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## **Rural Livelihood and Household Survival Strategies in Ileje District, Tanzania**

Christopher A. Mulungu and Shakila H. Mteti

Department of History, Political science and Development studies, Mkwawa University College of Education, P.O. Box 2512, Iringa, Tanzania.

Corresponding author, e-mail: [mulunguc@yahoo.com](mailto:mulunguc@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

The objective of this study was to examine rural livelihood and household survival strategies of the indigenous people in stressed environment in Tanzania using Ileje district as a case study. A total of 496 heads of households were involved in this study. The study used both quantitative and qualitative techniques in collecting and analysing data where household questionnaire, in-depth interviews, field observations, focus group discussions and documentary review were used as data gathering techniques. The study results indicate that, out-migration, intensification of agricultural production such as coffee, pyrethrum, maize, rice, millet and bananas, establishment of petty businesses within and outside the district, wage employment in growing district trading centres and involvement in casual labour major was a livelihood activities in the study areas The study concludes The study concludes that the adopted rural livelihood and household survival strategies were seen to be useful for the people in Ileje district. However, none of them deemed to be sustainable; rather Ileje people used them interchangeably. The study recommends to improve agricultural production in the rural district to minimize out-migration among the young population.

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### **Introduction**

The pattern of survival of individuals or households is reflected in the assets and activities undertaken to earn a livelihood. In fact, resilience of a given social unit

tends to depend on the success of these livelihood activities. In this regard, survival strategies are composed of various activities undertaken by households to earn a living. As an intrinsic part of the assets-activities-outcomes cycle, survival strategies are generally adaptive over time, responding to both opportunities and changing constraints (Scoones, 2009). These survival strategies have been classified according to different criteria. For example, Kassie (2017) argues that rural people establish their livelihood through three main strategies: agricultural intensifications, livelihood diversification and out-migration. Of the three strategies, agricultural is treated as the predominant source of household survival. This is either done by intensifying resource use through the application of greater quantities of labour or capital for a given land area or by cultivating or grazing more land. Furthermore, Kassie *et al.*, (2017) noted that agricultural practices in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular is predominantly rein-fed which makes the livelihood of smaller farmers at mercy. Though their contribution is less, non-farm activities are supplemented source of livelihood for greater portion of household.

Livelihood diversification is considered as a key strategy taking place at different levels of the economy, which are usually, but not always directly linked. It is further noted that rural livelihood diversification is commonly classified by sector (farm or non-farm), function (wage employment or self-employment) or by location (on-farm or off-farm) (Asfaw *et al.*, 2017). Loison (2015) considers household diversification as income strategies of rural individuals or households in which they expand their number of activities, regardless of the location or sector. Many rural small-holder farmers have increasingly diversified their livelihood through non-farm activities and out-migration. Kassie (2017) noted that there are four distinct rural livelihood strategies namely non-farm agricultural production, unskilled on-farm or off-farm wage employment and non-farm earnings from trade, commerce and skilled employment and the fourth mixed strategies combines all the three strategies. Asfaw *et al.*, (2017) notes that the prominent non-farm economic activities practiced in Ethiopia (Woleka sub-basin) are petty trading, casual daily labourer, handcrafting of different forms and selling local liquor which demand less skill and entry capital. According to them, non-farm livelihood diversification in the area favoured the better-off groups and special support has to be given for the marginalised sections of the population.

The extent and nature of diversification of household income sources varies among households (Block & Webb, 2001; Ellis & Allison, 2004). Ellis and Allison (2004) argue that better-off households tend to diversify in non-farm business activities such as trade, transport, shop-keeping and brick-making, and the poor tend to diversify in the form of casual wage labour, especially on other farms. The poor's diversification makes them highly reliant on agriculture as

opposed to the better-off whose sole dependence on agriculture ultimately gets reduced. Moreover, diversification seek to broaden the range of non-farm activities (e.g. adding value to primary products by processing or semi-processing them), or diversify non-farm activities by taking up new jobs. It occurs by choice for accumulation or reinvestment purposes, or out of necessity either to cope with temporary adversity or as a more permanent adaptation to the failure of other livelihood options. The former motivation might be associated with a wide range of income-earning portfolio to offset all future types of shocks or stress, whereas the latter would more likely be a narrower, rehearsed response to a particular type of common stress. Niboye (2003) observed that lack of land for farming increases the demand for livelihoods outside agriculture. In fact, people are prompted to consider available options in the face of population pressure whereby non-farm activities take precedence over farming as the basis of rural household livelihoods. Such process of de-peasantisation is triggered by the presence of non-farm markets coupled with shortage of arable land. These activities may be in the form of wage labouring for better-off farmers or employers in the non-farm sectors, self-employment and petty business.

As a critical strategy to securing non-farm employment opportunities, out-migration may rely on and/or stimulate economic and social links between areas of origin and destination. Kinship structures, social and cultural norms may strongly influence who migrates and migration may have implications for the asset status of those left behind, for the role of women and for on-farm investments in productivity. Furthermore, Niboye (2019) noted that population growth in an agrarian society tends to cause pauperisation as food productivity becomes insufficient to increasing numbers. People also migrate increasingly in search of livelihoods away from areas of domicile.

Tanzania, like other developing countries, is indeed disadvantages by unfavourable natural and geographic conditions. Agriculture's poor performance has often been due to under-investment in physical, institutional and human capital as well as by attempts to bypass agriculture through isolated industrialisation, often at the cost of agricultural stagnation and worsening poverty. In this case households in rural areas of Tanzania depend on natural resources, which in turn depend on erratic rainfall and the unpredictable weather conditions. Since farmers do not have well defined markets for their product, they normally suffer from price fluctuations. Therefore, the capacity of the food – crops sector to continue to sustain the livelihood of rural household is very much in doubt as dependence up on subsistence farming confronts household with a precarious living, exposing them to adverse contingencies which always make them risk – managers. This call upon diversification and livelihood strategies

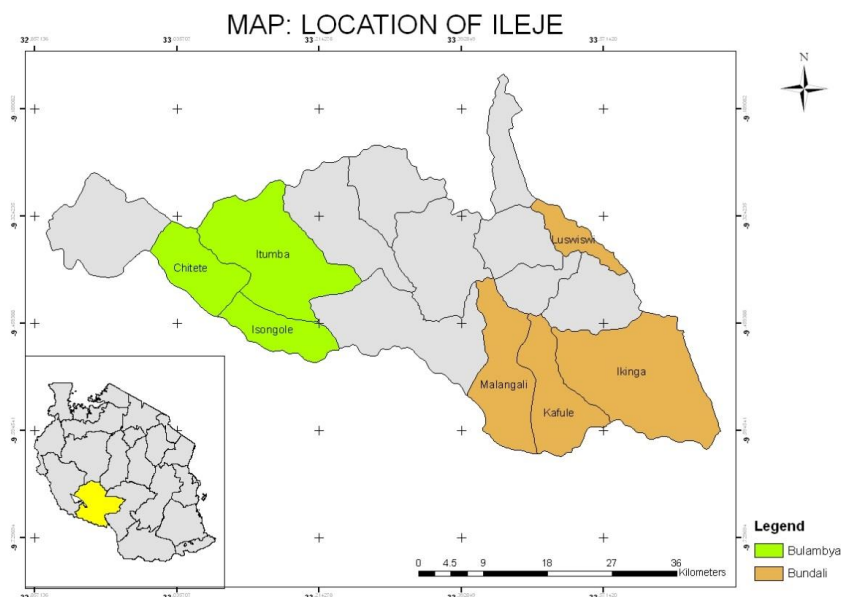
Urassa (2009) observed that almost 90 per cent of the households had adopted a variety of livelihood strategies which enabled them to achieve livelihood security under improving economic conditions. A higher proportion of female headed household adopted livestock production, non-farming activities and crop production as their livelihood strategies. On the other hand, relatively a high proportion of male headed household reported fishing, livestock – keeping and craft as their livelihood strategies. Lyatuu and Urassa (2015) noted that majority of the Mvomero district household remain in exclusive farming and / or survival livelihood strategies because they lack capital such as labour skill, savings and credits for meaningful diversification of livelihood strategies. Mulungu and Myeya's (2018) study shows that the migrants from Ileje in Mbozi district adopted a number of survival strategies such as intensification of non-traditional cash crops such as maize, rice, millet, and banana; out migration; establishment of petty business in major trading centres of Vwawa and Mlowo and involvement in casual labour. The survival strategies of these migrants seem to be useful in improving the livelihood in their destination although the strategies were not sustainable.

Various scholars particularly Mulungu and Myeya (2018), Urasa (2009), Lyatuu and Urassa (2015) Niboye (2003, 2019) and Mbonile (2002) have examined the survival strategies of migrants and the effects of migration in Tanzania. Though this is well known, more studies on how indigenous people in Ileje district survive despite the stress environment which culminates to the need for this particular study is needed. Thus, this study investigated the rural livelihoods and survival strategies of the indigenous people in stressed environment of Ileje district. The paper highlights various survival strategies performed by Ileje people as a way of improving their livelihoods.

## **2. Methods and materials**

### **2.1 Description of the study area**

The study was conducted in Ileje district, Songwe Region. This area was selected as it represents rural areas in Tanzania and how the people in Ileje district survive in the stressed environment. This makes Ileje a good choice for this study. The study area extends in the South Western part of Songwe region. It lies between latitudes 9° 14'-9° 37' South and longitude 32° 80' and 33° 45'. It is bordered by Kyela district in the East, Rungwe district in the North East, Mbozi and Momba districts in the North West and Mbeya district in the North. Also, River Songwe in the South marks the boundary with Malawi. Six wards were randomly selected namely, Malangali, Ikinga, Kafule and Luswisi in Bundali division, while Chitete, Isongole and Itumba were selected in Bulambya division (Figure 1).



**Figure.1: Divisions of Study Areas in Ileje District**

**Source: Cartographic Unit, University of Dar es Salaam, 2018**

## **2.2 Design and sampling procedures**

This study employed a cross section study design. The design was employed to examine survival strategies of the people in Ileje district. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. Simple random sampling was used in the selection of seven wards, the heads of households were selected randomly from the first ward to seventh ward until the sample size were reached. The selected wards were Ikinga, Luswisi, Kafule and Malangali from Bundali division; and Chitete, Itumba and Isongole from Bulambya division. Apart from randomly sampling technique, purposive sampling was also employed in the selection of the study area (Ileje district) due to being a former colonial reserve, semi landlocked district (Mbonile, 2008). Thereafter, key informants, particularly agricultural and livestock officers and livestock field officers due to the fact that agriculture is one of the survival strategies in the area. Apart from simple randomly sampling technique, purposive sampling was also employed in the selection of key informants deemed to possess crucial information for the study.

## **2.3 Sample size, data collection methods and analysis**

A total of 496 households' heads were technically selected from the district to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The sample size of 496 household heads was determined by using a formula proposed by Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973) formula with 95% confidence level. (According 26832 head of household

population), the calculation of a sample size using formula of Taro Yamane is presented as;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \dots\dots\dots 1$$

$$n = \frac{26832}{1 + 26832(0.0445)^2}$$

n= 495.658 household

Where:

n= sample size required

N = number of head of household in the population (N=26832)

e = allowable error (%) (4.45%)

Upon substitution of numbers in formula, the sample size becomes 495.658. In order to obtain reliable data, researcher has increased sample size to 496 head of household.

This study was undertaken from January to May 2018 in Ileje district, where questions were directed to the heads of households who, in most cases were the main decision makers at the household level. Both closed and open ended questions were used. Closed ended questions had many options that allowed the respondents to choose only one for some questions and more than one option for multiple response questions. Few open ended questions were also included to allow respondents to express their levels of understanding on the topic studied. Closed questions ensured uniformity on answers and simplified data entry while open ended questions aimed at acquiring more information based on survival strategies. Qualitative information was collected through the use of in-depth interviews, field observations and focus group discussions. In-depth interviews were conducted with ten selected key informants who were deemed to possess crucial information for this particular study and were purposively selected. Focus group discussions were used to validate the information gathered through other methods. In total, five focus group discussions were conducted among four wards namely: Ikinga, Luswisi, Kafule and Malangali. A total of five groups with a composition of six members (youths, adult women, adult men and elderly people) were random included in the discussions. The language used in the discussion was *Chindali* as a Bantu language spoken in Ileje district. One of the researchers was having a very good command of the language. Conversations were recorded in writing and by a voice recorder and lasted for one hour. Field observations were used to capture specific information particularly, activities done as survival for people in the district. During field observation, photographs were taken to supplement qualitative data. Secondary data were obtained mainly through library research. The collected data were analysed through both

descriptive and content analysis methods. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed through descriptive statistics (percentages). Frequencies were determined to observe the occurrence of the responses from interviewed heads of households. Qualitative data from focus group discussions, key informants interviews, in-depth interviews and field observation were analysed using content analysis.

## **2.4 Ethical issues**

Prior to data collection, participants were briefed about the purpose of the study, to get informed consent and voluntary participation. The consent for participation was verbal because it intended to protect each participant's welfare. Not only this but also the University of Dar es Salaam provided the research clearance letter. Furthermore, the regional and district authorities in their respective administrative units also approved the research to be conducted in the study area.

## **3. Finding and discussions**

### **3.1 Socio-economic profile of heads of households in the study areas**

It was important to study the age structure, sex, household heads and education levels of the population because survival strategies depend on the mentioned variables. Whereas, 6 percent of the heads of households were aged less than 20 years (Table 1); 40 percent of heads of households were aged 31-50 years and 12 percent heads of households were aged 21-30 due to high youth seasonal out-migration in Ileje district. Furthermore, 42 percent of the heads of households were aged more than 50 years.

**Table 1: Age of heads of households in Ileje district**

<b>years</b>	<b>Percentage (n=496)</b>
< 20	6
21-30	12
31-50	40
> 50	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the heads of households in sampled areas in Ileje district, 40% were female-headed households and 60% were male-headed households. These female-headed households were largely composed of divorced, widows, separated or left behind women due to heavy seasonal out-migration.



**Table 2: Heads of households in Ileje district**

<b>Heads</b>	<b>Percentage (n=496)</b>
Male headed	60
Female headed	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Education wise, the study shows that about 61 percent of the heads of households in Ileje completed primary education; followed by 20.2 percent who never went to school hence illiterate. Also, 10 percent of the heads of households had attained secondary education. Those who had attended other courses were 9.3 percent. The proportion of those who attended post-secondary education was almost absent. The findings show that, the high proportion of those who had not attended any schooling was in the older age groups of above 50 years.

### **3.2 Rural livelihood and household survival strategies in Ileje district**

This study intended to identify the survival strategies of the people in Ileje district. The study findings identified the following survival strategies: out-migration, crop farming, petty trade, livestock keeping, casual labour and others (sales of local brew, carpentry, masonry, brick making, grain milling and cargo transportation). The study results show that, farming was the dominant survival strategy where 80% of the surveyed population was involved in crop production. The current results are in line with observation made by Urasa (2009) that many rural households in Tanzania depend on agriculture as their major source of livelihoods, selling of surplus food to raise cash meeting household needs. The findings point out that male heads of households reported a higher proportion of families adopting crop production, out-migration and non-farm activities as their survival strategies. Relatively a higher proportion of female headed households cited petty trade, brewing and selling of local brew as well as casual labour. Relatively, higher proportions of male-headed households reported lumbering, livestock keeping, trades, carpentry, masonry and welding as their survival strategies. Kaija (2007) also made a similar observation in Uganda where women were involved in more survival strategies than men. Their type of livelihood activities included brewing and selling local brew and petty trade (sale of vegetables, fruits, food and fish mongering) mostly done by women. In addition, Lugalla (1995) observed that women in Tanzania tend to dominate low paying and low status jobs similar to the ones already mentioned.

A proportion of young men in Ileje district prefer out-migration, casual labour and trade whereas women generally prefer trade. The current study results concur with that of Ellis (1998) and Toulmin *et al.*, (2000) who observed that women's choice of survival options can be influenced by what a community considers to be permissible activities for women and men. Similarly, Smith *et*

*al.*, (2001) reported Ugandan men had a greater degree of occupational livelihood diversification than women mainly involved in agricultural-related activities, alcohol brewing, hand-craft making and farm labouring. Men on the other hand were involved in carpentry, brick-making and construction, in addition to traditional agriculture-based activities. Female-headed households were more likely to be engaged in informal activities such as producing and selling local brew or food staff or fetching forest products than male-headed households. Empirical evidence shows that rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa rely on diversified income portfolios (Ellis, 1998). Diversification of livelihood strategy also serves as a shock absorber for households against environmental and economic eventualities (Ellis & Allison, 2004). For Ileje people, access to income-generating activities is not promising.

### **3.2.1 Out-migration**

Out-migration of people from Ileje is more triggered by increased pressure on land resource due to high population growth. This has resulted to increased cultivation of the marginal lands causing land degradation and loss of soil fertility of which has affected the farm output. As a response to increased poverty levels due to low agricultural returns, people have decided to move from one place to another searching for better life, Mbozi district being their major destination in the sampled areas as indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Out-Migration Destination for Ileje People**

<b>Area of destination</b>	<b>Percentage (n=496)</b>
Mbozi	51.6
Chunya	4.0
Mbalizi	6.5
Mbeya (rural)	2.0
Kyela	1.2
Mbarali	5.0
Malawi	4.0
Sumbawanga (rural)	5.8
Morogoro	14.9
Mbeya (urban)	3.2
Dar es Salaam	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

In Ileje rapid population growth in Undali hills has triggered out-migration because the environment has limited the people's activities in the area (Mbonile, 2008). Moreover, the markets in the district appear not to have developed enough to support non-farm activities. The current study results concur with that

of Niboye (2019) that out-migration of both skilled and unskilled labour has been one of the survival strategies of many youths in Africa.

Some of the Ileje people have embraced intra-district migration as one of the survival strategies. As observed before, all wards in Bundali and Bulambya divisions were involved in intra-district migration, mainly from Bundali to Bulambya due to the availability of space for settlements in Bulambya. The movement sees people from periphery wards to more relatively better developed wards, from Malangali, Kafule, Ikinga, and Luswisi in Bundali division, Ndola, Itale and Chitete to Isongole for business and agriculture and at the district headquarters of Itumba for income-generating activities. Information from field study shows that these two wards in Bulambya have witnessed more in-migration than out-migration. This was supported by Mushi (2003) who observed that out-migration is one of the most important methods of diversifying rural livelihoods. Similarly, Mbonile (2008) noted that poverty in the periphery districts made the people adjust their means of livelihood in several ways. First, they embarked on out-migration to urban areas in intensive manner. Since, most of these out-migrants had low education, they were largely employed in the informal sector. In fact, 60 percent of the intra-district migrants were engaged in agriculture in trading centres of Isongole and Itumba in addition to business ventures. Since business and wage employment cannot provide sufficient survival of the households, farming helps to sustain these intra-district migrants. Inter-district/regional migration is the movement of people in or out of the region or district. It is a form of geographical mobility involving a change of usual residence between clearly defined geographical units; it can be a very significant factor in bringing about change in the size and structure of population of an area.

In this study, migration was categorised into two main categories namely seasonal and permanent. Seasonal migration involved people to move temporarily from their original residence to another place for some economic reasons. A permanent migration on the other hand, involved people to migrate in search of new farming land, better pastures for livestock and better life through employment opportunities. This type of migration was common among agriculturalists and livestock keepers especially the Ndali, Lambya and Malila in Ileje district. The study established that relatively higher proportion of households headed by younger heads (aged 15-40) adopted seasonal out-migration. These findings support the general perception that youths are more dominant in out-migration as they are the active labour force (Gray, 2009; Perz, 2007) They were engaged in non-farm activities in addition to crop cultivation than households headed by middle aged 41-60 people or those aged 61 years and above. The need for money was a primary cause of seasonal migration coupled by lack of property and economic difficulties among the youth in the absence of cash crop to generate income locally and pay for school fees. The youth were

motivated to move out of the district, hence making age a key factor in out-migration. Out-migration is usually adopted by heads of households to generate enough income for survival. Relatively rich households, on the other hand adopt the migration strategy to enhance the social status of the household by allowing members of the household to occupy a prestigious job in the modern sector (Mbonile, 1993). In some cases and notably in Southern Africa rural areas have become dependent for survival on the earnings passed on to them by the migrants on the other hand, the remittances to relatives in the rural areas by urban dwellers are diminishing in frequency and volume (Staftung, 1994). The changes have been attributed to the impact of development strategies and policies on traditional social security systems. This study found that migration benefits both the individual migrants and their families. Indeed it is necessary for some members of the households to migrate in order to generate enough income for their survival. This was also reported by one respondent during in-depth interview;

Today we do not live with our husbands because they are migrating to other areas to find casual employment in Usangu, Chunya, Uporoto, Matwiga, Makongorosi and Umalila. If they remain here we are going to die of hunger. Because there is no means of earning money here in our village to buy school uniforms and other contributions for our children (Female respondent with primary education aged 30 years at Malangali ward, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2018, Ileje District).

### **3.2.2 Business activities**

Other survival strategies for Ileje people were businesses, especially in the small settlements such as Ikinga, Ilondo, Katengelebalindu, Malangali, Kalembo, Ibaba, Isongole, Mbebe, Msiya and Itumba. Information from FGDs in Ileje reveals that business people are compelled to walk or pay high transport costs to unreliable vehicles which operate from Tunduma and Isoko which is the only means of transportation for Bundali people. Ileje infrastructures, for example roads, are largely impassable during rainy season. This problem generates other problems such as low profit margins, lack of commodities and poor security for most business people. One of the male respondent had this to say:

Unless transport is improved developing and sustaining business in Ileje will be a dream even though the people from Ileje living in Mbozi and Momba districts particularly in major trading centres like Vwawa, Mlowo, Mpemba and Tunduma, respectively have shown wonders in business (Male respondent aged 45 years at Ikinga ward, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, Ileje District).

The term business in this study was used to mean all non-farming activities. The activities include petty trade and small-scale manufacturing in the informal sector, buying and selling of non-self-produced products or processed farm products. Isongole is a centre for the exchange of agricultural and non-agricultural products such as tools for farming, pesticides, fertilisers and textiles. In this study, 35.7 percent of heads were engaged in business activities in Ileje district. Businesses include *dukas* (small shops), small *kiosks*, selling consumer items, brewing local liquor, selling bamboo goods, buying and selling crops, livestock, making and selling burnt bricks, lumbering, buying and selling forest products such as timber, firewood, and charcoal and brewing local beer. Apart from local opportunities, entrepreneurs in Ileje have the added advantage of cross-border trading with Malawi. There is one official crossing point, the bridge, with immigration departments of the particular country on each side. However, along the flow of Songwe River any point can be crossed (evidence of many make shift “bridges” some just a log or two strong, with breadth of the river at less than five metres and depth of no more than a foot during dry season). One of the options which offer a better opportunity to prosperity for people from former labour reserve is business. This survival strategy was used by Ileje people to adapt to and cope with the prevailing socio-economic condition and environmental stress. Where there is good access to markets the ability of rural households to diversify into non-farm income earning opportunities is enhanced (Smith *et al.*, 2001; Lanjouw, 2001). It was observed during field research that most of the youths in Ileje turned to business as an alternative to both farming and out-migration. As the majority of Ileje people had a peasant background coupled with low education, it was difficult to penetrate salaried/wage employment in the modern sector. The youth from Ileje with primary education have thus taken up business. Other non-farm economic activities include beekeeping, hand crafting, masonry and fishing.

In terms of intra-district business as stated earlier, poverty in periphery districts such as Ileje made the people adjust their means of livelihood in several ways. They resorted to trade, especially in minor settlements close to Malawi such as Isongole and Itumba (Figure 2; Table 4). Intra-district trade also led to the emergence of several weekly markets in centres such as Malangali, Ilondo, Ikinga, Luswisi and Katengele-balindu. Ilondo on the Tanzanian side on one of the many porous borders is the official market for cross-border trading and operates on Sundays, drawing sellers and buyers from both Malawi and Tanzania. This group also, resorted to trade that utilised their most immediate resources such as bamboos in the production of winnowing baskets and ornaments for marketing within and outside the country.



**Figure 2:** Cross-border trade between Tanzania and Malawi at Isongole

**Table 4: Household business type in Ileje district**

<b>Business type</b>	<b>Percentage (177)</b>
Bamboo goods	11.3
Second hand cloths	9.0
Agriculture/livestock	28.2
Timber	4.5
Petty trade/ <i>kiosk</i>	19.8
Wholesale shops	0.6
Food venders	7.3
Local brew	10.7
Other business	8.5

Apart from the traditional opportunities such as shops, food stalls, etc. cattle keeping was also gaining attention. Every Saturday sellers and buyers met for transaction (Figure 3). As there is great competition between the Ileje people and as their activities were subject to seasonal fluctuations, their survival strategies cannot be based solely on non-farming activities.



**Figure 3:** Cattle market at Katengele-balindu, Kalembo ward

### **3.2.3 Crop cultivation and livestock keeping**

Farming and livestock keeping were a primary livelihood activity carried out in Ileje district. The economy of this district depends almost entirely on small scale livestock and crop farming. Animals kept are cattle, goats, sheep, pigs and chicken which are mostly done by both old and young heads of households. Major food crops grown were bananas, maize, beans, sweet and round potatoes and finger millet. The main cash crops include coffee, pyrethrum, sunflower and cardamoms. Fruits such as avocado, apricots and apples were also grown as income generating ventures (Ileje District Investment Profile, 2010). Other economic activities included weaving, and artisanal and small scale mining. Studies by Mbonile (2002), Niboye (2003) and Mulungu (2013) observed that many rural households in Tanzania depend on agriculture as their major source of livelihoods, selling of surplus food to raise cash meeting household needs. Results from households, focus group discussion and key informants indicated that livestock keeping is a common small-scale activity in Bulambya division. The findings indicate that about 95% of the households involved in poultry keeping in small-scale. Ileje is well-known for its black feathered chicken from Malawi, which grow fast and produce meat and eggs as well. As such, the growth of supportive grains, sunflower and poultry feeds industries in the area help enhance business in general and boost poultry projects in particular (Ileje District Investment Profile, 2010).

The study established that a relatively higher proportion of households headed by middle aged and older people adopted livestock production and crop production as their survival strategies than younger headed households. In the meantime, a relatively higher proportion of households headed by younger people participated in non-farm activities and seasonal out-migration than those headed by older people. The influence of household head's age on survival strategies has also been reported by scholars such as Smith *et al.*, (2001; Liyama *et al.*, (2008) and Babulo *et al.*, (2008). On average Liyama *et al.*, reported that

in Kenya households with young heads (35 years) diversified into regular off-farm income generating activities whereas those with older heads (61 years) diversify into livestock keeping. Similarly, Smith *et al.*, (2001) have reported that younger men were more proactive in newer survival strategies than older men. In fact, the older remained mostly in the more traditional non-manufacturing activities. The relatively higher diversification witnessed in households with young heads observed might be attributable to their being more energetic. Block and Webb (2001) contend that households with young heads could have a relatively heavier burden of dependency from their children, as well as their aging parents.

Despite diversifying their livelihood strategies, many rural households continue to rely on agriculture, especially in the production of staple foods. Households in Ileje generally participate in farm activities, income diversification, on-farm employment and out-migration. This has to do with the fact that a single activity in Ileje does not amount to an adequate survival of the households. Mbonile and Mwamfupe (1997) and Mulungu (2013) established that, Ileje people were forced to resort to the production of non-traditional cash crops such as maize, rice, millet and bananas. In addition to growing more traditional cash crops such as coffee and pyrethrum due to the availability of abundant water. Moreover, those wards with reliable rainfall such as Luswisi, Sange and Ngulugulu resorted to growing more traditional cash crops such as coffee but failed to compete effectively in terms of markets with districts that had better transportation networks such as Mbozi and Rungwe districts. They were also affected by the drastic fall in world coffee prices in the 1980s. And the ban of pyrethrum products in the world market affected production in the area. The factors behind poverty in Ileje, includes limited access to technology, poor infrastructure and inability to cope with various shocks such as pests and lack of agricultural extension services in the area. Others included low level of education and low access to credit and financial services. This was also reported by one respondent during in-depth interview;

A household cannot rely on crop production to get out of poverty, because using the hand hoe can only enable you to cultivate a small area so the income earned is little which has resulted in excessive poverty to most dwellers and discouraged people to continue living in the district (Male respondent aged 50 years at Ikinga ward, Ileje District, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2018).

In other words, change in agricultural technology is necessary to bring about the desired change. Notably agriculture is characterised by low productivity due to unreliable rainfall (United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). The same scenario was reported during the FGD:



One cannot rely on crop production to get out of poverty and survive, because if harvests fail in a particular year then you have to wait till the next crop season (Female FGD participant aged 45 years at Malangali ward, Ileje District, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2018).

The same scenario was reported during the FGD at the same ward:

In our area, one cannot rely on crop production alone to get out of poverty due to our use of poor technologies such as the hand hoe and lack of access to extension services. Furthermore, our crop production is reliant on the availability of rains so it is very unpredictable (Male respondent aged 40 years at Malangali ward, Ileje District, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2018).

On the whole, residents argued for the introduction of power tillers in the area that would enhance their development prospects as outdated technologies currently in use by most households only stunted development. Some of the respondents also noted that the farmers also needed free or affordable farm inputs through subsidies. Information below shows the observation by the Ileje district agricultural extension officer on this issue:

The cultivated land is infertile coupled with the use of primitive methods in agricultural production as most of the households do not use fertilisers leading to less production per unit area. This situation normally leads to young and energetic youth losing hope of staying and decide to migrate to Mbozi, Mbarali, Momba and Morogoro and other areas to look for opportunities (Interview with Ileje district agricultural extension officer, Ileje District, 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2018).

In the district, survival strategies cannot be based solely on farming activities due to severe land degradation.

### **3.2.4 Salaried/Wage employment**

The findings from the study revealed that for Ileje people access to income-generating activities was not promising. Limited demand for wage labour, coupled with the large manpower supply make it difficult to obtain employment in the formal sector. This is supported by Devereux (1993) who argues that, the most vulnerable individuals and households are those whose incomes are insecure and/or erratic, hence their vulnerability to the real risk of hunger. The findings from in-depth interview shows that other survival option for Ileje people, which help them to overcome abject poverty is salaried/wage employment in district centres such as Isongole and Itumba and in Mbozi, Rungwe, and Kyela and Momba districts. However, this option is only possible for educated people (Mbonile, 1996). Historically, Ileje was treated as a labour reserve, hence less investment in educational opportunities. The few who has

access to education from Ileje benefited from colonial administration system, but still marginalised or cannot compete in the labour markets by people from more developed districts such as Kyela and Rungwe. This was supported by Mbonile (1993) who observed that education plays a vital role in the likelihood of people securing long-term employment in the formal sector. As such, permanent wage employment which requires a long period of investment in education cannot be used as a short-term survival strategy for people from the former labour reserve such as Ileje desperate to make ends meet regardless of cost. Gender-wise women were even more marginalised in formal employment than men due to both colonial education and traditional patriarchal practices which favoured education for boys. Generally, it is normally not easy for people to penetrate the modern sector since, requires a lot of negotiations and, sometimes, bribery is necessary to get employment (Bagachwa, 1993; Maliyamkono *et al.*, 1990).

#### **4. Conclusion and recommendation**

This paper has examined the survival strategies of people in Ileje district. A number of survival strategies were identified including out-migration to areas with better economic conditions such as Morogoro, Kyela, Rungwe, Mbeya, Mbozi, Momba, Chunya, Mbarali and Sumbawanga in Tanzania, as well as neighbouring countries such as Zambia and Malawi for selling their services as casual labourers in small-scale farming. Out-migration was treated as a way of diversifying survival strategies by many youth households. Therefore, the study concludes that age was an important factor influencing survival and livelihood strategies in Ileje district.

Other survival strategies of Ileje people were the production of non-traditional cash crops such as maize, rice, millet and bananas for sale. Moreover, those wards with reliable rainfall such as Luswisi, Sange and Ngulugulu resorted to growing more traditional cash crops such as coffee. However, they were affected by the drastic fall in world coffee prices in the 1980s. Ileje people resorted to selling their services as casual labourers in small-scale farms in the districts such as Mbozi, Mbarali, Chunya, Kyela, Rungwe and Mbeya.

A substantial number of Ileje residents traded especially in small settlements such as Isongole, Ilondo, Katengelebalindu, Itumba, Ikumbilo, Mbebe and Msiya. Intra-district trade also led to the emergence of several weekly markets in centres such as Ikinga, Malangali, Isongole, Luswisi, Ilondo and Mtula. Winnowing baskets from Ileje were also marketed within and outside the country, especially in Malawi, Zambia and Botswana. Most of the traders from Ileje remain small-scale in their operation largely because of poor transport networks and infrastructure in the district. Finally, the study concludes that, all the survival strategies examined seems not improved peoples livelihoods in the district, however none of strategy is complete in its own forcing Ileje people to

opt for more than one survival and livelihood strategy. It is recommended that there is a call for an improvement in agricultural technology to stem out-migration among the young population, the vanguard of any future development process.

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