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Migration as a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy: A Conceptual Equation for Analysis

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Abstract : Undoubtedly, climate change is a major global challenge that could threaten the very foundation upon which life on earth is anchored, with its impacts on human mobility attracting the attention of policy makers and researchers. There is an increasing body of literature and case studies suggesting that migration could be a way through which the vulnerable move away from areas exposed to climate extreme events to improve their lives and that of their families. This presents migration as a way through which people voluntarily move to seek opportunities that could help reduce their exposure and avoid danger from climate events. Thus, migration is seen as a proactive adaptation strategy aimed at building resilience and improving livelihoods to enable people to adapt to future changing events. However, there has not been any mathematical equation linking migration and climate change adaptation. Drawing from literature in development studies, this paper develops an equation that seeks to link the relationship between migration and climate change adaptation. The mathematical equation establishes the linkages between migration, resilience, poverty reduction and vulnerability, and these the paper maintains, are the key variables for conceptualizing the migration-climate change adaptation nexus. The paper then tests the validity of the equation using the sustainable livelihood framework and publicly available data on migration and tourism in Ghana.

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