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Impact of Rural to Urban Migration on Family Dynamics and Social Cohesion in Rural Pakistan

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Abstract

This research explored the effects of rural to urban migration on family system and social integration in rural Khyber paktunkhwa Pakistan. During a semi-structured interview and a case study, 30 participants were identified: uprooting disrupts traditional family dynamics and shifts the burden and distance on the stay behind family member. While taking a closer look on the positive impact of remittances, the negatives are also very important; these include dependency problems arising due to the boost that remittances effect on the financial situations and infrastructure available in the country. Migration alters usually recognized social relations and undermines community cohesiveness. This paper highlights the importance of specific intervention and community based organisation programmes. Future studies should aim at identifying the long-term consequences and perform more comparison on regional basis.

Keywords: Rural-to-Urban Migration, Family Dynamics, Social Cohesion, Qualitative Methods, Remittances, Community Development

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study: Migration from the rural area to the urban area has become a major international process that has social, economical and cultural impact over the long run especially in the developing country such as Pakistan. This migration has slowly created a trend when individuals in the underdeveloped rural regions searching for better income, education, healthy lifestyles and superior quality migration from the rural areas to the urban centers. But the progression that comes with migration results to higher levels of urbanization, thus rural people are stripped human resource and social capital. The migration of young adults particularly male members from one region from rural to urban areas causes social disorganization/family disintegration, change in role of gender (Afsar, 2011).

It is important to understand that rural societies' in Pakistan have always been quite cramped where families consisting of close kin were generally living in the same neighborhood, helping each other (Shah, 2008). Family

members participate in tasks, decision making and offer one another emotional and social support in what may amount to social integration. However, migration within the population has increased over time thereby contributing to the breakdown of such familial and communal formations. The loss of close family members thereby leaves social voids in the family and transfers new responsibilities onto mainly female members of the family (Memon, 2005).

The degree of connectedness and solidarity among members of society known as social cohesion is profoundly changed by rural to urban migration. Community resilience is strongly dependent on trust, values that are shared, and social networks, which are susceptible to wearing down with migration (Putnam, 2000). In rural Pakistan, families migrating break apart the community's capacity to function together and engage with local challenges. This research examines how rural-to-urban migration influences family dynamics and social cohesion, through a sociological investigation of the changes that affect rural life.

1.2 Problem Statement

Moving out of rural settings and into cities isolates family members, which disrupts the customary family structure and converts both gender roles and conversational habits. These modifications interrupt the joint capabilities of families, which is important for preserving emotional and social equilibrium in rural environments (Golini, 1974). The disunification of social interconnectedness destabilizes community relationships, rendering it hard for rural sites to uphold their cultural identity and support environments (Coleman, 1988).

1.3 Objectives

- a) To explore the impact of migration from rural areas to urban areas on the conventional family structures of the rural sector in Pakistan.
- b) To determine the effect of migration on family regarding gender roles and responsibilities.
- c) For the purpose of understanding the outcome of migration on social integration and social capital within the rural society.
- d) In order to establish what coping strategies that the rural families and communities have adopted in relation to costs challenges posed by migration.

1.4 Hypotheses

H1: In the context of the present study, RTUM distorts family patterns of women in rural Pakistan disturbingly.

H2: This means that migration contributes to change in gender roles since women take up more chores in rural households than before.

H3: In the context of rural areas, social capital erodes with the increasing rates of people moving from rural areas to urban areas.

H4: There are negative experiences, and this has resulted in cultural adaptation by the rural families and communities in order to compensate for the family break up in order to support migrants across the region, though these solutions did not always enhance social harmony.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is as follows. Firstly it provides the comprehensive and basic perception of sociocultural impacts of rural to urban migration in Pakistan. However as will be argued from the previous discussion this strand of work is different from most of the work that has been published on the subject in the following ways Even though this strand of work is more socially orientated than economically there are a number of good reasons why one might want to care about the economic effects of migration (Ellis, 2000). The conclusion from this study shall be of immense importance to the field of rural sociology and the studies of mass migration to rozszeżeniem newly influencing the factors of rural functioning communities (Skeldon, 1997). Besides, the study will be used by policy makers and those that deal with development most beneficially, if not exclusively. For that reason, the study holds probable implications in policies under the outcomes of migration in as much as family structures and community life for the intention of constructing strong rural substantiation and supporting families whom migration has a negative impact on (Deshingkar & Grimm, 2005). It can help rural development programmes focus on sustaining social stocks and services which are so important in building healthy families especially women and children who are often left behind.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Rural-to-Urban Migration

Rural-urban migration is a process that has received considerable interest in academic literature. According to Todaro and Smith (2015), rural-urban migration is the overall process by which people shift from rural regions to urban area primarily because of job opportunities. Skeldon (1997) makes it clear that due to inadequately developed inhabitants' facilities and equipment in rural territories, inhabitants frequently have to settle in urban territories. Migration process however is a complex economic, social and psychological process not limited to search for jobs (Ellis, 2000). Labour mobility also leads to labour force spatial changes from the rural to urban end and this has repercussions in the sociopolitical and development spheres. Urban areas have the advantage of availability of large pool of labour force while rural areas are constrained by lack of labour force which is a major constraint in farming activities, welfare of families thereof. This means that loss of labor due to remittance can be serious in the case of developing countries such as Pakistan where agriculture is still an important source of livelihood of the people in the rural area.

2.2 Theories of Migration

Different theories exist that explain the characteristics and reasons for change of status from rural to urban areas. Harris and Todaro (1970) believe that the neoclassical theory of migration holds the opinion that people move from the rural to the urban areas mainly due to wage differentials. Immigrants move from areas of low wages and in turn take up jobs in areas of high wages such as urban places, that is, according to the New Economic Theory. But the act of migration is not a purely economic one at that. NELM theory suggested by Taylor (1999) points out that migration is perhaps a household pursuit to diversify risks and gain general income security. Households may shift one member to urban areas in order to offset the vulnerability that results from returns on rural agriculture (Stark, 1991).

Massey et al. (1993) reveal that social capital has been widely used to explain why people tend to migrate in networks and what role social capital plays in migration. Informal resources such as family members and friends who have already migrated to urban areas are also essential instruments in offering information's, physical and emotional assistance to new migrants (Coleman,1988). Such networks can help the individuals lessen the mental or financial costs of migration.

2.3 Migration Trends in Pakistan

This paper addresses the rural-urban migration which has been a common phenomenon in Pakistan over the last few decades. For this reason, Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad and other large cities today have recorded increased populations with people from rural areas migrating to urban areas. The push factors that predominate in Pakistan include income differences between the urban and the rural areas, dearth of educational and health facilities in the rural sector, flood and drought as the natural factors. According to Shah (2008) most of the migrants who move to urban from rural areas of Pakistan are young workers who left behind women children, and the elders. Not only does this migration change the demographic composition of rural villages, but it also creates several great social impacts onuzzer families. In particular women are compelled to work and assume the challenges of agriculture and care for the family thus eradicating the gendered structures of employment and remunerations (Afsar, 2011).

2.4 Impact of Migration on Family Dynamics

Migration is a social factor that affects families most especially the family structure because in the rural setting there are many families living together under one roof. Drawing from Golini (1974) the rural families are primarily a collective unit where each of the family members has his or her own responsibility in terms of family chores as well as responsibilities in the production of food crops. When are family member(s) move to the neighbourhoods we term as urban areas, then such responsibilities change, and the formation of families and or households. More so, women bear the highest burden and bear the biggest transition when their husbands and male relatives travel. Female partners are usually the main care givers and providers and take most responsibilities which add burden to them besides reversing gender roles (Mosse et al., 2002). Afsar (2011) pointed out, Pakistani rural women are gradually invading male dominated sectors like agricultural business and household economics. This shift however comes with things such as elevated social vulnerability, and psychological strain.

2.5 Social Cohesion and Migration

By social capital in this regard, the author means the way of carrying out social activities and the sense of belonging in a community as described by Putnam (2000). Social integration in rural context depends with close relations, shared culture, and available social structures. Nevertheless, migration was stated to sever these ties by breaking down family and community frameworks (Skeldon, 1997). This calls us to recognize that when key family members are missing from a community because of migration, social capital is depleted as is the ability of the society to address emergent social issues. For example, the peasants from rural parts of Pakistan tend to engage in collective work farming and other community related chores. For instance, when a massive number of workers in the labor force move to another area it harder for a community to sustain such pursuits (Memon, 2005). However, young educated people are mostly in the movement of pulling out from the countryside to cities, thus leaving the rural areas with human capital deficit. This reduction in manpower has a multiplier effect to the social organizations in the rural areas as there are few people who can come forward to challenge or encourage the upliftment of standard of living in the village (Hugo, 1996).

2.6 Economic Effects of Migration

Therefore, migration has salaries for the work done helping the individuals and families and the economic effects of migration impact within the framework of the effects on rural territories. Cross sectional and for Pakistan in particular it has been observed that remittance does have a potential to alleviate poverty levels and even augment the standard of living of the people in the rural area. The financial remittals also give families an opportunity to pay for education, health and shelter thus raising the quality of life. Besides, there are some drawbacks to the flexibility of dependence on the money transfer among the families in the areas; drawing conclusions from the fact that those families who receive money from the working relatives in other countries do not attempt to engage in the productive effort within the economy (Deshingkar & Grimm, 2005). This dependence can worsen other regional imbalances within the rural areas: the fact is that more economically developed households are those that, for one reason or another, have no migrant members (Lipton, 1980).

2.7 Coping Mechanisms and Adaptation

As mentioned before, families in the rural settings come come up with so many ways of handling with the challenges which arise from migration. These strategies include changing the roles with in families, seeking support from social networks as well as modifying cultural practices of different families since member of the family are away (Mosse et al., 2002). Many females work and find themselves assuming the leadership of households, both economic and productive (Afsar, 2011). However there exists possibilities of a positive social change that may come along with migration. For example, higher family and wife adultery increased the level of women gaining decision-making authority in the home (Golini, 1974). Although, such changes may not be prove sweeping since women may suffer a backlash from traditional culturalists and consequently structures in any given society (Shah, 2008).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Neoclassical Economic Theory: The neoclassical economic theory of migration advanced by Harris and Todaro in 1970 is hinged on rationality whereby persons decide on migration on the rational self-interest that there is better off somewhere else. The theory presupposes that migration mainly arises from differences in wages between rural and urban regions. With regard to this view, people will migrate to these urban centres a place of work because there is better wages and jobs avails (Todaro & Smith, 2015). In the perspective of economic neoclassical theory of migration, most people in the rural areas of Pakistan move to urban areas such as Karachi and Lahore to look for better-paying jobs. However, it has been criticised in the following way, it overlooks the fact that the process of migration and motives are not very well defined and rigid as given in the model, while the main motive stated here is quest for income, other factors that can lead to migration are either underemphasized or completely eliminated (Skeldon, 1997). Although, the key causes are mainly rooted in economic factors the theory fails to capture the social vices that come with migration such as the disconnection of families and demoralization of social institutions. The theory will come handy in establishing how economic separation contributes to this migration trend but by and large it'll be relevant when wed with other theories so as to capture the multifaceted aspect of this issue of rural to urban migration as disintegration to family and social structure.

3.2 New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM): NELM (New Economics of Labor Migration) proposed by Stark & Bloom (1985) Designed to move away from simple rational choice theory type of remittance decision making

towards the Household. In this case, migration is not only for realizing additional income, but for reducing exposure to certain risks and enhancing the economic vulnerability of the household. The unitary decision-makers are families or households, and one or several representatives may go to urban areas as an insurance against other sources of revenue (Taylor, 1999). In Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, then People's Republic of Pakistan, mobility can be conceptualized as a household response to risk, including variability in crop yields and constraints on liveliness. Remittances are an essential 导因 for improving the quality of life of the families concerned through money earned at the foreign country. Nevertheless, despite its apparent ability of increasing financial capacity, of direct and indirect type, it causes social path dependencies and undermines traditional family type as women bear multiple roles where male kin are absent (Afsar, 2011). This study will use the NELM framework to analyze the way families in rural Pakistan leverage migration to manage risk. It also helps in the analysis of inter and intrapersonal movement of monetary funds between the migrants and the non-migrants as well as enhance knowledge on the effects of migration, within the economic and family domains.

3.3 Social Capital Theory: Social Capital Theory that is more elaborate and broader than the one developed by Bourdieu (1986) and refined by Coleman (1988) An important concept of this theory is the social structure that can provide the individual or families with assets. Hypothesis for the social capital theory stated that migration is best facilitated through social capital. The successful migrants can help their fellow nationals find jobs, homes and even emotional support within the urban centers as they usually depend on acquaintances who have preceded them in the area (Massey et al., 1993).

As for the case of rural to urban migration in Pakistan, social networks are crucial to the process to make it smoother. The rural societies give potential migrants hints as to the arrangement of moving to urban centres and rural society's ideas about structure are still embedded in kinship and communal contexts (Shah, 200e). Nonetheless, migration has an adverse effect on social capital within rural families because the absking of most of the family members not only erodes such networks, but additionally is likely to reduce the social capital available to the remaining members of the family.

The theory of social capital will be employed to analyze the networks that can organize migration and to depict the impacts of migration on family and rural communities social connectedness in Pakistan.

3.4 Structuration Theory: Alongside these theories, there is another more generalized sociological theory – Structuration Theory that was worked out by Anthony Giddens in 1984 and also can be used for the investigation of the problem of migration, and its consequences for migrants and structures. Giddens introduces the structure-actor debates by stating that while structures set the frame work for behaviors, actors are not determined by structures and structure themselves act back on those actors. Migration is thus was both actors decide and change that is induced by factors such as income disparities, state policies, and global systems of demand for labour. In the rural contexts of Pakistan the reason for migration is a combination of both demand, in terms of the ability of the individual to make this decision, and supply, in the form of lack of education and health services in rural areas Memon (2005). Migration is greatly influenced by factors such as social culture practices Including family type and and gender related issues بیماری. For example, while the young men travel from rural area in seek of jobs and other opportunities then the existing gender roles remain dominant with women being the ones left behind to do both domestic and agricultural work, which tends to change the power relations in the households (Afsar, 2011).

Therefore, Structuration Theory will be helpful in analysing how migration is shaped by social structures and in turn shapes social structures in rural Pakistan. It will also help assess how migration refashions family and community relationships and other related changes to social interaction.

3.5 Migration as a Social Process: In no way can be migration be assumed to be linked with either the economy concerning it a mere way of seeking employment somewhere or concerning it as an individual decision to seek better life elsewhere it is a social process that is deeply rooted in society. One of such theories is the Cumulative Causation of Migration which was argued by Massey (1990). Once migration commences in a particular direction some parameters assist in encouraging other individuals in the community to migrate. There is some resemblance with one of the theories of social capital whereby early immigrants play a critical role for the others by sending money back home and providing others with information. In Pakistan migration from rural to urban area has become a trend in most of the families in which the young generation tends to join the same profession as followed by their ancestors (Memon, 2005). This results in constant stream of migration, which may positevely of negatively influence the degree of social cohesiveness based on the community within which migrants operate, the amount in dollar terms of remittance, and the extent to which migrant can support their home communities (Stark, 1991).

3.6 Application to Family Dynamics and Social Cohesion: Evaluating the effect of rural to urban migration on family relations and social organization in rural Pakistan, the theories highlighted above are interrelated. This paper explores how Migration and its subsequent outcomes impact family and community through economic differences (Neoclassical Economic Theory), household risk management strategies (NELM), & Social Capital Theory. On the other hand, Neoclassical and NELM theories are useful for explaining the rational for migration for financial reasons; the Social Capital approach and Structuration theory help to explain the social/cultural aspect of migration. The integration of these theories improve the knowledge of this study on how migration affected not only the economic status of the families but also the social relations within the community.

4. Methods and Materials

Therefore, in framework of this research, we employed qualitative method to analyse the factors that affect the family and social relationships in the rural Pakistan because of migration. This study adopted purposive sampling technique where the researcher targeted 30 participants, 15 trips in urban areas, 10 relatives who stayed in villages, and 5 community leaders from the selected villages. Semi-structured interviews, a purposive case study, and documentation data collection methods were used. The interviews took place in secluded areas and were audio and later text recorded to follow up on themes. Data collection in each case involved conducting interviews with programme participants and key informants at the individual and community level, focus group discussions, participant observation, and use of records to provide more specific information about the rippling effects of the programme across different sectors of society as well as qualitative and quantitative data analysis including the use of documents such as government reports and local studies. Thematic analysis was applied to describe and explain the used data as well as to ascertain validity through triangulation, member check, and peer debriefing. Any concerns about ethical practice such as informed consent and issue of anonymity were highly observed at all times.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Findings

5.1.1 Changes in Family Dynamics

The data also show that migration triggers major changes in family structures with rural to urban migration being more transformative. Key findings include:

Emotional Distance: A significant number of migrants drive emotional disconnection from their families. This limited contact and communication between migrants and their families, friends and associates makes them phenomenally isolated.

Role Reconfiguration: Relatives living in rural setting often get other obligations to take care of. This can lead to a rise of the stress levels and worked in those employees who are retained in the organization.

Financial Support: People move to the other country with the intention of investing on the vulnerable of their families through remittance, which at sometimes cause dependency to the family.

Table 5.1: Summary of Changes in Family Dynamics

Aspect	Description
Emotional Distance	Increased feelings of isolation among migrants.
RoleReconfiguration	Additional responsibilities for remaining family members.
Financial Support	Remittances improve standards but may cause dependency.

5.1.2 Impact on Social Cohesion

There is clearly a sense that migration erodes the fabric of societies in rural areas:

Reduced Social Interaction: The business migration destabilizes the networks and social practices of a community by removing important core members.

Economic Benefits: Improve structures and social services in homes that people build and improve the infrastructure in the local areas.

Social Tensions: The gap of the migrant and non-migrant families increases tensions and unequal society within the society of migrating families.

Table 5.2: Summary of Impact on Social Cohesion

Aspect	Description
Reduced Social Interaction	Weekend community networks and tradition practices.
Economic Benefits	Improved local infrastructure and services from remittances.
Social Tensions	Inequality and tension between migrant and non-migrant families.

5.1.3 Economic and Social Changes

Change in economy and social setting brought by immigration are;

Improved Economic Opportunities: The size of wages and non-wage migrants' benefits are often higher in urban sectors than in rural areas improving personal and family finance.

Uneven Benefits: The push effects for migration and urban adjustment are positive in that income is increased to some of the families while the pull effects are negative since families experience economic hurdles in their costs of migration and urban adjustment.

Social Disparities: The economic immerses which are accrued by the migrants also tends to widen the social gaps in rural populations.

Table 5.3: Summary of Economic and Social Changes

Aspect	Description
Improved Economic Opportunities	Better job prospects and financial conditions for migrants.
Uneven Benefits	Economic challenges for some families due to migration costs.
Social Disparities	Increased inequality between migrant and non-migrant families.

5.1.4 Community Perspectives and Responses

Receiving community's attitudes towards migration are as follows:

Positive Views: Some of the people in the community regard migration as the impetus towards creating economic growth and pushing for the process of development and modernization.

Concerns About Social Change: Some hold a worry of the declining standards and societal interdependence.

Adaptation Strategies: They are evolving new social sponsorship structures and social incorporation of migrants in local development plans.

Table 5.4: Summary of Community Perspectives and Responses

Aspect	Description
Positive Views	Migration seen as a driver of economic development.
Concerns About Social Change	Erosion of traditional values and community cohesion.
Adaptation Strategies	New support systems and integration of migrants in development.

5.2 Discussion:

5.2.1 Reconfiguration of Family Roles

The study provides an indication that such migration contributes to a massive reshuffling of roles within families that relocate from rural areas to urban ones. The fact that the migrants have adopted this emotional detachment from family members is proof enough that migration impacts on personal and, or even familial welfare. The extra roles taken by surviving family members depict how relishing migration is, to those who are left behind without anything.

5.2.2 Erosion of Traditional Social Cohesion

Migration alters the life relationships arrangements, both the organisational and informal structures of affiliations, and communal activities. This is therefore a clear pointer towards how migration impacts on social relations, and the extents to which the levels of community engagement are impacted on. Yet there is one positive impact in relation to the economic sector, in so far as they help advance infrastructural support and service provision in rural regions, through the remittance.

5.2.3 Economic Disparities and Social Tensions

There is great economic gains of migration although this is not evenly spread and causes tensions within the social structures amongst the rural populations. The comparison between migrant and non-migrant families intensifies social inequalities and generates the potential for new social conflict.

5.2.4 Community Adaptation and Resilience

Migration is receiving a social response from various communities to embrace the challenges now resulting in improved strength and flexibility. Whereas conventional frameworks are destabilized, new types of support networks and reintegrative processes are being formed. Such flexibility shows that rural populations can adapt to migration-generated shifts in their context.

6. Conclusion

This study found that migration severely impacts family functioning and social organization among rural families in Pakistan. The research also discussed an enhanced issue that stem from migration whereby migrants' families experience role transformation and increased emotional detachment from their loved ones. However, like other machineries of global flows of capital, remittances although can provide extra income and investment in infra products and facilities, are not free from questions of dependency and social exclusion. They weigh negatively on the social relations by eroding social structures and disrupting solidarity in a given community but positive effects are observed in localized development. From the results presented above, it is possible to conclude that there is a definite need for the development of concrete support programs for migrants and families of the former category. Therefore, the measures taken towards community development must seek as well to foster social cohesiveness as well as address exaggerated effects of migration. More research should be conducted in the outcomes of migration established as time-bound and in comparative realignment to enhance the performance and delivery of policies.

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