

A Statistical Analysis of the Rural-Urban Migration Problem in South Africa

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In this study, data extracted from the computer files of the 10% census 1996 and 10% census 2001 were used to explore the dynamics of poverty and migration, and the changes in the demographics of the household structure in the North West Province of South Africa. Rural-urban migration has put pressure on government service delivery in urban areas more especially to provide houses and job opportunities to in-migrants. The results indicate that poverty is a major cause of rural-urban migration in the North West Province, and seemingly, this has resulted in rural areas having a higher: fertility rate, average household size, percentage of FHH, percentage of extended families, dependency ratio and a higher percentage of young children (i.e. 0 – 14 years old) than urban areas, and having a lower: sex ratio and percentage of married couples than urban areas.

The phenomenon is most likely explained by the geographical disparities theory and cumulative and cyclical interdependency theory of poverty, and the Ravenstein theory of migration. Intervention may involve a community development approach that includes infrastructure investment (i.e., building roads, water supply, schools, etc) and addressing poverty from a multifaceted approach to help the poor to achieve “self-sufficiency”.

Keywords: Poverty, unemployment, migration, sex ratio, fertility rate, household size, marital status, type of household, family type, dependency ratio