly men.

He and Ye (2014) in their study of 400 elderly in 10 rural communities of China shows an incidence of the altered traditional care system. They posited further that as a result of the migration of rural workforce to urban centres, the welfare of the left behind elderly has been degraded.

Methodology

The study is a descriptive, cross-sectional in design. This design allow the use of different methods to investigate a particular phenomenon. It focused mainly on the elderly people (60+) residing alone in the settlement for at least six months and having a family member who has migrated out of the settlement a year before the survey. An elderly is defined as a person who has attained the age 60 and above (United Nations, 2013, 2019; NBS, 2018).

In this study, both primary and secondary data were used. Secondary data for the work was gathered from textbooks, journals and periodicals to complement the primary sources are from



participant observation, questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). All elderly people in household residing in Temidire constitute the target population or sample frame. From a total household population of 227, a total of 21 elderly, consisting of 15 males and 6 females were used for the sample. The small nature of the sample frame is due to the criterion used in selecting the sample frame. An elderly is either male or female household member residing alone for at least six months in this settlement and of age 60 years and above. In addition, he/she must have at least a child that has migrated out of the settlement for at least a year prior to the time of the survey.

This study utilized a mixed method approach in order to understand the issues relating to consequences of migration on elderly left behind. The questionnaire for the study has 14 items. Section "A" elicited information on respondents biodata including age, gender, occupation, educational status and marital status while Section 'B' sought information on the duration of absence from Temidire, frequency of visits and periods of visits. Data were also collected on respondents' means of contact with children after migration. Respondents' opinion on the perceived physical consequences (such as elderly abuse in form of general neglect, verbal abuse, medical neglect, lack of visitation, perceived level of comfortability with their living condition through the scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree), causes of stress (such as increased demand for health care, decreased functional independence, increased economic stress, absence of elderly-friendly services) and coping strategies as a result of the absence of their children at home were also sourced for. Since there is no nationally representative sampling frame on the data set, the elderly in the household that fit into the criteria were identified and selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The choice of this method was because random sampling method cannot be used to reach the targeted population. Through this method of referrals, 21 elderly comprising of 15 males and 6 females were identified that fit into these criteria in the entire settlement.

Data were collected directly through the questionnaire from the identified elderly and three different Focus Group Discussion were organized for the participants during the research. Discussion were recorded in Yoruba (the indigenous language) and then transcribed. Participants' observation method were employed to gather data on the three occasions from a cross section of people. Through this, the study achieved the desired validity, reliability and diversity. In addition, the study was conducted after informed consent was obtained from all the participants and it was agreed that the first alphabet of their names should be used while reporting the results. All respondents were purposively selected based on the inclusion criteria through the author's informal links/referral. Data collected were analyzed using statistical tools such as percentages, charts and graphs. Coding, thematic and content analysis were manually done to analyze the qualitative data generated.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Sample Population

Gender	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Male	15	71.4
Female	6	28.6
Total	21	100



Age	Frequency	Percentages (%)
60-65	3	14.3
66-71	7	33.3
72-77	5	23.8
78 and above	6	28.6
Total	21	100
Occupation	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Agriculture	9	42.8
Manufacturing	3	14.3
Construction	3	14.3
Commerce	6	28.6
Total	21	100
Education Status	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Non-Formal	7	33.3
Primary	9	42.8
Secondary	3	14.3
Tertiary	2	9.6
Total	21	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Married	6	28.6
Divorced/Separated	9	42.8
Widow/widower	6	28.6
Total	21	100

Source: Author's Analysis, 2019

Elderly respondents left behind consisted of 71.4% male and 28.6% female. Also, the majority (33.3%) of them were aged between 66-71 years (Table 1). Those elderly in the age group between 72-77 and 78 and above were 23.8% and 28.6% respectively while the least age group of respondents is 60-65 with 14.3%. The occupational distribution shows that agriculture remains the major (42.8%) form of occupation in the settlements among the elderly. This was followed by commerce/trading (28.6%). Manufacturing and construction had a share of 14.3% each respectively. Further, the elderly with primary education is the largest (42.8%) among the respondents. Other respondents had non-formal (33.3%), secondary (14.3%), and tertiary (9.6%) educational status. Of all the elderly, 42.8% are divorced/separated, and the married and widow/widower had an equal share of 28.6% each respectively.

Frequency of Visits

The frequency of visits by migrated children in the settlements is as shown in Table 2 and graphically in Fig 2. This factor is considered because it is an important determinant of the effects of migration on the left behind elderly (Thapa, et al., 2018). The graph shows that more than half (66.7%) of the left behind elderly reported a visit of their migrated children as occasion demanded,

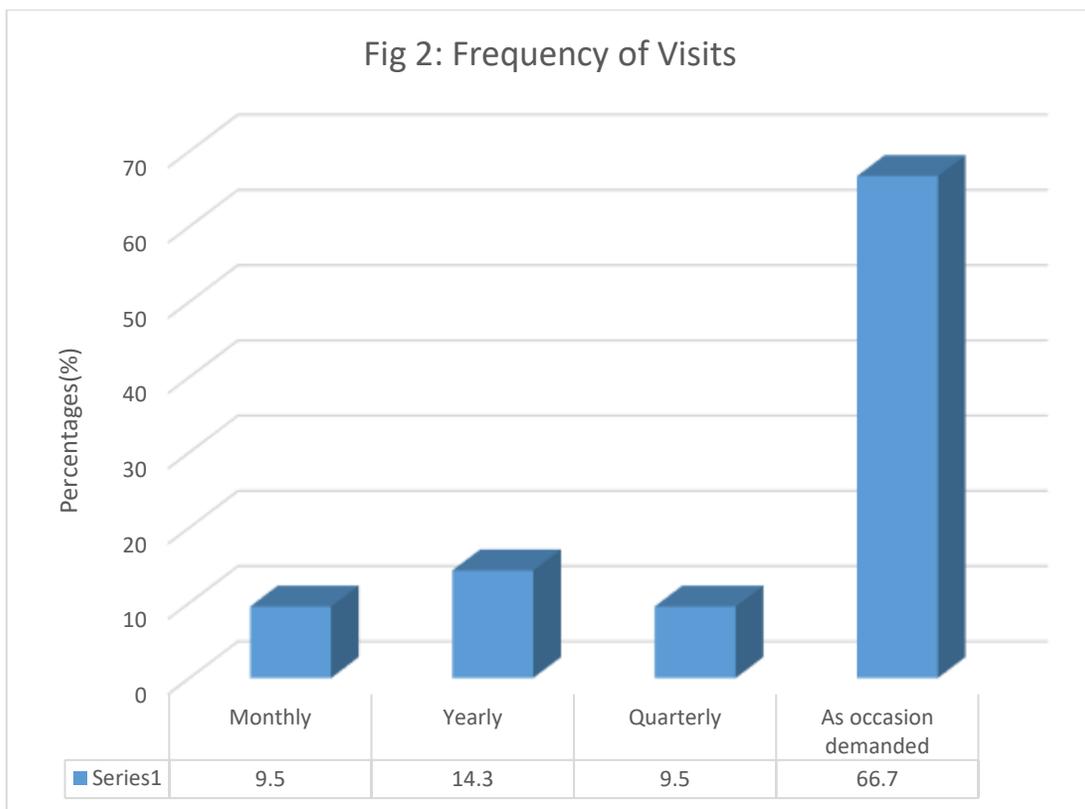


followed by those who visit home yearly (14.3%). Other visits are monthly and quarterly with a share of 9.5 per cent each. The pattern of the visits reveals that migrated children rarely visit the left behind elderly.

Table 2: Frequency of Visit

Frequency of Visits	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Monthly	2	9.5
Yearly	3	14.3
Quarterly	2	9.5
As occasion Demanded	14	66.7
Total	21	100

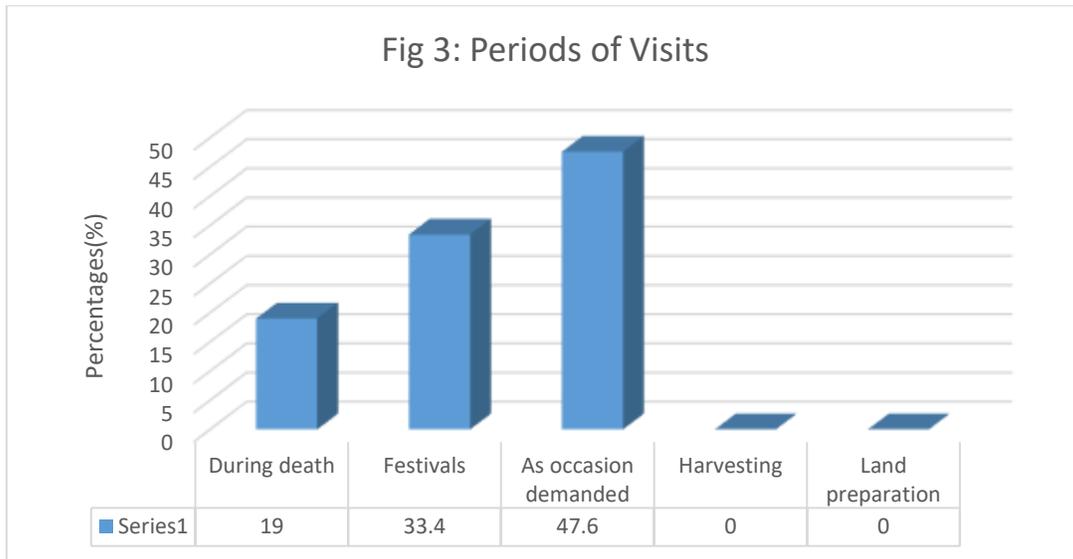
Source: Author's Analysis, 2019



Source: Author's Analysis, 2019

Periods of Visits

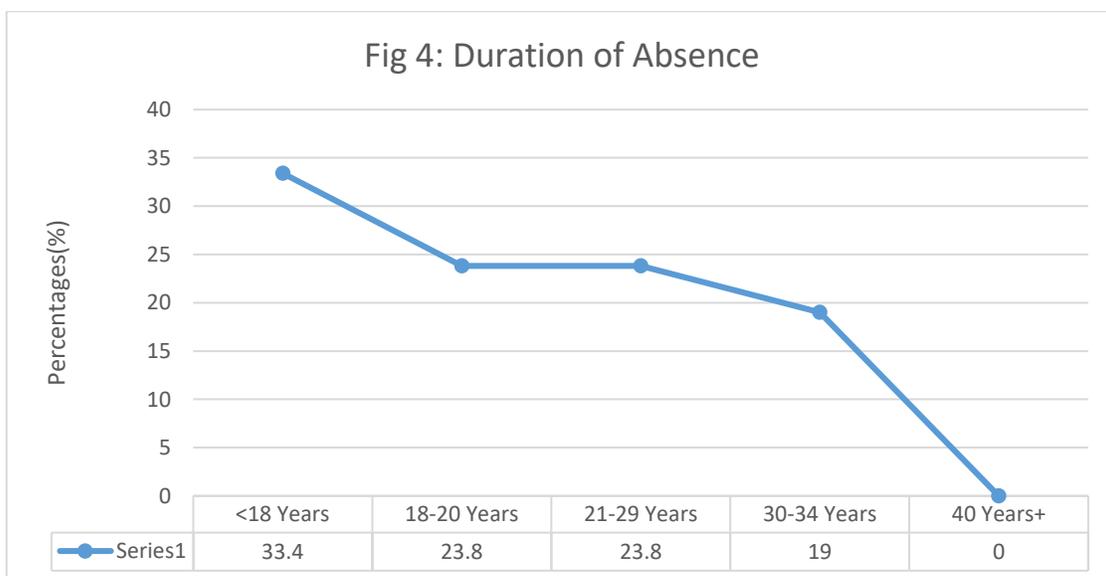
The periods of visits are shown graphically in Fig. 3. They are as occasion demanded (47.6%), during festivals (33.4%) and death (19%). That is, 10, 7 and 4 of the respondents respectively. Even though Temidire settlement is a rural settlement, one would expect that more visits might occur during harvesting and land preparation. However, no visits were recorded during these periods.



Source: Author's Analysis, 2019

Duration of Absence

The spatial variation of the duration of absence is as depicted in Fig. 4. The graph indicates that majority(33.4%) of the migrated children have left the settlement for 18 years and less while the remaining proportion of 23.8%, 23.8%, 19% and 0% have been absent for 18-20 years, 21-29 years, 30-39 years and 40 + years respectively. None of the left behind elderly indicated that an adult child that has left for 40 years and above. This pattern shows that the period of migration decreases with increase in the duration of absence.



Source: Author's Analysis, 2019



Means of Contact with Children

Opinions were sought on how the respondents made contact with their children and are as presented in Table 3. The multiple responses revealed phone calls and travelling out of the settlement as the most prominent. Out of the 21 respondents, 52.4% are through phone calls, 28.6% engages in travelling while 19% indicates no contact at all at the time of the survey. Disaggregating further by gender, shows that majority (33.4%) of the respondents who made contact through phones are males while 19% are females. Also, among the respondents, female elderly left behind travel most (19%) to meet their children compared with male that has a share of 9.6%. However, the proportion of respondents with no contact is 19%.

Table 3: Means of Contact

	Frequency	Male	Female
Phone Calls	(11) 52.4%	(7)33.4%	(4)19%
Travelling	(6) 28.6%	(2)9.6%	(4)19%
No Contact	(4) 19%	(4)19%	(0) 0
Total	(21)100	(13)62%	(8)38%

Source: Author's Analysis, 2019

Consequences of Migration on left behind elderly- Elderly Abuse

From Table 4, general neglect of the elderly left behind, verbal abuse, medical neglect, lack of visitation and being uncomfortable with their living condition were identified as the form of abuse in the study area. Lack of visitation ranked highest (38.1%) among the strongly agreed (SA). This was followed by medical neglect (28.6%). Others are verbal abuse (14.3%), general neglect of the elderly and being uncomfortable with their living condition with 9.5 per cent each of those who strongly agreed. On the other hand, there is a slight variation in the pattern of those who agree with the form of elderly abuse. Lack of visitation (28.7%) form the majority followed by general neglect (23.8%). However, 19 per cent each of the elderly agree to medical neglect and being uncomfortable with their living condition while verbal abuse ranked least (9.5%) among the elderly who agree with the form of abuse. Moreover, only 8.3 per cent disagree with verbal abuse as a form of elderly abuse identified in the settlement. In general, elderly abuse include lack of visitation (66.8%), medical neglect (47.6%), general neglect of elderly (33.3%), verbal abuse (28.6%) and being uncomfortable with their living condition (28.5%) in order of importance. In addition, in the FGD session, more information was revealed. Majority revealed that neglect due to non-visitation is the major form of abuse identified by most respondents as summarized in the responses below:

"... I have not seen my child since he left the house and this has resulted in a lot of hardship especially medically" (Mr A, 80 years old elderly)

"... My children rarely visit me" (Mr O, 71 years old elderly)

"... God has been my only companion and some neighbours children have also been helpful since they all left without looking back" (82 years old elderly)

"... living alone is not good and is even made worse when no one is visiting" (FGD session)

"... I feel neglected in this community because I have no children I can call my own around me" (Mrs Y, a 75 years old elderly)



“... I am sick inside because I am the one living alone doing most of the house chores which I am now finding difficult because of my age” (An 80 years old elderly)

These findings are in consonance with earlier analysis where the majority of the elderly reported frequency and periods of visits to be as occasion demanded with 66.7% and 47.6% respectively (see Fig 2 and 3). The above findings reveal that despite the 1989 Nigeria National Social Development Policy aimed at protecting the elderly from neglect in form of assistance, there has been no effective implementation as earlier noted by Oladeji (2011).

Table 4: Forms of Elderly Abuse on Left Behind Elderly

Elderly Abuse	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Total
General neglect	(9.5%) 2	(23.8%) 5	-	-	(33.3%) 7
Verbal abuse	(14.3%) 3	(9.5%) 2	(4.8%) 1	-	(28.6%) 6
Medical neglect	(28.6%) 6	(19%) 4	-	-	(47.6%) 10
Lack of visitation	(38.1%) 8	(28.6%) 6	-	-	(66.7%) 14
Uncomfortable with their living condition	(9.5%) 2	(19%) 4	-	-	(28.5%) 6
	(100) 21	(100) 21	1	-	(100) 43

Source: Author's Analysis, 2019

Causes of Stress

Another effect of migration on elderly identified is stress among the elderly. The study further sought to know about the causes of stress among the left behind elderly. Table 5 shows that majority (33.4%) of the elderly identified inadequate mean of sustenance as a major cause of economic stress. Similarly, increased demand for health care and the absence of elderly-friendly services ranked second most identified causes of stress (23.8%) while decreased functional independence ranked least with 19 per cent. However, in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted, majority of the male elderly left behind identified the absence of elderly-friendly services. However, the entire participant recognized increased demand for health care, loneliness as a major cause of stress in the settlement as attested to in their responses below:

“... as you can see if you look around, the government did not provide any amenity for us to relax in this community” (FGD session)

“... most of us depend on local herbs for medicine or when cases are severe we go to Eruwa to access health care facility” (FGD session)

“... I feel lonely most of the times but I play local games with other inhabitants to reduce my stress” (Mrs O, 80 years old elderly)

“... presence of elderly-friendly service in this community? no no no” (FGD session)

“... only routine immunization of our children takes place “ a 61 years old female participants



“... we need more health care facility in this community” (FGD session)
“... it cannot be denied, I am lonely and it makes me think a lot” (Mrs. T, a 70 years old elderly)
“... when there is no money, the body is week abi” (FGD session)
“... we need free health care services for those of us that are old and can’t work again” (FGD, session)

Table 5: Causes of Stress

Variable	Percentages
Increased demand for healthcare	(23.8%) 5
Decreased functional independence	(19%) 4
Inadequate means of sustenance	(33.4%) 7
Absence of elderly friendly services	(23.8%) 5
Total	(100%) 21

Source: Author’s Analysis, 2019

Coping Strategies

Coping strategies are methods the elderly left behind is adopting to make life bearable and pleasant for their daily living. Coping strategies in this study refer to different ways the left behind elders bear the experiences of migration of their children in order to make life more bearable for them. The perceived coping strategies by the respondents are as presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Perceived Coping Strategies by the Respondents

Coping Strategies	Male	Female	Total
Working in the farm	(10) 90.9%	(1)9.1%	11
Borrowing from neighbours	(10) 83.3%	(2) 16.7%	12
Engaging in joint petty saving	(15) 71.4%	(6) 28.6%	21
Making calls to reduce stress of idleness	(5) 62.5%	(3) 37.5	8
Visits to neighbours/relatives	(9) 60%	(6) 40%	15
Playing local games (Ayo Olopon)	(15) 100%	-	15
Attending/engaging in religious function	(7) 53.8%	(6) 46.2%	13
Attending social function	(9) 60%	(6) 40%	15
Engaging in trading	(2) 28.6%	(5) 71.4%	7
Total	(82) 70.1%	(35) 29.9%	(117)100

Source: Author’s Analysis, 2019

From Table 6, the distribution of the coping strategies adopted among the male and female left behind elderly shows that all the male respondents engage in playing of local games as a coping strategy (100%). Other coping strategies are working in the farm (90.9%), borrowing (83.3%), engaging in petty savings (71.4%) and attending social functions (60%). Furthermore, male adopted attending religious functions (53.8%), visits to relatives (60%), and making calls (62.5%). Only 2, (28.6%) of the males engages in trading activities as a coping strategy. Conversely, for the female elderly left behind, trading activities form the major (71.4%) coping strategy. Others include



attending/engaging in religious function (46.2%), attending social function and visits to relatives (40% each), making calls (37.5%), engaging in petty savings (28.6%), borrowing (16.7%) and working in the farm (9.1%).

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The migration of a household member and the consequent left behind of elderly posed a challenge to them. This study has examined the challenges of elderly left behind as a result of the migration of their children in a rural settlement. The identified challenges are lack of care, increased loneliness, elder abuse, increased economic stress, decreased functional independence. Moreover, Nigeria is engrossed with socio-economic problems that have impacted negatively on the care of the left behind elderly due to the collapse of the traditional family care system. Hence, the left behind elderly have to adopt various coping strategies among others such as working in the farm, borrowing, visit to relatives, playing local games and attending religious functions. In the face of these daunting challenges in the rural areas in Nigeria, the government needs to develop and implement policies that will adequately cover the needs of the aged in rural areas. Laws should be promulgated and enforced on elderly abuse and neglect in Nigeria. This policy should incorporate the widowed, elderly and those incapacitated by infirmities with respect to their daily care. Moreover, targeted livelihoods support for elderly who are left behind should be incorporated. In addition, there is need to improve the living condition of the elderly left behind by restructuring the social welfare scheme in the country to favour the elderly left behind especially in the rural areas who have no reliable source of income and who are faced with the menace of rural-urban labour migration.

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