

Underage Internal Migration from Rural to Urban Areas of Ethiopia: The Perspective of Social Marketing in Controlling Child Labor

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Abstract : This study focuses on the issue of underage internal migration from rural to urban areas in Ethiopia, specifically in the context of child labor. It addresses the significant disparities in living standards between rural and urban areas, which motivate individuals from rural areas to migrate to urban areas in search of better economic opportunities. The study was conducted in Addis Ababa, where there is a high prevalence of underage internal migrants engaged in child labor due to extreme poverty in rural parts of the country. The aim of this study is to explore the life experiences of shoe-makers who have migrated from rural areas of Ethiopia to Addis Ababa. The focus is on understanding the factors that push these underage individuals to migrate, the challenges they face, and the implications for child labor. This study adopts a qualitative approach, using semistructured face-to-face interviews with underage migrants. A total of 27 interviews were conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, until the point of data saturation. The criteria for selecting interviewees include working as shoemakers and migrating to Addis Ababa underage, below 16 years old. The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed into Amharic, and then translated into English for analysis. The study reveals that the major push factors for underage internal migration are socioeconomic and environmental factors. Despite improvements in living standards for underage migrants and their families, there is a high prevalence of child labor and lack of access to education among them. Most interviewees migrated without the accompaniment of their family members and faced various challenges, including sleeping on the streets. This study highlights the role of social marketing in addressing the issues of underage internal migration and child labor. It suggests that social marketing can be an effective strategy to protect children from abuse, loneliness, and harassment during their migration process. The data collection involved conducting in-depth interviews with the underage migrants. The interviews were transcribed and translated for analysis. The analysis focused on identifying common themes and patterns within the interview data. The study addresses the factors contributing to underage internal migration, the challenges faced by underage migrants, the prevalence of child labor, and the potential role of social marketing in addressing these issues. The study concludes that although Ethiopia has policies against child internal migration, it is difficult to protect underage laborers who migrate from rural to urban areas due to the voluntary nature of their migration. The study suggests that social marketing can serve as a solution to protect children from abuse and other challenges faced during migration.

Keywords : underage, internal migration, social marketing, child labor, Ethiopia

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