

**Working Paper on Social-Ecological Resilience Series
No. 2008-006**

**Re-thinking Labour Migration in Relation to Livelihood Diversity in
African Rural Area: A Case Study in Southern Province, Zambia**

By

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Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS)
Kyoto University**

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Vulnerability and Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems

RIHN Research Project E-04

Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN)

Inter-University Research Institute Corporation, National Institutes for the Humanities

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Abstract

This paper attempts to 1) describe diversification of economic activities in African rural area, 2) trace and describe labour migration, and 3) analyse the relationship between labour migration and diversified activities in rural society.

In most rural areas of Africa, agriculture remains the main livelihood. However, agricultural production is often supplemented and even sustained by other economic activities in order to cope with variable environmental conditions, and social and economic changes. Labour migration has been considered as one of essential activities to supplement rural society, but we do not know much about the relation between labour migration and other strategies taken inside of the village. This paper has examined the situation of livelihood diversification and its relationship with labour migration in Zambia.

As a result, there are employments, agricultural and non-agricultural wage labour and the coping strategies for drought. But practice of these strategies would be constrained by primary cost, social networks and assets. Access to these strategies was not in uniform. There are differences of livelihood strategies by households.

In regard to labour migration, people can easily migrate without obstacles, thus it has been connected to rural society and economy as an alternative strategy. This character of labour migration was supported by increasing labour demand in neighbouring towns and social network.

Labour migration had an essential role for compensating rural economy in case of distress, however importance and need for it would differ from households, and it had a relation with access to other livelihood strategies practicing inside of the village.

Keywords: Labour migration, Livelihood diversification, Coping strategy, Zambia

要旨

アフリカ農村部では農業が基盤ではあるが、市場経済の影響やリスクへの対応として農民の生業は多様化してきている。中でも出稼ぎ労働は農村経済を補填する役割を担うものとして注目されてきた。本稿の目的はザンビア農村部において、生業多様化の実態やリスクへの対応を明らかにし、そして特に出稼ぎ労働が持つ役割や影響を農村内の多生業との関わりから明らかにすることにある。

調査の結果、村内雇用労働や農業・農外賃労働、干ばつ時の対応策など様々な生計手段が観察された。しかし、各種の生業へのアクセスは一様ではなく、各世帯の生計戦略の幅に差異が生まれていることも明らかとなった。

これに対し調査地からの出稼ぎ労働は、低コストで容易に行えるため、農村内の生計戦略を代替するものとして農村社会と経済に組み込まれていた。これらが実現した要因として、近隣の都市における非熟練労働の需要増加と、社会的ネットワークによる初期費用の削減などの要因が挙げられる。

調査地における出稼ぎ労働は、干ばつなどの困窮時に容易に行える手段として重要な役割を担っている。しかし、その必要性や重要性は世帯によって異なり、それらは農村内の生計戦略へのアクセスと関連しているといえる。

キーワード: 出稼ぎ労働・生業多様化・生計戦略・ザンビア

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose of this paper

This paper 1) describes the diversification of economic activities in African rural area, 2) traces and describes labour migration, and 3) analyses the relationship between labour migration and diversified activities in rural society.

Rural farmers in Africa face risks caused by economic and social changes and recurrent natural disasters. To cope with such risks, farmers have adopted various kinds of activities to supplement subsistence agriculture. Diversification of livelihood is an essential factor when we consider of rural society.

Ellis (1998) defined “livelihood diversification” as the process by which rural families construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in their struggle to survive and improve their standards of living. Ellis emphasised the importance of diversification, not only in regard to sources of income. I agree with his proposition and further stress the importance of livelihood diversification from the perspective of coping strategies. Diversification of livelihood helps to lessen rural vulnerability.

While agriculture is the main source of livelihood in rural areas, labour migration often serves as a supplemental activity undertaken to cope with food shortages or as an alternative activity that is not necessarily related to agricultural production. Especially in arid and semi-arid areas, labour migration as a response to food scarcity, can represent an essential substitute for formal insurance and financial markets (Hampshire 2006.; Schrieder and Knerr 2000).

Much attention has been paid to labour migration from economic and social points of view; with studies examining such aspects as the causes and patterns of migration (Todaro 1969; Stark 1984), the impacts of labour migration on rural economy especially in regard to remittance (Miracle and Berry 1970; Lucas and Stark 1985), and the responses to negative impacts of outmigration, such as loss of male-labour (Akin 1989; Hampshire 2006). These studies clarified how labour migration happened and what kind of effect it had on rural economy and society by analysing labour migration itself alone, but as mentioned above, rural economy has been diverse then the role of labour migration should be re-thought in relation with their social and economic activities in the village. In discussing the labour migration from livelihood point of view, we realize that migration has not a little relation to social vulnerability and resilience in rural society. Because for improving and securing rural livelihood, labour migration is one of ways by which people can diversify their livelihood. We know much about diversification strategies in farming, however we do not know quite well about the relation between the role of migration and diversification in farming. The labour migration itself constitutes a part the livelihood diversity strategies, but we have to know how it relates to the rural livelihood diversification strategy. Therefore, in this paper, labour migration will be examined from the perspective of livelihood diversity in sending area, focusing on the role of migration as one strategy for improving and securing rural livelihoods.

The organization of this paper is as follows. The following section reviews the

history of labour migration in Zambia. Sections 3 and 4 discuss actual situations of rural livelihood diversification and labour migration in the rural area based on a case study of Southern Province, Zambia. Finally, section 5 presents conclusion and notes some additional important topics that could not be discussed thoroughly in this paper.

1.2 Methodology and dataset

I conducted field research for 8 months (August 2006 to March 2007) in two villages in Southern Province, Zambia. The research method included both interviews and participatory observation. Interviews were conducted with heads of households (N=45) and focused on demographic change, social and economic status and the agricultural situation. I also indentified 37 people who had experienced labour migration without regard to age, sex and social status. Out of those 37 people, 83 cases were interviewed one by one about their experience with labour migration.

In this research, I do not define labour migration based on the length of time migrants spent away from their villages, because even migrants who spend more than 5 years away may expect to return to home and even they do not remit anymore to their relatives at home, they still could be asked for assistance in case of hardship. Therefore, in this paper, I analysed long-term and short-term migration in the same way.

2.0 Labour Migration in Zambia

2.1 Overview of the history of labour migration from colonial era to independence

Zambia supplied labour to neighbouring countries including South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Tanzania, during the colonial period when labour demands increased with the development of mines and plantations. The colonial government of Zambia also introduced taxes on poles, huts and cattle which compelled subsistence farmers to enter the labour market.

In the 1920s, Zambia began to develop its own copper mines, and the demands for workers in copper-belt region. Railroads were built to access the mines and urban centres, and non-agricultural populations expanded in the copper-belt and along the rail-lines. To meet the food demand of those miners and urban residents, commercial maize production also started to increase. The colonial government provided some land along railroads to white settlers to promote large-scale commercial farming. These commercial farmers produced tobacco and maize and required farm labourers. Since the railroads are running in Southern Province where most of the Tonga lived, many of the Tonga became migrant labourers working at commercial farms and mines. Compared to farmers in other provinces, small-scale farmers in Southern Province were relatively quick to develop commercial maize cultivation. Farmers in this area had the advantage of learning new technologies and knowledge from nearby white large-scale farmers.

In other provinces, the agricultural production remained low as men left their villages to enter the labour force(Richards 1939). However, in urban areas, male

migrants often faced low wages because they were generally considered “circular single male migrants” whose wives and children were supported by member of their rural society.

In the 1930s, Zambia experienced an economic crisis sparked by the depreciation of copper. Approximately 4000 people lost their jobs in the copper-belt(Ferguson 1990). However, by 1935, with the lead up to World War II, the copper industry and Zambian economy recovered and shifted upwards. After World War II, employers seeking a continuous labour supply began to promote permanent settlement of migrant workers (Cliffe 1978).

2.2 Labour migration after Independence

From approximately independence in 1964 until 1975, Zambia experienced economic “golden age” influenced by the high price of copper. The prosperous copper industry, rise of public enterprises and increasing employment opportunities encouraged the flux of migrants into the cities. Rural migrants were also responding to the growing gap between urban and rural wages. Kodamaya(1993) reported that urban population in Zambia rose from 20% in 1963 to 35% in 1974. Likewise, the number of workers in copper-belt rose from 28,000 in 1945 to 38,000 in 1964.

However in 1976, the Zambian economy once again fell into stagnation caused by sharp declines in copper prices and increases in petroleum prices. The economic crisis drove up prices of consumer goods, making urban life more difficult. The food prices increased further with the government’s acceptance of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in the early 1980s.

2.3 Labour migration after the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP)

Maize prices rose after SAP but urban wages did not change, creating great hardship for urban residents. Whereas the wage disparity between urban and rural areas had previously spurred labour migration (Todaro 1969), the situation following the SAP made urban areas less attractive to potential rural migrants. In-migration to urban areas decreased. After the 1980 the employment in the formal sector also decreased.

Furthermore, because more people had grown up in cities by the 1990s, urban employers required fewer workers from rural areas. New rural migrants have thus had more difficulty obtaining formal employment in cities, and new problems have arisen, such as an unprecedented increase in informal sector employment and slum populations.

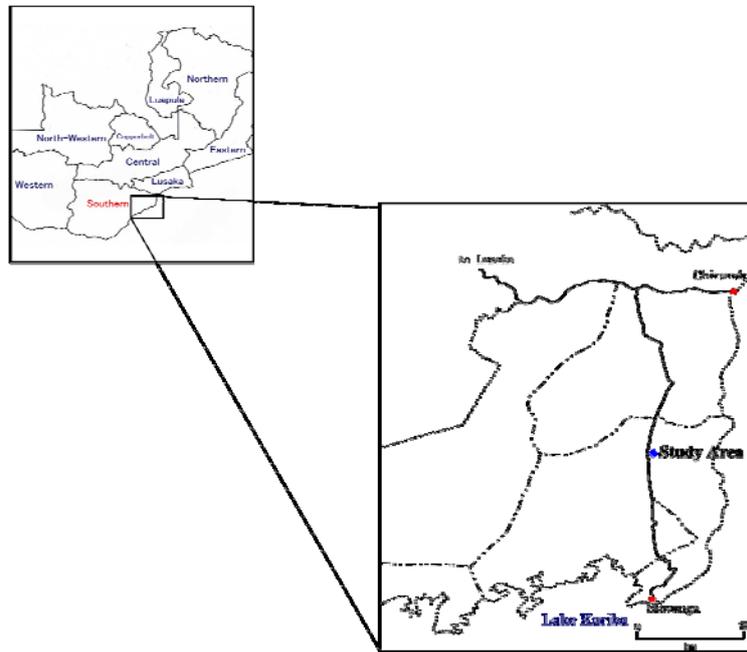
Both before and after independence, the settlement of migrants was promoted; however, low-income persons have suffered from high food prices and decreased employment opportunities. Therefore, the role of rural areas as a secure and assured place of resort against fluctuating urban life has been remained important. This is why to analyse the relation between labour migration and livelihood situation in rural areas

has come to be renewal issue.

3.0 Livelihood diversity in the study area

3.1 Ecological and social overview of the study area

The study area is located in Lusitu Ward in the Siavonga District of Southern Province (Map 1), approximately 150 km south from capital city of Lusaka and along the paved road between Lusaka and district capital of Siavonga.



Map 1 Location of the study area.

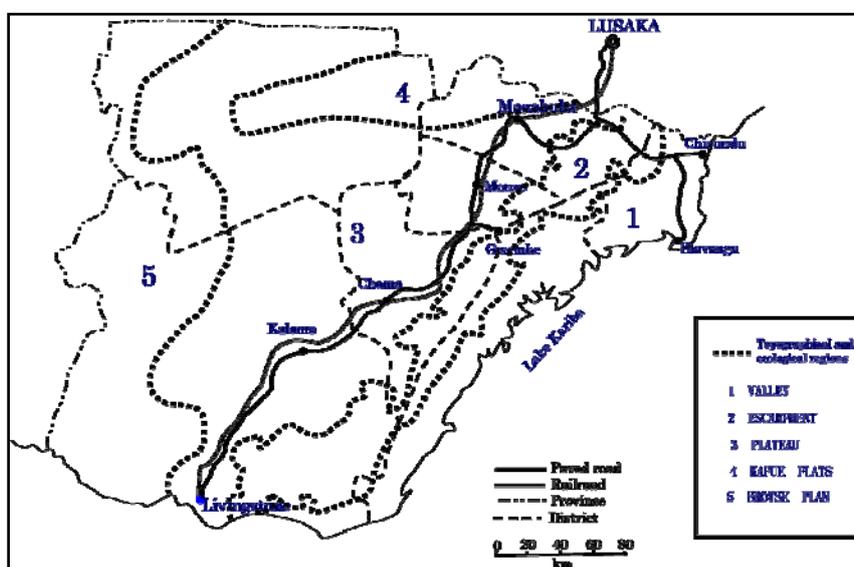
Source: Modified from the “Zambia Travelers Map”, 2006.

Southern Province can be divided into five main topographical and ecological regions (Map 2): the plateau, the valley, the escarpment, the Kafue flats and the Barotse plains (FAO 1993). Table 1 describes the agricultural and ecological character of each region. Siavonga District is in the valley area, as are the districts of Sinazongwe and Gwembe. Annual precipitation in the valley area ranges from approximately 600 to 800 mm, with an average of 631 mm in the study area.

Figure 1 illustrates the variation in annual precipitation from 1974-75 to 2005/06, which is particularly evident in the study area. Data for the same period for Siavonga show a clearer picture of this area. As shown in Figure 2, Lusitu received 546 mm of annual precipitation and Siavonga received 657 mm. Thus even within the same valley region, the study area faces relatively more difficult conditions for agriculture.

Lusitu is a rather young region. It was established in 1958 by former residents of

Zambezi River area who were forced to resettle due to construction of Lake Kariba and Dam.¹ Initially, the settlers resided in five villages already established at the former society, but as the population increased, more villages were established to cope with drought. Since Lusitu is infamously drought-prone, the government and international organisations have actively provided food aid to this area. Because units of food aid were allocated at the village level, regardless of village population size, people thought that more households could obtain aid by forming new villages. At the time of my research, there were 15 villages in the area². Among these villages, Habamba and Siachanka were chosen for the sites of the intensive interview study.



Map 2 Topographical and ecological regions of Southern Province.
Source: FAO (1993)

¹ In the 1950s, Northern and Southern Rhodesia (present-day Zambia and Zimbabwe, respectively) decided to build Kariba Dam, with the goal of creating a hydroelectric plant to provide electricity. Approximately 5700 people living in this area were forced to resettle in Southern Province (Colson 1960). Scudder (1962) described the traditional society and environment of the former residents.

² Five new villages were formed after this research, for a total of 20 villages in August, 2008.

Table 1 Agricultural and ecological characteristics of Southern Province.

Characteristics	Plateau	Valley	Escarpment	Kafue Flats	Barotse Plain
Altitude(m)	1,100-1,400	400-650	650-1,500	1,000-1,100	900-1,100
Mean rainfall(mm)	800-900	600-800	600-800	900-1,000	700-900
Mean growing season(days)	120-130	110-120	110-120	120-130	100-120
No.of 10-day drought periods during the rainy season ¹	3-4	3-5	3-4	2-3	4-5
Soil fertility	Poor to good	Poor to moderate	Poor	Poor to good	Poor
Soil drainage	Good to excessive	Poor to excessive	Good	Poor	Excessive
Population density	High	Medium to high	Low to very low	Low	Very low

¹/Less than 30 mm of rainfall in 10 days.

Source: FAO (1993).

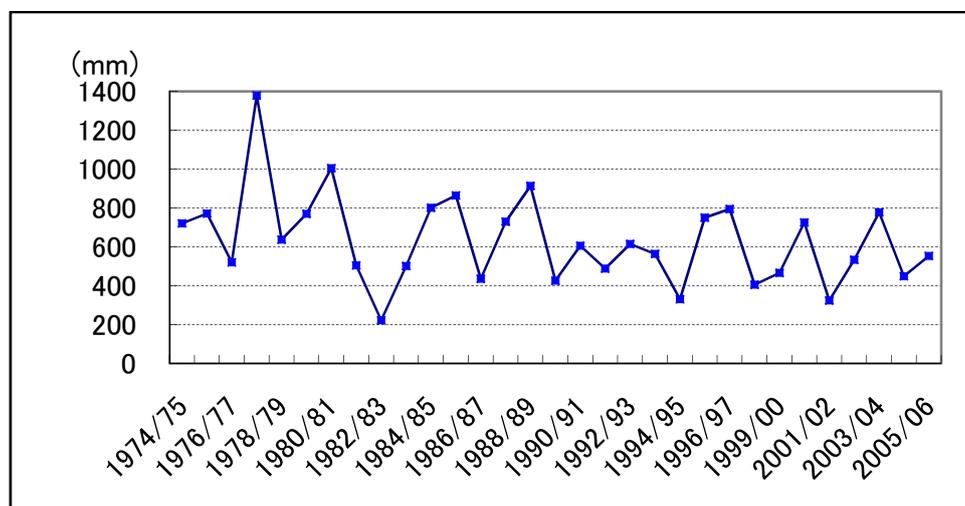


Figure 1 Annual precipitation in Lusitu (except 1998/99).

Source: Lusitu Agricultural Office.

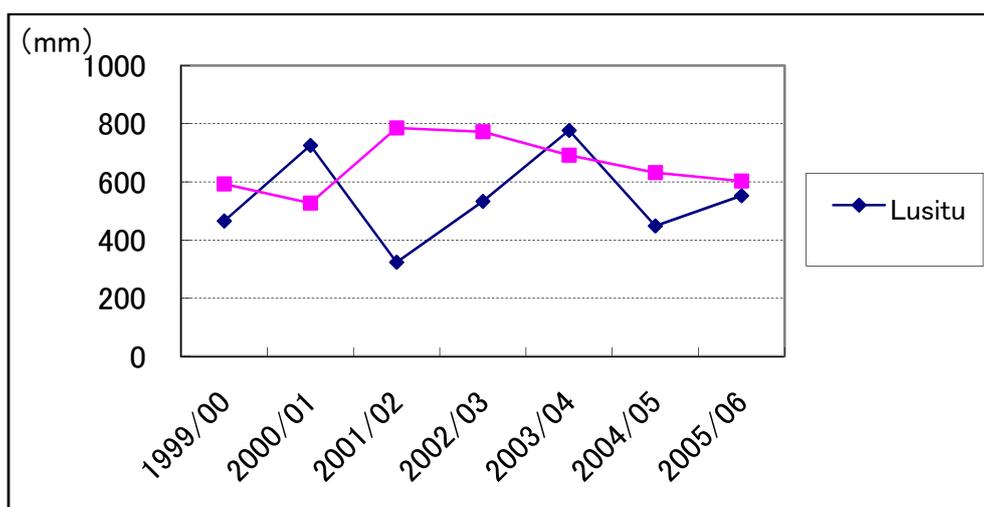


Figure 2 Precipitation in Lusitu and Siavonga from 1999/00 to 2005/06.
Source: Lusitu Agricultural Office and Siavonga Agricultural Office.

3.2 Agriculture

During my study, all households in study area were engaged in agriculture for food production. Even though some households had another source of income, they had not abandoned agriculture.

Maize is considered the staple food in Zambia and is widely produced in Southern Province. However, the sparse and fluctuating precipitation in the study area make it unsuitable for maize production, and people mainly cultivate sorghum and pearl millet, which are more drought-tolerant than maize. The government also recommends these crops, as well as multiple-cropping rather than single-cropping system.

Table 2 shows the kinds of crops widely planted in the study area and the number of households planting each crop in 2006. Almost all households planted sorghum. Millet was also a main crop, and rape, groundnuts, okra, pumpkin and watermelon were planted for side-dish foods. Maize was of low priority. Cotton is a main cash crop, but it requires large plots of land and labour inputs, only a few households grew cotton.

Table 2 Main crops produced in the study area and number of households (HH) growing each crops in 2006.

	Maize	Sorghum	Pearl millet	Ground nuts	Legumes	Cotton
Number of HH	28	44	41	13	14	11
%	62.2	97.8	91.1	28.9	31.1	24.4

Table 3 categorises landholdings by households. Land holdings ranged from a maximum of 17.2 ha to a minimum of 0.7 ha, with an average area of 3.0 ha. About 67%

of the households fell below 3-ha average. Land is generally owned by individuals, not by the community. People can sell and inherit land as they choose, but must inform the village headman about each transaction. Anyone wishing to cultivate new land must also inform and obtain the consent of the village headman. In this sense, the land tenure system in this area is not a free-hold system. However, the system in this relatively new territory is also distinct from the traditional communal land tenure system in Africa.

Table 3 The area of land held by households (HH).

Area (ha)	No. of HH	Mean	Maximum	Minimum
≥ 3.0	15	5.8	17.2	3.0
$1.5 < 3.0$	17	2.1	2.9	1.7
≤ 1.5	13	1.1	1.4	0.7
All	45	3.0	17.2	0.7

Interviews revealed that food security in this area both fluctuated and differed among households. Some households having less than 1.0 ha of land reported that they consumed all of the previous year's crops before the next crops were ready to harvest. In contrast, for some households with more than 5.0 ha, the harvest could feed the household throughout the year when sufficient rain fell.

3.3 Agricultural and non-agricultural income sources

Households that planted cotton received the profit in May or June. In 2005/06, the average profit from cotton³ was 1,291,438 ZMK⁴. The price of cotton was 1220ZMK/kg. This average profit was approximately the same amount that millers (engaged in casual employment) would make in a year. Selling sorghum was another source of income in the study area. Some seed companies had contracts with farmers; only the *Kuyuma* variety of sorghum was sold in the study area. Both cotton and sorghum were only sold by households with large areas of land and surplus crop production. Further, since there was no irrigation system in the study area, the profits from selling cotton and sorghum were influenced by precipitation.

Among non-agricultural income sources, employment was the most stable and secure. Workers engaged in two main types of non-agricultural employment: formal and casual employment, and self-employment. Teaching at school and milling are examples of formal and casual employment, respectively. A miller, for example, could receive about 70,000~100,000 ZMK as a monthly salary.

Examples of self-employed workers included carpenters, shop owners and traditional beer sellers. A carpenter reported that he sold a table and a chair for approximately 25,000 ZMK and 15,000 ZMK, respectively, and that people from both

³ The average of households only which remembered their sales and profit, N=4.

⁴ 1US\$ \doteq 4000ZMK (in 2006)

inside and outside of Lusitu came to buy his furniture. In this case, his income depended on the demand, which was influenced by the season.

Wage labour called “piecework” was the most common way to earn cash. Comparatively wealthy households (e.g., those having employed members or owning large areas of land and growing cotton) were the employer of piecework. If they needed workers for tasks such as weeding or brick-making, they would call for workers and negotiate the working time and wage. Similarly, if someone was in financial trouble and needed money, he or she visit wealthy households and tell their hardship, then could obtain piecework. In the latter case, however, the pieceworkers would have to have a deep connection and relationship with the employers, since piecework was usually provided through social networks among friends, relatives and neighbours. Social networks in the study area spanned beyond the village boundaries. Networks extended across Lusitu, and people frequently visited relatives and friends living in other villages. This expansion of people’s relationships through networks served as a means of providing and obtaining piecework. Therefore, persons having wealthy relatives, in-laws or close friends had an advantage in obtaining piecework. For those without this connection, it was essential to establish close relationships with the wealthy households through daily communication.

Table 4 provides examples of payments received for various types of jobs. Weeding was the most common type of piecework in the rainy season. Brick-making and collecting poles for storage and house were common in the dry season.

Table 4 Examples of payment for piecework per 1 worker.

	No. of workers	Example 1 (ZMK)	Example 2 (ZMK)
Making bricks and brocks	2-3	1 bag of cement:3,000~5,000	1 day:20,000
Collecting poles	1~2	1 day:30,000~45,000	2 days(4hr/day):50,000
Weeding	1~	half a day:10,000	1 day:10,000
Clearing a field	1~2	1 weak(4hr/day):75,000	4 days:45,000
Threshing	3~10	2 weeks:20,000	

3.4 Risk management and Coping Strategy

Risk management is different from coping strategy by definition. The former refers to preventive action taken before a risk or shock occurs, whereas the latter is a response to a situation or experience. In practice, however, the lines between risk management and coping strategy often blur. For example, labour migration was conducted as a response to drought, but some households also sent young people out as labour migration before the harvest. In practice, it is thus difficult to categorise which migration was for risk management and which was a coping strategy.

In the study area, farmers usually planted various kinds of cereals including millet, sorghum and maize. Five varieties of sorghum were used, the four indigenous

varieties *Mujeme*, *Godola*, *Jeckson* and *Gasili*, and the hybrid *Kuyuma* variety developed by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in 1989. These sorghums vary in maturation period and the taste, and households choose different combinations to plant. *Kuyuma* has improved drought tolerance, and thus some households changed from maize or *Mujeme* to *Kuyuma* in 2006/07⁵. Households with a plot for cotton could decide to plant cereal in that plot instead of cotton if precipitation was not sufficient in the beginning of the rainy season.

In time of drought, some informants reported skipping meals or eating only once or twice a day to stretch the food supply. Even in Lusaka, where the agricultural situation is generally better than in the study area, Endo et al. (2005) observed undernourished children during cases of drought.

Gathering was practiced especially during droughts. Wild fruit and edible grass were gathered and cooked to substitute for cereals. Mutual assistance also served as a coping strategy; when food stocks ran short, people would visit their relatives or neighbours to ask for cereal or money. Further, because the Tonga have traditionally engaged in both agriculture and livestock farming, selling livestock was an essential strategy for obtaining money to buy cereal. People could sell a chicken for 10,000-20,000 ZMK, a goat is for 60,000-70,000 ZMK and a cow for 300,000-500,000 ZMK depending on the sizes. Prices differed between the markets in Lusitu and in town, and some people would go to town to sell livestock for higher price.

The government, international organisations and nongovernmental organisation (NGOs) have also provided various types of aid in the study area. Government aids to rural areas, and especially to small-scale farmers, increased following the establishment of the Poverty Reduction Programme in 2001 (IMF 2007). Moreover, many programs have focused on Lusitu because it is both drought-prone and easy to access from the capital. In 2006, for example, improved varieties and highly drought-tolerant crops were promoted, and new cash crop was introduced. During times of drought, food aid has been provided to this area, but only to two to four households in each village. In some situations, social relationships and politics in each village can influence which households receive food aid, with truly needy households sometimes not receiving aid.

3.5 Differences in livelihood strategies by households

Dividing households into four groups according to whether they had a constant income source⁶, and planted cash crops reveals how people combined the strategies discussed in subsections 3.2 and 3.3. Table 5 presents the four types of household groups, and Table 6 lists characteristics of each household group.

⁵ The rainy season started in late October in 2006/07; however, little rain fell in December and January. Therefore, crops planted in October wilted and died in some fields and needed to be replanted.

⁶ Piecework is not included in this category, since this work is fluctuating and irregular according to the need for works and the financial situations of wealthy households.

Table 5 Household groups categorised by agricultural and economic status.

	No constant income source	Constant income source
Subsistence farming only	A	C
Cash crop farming	B	D

Table 6 Characteristics of each household (HH) group.

	No. of HH (female-headed HH)	Average no. of members in each HH	Average land holdings (ha)	No. of cattle holdings HH
A	28 (14)	4.6	2.0	3
B	7 (0)	7.1	4.7	3
C	5 (2)	5.4	2.6	1
D	5 (1)	9.0	7.0	4
All	45 (17)	5.6	3.1	11

Group A, which only engaged in subsistence agriculture, accounted for about 60% of the surveyed households. Household in this category had the lowest number of household members and smallest areas of land. Some households did not produce enough to be self-sufficient. Stores of food ran short before the next harvest, and these households needed to supplement for food deficits by earning cash income. They also needed cash to buy commodities such as soap, salt and cooking oil. Thus, they often engaged in frequent piecework and other coping strategies to obtain food and cash. From the viewpoint of income diversification, Group A can be considered to have insufficient diversification. Furthermore, Group A was the most vulnerable group in terms of assets and labour.

On the other hand, households in Group B had the same land area as those in Group A but stabilised their livelihood by having a constant income source and could also become an employer of piecework. Group B resembled Group A in assets and labour, but the constant income source enabled Group B to employ some workers for weeding and harvesting while members of Group B households engaged in non-agricultural activities.

Group C and D had large areas of land and access to labour, which enabled households in those groups to cultivate cotton as a cash crop. Group C, however, was influenced by variations in precipitation and thus needed to engage in piecework or other strategies. Group D generally had the most secure households among the groups; households in this group combined cotton cultivation and a constant income source with subsistence agriculture in large fields and the employment of piecework.

Figure 3 summarises these differing livelihood strategies. While livelihood diversification did occur in the study area, not all households could engage in the most secure types of strategies. Note, however, that these results are based on only 1 year of observation in 2006/07. Further research and quantitative analysis are needed to show

transitions in social and economic status.

The following section discusses the role of labour migration against the background of various livelihood strategies outlined in this section.

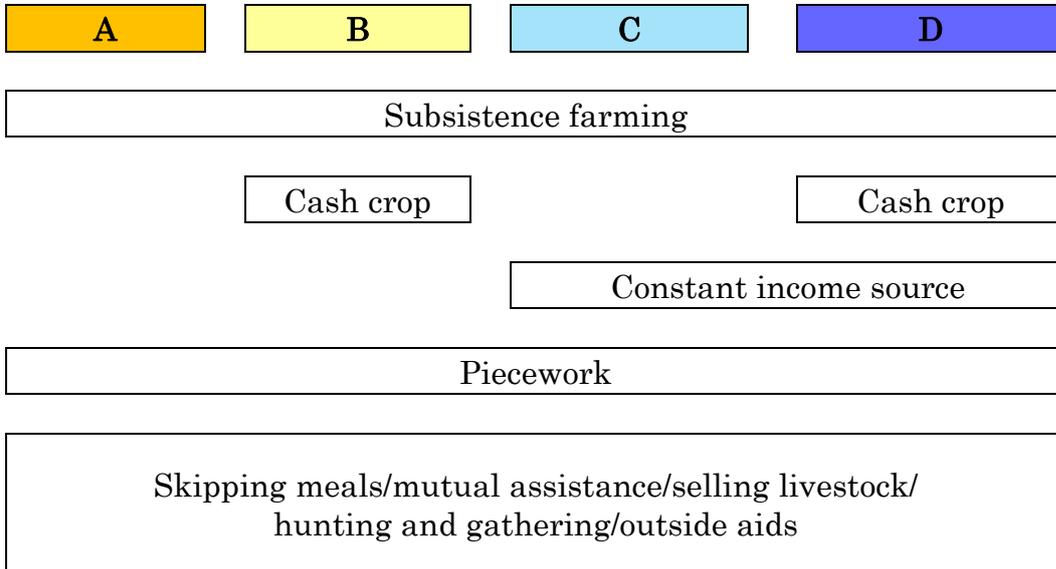


Figure 3 Differences in livelihood strategies by each type of household group.

4.0 Labour Migration

4.1 Who migrates?

Of the interviewees who had experienced labour migration (N=37), males accounted for 62% and females accounted for 38%. The number of female migrants has increased year by year. Of the household groups described in section 3, the most active group in labour migration was Group A. As shown in Figure 4, members of Group A made up 73% of the all cases. Members of Group B mainly practiced in labour migration in the 1980s; in the 1990s and since 2000, Group A has dominated labour migration from the study area.

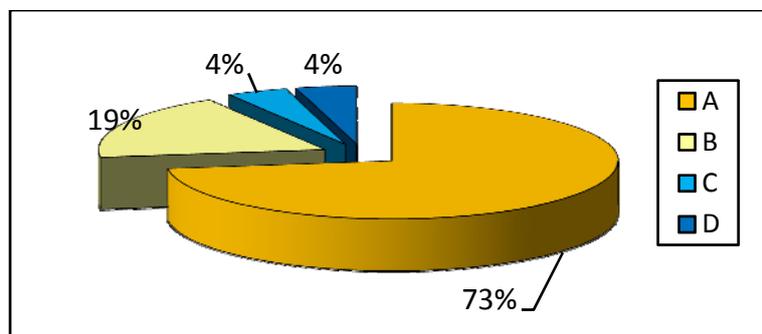


Figure 4 Percentages of labour migration conducted by each household group. (N=70)⁷

⁷ 37 people were interviewed and it reached 83 cases. But only the cases practised by the head of households are analysed in this figure (70 cases).

4.2 Reasons for migrating

Figure 5 illustrates reasons for out-migrating. Drought and food shortages were the most influential reason. As shown in Figure 6, the number of labour migrants increased following droughts. For example, a drought occurred in 1994/95⁸, and the number of migrants rose sharply in 1995. This kind of labour migration is considered to be a coping strategy mobilised in times of drought and crop failures, especially for vulnerable households in Group A.

The second main reason for labour migration was the need for cash for reasons other than those related to drought and crop failure. Cases included needing money for marriage payments⁹ or for buying clothes or other items. These “need for cash” are distinguished from disaster and farming-related needs for two reasons. First, the labour migrations in second case were responding to an unexpected or unusual social and economic event, such as a marriage or death of a family member. Second, deciding to undertake the former type of labour was usually an individual decision rather than a household strategy. In the case of “drought and/or lack of food”, the decision to send a member or members to work outside the village was a household strategy for supplementing the household’s food deficit.

A third reason given for labour migration was recruitment by relative. Some urban dwellers return to their home towns to find workers because the wage would be cheaper than one found in towns. In these cases, labour migration is related to household decision and social relationships with relatives rather than an individual determination by migrants.

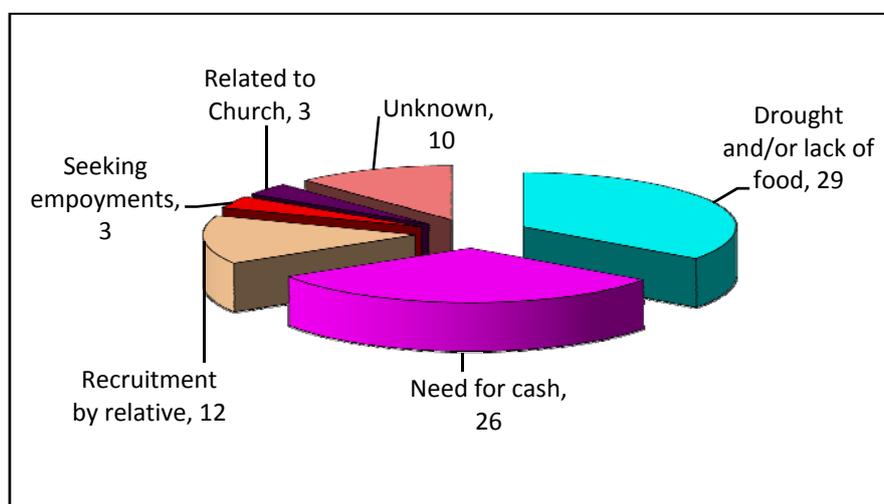


Figure 5 Reasons for labour migration. (N=83)

⁸ Since the rainy season in Zambia range over the years, the cases in 1995 corresponded with the influence of 1994/95 agricultural season.

⁹ In traditional custom of Tonga, male should pay a marriage portion to the parents in law. They generally require 5 cattle; it would be worth of 300000-500000ZMK per each.

These cases indicate that decisions for labour migration are based not only on the wage gap and individual utility maximisation mentioned by Todaro(1969), but on the combined social and economic situations faced by households and individuals. Further, usually no single factor makes them decide to migrate out; rather, overlapping social and economic conditions are important.

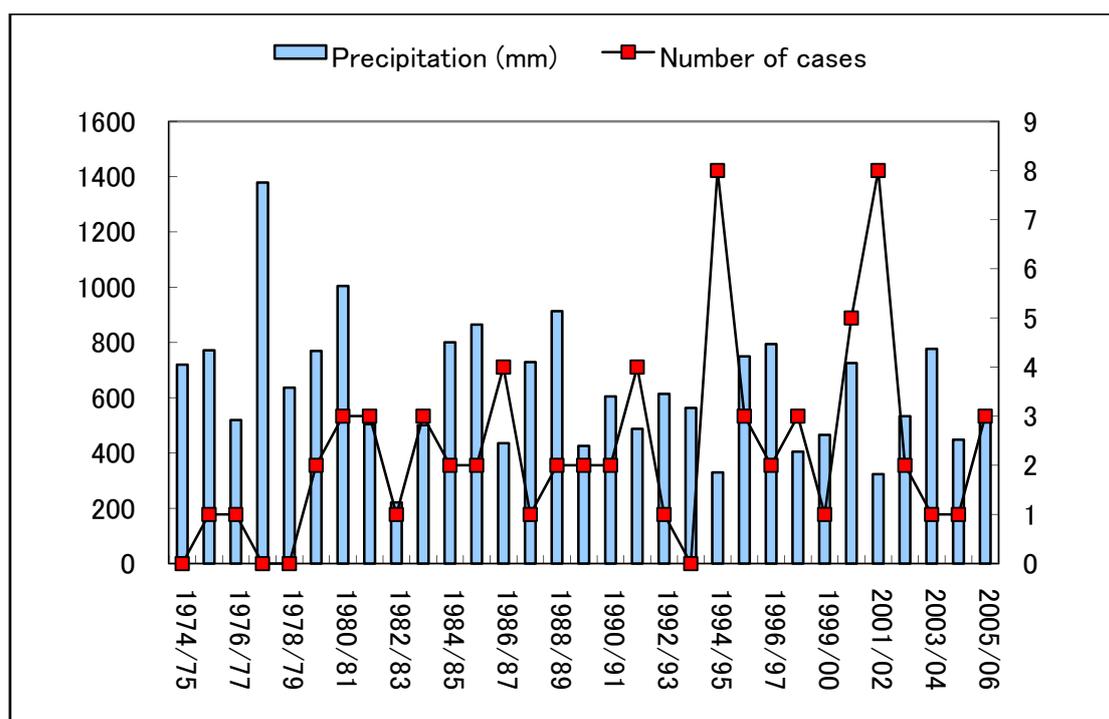


Figure 6 Relationship between precipitation and the number of labour migrations.
N=73 (1974/75 – 2005/06)

4.3 Destination cities and employment opportunities

Figure 7 shows the destinations of migrants by year. In the 1960s and 1970s, most migrants went to large cities in Southern Province, such as Mazabuka, Choma and Kafue. In the copper-belt region and cities along the rail line from Livingstone to the copper-belt, formal sector employment increased with the economic boom caused by high copper prices. During the 1960s and 1970s, employment in the formal sector and public works accounted for approximately 60% of employment in the sample cases.

From the 1980s, a large proportion (48%) of migrants chose to go to Siavonga. Siavonga, the district capital, is located approximately 80km south of the study area and had an estimated population of less than 10,000 in 2000¹⁰. A bus runs from Lusaka to Siavonga, making Siavonga easily accessible from the study area. People in the study

¹⁰ Siavonga District Council.

area frequently took the bus, which cost only costs only 4,000 ZMK. Fishing is the largest industry in Siavonga, which is located along Lake Kariba. The tourism industry is also expanding year by year, requiring labour in the service and construction sectors. However, migrants from the study area most frequently took jobs as housekeepers and gardeners, which did not require technical knowledge and skills. In Siavonga, there were many wealthy Zambians working at District Council or fishing companies and some foreign residents, thus migrants could have these kinds of employment by walking around towns.

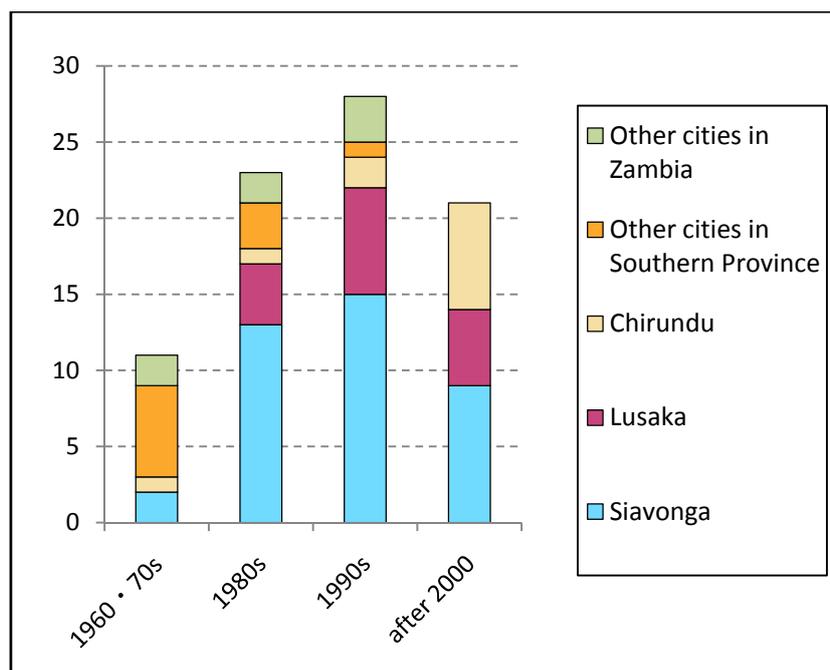


Figure 7 Destinations of labour migrant by year. (N=83)

From both housing and employment perspectives, Siavonga had a number of advantages. People in the study area often had relatives and friends living in Siavonga¹¹; those people could help newcomers with food and housing when they first arrived in town by while they found employment. Further, having numerous relatives and other migrants from same area already in the city meant that migrants could more easily obtain employment and information through their social network. Especially in the case of housekeepers and gardeners, employers would normally ask workers who were leaving their jobs to find a replacement worker¹². Thus employment opportunities were introduced through social networks.

After 2000, migration destinations were confined to three towns: Siavonga,

¹¹ Because people in the study area had the relatives and friends in Siavonga, many people had visited and stayed before they migrated. Thus Siavonga was a town which they are familiar the most and it also made them free from anxiety of out-migrating.

¹² This is also have a merit for employers, because they can find a new worker easily and they can get his or her information by the former worker.

Lusaka and Chirundu. Lusaka is the capital, and transportation from the study area is relatively convenient. However, because a main reason for labour migration is lack of money, travelling to Lusaka might cost too much as an initial migration destination. The cost from the study area to Lusaka was 35,000 ZMK, which restricted many migrants from choosing to migrate to the largest city in Zambia. Therefore, despite the convenience of transportation to the capital, labour migration to Lusaka has never been dominant.

Chirundu, located on the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe, is approximately the same size and distance from study area as Siavonga. The proportion of migrants choosing Chirundu increased from the late 1990s and 2000. There are two important differences between Siavonga and Chirundu. The first relates to transportation. Some migrants mentioned that if they did not have money for transportation, they could go to Chirundu on foot or by bicycle using a local unpaved road; the trip would take only about 1 day. The second associates with environment. Siavonga is adjacent to Lake Kariba and has a calm atmosphere; the town is attracting an increasing number of tourists and Zambians from other urban areas who come to enjoy sightseeing, quite setting, and holidays along the lake. On the other hand, Chirundu is a heavily trafficked border town where trucks carrying materials from South Africa and Zimbabwe stop and make a long line at the checkpoint. Shops on the street and prostitutes target on the truck drivers, with some becoming quite prosperous. At the same time, HIV/AIDS is prevalent. However, Chirundu does have many opportunities for daily employment and piecework; workers can earn small amounts of money even by drawing water and carrying commodities to market. Compared to other cities, proportion of women is also higher in Chirundu. Widows and young girls who do not have much education or transportation money were likely to migrate to Chirundu¹³.

Migrants took into account these differing urban conditions and their social networks then they would decide which city was proper for each case.

4.4 The length of stay

Figure 8 lists the length of stay by years. Cases in which migrants stayed less than 1 year increased after 2000. This reflects the increase in migrations to nearby towns, especially Chirundu. Migrants to nearby towns can easily return to their home if they want to quit their jobs or go back for farming; employers have also tended not to pressure workers to remain since there are many other migrants looking for work in these towns.

In contrast, in the 1980s and 1990s, half of migrants stayed more than 1 year. Notably, even in the case of migration to cope with situations such as drought, migrants did not have a definite plan as to when they would return. The duration of stay varied because of changeable employment situations. While staying in cities, migrants often

¹³ In 2002, the government urged migrants in Chirundu to return home so as to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, from the perspective of importance of Chirundu as a destination for vulnerable women, public action would be needed not only to return migrants to their homes but prevent prostitution.

changed their jobs to seek better opportunities through network. Migrants with more experience would often introduce other migrants to their employer when they heard they were looking for another employment. In addition, through such networks and new connections obtained in the city, migrants could have opportunities to migrate to other large cities. However, since their employment contracts were usually not formal, there would be no work guarantee and workers would be vulnerable to losing their jobs. Therefore their length of stay could be longer or shorter than they had expected.

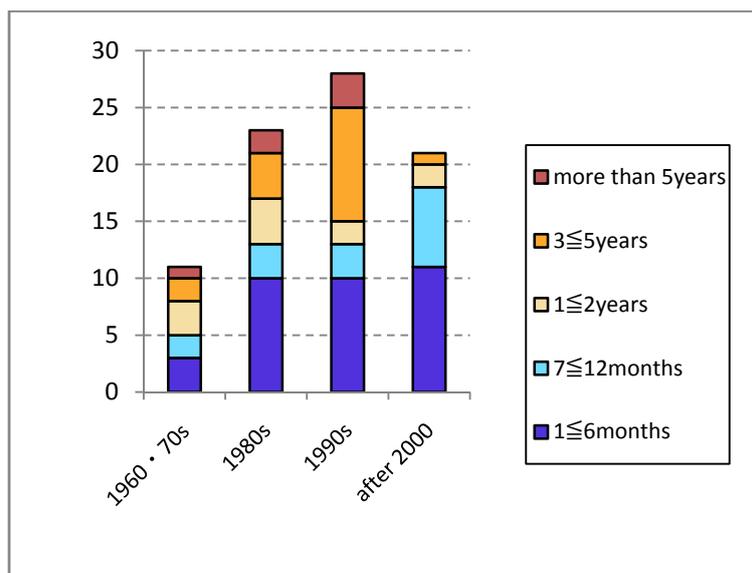


Figure 8 Length of stay in cities. (N=83)

4.5 The role of labour migration in the study area

Finally, this section examines the role of labour migration from the perspective of vulnerability. The characteristics of labour migration mentioned above are analysed in relation to livelihood diversification in the study area discussed in section 3.

Despite frequent drought and fluctuating precipitation, people did not necessarily migrate every dry season¹⁴. This can be explained by the diversification of income sources allowing people to refrain from out-migration. Households that had several income sources or that planted commercial crops generally did not engage in labour migration. Households that engaged only in subsistence agriculture could earn cash through piecework. Even when drought occurred, some households having strong relationships with wealthy households could obtain piecework preferentially, and they would not be in distressed to that extent to migrate. However, those without such relationships or who could not earn enough with piecework, were in need to cope with social, economic and ecological risks by other strategies, such as skipping meals,

¹⁴ In the case of the Sahel region, frequent drought has driven residents to migrate every dry season (Hampshire and Randall. 2000).

hunting and gathering, mutual assistance, selling livestock, obtaining outside aid or engaging labour migration.

Of those coping strategies, labour migration would be the relatively easiest to undertake. For example, selling livestock, which is common in times of drought, requires that a household have enough livestock to supplement his food deficit. Some households in Group A do not have much livestock and cannot take advantage of this strategy. As mentioned above, the migration destinations are mainly neighbouring towns, enabling workers to come and go easily. Social networks in towns and demands for unskilled labour also help migrants find work. Therefore, labour migration has become an essential coping strategy for vulnerable households.

Migration to nearby towns is also advantageous in terms of sending remittances and maintaining relationship at home. Migrants can send back money with acquaintances who are returning to their home village, and family members from the village can visit and ask money from migrants. People engaged in short-term and low-wage jobs sometimes cannot send remittances to their home. In these cases, migration still has an indirect effect of reducing consumption at home. Thus some households may send their children specifically for this indirect effect. From my research, when all members of family are in towns, they did not send remittances to their parents or relatives. Normally, there were quite few households that received remittances regularly, but having their children in towns still has an advantage of assistance when they were in hardship.

Labour migration is also an important coping strategy for individuals. Some young males need to pay for weddings, and widows and young girls may migrate to buy clothes. Therefore, labour migration plays an essential role in the rural society and economy, helping alleviate food deficits and helping especially vulnerable households and individuals cope with social, economic and ecological risks.

5.0 Conclusions

In most rural areas of Africa, agriculture remains the main livelihood. However, agricultural production is often supplemented and even sustained by other economic activities in order to cope with variable environmental conditions, social and economic changes, and recent globalisation movements. This paper has examined the situation of livelihood diversification and its relationship with labour migration in rural Zambia. When we examined only labour migration or agricultural system itself, we could not recognise many factors; what was the background of out-migrating, why those people migrated in a certain time and why their duration of stay in cities fluctuating. Analysis the relation between social and economic activities inside and outside village enabled comprehensive understanding of African rural area, where livelihood strategies do not remain inside of village any longer. The result can be summarized as follows.

First, there were considerable differences in income diversification in the study area. As examined in section 3, about 60% of the households had no constant income source and only engaged in subsistence agriculture. Only 27% of the households grew

cash crops, and only 22% had constant income sources. Households without constant income needed to engage in piecework and other coping strategies. However, opportunities for piecework and access to coping strategies were constrained by social relationships, assets, skills and knowledge, and some households experienced hardship, especially during time of drought.

Second, labour migration, therefore, turned out to be essential factor to discuss vulnerability of households without constant income sources. As analysed in section 4, migration could be undertaken relatively easily, because migrants were supported by networks of other migrants, acquaintances and relatives, and labour demands for unskilled employments were available at nearby towns, such as Saivonga and Chirundu¹⁵. As they could undertake labour migration easily, this is connected to rural society and economy, and lie behind the livelihood strategies practiced inside of the village as the essential coping strategy.

However, it is important to note that the importance and need for labour migration are not necessarily equal, as demonstrated in Group A, and even differ within the group. The importance and need for migration are related to livelihood diversification and access to other coping strategies practiced inside the village.

Further analysis is needed to clarify the constraints and restrictions on choosing and engaging in various types of income sources and other coping strategies.

¹⁵ This is likely influenced by market liberalisation and recent economic trends in Southern Africa; quantitative research on economic trends and the labour market will be conducted in Siavonga and Chirundu.

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