Mortality Estimates of the 1984–1985 Ethiopian Famine

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Abstract
A brief summary of famine and drought from a historical perspective is given. In an attempt to estimate the magnitude of deaths due to the 1984-85 famine in Ethiopia, a survey was conducted among the resettled famine victims. The results show that the expected life at birth among the male and female famine victims was 6.2 and 5.7 years, respectively. When compared with the highest mortality rates ever recorded (that is Coale-Demeny, West Model Life Table level 1), the Ethiopian famine induced rate seems to be considerably higher. Regional variations between the two famines affected regions show that mortality in Tigrai was slightly higher than that of Wello. Also prefamine socio-economic differentials between households did not seem to have an effect on mortality. The results suggest that as much as 700,000 excess deaths might have occurred during the 1984-85 famine period in Ethiopia.