



'Life beyond the Walls of my Hometown': Social Safety Networks as a Coping Strategy for Northern Migrants in Accra

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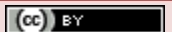
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Abstract

There is a persistent belief among Northern youth that urban centers, particularly Accra, offer better opportunities for them to improve their lives. These opportunities therefore serve as incentives for them to migrate in large numbers to Accra. However, these migrants are confronted with difficult conditions such as lack of suitable accommodation, lack of regular incomes, high occupational risks, poor remuneration for their services, poor health care, reproductive health problems, and harassment from city authorities among others. Given their high levels of vulnerability within the urban environment, the young migrants, both at the individual and group levels, adopt diverse coping strategies that serve as social safety nets to soften the impact of the harsh socio-economic conditions they encounter in the city. These include accommodation arrangements, job seeking strategies, income management and savings strategies, sources of food and eating habits, health seeking behaviours, disaster management and institutional support. Using mixed methods, this paper explores these social safety nets, and examines the extent to which they have helped improve the well-being of Northern migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Keywords: Migration, Migrants, Kayayei, Safety nets, Accra, Sodom, Gomorrah.



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1. Introduction

Migrations have taken place since the beginning of human civilization. Annually, millions of people around the world, especially from developing countries, leave their usual place of residence to seek better employment opportunities and livelihoods in other countries (Bhattarai, 2005). Migrations are not only international, but also occur within countries, often from rural to urban areas, though in some countries, there are also movements from rural areas to other better-endowed rural areas. Indeed in several developing countries, urban areas have witnessed higher growth rates than that of the general population because of massive migration from rural areas.

Between 1950 and 2000, the world's urban population grew from 30% to 47%, and it is expected to reach 60% by 2030 (United Nations Population Fund, 2001). The proportion of Africans living in urban areas increased from 15% in 1950 to 37% in 2000; by the year 2030, this is expected to rise to 53% (United Nations Population Fund, 2001). Urban growth in Africa is estimated at about 6% a year, twice as much as in Latin America and Asia (Anarfi and Ahiadeke, 2006).

Historically, migration in Africa, South and Southeast Asia has been male dominated (Sharpe, 2001). A prevailing misconception has been that men migrate and women do not, making women migrants often invisible, or assumed to be the economic dependents of spouses (Jolly and Reeves, 2005). But more and more women are migrating for work now and not just accompanying spouses. Female migration has increased because of a greater demand for female labour in certain services and also because of growing social acceptance of women's economic independence and mobility (Deshingkar, 2004). Today women account for approximately half of all global migrants (Sharpe, 2001).

Africa is undoubtedly a continent of considerable migration (Hance, 1970). Over the generations, various forms of population movements occurred in response to demographic, economic, political and related factors; population pressure, environmental disasters, and poor economic conditions (Aina, 1995; Manuh, 2005).

Before colonial rule in Africa, there were no strict political boundaries separating one ethnic group from the other. Indigenous inhabitants of the region are known to have migrated in large groups, fairly extensively over wide areas of land in search of favorable conditions for development of their social, economic and political welfare (Addo, 1974). Movement connected with trade and evangelism also featured during this early period (Addo, 1974). However, contact with Europeans created new patterns of movements, first through the slave trade, and later through colonization, within the sub region and with the rest of the world (Boahen, 1985).

Colonial rule paved the way for relative peace and political stability, and movements associated with warfare reduced. The development of the export sector, with emphasis on the urban areas and exploitation of the rural areas, resulted in considerable inequality in both sectors. The stage was therefore set for a new framework for migration, deriving from the labour requirements for plantations and later the administrative apparatus associated with colonialism (Amin, 1974). There was forced migration through forced labour, taxes and compulsory cultivation, and in time, forced recruitment gave way to free migration of individual and families in search of better conditions (Mabugunje, 1972).

During the post-colonial period, urban-biased development strategies, the introduction of free primary education and higher population growth rates reinforced the volume, intensity and determinants of migration mainly towards the capital cities, and other urban areas (Adepoju, 1990). After independence, nationalist governments attempted to deal with the colonial legacy of underdevelopment by investing heavily in industry, commerce, administration and most especially the establishment of post primary schools and social amenities in the cities. However the continued export-oriented development path and the concentration of investment in a few cities became a major cause of regional population movements and subsequent inequality in development, income, employment and living conditions (Aina, 1995).

According to Osei (1996), cities of most African countries are still the centers of modernization, in addition to serving as the intellectual and social capital, the seat of government and the main centres of political activity. They are also the major transport and market centers because of their populations and physical infrastructure. The rapid social change associated with the modernization of these cities has caused a mass exodus of population from rural areas to urban areas. Thus a large proportion of the urban population is made up of migrants from the rural countryside.

In Ghana, urban population growth has outstripped the overall population growth rate. From 32% in 1984, the population living in urban areas rose to almost 44% in 2000, representing an inter-censal growth rate of 4.6% as against an overall national growth rate of 2.7% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2002). At this rate of growth, the urban population is expected to double by 2020 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2002). There is a growing concentration of population in the three major cities of Accra-Tema, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi, and over one-third of all urban residents in Ghana live in these three cities (Ghana Statistical Service, 2003; Anarfi and Ahiadeke, 2006).

Many of the young urban migrants face substantial challenges in obtaining employment and finding accommodation, while their living conditions often expose them to severe health risks. However, these risks are considerably mitigated through access to networks that function as informal insurance mechanisms (Boyd, 1989). As it's well known, migrants generally create social networks in their settling-in process. These social networks provide them with valuable opportunities in such areas as jobs and housing, and in learning to survive beyond the walls of their hometowns. Using mixed methods, this paper explores these social safety nets and examines the extent to which they have helped improve the well-being of the migrants in the Accra Metropolis. The paper identified family relations, friendship, community and occupational associations as some of the major key components of the social safety networks that help to minimize the vulnerability of the migrants in their process of integration.

2. Methodology

Data for this study was obtained through quantitative and qualitative methods. Multiple data collection devices including direct observation, in-depth interviews and focused group discussions were used in the field so as to ensure reliability. Relevant documents were also consulted for information on the study. Young migrants from the Northern

region between the ages of 10 and 25 who either migrated individually or in the company of others to the Accra Metropolis formed the target for this study.

2.1. Sampling Techniques

A combination of sampling techniques was used to select respondents for the data collection. A simple random sampling approach was adopted to locate young Northern migrants whilst purposeful sampling technique was used to get key informants such as chiefs and other opinion leaders. Purposive sampling was also employed to group the migrants for the focused group discussions.

2.2. Data Collection Methods

Structured questionnaires were administered to a sample of 50 young migrants aged between 10-25 years, including both males and females. The sample consisted of 21 males and 29 females. This method proved efficient because many respondents were interviewed within a short span of time. However, there were some difficulties in getting respondents to answer questions due to lack of time as many of them were busily going about their daily activities. Therefore, the respondents were visited at their own convenience.

In addition, data was collected using in-depth interviews. Key informants such as leaders of associations, local chiefs as well as opinion leaders like the Assemblyman, Imams and Pastors were interviewed. Officials of relevant state agencies like the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Non Governmental Organizations and other benevolent organizations that provided support to the migrants were also interviewed. Much of the interviewing was done during the day. This method offered flexibility to both the interviewer and the respondent.

A Focusd Group Discussion (FGD) guide was also used to obtain information from various youth groups. Using this guide, a total of five group discussion sessions were conducted, with groups consisting of about 6 to 10 migrants each. Three group discussions were conducted in Sodom and Gomorrah, and one each in CMB, and Okaishie Market. For each youth category, group discussants were constituted on the basis of gender while a third mixed group represented both genders. The FGD method provided the researcher an insight into the real life situation of the migrants. Furthermore, the FGD required far less time than the individual interviews for the same number of participants. It also provided an opportunity for the participants to correct those who did not provide accurate information. However, controlling the groups was more difficult than in the one-on-one interviews. To avoid wasting much time on issues not considered relevant for the purpose of the study, discussions were kept on track while dominant personalities were not permitted to overwhelm other participants.

Another method adopted to gather information included observations, where migrants socio-economic lifestyle was critically observe. This was considered non-intrusive as respondents could be observed as they went about their daily activities. Also the method allows the researchers access into the daily life of the subjects (Vlassoff, 1994).

In all the methods mentioned above, information gathered was carefully written in a field notebook and respondents were asked to provide information on their coping strategies and other support systems employed to address the hardships that confronted them. The information obtained was analysed using qualitative and quantitative techniques. The data was coded and transformed into themes and categorical labels. Materials were sorted by these categories, identifying patterns, relationships and commonalities or disparities. The sorted materials were also examined to isolate meaningful patterns and processes. Identified patterns were considered in the light of previous research and theories and then a small set of generalization was established.

3. Literature Review

Many studies have been undertaken on migration in Ghana, especially from the Northern regions to Southern Ghana. However, many of the studies have tended to focus on remittances, the contributions of migrants to their communities of origin through knowledge transfer and other forms of investment, issues of undocumented migration, and discrimination against migrants (Awumbila *et al.*, 2009). Missing in much of the debate has been the socio-cultural dimensions including the social context within which the migrants live, the complex dynamics of social relationships among migrants, as well as their home and host societies (Awumbila *et al.*, 2009). In the light of these gaps, the literature review focuses on the challenges and the accompanying coping strategies or social safety networks of young migrants in urban areas.

In a study of migration and development in Uganda, Cheney (2004) observed that labour migration was prevalent in pre-independent Uganda and followed a similar pattern to that of other African countries at the time. She is of the opinion that governments increased villagers' dependence on money and wage labour by imposing huge taxes, and families needed money to purchase basic household goods.

However, the macro-economic environment created by post independent governments particularly in Ghana promoted rural urban-migration. Through urban biased policies, the terms of trade were turned against agriculture and the rural areas, contributing to wide urban differentials. Urban biased policies which include over valued exchange rates, industrial protection and cheap food policies, discriminated against agriculture in particular and rural areas in general. These policies suppressed farm prices and rural incomes encouraging a shift of labour out of agricultural production and a subsequent increase in rural urban migration (Anarfi *et al.*, 2003). But macro economic sector specific policy reforms initiated in 1983 contributed to improving the domestic terms of trade in favour of the rural sector thereby encouraging urban-rural migration (Anarfi *et al.*, 2003)

It has been established by many researchers that economic motives tend to be the principal factor influencing migration (Addo, 1974; Findley, 1977; Hashim, 2005). For instance, Gugler and Flanagan (1978) are of the opinion that there is an imbalance in economic opportunities between the urban and rural sectors in West Africa and this has promoted rural to urban migration.

On related issues, Aiken (1981) studied squatters in the Cheras Roads flats of Kuala Lumpur and concluded that squatters of both rural and urban areas move to the capital in search of employment, high incomes and better prospects for their children. His study revealed that 45% of the migrants to the city were unemployed in their place

of origin, 20% migrated because of low income in their home area and the rest either followed their parents to the city or moved there for further education. In the opinion of [Awumbila et al. \(2009\)](#) migration has become an important livelihood and coping strategy for individuals and families and is one of the surest means of acquiring skills and improving the living standards of both the skilled and the unskilled labour.

In the northern Ghanaian context, [Van der Geest \(2008\)](#) in a study of North–South migration in Ghana indicated that poverty and financial problems were generally the most important reasons for people to migrate. Migrants made specific reference to scarcity of fertile land, low crop yield and/or food security problems in the North as being reasons for migrating. [Kwankye et al. \(2009\)](#) in their recent study of independent North-South child migration in Ghana found that the perception of greater availability of socio-economic opportunities in the Southern regions has over time sustained continuous stream of migration from North to South.

Contrary to the view that young people migrate for economic reasons, [Kielland and Sanogo \(2002\)](#), in a study of labour migration in Burkina Faso, cautioned that poverty should not be seen as the single most important cause of youth migration. They argued that while poverty is the most cited reason parents give for sending their children abroad, by comparing the households of child migrants with those who stayed, it was found that poverty was a much weaker factor than anticipated. Rather, they emphasized that there is a culture of migration in rural Burkina Faso, where children are thought to be mature and having independence when they migrate from home to neighbouring towns or even across towns or the border to La Cote d' Ivoire (see also [Quarthey and Yambilla \(2009\)](#))

Although economic factors dominate the North-South migration in Ghana, social factors like family conflict, ethnic conflict, witchcraft, education, and the desire to be independent have also been identified as some of the reasons for the migration of the Northern youth to other cities and towns outside the region ([Van der Geest, 2008](#); [Kwankye et al., 2009](#)).

3.1. Major Challenges of Migrants in the City

The quest for accommodation is a basic 'predisposing cultural habit' of enfolded oneself in an urban dwelling ([Pellow, 1988](#)). Streams of migrants in urban areas, given the shortage in accommodation, resort to living in slums and squatter settlements both within the city and at its periphery, often in extremely hazardous conditions ([Mumonge, 1980](#)). [Alhassan et al. \(2004\)](#) studied Northern migrants in Accra and stated that housing shortages forced these migrants to put up makeshift rooms made of waste material with an average of ten people in a room, usually from the same village. However, a recent study by [Awumbila \(2007\)](#) has shown that there has been some improvement in the housing condition of the Northern migrants in Accra due to the interventions of some Non Governmental Organizations.

In a study of a migrant community in Accra, known as Sabon Zongo, [Pellow \(1988\)](#) observed that in spite of its deplorable conditions, space in Sabon Zongo is at a terrific premium as many people clamour to live there due to their poor economic conditions. She notes further that the area is concentrated with the lowest and the most casually employed individuals who provide cheap labour but do not get any good investment in the form of housing.

The [United Nations Human Settlement Programme \(2003\)](#) characterized squatter settlement by these attributes: lack of basic services, substandard housing or illegal building structures, overcrowding and high density, unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations, poverty, social exclusion and minimum settlement size. The report further stated that these attributes are linked to ill-health.

[Anarfi and Ahiadeke \(2006\)](#) showed a reflection of this phenomenon in a research carried out in some communities in Accra. They studied four urban slums which included Nima, Mamobi, Shukura and Sodom-Gomorra. They observed that there is worsening access to adequate shelter and security, overcrowding as well as growing vulnerability to environmental health problems and natural disasters in these areas. They identified malaria and cholera as the most prevalent diseases in these four urban slums. These two diseases constituted 88% of all reported health problems in Nima and Mamobi, and 62% in Sodom-Gomorra and Shukura. Sexually transmitted infections also ranked high in the four communities while diseases such as diarrhoea, coughs, skin, ear, and throat infections were quite common.

In terms of causes of these diseases, the report identified environmental sanitation, especially 'choked and stinking' gutters and drains as the main cause of the health problems. The survey however, failed to point out the environmental safety nets put in place by the people to deal with their numerous health problems.

With regard to migrants reproductive health, [Zheng et al. \(2001\)](#) in their study of sexual behavior and contraceptive use among unmarried, young women migrant workers in five cities in China found that some female migrant workers were sexually active and living with their boyfriends. They indicated that most of the young girls lacked basic information about reproduction and contraceptives. They noted that there were social, psychological and economic barriers to accessing these services, so induced abortion were the outcome of unprotected premarital sex.

[Tanle \(2003\)](#) also made a similar observation among migrant adolescent women from the Upper West Region to Accra and Kumasi. She finds that young migrants aged between 15 and 24 and mostly illiterates engaged in unprotected sex with different sexual partners. In his study of street youth in Accra, [Anarfi \(1997\)](#) observed that 52% of males and 54% of the females had ever had sex but only 29% of those had regular sexual partners. [Adomako et al. \(2007\)](#) in their study of sexual exploitation of children on the streets of Accra found that financial hardship, lack of education among migrants such as Kayayei from Northern Ghana, lack of parental support, unavailability of jobs and lack of accommodation would seem to be predisposing factors. They indicated that most of the respondents pass the night in verandas of shops and sheds and were more likely to be subjected to abuse by night watchmen and other people active at night.

Notwithstanding the difficulties, some scholars have argued that the young migrants make a positive contribution to society through the services they provide ([Kwankye et al., 2007](#)), and serve as an informal means of transporting goods from the market to lorry parks or homes. In return for these services, the porters receive money from their clients which they use to cater for themselves and in some cases, also send some home to support their families ([Apt](#)

Van Ham *et al.*, 1992). The head portorage is a form of informal sector employment which provides income for the porters (Kwankye *et al.*, 2007).

3.2. Migrants' Coping Strategies/ Social Safety Networks

The harsh living conditions in the city have compelled young migrants to adopt a variety of social safety networks and coping strategies to minimize the impact of the hardships that confront them. This includes support systems provided by private agencies like non-governmental organizations and the state. For some scholars, migrants generally create social safety networks in their settling process to provide them with valuable resources in their new destination (Colman, 1988; Lopez *et al.*, 2001). Awumbila *et al.* (2009) found that in migration studies, social capital and social safety networks has been applied at three stages. Firstly, social networks have been applied at the stage of migration decision process. Here the applicant seeks to emphasize access to information networks which ease the decision process. The basic question at this stage probes how social safety networks influence the migration decision making process through access to information.

The second level of application of social safety network theory in migration studies is at the movement stage of the migration process. This relates to the influence of social networks in the actual movement. The third level in the application of social networks theory in migration is at the stage of migrants' adjustment process in their new destinations. At this stage, social safety networks are resorted to because of the risk and vulnerabilities such migrants experience and the network that are generated in response to these risks and vulnerabilities. They observed further that social networks are manifested in the form of kinship ties, friendships, voluntary associations, and institutions that support migrants to integrate in to the host society

3.3. Migrants' Kinsfolk/Socio-Cultural Networks

A migrant's kinsfolk are an important resource for obtaining accommodation and urban jobs in the city (Graves and Theodore, 1974). Peil (1972) in a study of factory workers in Ghana found that between 8% and 13% of factory workers interviewed in Accra, Kumasi and Secondi-Takoradi arrived in town knowing no one. About two thirds of them stayed with kinsfolk upon arrival. It must be noted, however, that with the passage of time these statistics can certainly not be relied upon because many changes have occurred. As current evidence reveals, scores of migrants with children, some of whom are under a year old, pass the night on hard paved walkways and passenger sheds at lorry stations.¹ This suggests that most migrants in recent times do not necessarily rely on their kinsfolk for accommodation upon arrival in the city.

Aina (1995) noted that kinsfolk are highly valuable in the first period of settling down in town. He also added however, that the standards of hospitality and clan solidarity are undergoing changes in response to availability in urban life which is sometimes individualistic. Agarwal (1994) studied female porters popularly known as 'Kayayei' in Accra and revealed that a large proportion of the migrants receive help from relatives and fellow villagers when they reach the city. She added that the mechanisms by which some of the porters came to be working in Accra was through family connections. She further explained that an older sister, cousin, hometown acquaintances or distant relative was involved in arranging accommodation, and securing work for the newly arrived migrant.

3.3.1. Voluntary Associations

A voluntary association is by character, a body of persons associated for a common purpose. In such an association, membership is based on one's own free will without any external compulsion (Assimen, 1999). Graves and Theodore (1974) stated that mutual aid societies and voluntary associations were a highly flexible adaptive strategy employed by migrant communities throughout the world. He stated further that such associations can be formed on the basis of kinship, place of origin, ethnicity or occupation in the cities. He listed various types of such associations which included ethnic associations, village or home town associations and recreational groups, all of which served as bridges for the newly arrived migrant. They provided fraternity, a sense of identity, practical training, financial protection, religious guidance and traditional social control. Many of these voluntary associations can still be found in urban centers of Africa contributing to the welfare of migrants.

However, their services now extend beyond the boundaries of its membership to cover people who are even not members of such associations Assimen (1999). Acquah (1972) observed that, the main purpose of the voluntary association was to provide support for its members, including taking care of the sick, and provision of accommodation for its members. She noted further that these associations provided avenues through which news about contemporary issues are circulated.

In the study of the role of Ghanaian immigrant associations in Toronto, Owusu (2000) observes that voluntary associations promote unity and social interaction among migrant members. They serve many important social and economic purposes, including assisting their members to find jobs and housing particularly new migrants. This assistance may include providing information about jobs that members have learnt through informal networks and contacts, and informing newcomers about employment opportunities in their work places. He states further that the associations often offer direct financial assistance in the form of 'soft loans' to members, especially newcomers who may be experiencing financial difficulties. In addition, individual members of the associations make voluntary monetary donation to bereaved members, normally during a funeral ceremony. He categorized immigrant associations in three main groups as follows: township association, ethnic associations, and national associations. The psychological effects of being a member and the reciprocal gift and support systems inherent in the relations are beneficial to the people. However, people generally rely on family members and interpersonal social networks for certain activities, particularly marriage, naming, and funeral ceremonies.

¹ Naa Lamiley and Daabu (2007).

3.3.2. Mutual Benefit Societies

Acquah (1972) stated that migrants in urban cities particularly Accra had resorted to the formation of mutual benefit societies as a strong economic tool to cushion their unreliable source of income. These societies serve as a source of security for migrants living under unstable economic conditions. She indicated that these societies can be put into different categories, some of which include, rotating credit and contribution to a common fund for the mutual benefit of all.

She stated that the various forms of assistance given by these societies include provision of capital for trading, and giving support to members who are robbed or involved in court cases. Migrants who are ready to go back to their places of origin obtained funds especially from the rotating credit to buy their personal belongings and use some as capital in their home village. Adepoju (1990) also added that these societies in addition provide resources for individuals during periods of personal crisis in the urban centers.

In the same way, Agarwal (1994) observed that there are voluntary associations formed by migrants in urban centers for the purpose of helping their members to save money or to promote their mutual benefit. These societies help their members to save, provide a means of obtaining credit and serves as a form of insurance. He stated that the best known kind of the credit institution for migrants in the cities is *esusu* (rotating credit), apparently of Yoruba origin, which is found all over West Africa under slightly different names, for instance, *asusu* in Freetown, *susu* in Kumasi and *ozuzu* in southeastern Nigeria.

In recent times, *esusu* has further undergone some modifications in African cities with specified informal financial agents called *Susu collectors*, who offer opportunity for low income earners to save and also give credit as well. Schindler (2007) studied how market-based small scale business women (traders) in Tamale used *Susu collectors* as a strategy to minimize risk and to facilitate the reconstruction of their business after experiencing a loss. He found that under this strategy, a *Susu Collector* visits his customer business location every day for a period of one month and collect a fixed amount of money. The daily contributions of a customer are recorded in a savings pass book. After 31 days the aggregate amount is paid out to the customer as a lump sum, while the *Susu Collector* keeps the first day's contribution as a fee for his service. They sometimes grant loans to their customers with a small interest. He finds that they appreciate the discipline to save forced on them by this strategy and also to buy larger consumer goods. They however admitted that saving with *Susu Collectors* may entail a risk for them, as they are not regulated by state authorities.

3.3.3. Migrant Leadership/ Political Safety Nets

Another coping strategy of Northern migrants in Accra is the appointment of leaders among themselves. Leadership is a very important tool for the survival of any organized human society. In the light of this, Acquah (1972) studied Accra migrants and observed that rural urban migrants in cluster settlements in Accra chose to appoint their own leaders to whom they could look up to for leadership and to whom they could turn in time of need and for the settlement of disputes. She stated that every migrant ethnic group from Northern Ghana and beyond which has a large number of migrants in Accra has its headman.

3.3.4. Institutional Support

In a study of the management of slums and squatter settlements in Nairobi, Mumonge (1980) indicated that all efforts to evict squatter settlers in the city by urban authorities have always remained unsuccessful. Faced with this situation many scholars and policy makers have now shifted position and are advocating policies of accommodation rather than continuing to exercise control with the view of forcing squatters out of the city. He indicated further that the government implemented an urban development scheme known as 'site- and- service' as part of efforts to address the problem.

Under the 'site- and- service' scheme, plots of land at the periphery of the city with access to water supply, roads and other social services were made available through low cost loans to encourage private development. The essential feature of the scheme is that those who succeeded in being allocated a plot were also offered a material loan which was generally sufficient to construct at least a two bed room house.

Aiken (1981) pointed out that to solve the squatter problem in Kuala Lumpur, the government pursued a number of policies: relocation in conventional lower income housing schemes, eviction without alternative housing compensation, upgrading of existing settlements through the provision of utilities such as electricity, pipe-borne water and drainage facilities.

In the same vein, the government of Ghana has decided to relocate the people of Sodom and Gomorrah to a place known as Adjin Kotoku, about 5 kilometers from Amasaman. A loan agreement of about 10.4 million euros has so far been signed with a Belgian Bank to develop infrastructural facilities for the area. These include drainage, health centers, market, transportation terminal and a police station.²

Hurley (1990) observed that the government and non-governmental agencies can usefully work with informal associations especially migrants by promoting credit and savings schemes. The provision of credit is a direct and effective way of assisting income generating activities. He claims that it may be difficult to get loans from banks; therefore interveners can assist by acting as guarantors or setting up revolving loan funds as a way of making credit available for urban migrants. The principle of a revolving loan fund is where a sum of money is made available to a member of a group, and when he or she repays it, it is lent to another member.

In their study of sexual exploitation of children on the streets of Accra, Ampofo and Alhassan identified some interventions undertaken by some non-governmental organizations like the Women Development Agency to assist young migrants. They indicated that young females were given short skills training in occupations such as hair dressing, sewing, tie-and-die making and catering services. They further indicated that successful trainees were given

² <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhnaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=108056> accessed on 27/4/08

some incentives in the form of tools and a start-up capital with which they were expected to return to their places of permanent residence to make meaningful livelihood through the skills acquired. However, these migrants were not given the opportunity to try out their skills in the competitive urban environment they find themselves. As a result, many of the repatriated girls stayed in their respective villages just for a short period and then returned to the streets of Accra to make a living.

4. Discussion of Findings

4.1. Age profile of the Migrants

This section provides a general idea of the demographic characteristics of the survey sample.

Table 1 shows the age and sex of respondents in the study.

Table-1. Age and Sex of Respondents

Age Group(Yrs)	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
10-14	2	10	5	18	7	14
15-19	6	29	7	24	13	26
20-24	8	38	14	48	22	44
25-30	5	23	3	10	8	16
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

The ages of the respondents ranged between 10 to 30, with close to half of them (44%) falling within the range of 20-24 years, followed by 15-19 years (26%), 25-30 years, (16%), in that descending order with the least being 10-14 years, (14%) as shown in Table 1.

On the whole, the sex distribution indicates a greater proportion of female than males, thus suggesting that more females are now involved in the north-south migration than males as indicated by Awumbila (2007). Also, the number of female migrants after ages 20-24 years started falling whilst those of males continued rising suggesting that more males tend to stay in the city than females after these ages. This might be attributed to the fact that females could be returning to their areas of origin to prepare for marriage as they grow older whilst the males stay on in the city.

4.2. Status of Shelter

This section discusses the living condition or situation of migrants in the city. One of the biggest challenges for the young Northern migrants is accommodation. Most of these migrants, particularly the young girls, sleep in the frontage of shops, lorry parks, pavements, and market squares, with a large proportion of them living in surrounding slum settlements like CMB and Sodom and Gomorrah. When migrants were asked during the interview why they slept outside, most of them simply answered that they had no better alternative places to lodge.

A significant proportion of the Northern youth migrants at Sodom and Gomorrah dwell in make-shift structures made of wood, empty packing cases, scrap metal, and other waste materials. These rooms were not spacious enough to contain the 'multitude' of inmates who are therefore compelled to live in close contiguity and jostle over each other with an average of about 15 to 18 people per room of about 4 by 5 metres in size. Most of the rooms had leaking roofs and therefore offered no protection from the rain. Males and females lodged in separate rooms with the females having the highest number of people in a room. Some female participants in the focused group discussion admitted living together with their boyfriends, who often abused or exploited them. Another female participant added that as a result of the lack of accommodation they were usually lured by men who promised them accommodation but abandoned them after exploiting them sexually.

The structures were mostly owned by the males who then rented them out to their fellow migrants who paid an average of one Ghana Cedi each per week. Many of the respondents complained of excessive heat in the rooms as a result of their numbers which compelled them to sleep outside in the night. Some of the females were able to save enough money to acquire their own rooms. For instance, a 21 year old female migrant from Yendi, in a focused group discussion revealed that she bought her structure from another young male migrant who was leaving for home. Due to lack of security at their sleeping places, migrants are sometimes robbed of their savings or get injured by criminals.

Table-2. illustrates the sleeping places of the migrants.

Table-2. Sleeping place at night

Place	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
In front of shop	4	19	10	34	14	28
Makeshift room	11	53	8	28	19	38
Lorry park	4	19	8	28	12	24
Workshop	2	9	1	3	3	6
Home	-	-	2	7	2	4
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data

It can be seen from the table that, generally, majority of the respondents sleep in makeshift rooms (38%), followed by the frontage of shops (28%), lorry park (24%) with those sleeping at home (4%) being the least.

On the basis of sex, more males (53%) than females (28%) sleep in makeshift rooms, thus reflecting the fact that more of the males had the opportunity of acquiring lodgings than the females. Furthermore, a greater number of the females (34%) than males (19%) sleep in the frontage of shops probably due to their inability to have access to a makeshift room.

On the whole the proportion of females who sleep in the open (62%) are greater than that of the males (38%) which suggests that many females are at the mercy of the weather and susceptible to sexual harassments than the males.

4.3. Unsanitary Living Conditions and Associated Health Hazards

Many of the migrants who slept outside were exposed to the vagaries of the weather. In an interview with a 16 year old female migrant who slept with her friends at Kokomba market, she complained they often did not sleep at all whenever it rained at night, since their sleeping places were always inundated with water. To elude the cold and the dampness of the weather they often wrapped their bodies with a thin layer of polythene. Another female migrant pointed out that too much heat in their makeshift room forced them to sleep outside in the night, leaving them at the mercy of the elements of the weather and mosquitoes.

Though Sodom and Gomorrah had potable water and electricity, usually from illegal sources, the environmental and sanitation situation is better seen than described. There were no well constructed drains to absorb running water in the area. Also, there were no sanitation facilities like waste disposal containers, and people therefore disposed of rubbish indiscriminately in their surroundings. They queued at public makeshift bath houses and toilets and paid between GH¢ 0.10 and GH¢ 0.20 to have their baths. These were sub-standard toilets that were made of wooden materials. A participant in one of the discussions lamented that one problem has been that poor persons with no jobs could not afford payment of some of the open pit latrines, and instead, hold it until night time and defecate into plastic bags. They then threw these into the street while others openly defecated into the Korle Lagoon. A substantial number of the migrants agreed in the discussions that the sanitation situation in the area is the cause of the serious health problems such as malaria, diarrhoea, worm infestation, skin infections, typhoid, and cholera. A key respondent indicated in an interview that most of the sicknesses found in the area are hygienic related. Another key informant, a community leader with the title Saha Naa which means ‘lucky chief’, lamented that the deplorable environmental state of the area was responsible for the high concentration of serious communicable diseases.

Table 3 describes the major health problems in Sodom and Gomorrah

Table-3. Major health problems in Sodom and Gomorrah

Sickness Type	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Skin diseases	4	19	3	10	7	12
Headache	9	43	12	41	21	46
Fever/Malaria	4	19	6	21	10	20
Stomachache/diarrhea	2	10	5	17	7	14
STDS	1	5	2	7	3	4
Other	1	4	1	4	2	4
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

It can be observed From table 3 that close to half of the respondents (46%) reported suffering from headache, followed by malaria (20%), stomachache (14%), skin disease (12%), Sexual transmitted diseases (4%) in that descending order. The high prevalence of headache with the migrants could be attributed to lack of rest among the migrants. Again, with the exception of skin diseases, in all the categories of sickness female respondents outnumber the male respondents. This implied that the females were more liable to sicknesses than the males. The study confirmed the findings in earlier studies by Ankrah (1995) that squatter settlements in Ghana exhibit a high rate of disease outbreaks due to unsanitary conditions and lack of basic health-care.

4.4. Major disasters in Sodom and Gomorrah

This section identifies and discusses the major disasters encountered by the Northern migrants in the study area. The migrants like most other slum dwellers around the world struggle with both man-made and natural disasters such as fire outbreaks, flooding and outbreak of epidemics. According to the migrants, the frequent occurrence of these disasters poses a great threat to their lives and properties at Sodom and Gomorrah.

Most of the respondents rated fire outbreaks as the leading and the most frequent occurring disaster in the area which causes destruction to life and property. It was a unanimous agreement among many respondents in the discussion that fire outbreak has now become a monthly affair in Sodom and Gomorrah and whenever it occurs it spreads widely to other parts given the fact that the whole community is made up of wooden structures which facilitates the spread of the fire. It was also noted by many in the discussion that it has become extremely difficult to put out fire in the area due to lack of accessible routes to fire scenes.

When asked to enumerate the kind of havoc that the fire wreaks on them, a number of the migrants replied that the items that were usually destroyed in fire outbreaks included cash, jewelry, clothing, shoes, and electronic appliances such as television sets, video decks, tape recorders and physical structures. In the words of a 21 year old migrant from Nakpayili in the Northern region of Ghana, ‘there are frequent fire outbreaks in the area and, whenever that happens, we lose everything and start all over again’. Another migrant whose personal belongings and structure were burnt in the last fire outbreak, said he has had enough from the place and was ready to go to his home town, Bimbila, to start a new life. “a ‘malam’ friend of mine who was believed to be sleeping in his room was burnt beyond recognition when the fire swept through it”, he concluded.

Another serious challenge that confronted the young Northern migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah was the annual outbreak of cholera. According to most of the respondents, though there could be other epidemics like flu, small pox, and yellow fever, cholera was believed to be the single largest killer in the area whenever there is an outbreak. According to a 24 year old key informant who had lived in the community for close to seven years, they experienced an average of about four to five deaths daily when cholera broke out in the area in 2006. They explained that though cholera kills so fast, it does not occur as frequently as other epidemics but anytime there is an outbreak, many lives are lost. Table 4 describes the major disasters in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Table-4. Major disasters encountered by Northern migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah

Disaster Type	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Fire outbreak	11	52	17	56	28	56
Flooding	3	14	8	28	11	22
Epidermics	6	29	3	12	9	18
Other	1	5	1	4	2	4
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

Table 4 illustrates the main disasters confronted by the Northern migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah. From the table (4) more than half of the respondents reported fire (56%) as the leading disaster in the area followed by flooding (22%), epidemics (18%) in that descending order. It must also be noted that the proportion of fire (56%) is far greater than that of epidemics (18%) though some of the migrants agreed that epidemics such as cholera claims many lives whenever there is an outbreak. This is because the fires occur more frequently in the area and outbreaks were therefore remembered quickly by the migrants whilst epidemics sometimes occurred once within a year.

The choice of fire as a major threat could be attributed to the fact that the whole area is made up of mainly wooden structures which facilitates the spread of fire anytime there is an outbreak. Secondly, the electricity supplies to these structures are from illegal sources; the structures were improperly wired with some of the cables buried underground. Most of the migrants acknowledged in the interviews that the improper electrification of the area could also be the cause of their woes. It must be noted, that, the threat of the fire in the area could also explain why concrete buildings are now springing up in the area in recent times.

4.5. The Hunt for Employment

Once in the city the young migrants have difficulty finding work in the formal sector due to their low level of education and lack of skills for the formal sector. In their quest to make a living, they felt they had no option but to drift in their large numbers to work in the informal sector. Many of them, particularly the young girls, were working as porters, popularly known in Ghanaian linguistic trope as *kayayei*, in the central business district of Accra. Some were working as apprentices with food sellers; others worked as shopkeepers while others served domestic urgencies (i.e. household chores). There were also male porters who hired trolleys to carry goods from one point to another for a negotiated fee. However, there were a few of the young migrants who were also engaged in petty trading and street hawking. Some of the young girls were found to be hawking with products like fruits, bagged water (pure water), plastic materials such as cups and bowls while the boys were involved in the sale of items like foodstuffs, household items, second-hand clothing etc. There were also a few others involved in apprenticeship to become hairdressers, tailors, and welders. Some of them use the proceeds from their jobs to support their families back home.

Majority of the young male migrants interviewed were scrap dealers, track-pushers and porters. There were a few others who worked in construction firms as labourers. It was also revealed in the study that some of the young girls were involved in prostitution to meet their daily needs. A key informant in an interview actually pointed to a particular makeshift structure in the area where prostitution takes place at night.

The female porters who formed the majority of these young migrants often carry head pans, relying solely on their own human energy to cart foodstuff for shoppers. They were regularly seen carrying large loads on their heads in the various market places in Accra. The charges for the loads were determined by the weight and distance which ranged between GH¢0.30 to GH¢1.50p. Majority of the girls were working at Old Fadama, Kokomba Market, CMB, Avenor, Tudu, and Agbogloshie areas. A number of the respondents said they normally wake up as early as 4 am to roam the markets and the lorry parks to get loads to carry.

During the discussions, most of the porters complained that in recent times it is no longer easy to get loads to carry. One participant lamented that these days they even scramble for the load in the market. 'Sometimes one can roam the whole market without getting load to carry' another added. The participants generally attributed their current situation to the presence of the large numbers of porters in the market lately.

On the other hand, the males who were engaged in construction work also complained about a lack of jobs especially during the rainy season. Some of them said in the discussion that they faced a lot of difficulties in securing jobs with the big construction companies unless one becomes a beneficiary of favoritism. The scrap dealers also added that scraps are not as readily available as in the past so they travel outside Accra to get scraps.

As presented in Table 5 below, majority of the respondents were porters (32%) followed by petty traders (26%), scrap dealers (20%), shop attendants (14%) with Domestic work being the least constituting (6%).

Table-5. The occupations of the Northern migrants in the city

Type Of Work	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Porters	5	24	11	38	16	32
Petty trading	5	24	8	28	13	26
Domestic work	-	-	3	10	3	6
Scrap dealer	9	42	1	3	10	20
Shop attendant	1	5	6	21	7	14
Construction	1	5	-	-	1	2
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

The analysis by sex also shows that more females (38%) than males (24%) found work as porters. This could be attributed to the way in which the females conveniently enter the business by relying solely on their own physical energy in transporting bulky loads. Their male counterparts on the other hand had to hire or acquire trolleys before engaging in the business. These findings corroborate [Agarwal \(1994\)](#) study where she indicates that portering is primarily a female activity. Furthermore, there were an overwhelming proportion of males (42%) than females (3%) involved in scrap dealings which suggests that the scrap business is the preserve of men. Also, scrap business is an onerous physical activity which involves the tedium of traveling over long distances across the city and this perhaps explains why many of the females could not engage in it. On the whole, most of the jobs the respondents reported they were doing were menial work which is characterized by low remuneration, little rest and hard work. In spite of their difficulties many of the migrants were able to earn enough income to support their basic needs as well as their families back home. For most of them, despite the challenges they face it is better than staying in their respective villages where there is little or no chance at all for employment of any sort.

4.6. Occupational Risks

This section outlines and discusses the risks associated with the migrants' work in the city. Interactions with both male and female migrants revealed that the work they do constitutes a major source of health risk. Many of the young girls mentioned problems associated with the heavy loads they carry daily.

First of all, they believed that they were offered insignificant rewards for their services. The price for each single load is a bargaining game between the customer and the porter, and in this haggling, the girls complained they frequently suffer the use of insulting language on them by their clients who try to push the rate down. The prices offered by customers sometimes do not commensurate with the weight of the loads and the energy expended in carrying them. Sometimes some people refuse to pay the agreed sum of money but the female porter would have no choice but to accept the meager amount thrown at her. Young girls who carried babies on their backs go through extra difficulty as they carry the children at their backs with loads on their heads.

Again, most of the young male migrants who were 'scrap dealers' were involved in the business of dismantling and burning discarded electronic equipment such as television sets, personal computers, telephone cables, cell phones, electronic toys, dryers, fridges and washing machines, under unhygienic and unsafe circumstances with the aim of extracting copper, aluminum and metal scraps for sale. In the process of extracting the elements these migrants were exposed to poison and toxic chemicals like lead, mercury, Beryllium, and cadmium which could result in major health hazards such as lung cancer, skin diseases, and kidney damage ([Dogbevi, 2007](#)).

A number of the scrap dealers who push trucks across the city looking for scraps complained that apart from the tiredness resulting from the long distances traveled, they often ran into head-on-collisions with vehicles and suffered abuses from drivers on the road. According to them they are sometimes involved in fatal accidents with cars resulting in major injuries or even the death of the migrant. Others also expressed concern in interviews about constant harassment from the police for disrupting traffic. There was also a report of some of them being arrested and jailed for various offences like stealing or for purchasing iron scraps which were believed to be stolen.

Apart from the body pains, the migrants identified accidents as the next major source of risk of their occupation. Many of the female porters said during the discussion that on countless occasions a number of them have been knocked down by passing vehicles while they try to cross the road with loads. In the words of a female participant, 'we usually do not see clearly whenever we carry loads because the load sometimes obstructs our vision and this is most likely to result in an accident if one is crossing the road'. 'Sometimes we carry items like iron rods and roofing sheets, which could result in an injury when it falls on ones leg', added another. A 17 year old boy who hawks along the major streets of Accra added in an interview that many of his colleagues who try to sell petty goods to people in passing vehicles were knocked down by these same vehicles.

Many of the migrants in the discussion identified theft as yet another form of risk associated with their work and, according to the porters, if any item in the custody of a porter was stolen then he or she could be made to pay for it. The male porters who normally carried goods and other materials on trucks hinted that occasionally some of the wares they carried fell off without their notice and when this happened they were made to pay for them. Some of the female participants indicated that they were frequently trailed by thieves who try to steal the items either from their headpan or at the point of delivery. When asked what happened to a person who failed to pay for a lost item, the reply was that they usually contributed money in aid of the victim else he or she would suffer arrest and possible incarceration.

4.7. Reproductive Health Risks

The squalor and the poor living conditions in Sodom and Gomorrah, especially at night points to the possibility of exposure to reproductive health risks. Though some of the respondents in both the interviews and discussions did not deny engaging in sexual activity in one way or the other, they were initially hesitant to provide information about

their sexual behaviours since premarital sex is considered immoral. In answer to the question whether they have ever engaged in any sexual activity, majority of them responded in the negative. However, several of the respondents conceded having a girlfriend or boyfriend either in Accra or in their natal villages.

Some of the respondents both male and female reported having engaged in sex for the first time as early as age 15 or 16 years whilst others claimed to have been devirginised at age 20. In responding to the incidence or reasons which resulted in the sexual encounter, some participants of the group discussion, particularly the girls, said they slept in the same room with their boyfriends and therefore could not resist the temptation of sex. According to the girls, the boys offered them accommodation and security and for the two parties, sex was a mutual benefit. Many of the young girls said they had their first sexual encounter through rape which they said was not reported. Majority of them however, conceded that some of the young girls indulged in sex as a means of making money for survival since they did not want to work.

Even though a lot of the migrants were involved in unprotected sex, only few of them seemed to have knowledge about safe sex. This could probably be due to lack of sex education among them. When the question of consequences of sex at their stage was raised, substantial number of them mentioned pregnancy while others gave sexual transmitted diseases (STDs) as a consequence.

On the use of contraceptives, some of the respondents said that sexual activity was usually unplanned and therefore they did not have time to think about contraception or use contraceptives. Most of the young girls had little knowledge about contraceptives therefore they were involved in unprotected sex. The contraceptive methods most commonly mentioned among those who said they had ever used a method were condoms and withdrawal. A few of them especially the girls knew about the rhythm method but were wrong about when the 'safe period' was. When asked in the FGD when a girl is most likely to be pregnant in her cycle none of them could give a correct answer.

Table 6 sets out the conditions under which sexual activities often occurred among respondents in the study.

Table-6. Conditions under which sex took place among respondents

Situation	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Peer influence	5	24	2	8	7	14
For accommodation	1	4	3	10	4	8
Forced/coerced	3	14	13	45	16	32
Mutual consent	10	48	3	10	13	26
Monetary influence	2	10	8	27	10	20
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

It is observed that overall, many of the respondents (32%) indicated that their first sexual experience in the city was under duress, and this phenomenon was more pronounced among the females (45%) than the male (14%).

In addition, 26% of the respondents reported to have had their first sex through mutual consent, while for another 20%, sexual experience was influenced by money. However, monetary considerations seemed to play a fairly large part for females (27%) than males (10%), and this suggests that more females than males were enticed to have sex through monetary inducement. A small but significant proportion of them (8%) had their sexual encounter in an attempt to satisfy their accommodation needs.

4.8. Harassment from City Authorities

Majority of the Northern migrants who reside in Sodom and Gomorrah said in an interview that they were under constant threat of eviction by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). According to the Assembly the area is a government property for which the migrants have no permit to put up structures. The community leaders in an interview were displeased with AMA officials who constantly come to the area to write warning signs of eviction on some of their structures.

Also, the female porters who ply their trade along bus stops and other unauthorized places complained about how the AMA officials frequently chased them away from those places. A 16 year old porter said in an interview that most of the time the AMA officials often seize their head pans and other valuables whenever any of them is arrested. Porters who operated within the business district were also mandated by the city authorities to pay a daily toll of about 20p before they could conduct their business freely in the market. Some of the porters regarded the payment of the daily tolls as unfair treatment since according to them there were some days they do not earn income at all.

Some of the young migrants involved in hawking complained that the frequent decongestion exercise carried out by the AMA had affected their business and thus rendered them jobless. Those who were involved in selling petty goods to people in passing vehicles around some major traffic lights also narrated some of their unpleasant experience with the AMA Task Force. A 15 year old female bagged-water seller (pure water seller) at Abossey Okine traffic light, in an interview, said that they were sometimes beaten by the Task Force and their wares taken away from them.

The foregoing discussion aimed at finding out the difficulties that confronted the migrants in their bid to find means of survival in the harsh and insecure environment in the city. As part of their numerous challenges, accommodation was recognized as one of the daunting problems confronting the young migrants. As a result many of them resorted to sleeping on the streets, lorry parks, with a significant number of them residing at a squatter settlement called Sodom and Gomorrah. In this settlement the migrants were further confronted with problems such as poor sanitation resulting in frequent outbreak of diseases and epidemics. This poor neighborhood was also prone to disasters such as fire and flooding which resulted in loss of lives and destruction of properties. Besides, many were under steady harassment from city authorities especially the porters for the payment of market tolls whilst the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah were under constant threat of eviction. The evidence found above shall offer us

the opportunity to see in the next discussion the coping strategies that the migrants have adopted to be able to survive the onslaught of the social and economic exclusions.

5. Sources of Support

In this section of the discussion, we now shift the focus to the different coping strategies adopted by the young Northern migrants to be able to survive in the city of Accra. These include accommodation arrangements, personal and group safety strategies, role of voluntary associations, job seeking strategies, income management and savings strategies, health seeking strategies etc. We start by looking at how the problem of accommodation in the city is being managed.

5.1. Accommodation Arrangements

Respondents in the study accessed various sources of information about Accra before embarking on their trips to the city. Some of these sources of information included friends, family relations and the media. In a discussion with the migrants, some of them said they were brought to the city by their family relations who offered them accommodation and other basic needs before they were able to start life on their own. Others said they followed their friends who were returning to the city after a short visit to the village. Upon arrival in the city they were offered food and a place to sleep by their friends.

Migrants who came to Accra independently were sometimes provided with accommodation by people from their home town now resident in Accra. According to some of the respondents, a new migrant upon arrival in the city usually tries to find the location of Sodom and Gomorrah, and once they arrive they are further directed to the rooms of people from their village. If the co-villagers happened to be sleeping in an open space or in front of a shop then the new migrants simply joined them. Such new migrants were received warmly and offered accommodation, food, and other basic needs.

In Sodom and Gomorrah, the young Northern migrants particularly the young girls had segregated themselves into quarters based on their kinship, village and suburban relations in the Northern Region. Migrants from each of the villages formed their own quarters which were located in different parts of the settlements. These room-mates were always people of the same village origins. For instance, migrants from the Tolon district of the Northern Region had their quarters which were separate from migrants from the Savelugu District of the same Region. In their local Dagbani or Mampruli languages, these quarters were referred to as *Savulgu nim du* or *Tolon nim du* or *Walewale nim du* meaning Savelugu Quarters or Tolon Quarters.

Table-7. illustrates the sources of accommodation available to a new migrant upon arrival in the city.

Table-7. Migrant's sources of accommodation in Sodom and Gomorrah

People Migrants Put Up With	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Friends	7	33	4	14	11	22
Family relations	5	24	7	24	12	24
Co-villagers	7	33	15	52	22	44
Living alone	2	10	1	3	3	6
Other	-	-	2	7	2	4
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: field Data.

Close to half of the respondents (44%) indicated that they were offered room by their co-villagers, followed by family relations (24%), and friends (22%) in that descending order. Further analyses of the data according to gender, shows that the proportion of females (52%) who sought accommodation from their co-villagers when they arrive in the city was far more than that of the males (33%). Also, there were a bigger proportion of males (33%) than females (14%) who obtained accommodation from friends. This could be attributed to the fact that a lot of the males had their own rooms and therefore could easily accommodate their friends and family relations.

On the whole, Table 7 demonstrates that socio - cultural networks played a very significant role in supporting the fresh migrant to secure accommodation in the city. This finding confirms the position of Kwankye *et al.* (2007) that accommodation or sleeping arrangements of child migrants from the Northern parts of Ghana to Accra and Kumasi was based on where they come from, with the aim of protecting one another.

5.2. Personal and Group Safety Strategies

The young migrants were also confronted with the general insecurity associated with urban life which includes high risk of abuse, robbery, rape and other criminal acts. These insecurities were addressed by the migrants both at individual and group levels. The major source of security for the migrants was from family relations and friends.

Participants of the FGD in Sodom and Gomorrah explained that a lot of them were living with their close relations while others were staying with their friends who served as their guardians and offered them protection in the city. Another female participant indicated that migrants who do not have a family relation usually adopt elderly persons in their rooms to serve as their guardians. The 'guardians' offered them good parental advice and guarded them against all forms of insecurity.

At the group level, migrants from the same origin were normally found to be living together in one room and this served as a great source of protection for them because by living together they were in a better position to resist any kind of foreign intrusion. For the young girls who slept in the open, they tried to avoid sexual harassment from men by sleeping together in large numbers to deter men from coming closer to them. If an attempt was made to rape one while they were asleep, the others quickly woke up to attack the intruder with their head pans until the rapist bolted.

In fact, other respondents, mostly the young girls who slept in the frontage of shops claimed they paid money to the security men who took care of the shops to watch over them in the night.

From the FGD report at Sodom and Gomorrah there were community leaders among the migrants who acted as chiefs and sub-chiefs to offer protection to these migrants. These community leaders were chosen by their fellow kinsmen. Some of the chiefs identified include *Zaachi*, *Nachin Naa*, *Volni Naa*, and *Saha Naa*. They were located at different parts of the community providing different kinds of services to people within their locality, and referring cases beyond their control to the police.

5.3. The Role of Voluntary Associations

There were a variety of voluntary associations formed by the migrants as an adaptive strategy to promote their interests in the city. The number of migrants who participated in some form of voluntary activity was quite high. These associations were fashioned on the basis of area of origin, ethnic group, gender, religion, occupation, and recreation. However, majority of the associations were simply primary youth groups which were formed irrespective of the tribe, age, and gender. Some of the names of these associations include *Bonzali Youth Association*, *Diboriyom Youth Association*, *Zomyaa Youth Group*, *Zosimli Youth Associations* among others.

These voluntary associations shared common objectives or functions which involved providing a measure of social security to its members. Members regarded themselves brothers and sisters showing sympathy to one another when in need. They also made periodic collection of money during their regular meetings in order to provide assistance in the form of cash or household items to members in sickness, during outdooing and marriage ceremonies. This was, however, more common among the female groups.

Table 8 shows the type of associations to which the migrants belong. Respondents who belonged to more than one association were asked to state the association they were most active members by their own standard. The table below outlines and discusses the kinds of associations, and the numbers of such associations that existed in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Table-8. Association Type and Members.

Type Of Assoc.	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Ethnic Group Assoc.	3	14	3	10	6	12
Area of Origin	3	14	5	17	8	16
Occupational Group	3	14	4	14	7	14
Primary Assoc.	4	19	9	31	13	26
Women/Men's Groups	6	29	5	17	11	22
Religious Assoc.	1	5	2	7	3	6
Non	1	5	1	4	2	4
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

Out of the six types of voluntary associations listed above in table 8, it is clear that primary association (Youth groups irrespective of gender, occupation and ethnicity) was the most prevalent form of voluntary association consisting of 26% of the total respondents. Followed by Women/Men's groups only (22%), Area of Origin (16%), Occupational Groups (14%) in that descending order with Religious Associations being the least (6%). It must also be noted that there were some of the respondents (4%) who had no relationship with any of the voluntary associations identified, therefore it cannot be concluded that all the migrants were involved in association activities. But it can be concluded that a significant proportion of the migrants resort to voluntary associations as a coping mechanism in their social life in the city.

The findings showed that in contemporary time's migrant voluntary associations in urban centers are no more formed strictly on Gender, ethnic, and area of origin, as reported in an earlier finding by Barnes (1975). Migrant youth associations in urban centres can now be fashioned out irrespective of gender, area of origin, and occupation to serve a common interest.

5.4. Job Seeking Strategies

Family relations and friends play a major role in assisting the newly arrived Northern migrants in getting employment in Accra. The migrants in a discussion indicated that a migrant who had a family relation or friends already in the city had relatively less difficulty in securing a job. Those without family relations and friends find it difficult though they are often assisted by their kinsmen and friends when in search of job.

For most of the migrants, working as shop attendants is the greatest opportunity for them and every young lady aspired to work as a shop attendant. A 19 year old female porter said in an interview that because of the great benefits attached to working in a shop they always ensured that they brought their family relations to replace them anytime they were finally leaving Accra to settle in their villages. This therefore served as a great opportunity for both the old migrants and the new arrivals. Working as a shop attendant required a lot of trust and some times a little bit of formal education on the part of the migrant. So the migrants usually start as cleaners and porters in the shop until they earned the trust of the shop owner before they are allowed to take charge of some business activities in the shop. Migrants who had some basic formal education stood a greater chance of securing the work (shop attendant) than those who did not have formal education because of their ability to use the calculator and also keep records of business transactions.

Apart from the kayayei business migrants who had close ties were also able to assist one another in getting jobs in the homes as domestic workers whilst others were assisted to get jobs in the bars. A female migrant who worked in a bakery, in an answer to the question how she got her job, replied that she was put there by her sister who was

formerly working there as a baker before going home. It was also reported in the discussions that a lot of young girls involved in head portage used it as an opportunity to raise capital to go into other occupations such as trading.

5.5. Income Management and Savings Strategies

Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered by the young migrants, there were some opportunities for them to earn income for themselves and their families. They had no fixed daily incomes but most of them could earn more on a good day. Even though many of the respondents were very reluctant to volunteer information about their earnings, several of them particularly the female porters indicated that they earned an average of about eight to fifteen Ghana cedis daily whilst the male porters and the scrap dealers claimed they could earn an average of about ten Ghana cedis a day. They also indicated that on a bad day they went home with just a small amount to feed themselves.

In terms of savings, the young migrants adopted several strategies of saving the income from their daily earnings. Majority of the migrants interviewed said they saved their daily income with *susu* collectors who came around daily to collect their contributions whilst others particularly the female migrants said they were involved in *adashie* (rotating credit) as a means of saving their income.

The *adashie* saving system was described as some kind of arrangement where groups of ten to twenty migrants usually from the same village contributed an amount daily to *adashie ma*³ who would then pay out to a particular set of individuals in accordance with the turn-taking-rule of the group. In this way, each migrant stood a chance of getting a relatively large sum of money available to her which could be used to purchase her needs.

A number of the migrants also said they were saving their daily income with their family relations who take care of them. A 16 year old baker from Bimbila indicated in a discussion that she saved her daily earnings with a sister she was putting-up with at Sodom and Gomorrah. Another 20 year old scrap dealer also disclosed in a FGD that because of the thieves in their room he usually gave his money to a brother who had a bank account to be kept for him.

Many of the migrants were also saving their earnings through the acquisition of property. Most of the young girls bought items such as cooking utensils, clothes, jewelry, and sewing machines while some of the young boys acquired items such as sound systems, TV sets, bicycles, motor bikes, washing and welding machines etc. Those with secure accommodation kept these items in their rooms whilst those without secure accommodation left them with their family relations or friends for safe keeping. In an interview, a 17 year old porter from Walewale said she used the money obtained from the *adashie* to acquire some pieces of cloth and cooking utensils which she must acquire before returning home. Table 9 presents the saving strategies of the young migrants interviewed.

Table-9. Migrants Savings Strategies

Savings Strategies	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Rotating credit	2	10	6	21	8	16
Susu	10	50	12	41	22	44
Cash savings with a relative	2	10	3	10	5	10
Material acquisition	4	15	8	28	12	24
Bank	2	10	0	-	2	4
Other	1	5	0	-	1	2
Totals	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

Among these strategies, majority of the migrants representing 44% of the respondents saved their income through the informal *susu* system. The high patronage of the *susu* system could be attributed to the fact that the system was fairly convenient as the 'bank' in this context moved to the client instead of the customer going to the bank as in the case of the formal banking system. This is also in a close agreement with the findings of Alhassan *et al.* (2004) in a previous study among the young migrants in Accra, which indicated that 46% of the migrants saved their money through daily *susu* contributions.

Close to a third (24%) of the migrants saved through the acquisition of physical assets such as cooking utensils, jewelry, and equipments such as sewing and welding machines to facilitate the learning of a trade in future. This suggests that the migrant's current jobs served as a means to attaining targeted future aspirations.

Again, 16% of the respondents were reported to be saving their money through the *adashie* system. This low patronage of the *adashie* was attributed to a high level of fraud associated with it in recent times. The analysis by gender shows that a larger proportion of females (21%) than males (10%) are involved in the *adashie* system. This reinforces the fact that the *adashie* system is increasingly becoming the preserve of women.

The formal banking system formed the least saving strategy of the migrants representing 4% of the total respondents. Only 10% male migrants reported having bank savings accounts with none of the female respondents reported having a bank account. This could probably be the result of high level of illiteracy among the migrants coupled with low levels of income.

5.6. Food/Nutrition Habits of Migrants

Due to the high cost of living in the city, most of the young migrants generally relied on street foods both as coping strategy and as part of normal consumption, with street foods contributing significantly to their nutrition requirements. In-depth interviews with some of the young migrants in the city showed that most of them purchase

³ *Adashie ma* refers to the person who keeps the daily or weekly contribution

food daily because of income constraints. For some of them though buying food is expensive, it is a relatively cheaper compared to cooking, since one requires a lot of things such as food ingredients, cooking utensils, and fuel which are quite expensive.

The migrants further indicated in the discussion that due to the high cost of food a lot of their colleagues have now engaged in the business of selling food to them at affordable prices. Some of the porters were found selling the food to their colleagues in the evening as a form of part time business whilst others did so in full time especially during the day. To cope with the high prices of food most of the migrants found it convenient buying food from their colleagues which was far cheaper as compared to buying outside their fold.

Generally, most of the migrants interviewed claimed they eat three times daily, but some of them said they sometimes skipped their meals on the days that they did not have enough money. Some of the migrants said that they usually skip breakfast because of their tight schedule in the morning. For these people the only period they can find time to eat is mid-day when business slows down a little. There were some who claimed they did not have specific times for eating but did so only when they were hungry and had some money on them. Table 10 illustrates the wide variety of strategies used by the migrants to acquire food.

Table-10. Strategies of acquiring food by the migrants

Strategies of Getting Food	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Buying from street vendors	13	62	15	52	28	56
Cooking with colleagues	4	19	8	34	12	24
Eating from relative/friend	4	19	4	10	8	16
Others (food sellers)	-	-	2	4	2	4
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

From the table, a little more than half of the total respondents (56%) purchase food from street vendors. This suggests that majority of the young Northern migrants eat on the street. It further reinforces Maxwell (2000) position that the purchase of street foods in itself is a coping strategy.

Further analysis of the data shows that close to a third of the migrants cook with contributions from colleagues. This serves as a kind of a coping mechanism to deal with the high cost involved in cooking. Analysis of the data by gender also indicated that the proportion of males (19%) involved in cooking was far lower than that of the females (34%). This could be explained by the cultural antecedents of the migrants which do not encourage men to cook. However, the proportion of males who depended on a relative or a friend for food was slightly higher than that of the female. An indication of the fact that more migrant males (19%) than females (10%) depended on relatives and friends for their food needs.

5.7. Health Seeking and Environmental Strategies

From the FGD and the in-depth interviews, it emerged that many of the migrants addressed their numerous health problems by resorting to self medication. Most of the migrants in the discussion said they accessed health care from the pharmacy and chemical shops in Sodom and Gomorrah. They simply walk over to the counter of any of the shops available to buy a drug of their choice whenever they fall sick. Sometimes, these drugs were prescribed by friends and family relation who had suffered similar symptoms previously.

In a direct conversation with a 17 year old female porter from Kumbungu, she said, "I do not often fall sick, but any time I fall sick I inform my sister who gives me medicine or sends me to the chemist to buy some medicine for myself". Even though there were others who claimed they visited the hospital or the clinic for treatment, they did so after unsuccessful self-medication. According to some of the migrants, the presence of so many retail drug outlets in Sodom and Gomorrah made it convenient for them to obtain drugs than going to the hospital which usually took a whole day to seek medical treatment. This was an indication that the convenient location of the chemical shops served as an intervening point for health service delivery, thus, making many migrants reluctant to go the hospital no matter the severity of the illness.

A participant in one of the focused group discussions at Sodom and Gomorrah indicated that if a migrant is suffering from a major ailment such as cholera, they contribute money to either send the sick person to the hospital or back to his/her home town in the North. Also, as part of their duties the community leaders in an interview said they arrange for people who suffer from major ailments to be sent back to their home villages for treatment.

Table 11 shows the health seeking behaviour of the Northern migrants under study.

Table-11. Health-Seeking Behaviours.

Sources Of Health Care	Sex				Total	
	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	No.	%
Spiritual/Devine healing	1	5	2	7	3	6
Hospital/clinic	2	10	3	10	5	10
Self medication	8	38	14	48	22	44
Pharmacy/Chemical shop	6	29	4	14	10	20
Traditional medicine	3	14	5	17	8	16
Non	1	4	1	4	2	4
Total	21	100	29	100	50	100

Source: Field Data.

It can be seen from the table that close to half (44%) of the total migrants reported to have used self-medication to treat their ailments. This was followed by the pharmacy, with 20% of the respondents saying they had their drugs prescribed to them by the Pharmacist. 16% of the respondents used traditional/herbal medicine with only a small proportion (10%) of the respondents reportedly attending the hospital or clinic for treatment.

In this study, migrants' use of self-medication was very high, which is almost in agreement with a study carried out by Kwankye *et al.* (2007) in Kumasi and Accra. The major reasons given for the soaring use of self-medication was its relative lower cost, availability of so many drug retail outlets, and most importantly the presence of family relations, friends and acquaintances who usually recommend drugs for their sick colleagues. The most frequent illness reported for self-medication was body pains, headache, fever, diarrhoea, cough, sexual transmitted diseases (STDS), and abdominal pains.

In terms of sex, females practiced more self-medication (48%) than males (38%) which was an indication of the fact that females were the worst victims in the consumption of drugs and employment of self-medication among the migrants. However, there were a higher proportion of males (29%) who accessed health care from pharmacist than females (14%). This indicates that more males obtained professional advice from the pharmacist than the females.

Further analysis of the data shows that less than a quarter of the respondents (10%) seek medical care from the Hospital or the clinic. They usually attend hospital after self-medication fails to yield any positive results or when the condition of the sick person deteriorates.

Migrant's failure to seek medical care from the hospitals and clinics was attributed to the high cost of medical care at the hospitals. Even though there is now health insurance in place to offer free medical care, none of the migrants interviewed qualified to access the free health delivery because they were not card bearing members of the National Health Insurance Scheme. This probably explained the migrants' wide patronage of self medication. Another reason for the low attendance to the hospitals was due to undue delays in accessing health care at the formal health centers. For some of them, the longer the time spent at the hospital, the more opportunities missed for making money. It is worth noting, that a significant number of the Northern migrants at Sodom and Gomorrah relied on self medication as a coping strategy which could lead to fatal repercussions on their lives. Therefore, though difficult to eliminate, interventions such as dissemination of information about self-medication and drug use at large, through the media, health education sessions, and posters can be made available to the migrants. Alternatively, health insurance campaign should be given emphasis at Sodom and Gomorrah to enable the migrants also access the free medical care.

5.8. Managing Disaster

The Northern migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah generally lack protection from both natural and man made disasters like flood, fire, and outbreak of epidemics such as typhoid and cholera outbreaks as a result, the initial response to disasters of these kind was carried out by the migrants themselves.

During epidemic outbreaks, for instance, migrants usually contribute money and other necessary resources in aid of the affected victims to seek medical attention at a nearby health institution. Also, in this period many of the migrants said they resorted to religious institutions like the church and the mosque in the settlement for either spiritual healings or appeal for fund to assist victims to seek medical care. In the worst situations, the sick person's immediate kinsmen contribute money to transport him or her back to the village for treatment.

In case of a fire outbreak in the area the first reaction of the people is to put out the fire by drawing water from the Korle lagoon. In addition, people with stand pipes and water tanks nearby freely provide sufficient water to put out the fire before calling on the fire service to assist. The community leaders in an interview disclosed that as a precautionary measure, inhabitants were now being advised to desist from erecting structures so close to one another in order to lessen the spread of fire. Besides, some of the migrants have now begun putting up concrete structures to minimize the impact of these fires.

Flooding was also identified as another kind of disaster that the migrants had difficulty in handling. Flooding had become a regular occurrence in Sodom and Gomorrah especially during heavy down pours which called for various coping strategies. A good number of strategies for coping with flooding in Sodom and Gomorrah were identified during the discussions. Some of the responses included bailing water out of the rooms to prevent damage to properties, placing children initially on raised items like tables and later removing them to unaffected dwellings. Others said they used blocks, stones, and broken furniture to create higher places on which to place their valuables during the floods. Some were reported to have dug trenches to divert water away from their homes whilst others used sandbags to block the water from getting into their rooms.

Essentially, there were more individual coping strategies rather than collective community action to construct drainage channels. There was no coordinated action for emergency response to flooding.

5.9. Institutional Support

Here, we now turn our attention to the support services that young migrants receive from government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Many organizations are involved in providing support to the young Northern migrants but those that were captured during the interviews included: Department of Children within the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor, Peoples Dialogue Ghana, Village of Hope, Street Girls Aid, and Urban Poor Child Organization (UPCH).

5.9.1. Government Support

The government through the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs embarked on alternative livelihood skills training programmes for all the young Northern migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah and other surrounding squatter settlements in Accra. According to the programme coordinator, the training was aimed at equipping the young migrants with skills in dress-making, soap making, and hair dressing to become self-employed and capable of making a decent living while contributing their quota to the development of their home communities and the nation

at large. He added that after the training the ministry would assist the migrants with capital through its collaboration with the Micro Finance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC) to start their own businesses.

The ministry is also currently embarking on a programme termed as 'kayayei' project to collect data on the number and needs of all the kayayei in Accra. The programme aims at withdrawing the young girls from Northern parts of the country in Accra and then resettling them in their home communities. The focus of the project is to make those below the age of 15 years go back to school.

As part of an HIV/AIDS sensitization program for the migrants, the ministry of Women and Children Affairs has conducted HIV/AIDS and female condom sensitization workshops for more than 2,000 'Kayayee' at Sodom and Gomorrah, Tema Station and Mallam Atta markets all in the Accra Metropolitan area. These workshops were aimed at preventing the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease among the migrants.

Even though the ministry had good policies for the migrants it has not been able to capture the majority of the migrants in the skills training programmes probably due to lack of funding and support from the private sector. For instance out of about 1000 porters only 120 were recruited for the skills training programmes at the Malam Ata market. Besides, the majority of the migrants interviewed were not even aware of the skills training programme possibly due to lack of effective communication and knowledge of the programme. Also, the programme is gender imbalanced since it is targeted only at the female migrants particularly the kayayei perhaps due to their large numbers and the likely high levels of vulnerability. What then happens to the male migrants in the interim since they are also most likely to be involved in social vices like stealing and armed robbery?

Furthermore, the 'Kayayei project' which aims at repatriating the child migrants back to their home communities to attend schools may not yield the desired results if specific steps are not taken to empower their parents to be able to cater for them in school. These child migrants are most likely to run back to Accra if they find out that their situation back home remained unchanged.

5.9.2. NGO and CBO Support

One of the several non-governmental organizations that had provided humanitarian services to the Northern young migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah is Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GFUP), a community based non-governmental organization working in partnership with People's Dialogue Ghana (PDG). According to the director of the GFUP at the Sodom and Gomorrah office, since the end of 2003 the federation has worked very hard to improve the living conditions of the migrants as well as exploring an alternative solution to the forced eviction from the area.

In the past, there had been strenuous relationships between the officials of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) and the migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah which resulted in frequent threat of eviction of the migrants in the area. With the establishment of the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GFUP) through collaboration with Peoples Dialogue Ghana, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed with the Accra Metropolitan Assembly which later resulted in a resettlement package for the migrants. The MOU also temporarily eased the threat of forced mass evictions in the area. They also organized forums which provided the opportunity for the migrants to dialogue and interact with leaders of government and the private sector.

The federation, in collaboration with Slum Dwellers International of India, built two hostel facilities for the head porters at Old and New Fadama. Each of the Hostels had five rooms which accommodated at least 14 people per room. The head porters paid GH¢ 0.10 daily which was used to manage the facility. The Director of the federation added that the frequent fire outbreaks in Sodom and Gomorrah were the main motivation for putting up the hostels. In an interview with the porters at the Hostels, most of them expressed satisfaction at their new location which they said was a better place to live than the makeshift structures they previously live.

Street Girls Aid is another relevant Non-Governmental Organizations found to be working in the locality. According to the coordinator, the organization takes care of pregnant girls who lack support until delivery. Upon delivery these young girls were educated on how to take good care of their babies. There was also a similar organization in the area called BIYOLNI, which takes care of the babies of the young girls until they returned from the market. According to the overseer of this organization, she takes care of an average of about forty babies ranging from six months to two years a day. She explained that the parents paid GH¢ 0.50 daily to be used in feeding the babies. In an interview, a 19 year-old mother, from Tolon said the organization is playing a very important role by saving their babies from going through the troubles with them in the market.

Another important Organization found to be providing support to the young migrants in Sodom and Gomorrah is the Urban Poor Child Organization (UPCO). According to the coordinator of UPCO, the organization provides counseling services and health education for the migrants. They also provide training in various forms of handicrafts which includes bead making, drawing, painting, drumming, sculpture, and wood curving. This aims at equipping the migrants with some useful skills to generate income for themselves.

Again, most of the services provided by these Non-Governmental organizations in Sodom and Gomorrah centered more on the females than the males which calls for some opportunities for the males. The impact of the activities of these organizations was enjoyed by just a few people considering the large number of the migrants. There was also the lack of effective co-ordination of the activities of these Non-governmental organizations working in Sodom and Gomorrah which often resulted in duplication of activities. A lot of them just existed on paper but were not actually doing anything concrete enough on the ground to improve the lot of the migrants. There is therefore the need for the Department of Social Welfare to constantly evaluate the performance of the activities of these Non-Governmental Organizations operating in the area.

6. Concluding Remarks

To all intents and purposes, this paper sought to outline the various survival strategies and remedial actions that have been taken to mitigate the socio-cultural and economic challenges that confront these derelict young Northern migrants in the Accra Metropolis.

The paper revealed that many of these young migrants in response to their challenges in the city choose to create informal social safety nets by establishing some social ties among themselves to collectively satisfy their basic needs. These networks enabled most of the migrants to quickly adjust and integrate very well in the city. There were various levels of networks which were being used as coping strategies. These include bonds with friends, kinship ties, co-villagers, organizations, and network with migrants from the same region.

These migrant networks provided diverse invaluable support in the areas of shelter, personal security, disaster prevention, food or nutrition, ill-health, job search, income savings, offering advice, information sharing, provision of emotional or psychological needs. This was done by collectively paying for their food and medicine, paying to live in makeshift structures made of wood and empty packing cases, formation of voluntary associations, saving their earnings through the *susu* system, rotating credit, acquisition of material wealth, and appointing community leaders to handle their security and other social needs. Included in these social networks were institutions that provided interventions such as hostel accommodation, skills training in variety of occupations, and the provision of credit facilities.

The paper also revealed that even though there were on-going programmes by the government and other relevant non-governmental organizations aimed at addressing some of the pertinent issues regarding north-south migration of children in Ghana, these programmes were not given a national priority. As a result, many of them could not be sustained due to inadequate funding.

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