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**The Socio-Economic Impacts  
Of Male Out-Migration on Rural Women:  
The Case of Babati District, Manyara Region**

***Milline J. Mbonile<sup>1</sup> & Joseph William<sup>2</sup>***

**Abstract**

This study examined the socio-economic impacts of male out-migration on rural women in Babati District, Manyara Region, and identified the major factors influencing out-migration in the region. It also examined the survival strategies of rural women in the absence of their husbands, and it evaluates the intervention measures to the problem. Findings showed that male out-migration in Babati District has been caused by the push-pull factors including population pressure, shortage of land, conflicts, land degradation and poverty. Pull factors were associated with the need to search for better livelihood, business and employment opportunities. Male out-migration has both positive and negative socio-economic impacts on the women left behind who adopt survival strategies to cope with difficult life through borrowing, consuming premature field crops, reducing the number of meals, selling household assets, agricultural diversification, petty business and migration. The study concludes that male out-migration has more negative than positive impacts to women left behind. It is recommended that the government reduce the rate of male out-migration by providing agricultural incentives, creation of rural markets and employment opportunities, ensuring gender equality in resource distribution, and minimizing rural-urban disparities.

**Introduction**

The ways in which male out-migration from Babati District may affect different dimensions of women livelihood are not clearly known because most studies have concentrated on the factors that influence out-migration in the area of origin, and on the roles and survival of migrants at the place of destination (Muhandi, 1995; Arjan, 1999).

The trends, patterns and destinations of male out-migration in Manyara Region can be traced back to the colonial period because of the establishment of plantation agriculture in the different regions in the

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country, particularly in Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Morogoro and Tanga (Spear, 1996). This situation perpetuated labor migrants to work in the plantations and estates as seasonal labor migrants (Gulliver, 1955, 1957).

After World War II men tended to migrate alone while women remained behind. Even though such women cultivated the land and took care of animals while their men were working somewhere else, they were not entitled to inherit land when their husbands passed away. This forced some women to move to towns; and since it was difficult to get wage employment in there, prostitution became the only means to earn money (Lugalla, 1990).

During the post-independence period, the wave of male out-migration shifted from large plantations to urban centres where they could find jobs for sustaining their own life and their families. In the case of Manyara region, most of these migrated to large towns like Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Moshi, Mwanza and Tanga (Muhandi, 1995). Nonetheless, more recently male out-migration in the region is highly associated with environmental factors such as population pressure, drought, land degradation, crop and animal diseases, poverty, conflicts, hard life in rural areas and individual motivations (Mbonile, 2004; Karlson, 2008).

In the area of origin male out-migration is well known to cause a lot of economic and social pressure on the poorly and already congested areas in the country. This out-migration of males is on the rise in many parts of the world due to economic and social developments, leaving many women either temporarily or permanently in charge of households in rural areas. However, the efforts of the women left behind to make ends meet are undermined by the laborious nature of farming activities, labor constraints or by the lack of access to productive resources (Palmer, 1985). As observed by Taylor (2000) male out-migration affects those left behind in terms of food production, agricultural exports, rural demand for manufactured goods, and investment elsewhere in the economy.

Male out-migration may have both positive and negative impacts on the family members left behind. The absence of the head of household is expected to give autonomy and power to the spouse remaining behind. Contrarily, it may increase the burden of workload and responsibilities. Women may also be subjected to greater patriarchal control as migrating husbands may delegate authority to other male members or older women in the family (Gulati, 1993; Salehe 2012).

Male out-migration is a prominent phenomenon in Manyara region, and it is caused by multi-factors ranging from searching for better employment opportunities and education, escaping from harsh climate, land degradation and environmental vulnerability. This situation has the impact on women

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socio-economic development in the area of origin, but the nature and magnitude of the impact differs from one part of the region to another depending on the physical characteristics, culture and behaviour patterns. Also, it varies considerably according to three main variables: the type of family structure (whether it is nuclear or extended); existing human capital of the spouse left behind (whether she earns income, and her level of education); and patterns of migration (whether the duration of husband's stay elsewhere is short or long and recurrent).

Since males out-migration is more revealed in Babati District and no research has been conducted to see the impacts left behind, this study intends to investigate the socio-economic impacts of male out-migration on rural women in Babati District.

The main objective is to investigate the socio-economic impacts of male out-migration on the rural women in Babati District. The study will be guided by the following specific objectives, which are to:

1. Assess the major factors influencing male-out-migration in Babati District.
2. Examine the impact of male out-migration on household socio-economic development in the study area.
3. Examine the survival strategies of rural women associated with male-out-migration.
4. Evaluate the intervention measures of male out-migration in the study area.

### **Conceptual and Methodology of the Study**

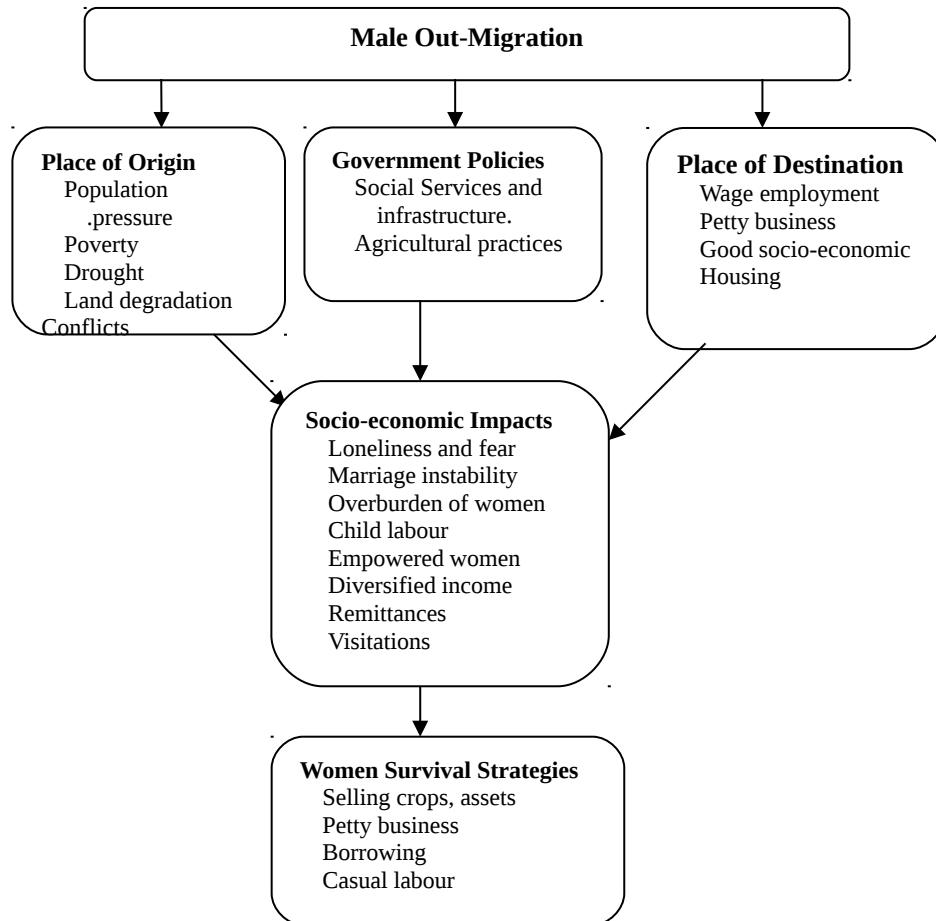
As indicated in Fig.1 migration is a continuous process that redistributes and transforms the population from poor areas to areas that are relatively better off economically. Besides spatial dimensions migration also transforms skills, attitudes, motivations of the migrants so that they are integrated into new areas. (Mabogunje, 1970)

In the case of Babati District among the push factors in the place of origin includes population pressure, poverty and hard life, land degradation, family conflicts, and disasters like pests and drought. These factors force males to adjust themselves by migrating to other places (Lee 1966).

In the area of destination migrants are attracted by pull factors such as employment opportunities, formal and informal businesses, availability of resources and social services, and the hope for better life. The integration and assimilation of these migrants depend on the employment opportunities and availability of housing, relatives or friends who accommodate them temporarily or rent their own houses. Those not

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absorbed in the formal sector join the informal sector. Other migrants cope with urban life by being multi-occupational, e.g., by working and doing petty business (Mabogunje, 1970, Jamal & Weeks, 1984).



**Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework of Male Out-migration**

The socio-economic impacts of male out-migration on women left behind include loneliness and fear, overburdening of women, decrease in production, increase in dependence, creation of child labour, increase in women empowerment, diversification of agriculture and improvement of infrastructure. Besides these, migrants also establish links with their places of origin by sending remittances and visitations. Other impacts include development of trade, introduction of new crops and conservation of

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environment (Mbonile, 2004). On the other hand, there are survival strategies that are used by the women left behind in the rural areas. These strategies include intensification and diversification of agriculture, hiring and selling labour power, reducing farm size, borrowing, selling a part of crops and animals, selling production and household assets, petty business, re-marriage, tolerance and migration (Mabogunje, 1970; Mbonile, 2004).

In order to examine the impact of male out-migration in Babati District, a number of migration theories were used to elaborate more clearly the process of male-out-migration. These include the push-pull theory that was introduced by Lee in 1966, which shows that male out-migration in Babati is induced by push factors like population pressure, and pull factors such as employment opportunities in the area of destination. On the other hand, the dual economy migration theory indicates how developed regions like urban areas continue to pull populations from the less developed rural areas (Lewis, 1954). Furthermore, the system approach model—introduced by Mabogunje in 1970—elaborates more on rural and urban linkages, such as the use of remittances and visitations.

Most studies on the impact of male out-migration reveal that it is the women and children who are left behind that bear the full weight of the loss of male labour from a household. As observed by Myers (1995), the wives of seasonal migrants in El Ain (Sudan) assumed complete household responsibilities such as managing household budget, children's welfare, water needs and marketing.

Women survival strategies in the absence of males include reduction in consumption, sale of production assets like land, sale of household properties like bed, illegal activities, begging, re-marriage, permanent out-migration, **starvation and destitution**. Others include intensified sale of livestock, lodging informal claims, casual labour, temporary migration, withdrawing children from school, reducing the quality and frequency of meals, and reducing farm size and social obligations. Many coping and survival strategies are forms of informal safety nets as they involve intensification of existing activities rather than engagement in new activities (Devercaux, 1999; Ellis, 1998).

Another survival strategy is livelihood diversification. To a large extent poor households depend on subsistence crops to survive, but middle and rich households rely purely on agriculture, livestock and petty trade. They

Are these survival strategies?

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survive by selling wild foods, firewood, charcoal and agricultural labour (SCF, UK, 1999).

Several countries have implemented a number of policies aimed at stemming out-migration, particularly rural-urban migration. For example, the transformation and improvement approach was used in Tanzania from 1961-1966 to encouraged progressive farmers to increase agricultural production (Mpangala, 2000). In 1967 another approach of rural development was introduced under the *ujamaa* village programme to improve social services of the rural population (Nyerere, 1968).

The study of this paper was conducted in Babati District, which is one of the districts in Manyara region. The study used simple random sampling technique to collect primary data. The sampling began by selecting the villages, which were Gallapo, Nangara and Singe. Primary data was also collected by using a structured questionnaire, and the number of households sampled is as indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Selected Villages and Household Sample Size**

<b>Village</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>	<b>Households Sampled</b>
Gallapo	824	82
Nangara	679	68
Singe	517	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>202</b>

The other methods of collecting data included in-depth interviews with key informants, religious and government leaders. Focus group discussions with females were conducted in each village, and the groups did not exceed 12 people representing the various age groups of women. **The data analysis used the ????**

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### **Analysis of Study Findings**

#### ***Socio-economic Characteristics of the Study Population***

Due to out-migration of males, the age structure of the study population showed that the proportion of females (55.6%) was far higher than that of males (44.4%). The marital status of respondents revealed that in villages like Singe more than 80% of the females were married, followed by Gallapo (73.2%), and Nangara (58.8%).

**Table 3: Socio-economic Characteristics of Study Population**

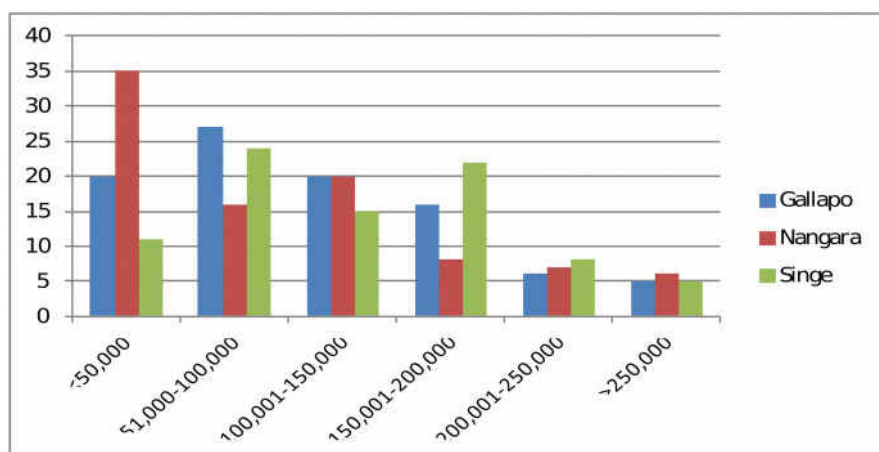
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
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	(n = 560)	(n = 701)	(n = 1261)
0-14	18.7	24.1	42.8
15-64	24.7	30.8	55.5
65+	1.0	0.7	1.7
<b>Marital Status</b>	Gallapo	Nangara	Singe
Married	73.2	58.8	80.8
Separated	17.9	17.8	19.2
Divorced/widowed	9.8	17.6	
Widowed		6.2	
<b>Education</b>	<b>N(=82)</b>	<b>N(=68)</b>	<b>N(=52)</b>
Non-formal	4.9	11.8	5.8
Adult	4.9	5.9	0.0
Primary	68.3	71.5	69.2
Secondary	9.7	5.9	23.1
College	12.3	2.9	1.9
<b>Livelihood Activities</b>			
Crop production	67.1	79.4	73.1
Animal keeping	4.9	4.4	1.9
Mixed farming	23.1	8.8	15.4
Petty trading	4.9	7.4	1.9
Others	0.0	0.0	7.7
<b>Household Size</b>			
1-3	14.6	5.9	15.4
4-6	31.7	38.2	32.7
5-9	43.9	50.0	48.1
10+	9.8	5.9	3.8

#### ***Income from economic activities in the study area***

The level of income of a household has a very significant effect in the decision to migrate. It is well established that the greater the gap in earning between the place of origin and destination the more likely are working age group to migrate (Lucas, 1997). As indicated in Fig. 2 most households earn very low income, which is inadequate to purchase some of the required basic needs such as food, clothes, housing, water, health and education. Furthermore, the proportion of those who were earning less TAS 50,000 was 20.7% in Gallapo, 35.3% in Nangara, and 11.5% in Singe. In the other extreme the proportion earning more than TAS 250,000 per annum was 4.9% in Gallapo, 5.9% in Nangara, and 9.6% in Singe. As a whole, more than 60% of households earned less than TAS 200,000 per year, which gives an average of TAS 16,667 per month.



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**Fig. 2: Annual Income of Rural Households in the Study Area**

### ***Determinants of Male Out-migration in the Place of Origin***

The determinants of migration can be related either to the characteristics of the migrants or the place of origin and destination of migrants. These factors may be economic, social, demographic or ecological; and are more related to the totality of an environment (Adepoju, 1994). The following are the major determinants of out-migration in the study area.

#### *Push-factors at the area of origin*

In the study, 20% of the respondents claimed that their husbands out-migrated because of hard life, which includes lack of social services, food insecurity, unemployment and lack of purchasing power. Low income emerged as the second push factor (18.4%), which is more associated with low investment in Babati District. As observed by Mbilinyi and Omari (1996), extreme poverty in rural areas push young people to migrate to urban areas in large numbers. Other factors that push people out in rural areas includes land degradation (11.2%), drought (11.2%), crop and animal diseases (9.9%), and land shortage (11%) (see Table 4). As observed by Lihawa (1995), rural areas have been adversely affected by poor infrastructure, communication and business premises.

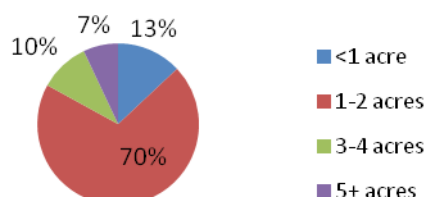
**Table 4: Push Factors for Migration in Rural Areas**

<b>Rural-Push Factors</b>	<b>Gallapo (f =162)</b>	<b>Nangara (f = 126)</b>	<b>Singe (f = 98)</b>	<b>Total (f = 392)</b>
Low income	24.4	11.9	16.3	<b>18.4</b>
Drought	12.5	11.9	8.2	<b>11.2</b>
Land degradation	11.9	11.2	10.2	<b>11.2</b>
Family conflicts	9.6	20.6	14.3	<b>14.3</b>
Crops/animal diseases	8.9	7.9	14.3	<b>9.9</b>
Land shortage	10.1	12.7	10,2	<b>11.0</b>
Hard life	22.6	23.8	26.5	<b>24.0</b>

It was further observed that many households in the study area did not have enough land for agricultural production, leading to high population pressure and invasion of marginal lands (See Fig. 3). These results are more similar to what was observed by Kivelia (1999) in Mount Meru area where land scarcity and lack of natural resources compelled people to

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adjust by adopting intensive farming or by changing completely into non-agrarian activities.



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**Fig. 3: Size of Land Possessed by Households in the Study Area**

#### *Pull Factors at the area of destination*

The existence of more employment opportunities in urban areas -- both in the formal and informal sectors -- was found to be the major pull factors leading to male out-migration from rural areas as indicated by more than 25.7% respondents. Moreover, about 30.6% of the women indicated that their husbands out-migrated in-search of new life, whereas only 15.1% of female respondents showed that their husbands out-migrated because of good business opportunities in urban areas. Others mentioned the presence of resources (20.4%), and improved infrastructure (4.1%) (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Factors that Attracted Males to Out-migrate in the Study Area**

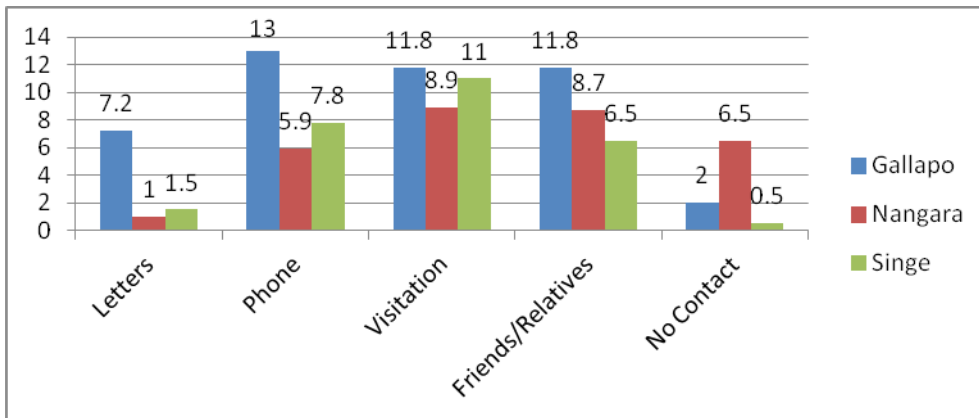
Urban-pull factors	Gallapo (n = 88)	Nangara (n = 87)	Singe (n = 70)	Total (n = 245)*
Employment opportunities	25.0	25.3	27.1	<b>25.7</b>
Good social services	6.8	2.3	2.9	<b>4.1</b>
Improved infrastructure	0.0	6.9	5.7	<b>4.1</b>
Business opportunities	18.2	8.0	20.0	<b>15.1</b>
New life	29.5	36.8	23.3	<b>30.6</b>
Resource availability	20.5	20.7	20.0	<b>20.4</b>

**Notes:** \* Multiple Responses

These results are similar to what was observed by Hossain (2001) in Egypt, that people migrated to towns and cities because of better livelihood opportunities. Most migrate to urban areas regardless of skills they possess, and are ready to risk themselves to enter informal activities as a trial and error (IURD, 2003).

***Rural-urban Linkages of Respondents***

To understand the socio-economic impacts of male out-migration on rural women it is essential to understand the means of linkages of migrants with their places of origin. The study revealed that more than 90.5% of migrants maintained contacts with their places of origin. The major means of contacts included mobile phones (25.3%), physical visits (30.5%), and writing letters (9.5%) (see Fig 4). Stark (1988) revealed the relationships between rural and urban areas was converted by the provision of remittances and day-to-day communication. These means of linkages were also observed by Kitali (2007) in her study of migration in Moshi Rural District, and by Zahor (2009) in his study of migration of Chake Chake District in Pemba.



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**Figure 4: Percentage Means of Linkages of Male Out-migrants with the Place of Origin**

***Preferred Period of Visitations***

Most migrants did not pay physical visitations to their places of origin systematically. About 63.1% of the respondents visited their places of origin once per year; and the main reason for the visits were to carry out agricultural activities, attend traditional functions, and perform other family responsibilities. About 18% of the respondents paid visits more than once in a year, and about 14% never visited their place of origin due to lack of fare and other social factors like being completely assimilated in the place of destination (see Table 6).

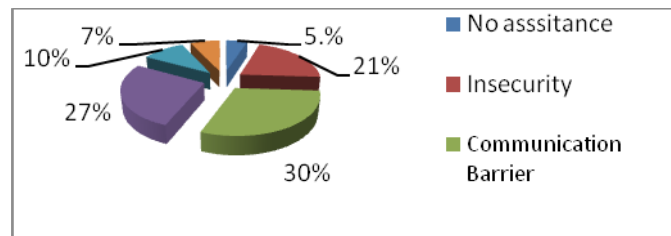
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**Table 6: Duration of Visitation of in the Area of Destination**

Duration of Visitation	Gallapo (n = 82)	Nangara (n = 68)	Singe (n = 52)	Total (n = 202)
<1 year	50.0	30.9	36.5	40.1
1 years	22.0	22.1	25.0	23.0
2 years	12.2	8.8	21.2	13.0
3 years	7.3	5.9	0.0	5.0
4+ years	2.4	2.9	11.5	5.0
No Visitation	6.1	29.4	5.8	14.0

### ***Problems Emanating from Absence of Males***

The families and communities at the place of origin faced a number of problems resulting from the absence of males. These problems include lack of assistance (30%) in different socio-economic tasks like childcare and house maintenance, and reduced household labour force (27%). Besides these, about 21% of households indicated that there was insecurity, which led to thefts of crops and livestock. Also, about 7% indicated that they were infected by diseases related to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV and AIDS, and about 5% complained of the lack of communication with their spouses (see Fig. 5).



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**Fig. 5: Problems Experienced in the Household due to Male Out-migration**

### ***Types of Assistance Received from Male Migrants***

Remittances were the most important link that bridged the rural and the urban economy in the study area. The majority of the women (80.9%) indicated that they received remittances from their migrant husbands in different ways. About 43.3% received remittances in the form of money transfers through bank accounts, mobile phones (e.g., M-Pesa, Tigo-pesa, etc.), or money orders. Some money is also sent through buses or by using friends and relatives that are visiting one's area of origin at a particular time. About 22.7% received materials like clothes (blackest, t-shirts, bed

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sheets, *khangas*, *vitenges* and school uniforms through this latter means. About 4.3% of the respondents said they received foodstuffs such as rice, sugar, wheat flour and cooking oil; while about 7.8% said they received building materials such as iron sheets, cement and other roofing materials like tiles. Also, about 2.8% indicated that their husbands had sent them agricultural equipments like hand hoes, ploughs, axes, machetes and knives. However, a proportion of about 19.1% of the respondents claimed to have received nothing from those that had out-migrated (see Table 7).

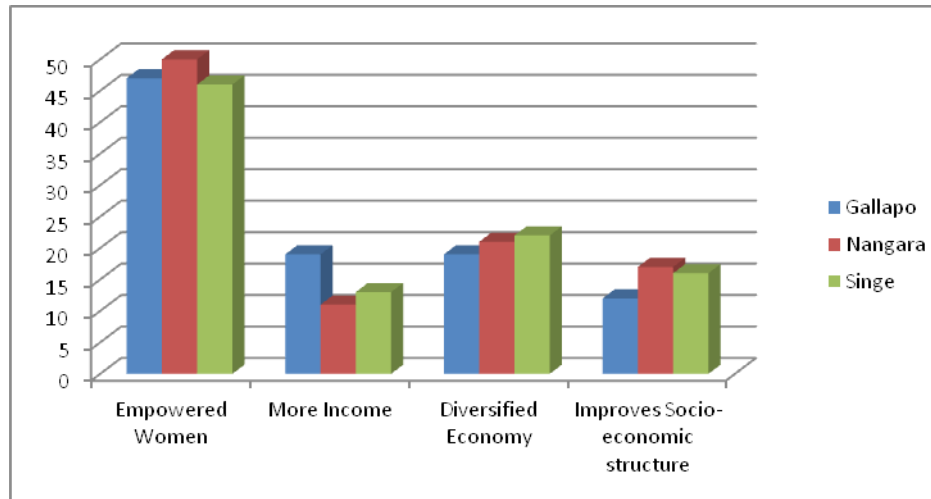
These findings are similar to what was observed by Gugler and Flanagan (1978), that remittances furnished villagers with luxury goods and in some cases rural areas as those of South Africa were dependent on remittances from migrants for survival. On the other hand, Stiffung (1994) found that in some rural areas remittances from migrants were diminishing with time. Women respondents reported that the bulk of remittances were used to purchase food and livestock; to pay wage labour, school fees and for health services; and to meet other social obligations like funerals.

### ***Impacts of Male-outmigration on Rural Household's Socio-economic Development***

The impact of male out-migration is either positive or negative (Lucas 1997). On the positive side, the majority of the women indicated that there were able to make their own decisions on resources like land use, and borrowing money from financial institutions such as banks, SACCOS, PRIDE, etc. Also, as observed by Mbilinyi and Omari (1996), other women managed to found their own petty businesses. With regard to negative impacts, the study revealed that the women remaining behind were overburdened with responsibilities, **especially with family issues such as the use of household resources, socio-cultural functions and finance**. Also others revealed that there was a shortage of male labour, and due to this women were forced to make bricks, fish and graze livestock. Furthermore, on the more dark side, there were the spread of STIs, especially the deadly HIV/AIDS, an increase in marriage instabilities, creation of child labour, and a lack of control of necessary household resources (see Fig. 6 and Table 8).

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**Fig. 6: Positive Impacts of Male-outmigration in Rural Households**

**Table 8: Negative Impacts of Male-outmigration on Rural Households**

Negative Impacts	Gallapo (n=136)	Nangara (n=114)	Singe (n=82)	Total (n=332)
Increase of women burden	35.0	39.0	39.0	<b>37.7</b>
Loneliness and fear	16.0	11.0	20.0	<b>15.4</b>
Intensified poverty	18.0	19.0	15.0	<b>17.5</b>
Reduced labour force	12.0	11.0	10.0	<b>10.8</b>
Marriage instability	7.0	4.0	2.0	<b>4.8</b>
Spread of HIV/AIDS	4.0	5.0	1.0	<b>3.6</b>
Poor resource control	4.0	8.0	12.0	<b>7.5</b>
Increase of child labour	4.0	3.0	1.0	<b>2.7</b>

#### **Survival Strategies used in the Household in the absence of Males**

Since historical times human beings people are known to have several adaptation strategies in order to survive with different shocks and stresses, especially when they encounter difficulties (Stark, 1988; Muhandi, 1995; Hossain, 2001). Households in Babati developed a number of strategies and techniques that enabled them to supplement what could be provided by out-migrants. These included seeking assistance from relatives, neighbours and their respective religious denominations to solve their immediate problems such as purchasing food, clothes and medicine. The assistance was not limited to material things but also to moral support. As indicated above, they also survived by borrowing money and from institutions like VICOBA, SACCOS and banks. Others diversified their economies in agriculture and

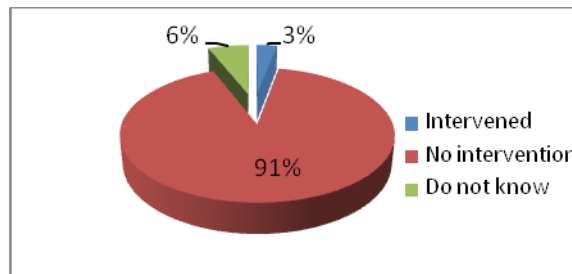
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livestock keeping by introducing new varieties of crops and livestock; while some sold their labour as casual labourers during the peak of cultivation and harvesting. Moreover, some were engaged in petty business, which to a certain extent boosted the income of their households.

**Intervention Measures for male Out-migration**

Some of the intervention measures included the reduction of rural-urban migration, balance of resource distribution, provision of social services, tax relief for agricultural products, and credit -- all of which in one way or another would curb out-migration. However, as indicated in Fig. 7, the majority of respondents indicated that there has been little intervention.

Intervention  
by who?



**Fig.7: Response of Government on Out-migration**

**Conclusion**

In answering the first objective on the main factors that influence out-migration, the study has observed that many males out-migrated to urban areas due to push factors such as shortage of land, land degradation, poverty in rural areas, drought, pests and diseases, and family conflicts. These factors worked in conjunction with pull factors which are found in the areas of destination such as better livelihood and employment opportunities, resource availability and better accommodation.

As concerns the impact of male out-migration on socio-economic development, the study findings show that it had positive socio-economic impacts to household economy due to remittances received as money, food, agricultural equipments/inputs, clothes, and building materials such as cement and corrugated iron sheets.

The study also found out that the survival strategies of rural women left behind by migrants included selling a part of crops or livestock, selling labour power, receiving assistance from relatives and faith organizations, borrowing, diversifying economic activities, doing petty business, withdrawing children from school, opting to low status jobs, and reducing

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social and ceremonial celebrations. It was observed that male out-migration has both positive and negative impacts on the society. However, the government has not taken any step to intervene and curb male out-migration

It is recommended that in order to minimize male out-migration, rural-urban inequalities should be reduced by improving agricultural facilities and infrastructure, and by providing subsidies of agricultural inputs. Above all, the government should formulate and reinforce strict and practicable policies on social and economic development.

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