

IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON SOCIAL PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND IN AGRARIAN COMMUNITIES OF DISTRICT TOBA TEK SIGNH, PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

Izhar Ahmed Khan^{1,*}, Sadaf Mahmood¹, Ghulam Yasin², Babar Shahbaz³

¹Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan; ²Department of Sociology, B. Z. University, Multan, Pakistan; ³Department of Agri. Extension, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan.
corresponding author's e.mail: izhark99@yahoo.com

The people living in one part of the world basically moved to other parts for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary. People migrate with the hope of improvement of living conditions of their families left behind. This study aims to explore the impact of international migration on the families left behind in the agrarian communities of district Toba Tek Singh of the Punjab province. Multistage sampling technique was used for the purpose of data collection. One tehsil from Toba Tek Singh district was selected through simple random sampling technique. Four union councils from out of 32 union councils and 30 respondents from each union council were selected. Convenient sampling technique and Snowball sampling technique was used in the selection of a sample of 120 respondents (wives of migrants). A strong positive relationship was found between migration and socio-economic protection of agrarian families left behind; however majority of left behind wives and children felt loneliness and insecurity due migration of their family heads.

Keywords: international migration, socio-economic problems, agrarian families, social protection, education

INTRODUCTION

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another (usually across a political boundary) for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi permanent residence. One of the most significant migration patterns has been rural to urban migration, i.e., the movement of people from rural areas to big cities in search of opportunities of employment (Anonymous, 2005). International migration is the term which refers to change in domicile of persons (Sattar, 2009). The people living in one part of the world basically move to other parts for their livelihood (Massey *et al.*, 1994; Bauer and Gang, 1998). The economics of migration focuses on the expectation of a higher income abroad as a main cause of decisions to emigrate (Solimano, 2002). The push-pull theory of migration traced out the economic factors of migration in the sending country as well as in the receiving country. Push factors attribute to the negative characteristics operating at the center of origin whereas pull factors identify the positive characteristics at the center of destination (Datta, 2002). People migrate with the hope of improvement of living conditions but receive the adverse effect on the whole family left-behind particularly education of the children. Pakistan is a major country among those countries which receives its main income for international

migration (Government of Pakistan, 2008). Apart from socio-economic impact on the area of origin, migration also has a profound influence on the status of left behind wives in the family. Nevertheless, absence of husband makes the life of a wife difficult. Her workload increases as she has to take care of several other things, which culturally are done by men (Gulati, 1993; Hugo, 1995; Hadi, 1999).

The relationship of migrants with their area of origin that takes the form of financial property, remittance or exchange of information and ideas been categorically referred to as remittance. This remittance can assist in improving the people, welfare in the area of origin, particularly the family members of family relations left behind. Family believes that working in abroad is the only way to improve economic conditions of the household (Sattar, 2009; Sadaf *et al.* 2010). Migrant workers send remittances to support their families that are left behinds in the sending countries (Hamann, 2007). Keeping in view the impact of migration on the families left behind, this study was conducted to investigate the socio-economic conditions of the migrant's families, the social problems faced by the wives and factors involved in upbringing of migrants children.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the rural areas of District Toba Tek Singh. A sample of 120 respondents (wives of migrants) was selected through convenient and snow ball sampling (Goodman, 1961) technique. One tehsil (Toba) out of three tehsils from Toba Tek Singh District was selected through simple random sampling technique. Four union councils out of 32 union councils were selected through simple random sampling technique. 30 respondents from each union council were selected through convenient sampling technique. A comprehensive interview schedule was devised in the light of research objectives. The data were analyzed through the descriptive and inferential statistical technique using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data given in Table 1 reveals that 26.7 percent (a slightly more than one quarter) of the respondents were uneducated. The level of the education of the respondents before and after migration of their husband remained same and that showed that the migration of husband did not put forth any impact on the education of the wives. The data describes that there was even no minor change in the education of wives. All the wives did not continue their education after the migration of their husband due to many reasons. The most important reason which the qualitative interviews showed was that the burden of more responsibilities was kept them far away from continuing their education. Educational attainment plays a vital role in shaping migration behavior. Izhar (2008) conducted research on overseas migration and

its socio-economic impacts on the families left behind in Pakistan. He conducted his research in two districts (Jehulm and Gujrat) of province Punjab, Pakistan and found that educated people migrated readily then uneducated people. Similar results were found by Sattar (2009) that highly educated people preferred to migrate because they want to establish themselves. IOM (2005) report indicated that in Mexico a trend of higher levels of education among migrants was observed during the past decade, and it was estimated that in the USA there are 700,000 Mexicans with university degrees.

The data (Table 2) depicts that 91.7 percent (a huge majority) of the respondent's location before migration was rural and 8.3 percent (a little less than one fifth) of the respondent's location before migration was urban. Data shows that a huge majority of the respondents (91.7 percent) were living in rural areas before migration. After migration majority 85.8 percent of the respondents (migrants' wives) continued to live in rural area and only 14.2 % (more than one fifth) of the respondents shifted to urban areas after migration of their husbands.

The present study also illustrates that 76.7 percent of the respondents were feeling economic protection and 23.3 percent of the respondents were not feeling economic protection. The majority of the respondents were satisfied with their economic condition after the migration of their husbands. The respondents, who were not satisfied with their economic condition, told that their husbands had a less time period of migration. They were paying back their loan yet which they took for the fulfillment of migration procedure requirement. Similarly Izhar (2008) stated that families felt economic protection after receiving remittances. His study also showed that they achieved their financial goals.

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents and migrants according to their education

Level of Education	Respondents (wives of migrants)		Migrants	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	32	26.7	1	0.8
Primary	9	7.5	22	18.3
Matric	30	25.0	34	28.3
Secondary	23	19.2	33	27.5
University & Higher	26	21.7	30	25.0
Total	120	100.0	120	100.0

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents according to their location before and after migration.

Location	Before Migration		After Migration	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	110	91.7	103	85.8
Urban	10	8.3	17	14.2
Total	120	100.0	120	100.0

The results also revealed that 60.8% (majority of the migrants' wives) felt social protection after the departure of their husband. The research results also showed that majority of the respondents were living in joint family system in agrarian communities so they replied that their in-laws protect them from facing social problems. In a previous study Rajan (2003) concluded that loneliness was more serious problem among the gulf wives more than anything else.

The distribution of the respondents according to social problem they faced after the departure of husbands indicates that more than half of the wives declared loneliness as their number one problem arising from their husbands' emigration (Table 3). In response to the question that which kind of social problems they faced after their husband migration was that they faced social insecurity (5.0%), loneliness (40.8%), feeling burden of more responsibilities (14.2%). Results showed that majority of the respondents felt loneliness after the departure of their husbands. Respondents clarified that they felt loneliness because many of the respondents were newly married. The wives who were interviewed in the survey also suggested that the migrants should migrate with their wives.

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents according to social problem they faced after the departure of husbands

Social Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Social Insecurity	6	5.0
Loneliness	49	40.8
Faced different problems	15	12.5
Feeling burden of more responsibilities	17	14.2
No problems	33	27.5
Total	120	100.0

Similar results were found by Farooq and Javed (2009) who conducted their study in Faisalabad, Pakistan. They reported that the respondents had to face a number of social problems in the absence of their spouses. About 36 percent of the respondents reported that they had to face psychological strains in the absence of migrants and the results also showed that majority of the respondents were feeling loneliness after their husband's migration.

Children were also affected by the migration of their fathers (Table 4). The results shows that 50.8 percent of the respondent's children were feeling loneliness after departure of their father, whereas other half of respondents children were facing different kinds of problems such as 10.0 percent felt insecurity, lack of guidance (10.0%) and lack of father affection (24.2%). Battistella and Cecilia (1998), conducted research on

impact of migration on the children left behind and found similar findings that children of migrant parents were experiencing higher anxiety and loneliness. However, the low level of anxiety and loneliness could also be attributed to the increase of family communication. Kuhn (2006) conducted a study in Matlab (Bangladesh) and stated that the emigration of fathers and male siblings often resulted in improvements in the education of children left behind in some rural areas in Bangladesh.

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents according to children's feelings after the departure of migrants

Children Feelings	Frequency	Percentage
No Child	6	5.0
Loneliness	61	50.8
Insecurity	12	10.0
Lack of Guidance	12	10.0
Feeling Lack of Father Affection	29	24.2
Total	120	100.0

CONCLUSIONS

Migration is an economic, social and political process that affects those who move, those who stay behind, and the places where they go. The results of the present study indicate that there is a positive relationship between migration and socio-economic protection of the families left behind in rural areas. In the study area 76.7 percent of the migrants' wives were satisfied with their economic condition after the migration of their husbands. The results also indicated that 60.8 percent of the respondents were feeling social protection after the departure of their husbands. However other side of the picture was quite bleak. Most of the wives and children reported loneliness as the major problem after the departure of migrants. Similarly insecurity and lack of guidance and father's affection were also reported by the children. It is suggested that the government should establish counseling institutions for families (particularly children) left behind. Migrants' wives both should be provided opportunities to improve their qualification so they can handle problems easily and individually. Parents-teachers meetings should be organized time to time to solve the problems of the migrant's children.

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