

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON MIGRANTS' FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND IN THE RURAL AREA OF PAKISTAN

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This study was designed to investigate the problems of the migrant families left-behind in the rural areas of Pakistan. It was observed in this study that women initially felt loneliness and burdened as they assumed the new duties and responsibilities in the absence of their husbands, particularly concerning the male children. Consequently, they faced psychological strains when their husband left them at origin. It was further explored that children felt lonely and lack of guidance in the absence of their father. The study was carried out in district Faisalabad. It included three hundred respondents, who were taken from eight villages, two villages from each Tehsil, selected by simple random sampling technique. Chi-square test and Probit estimation technique were used for empirical analysis. Probit Analysis proved that a large majority of migrants' children could not get the education as their parents expected.

Keywords: Wives' problems, education, migration, probit, rural areas

INTRODUCTION

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 (Economic Survey Government of Pakistan, 2008). Currently about 3.75 million Pakistanis are estimated to be living or working overseas. Overseas Pakistanis are mainly present in the Middle East (45%), followed by Europe (29%) and America (23%) (Government of Pakistan, 1998). The wives of the migrants face loneliness, added responsibilities, adverse effect on education of the children, debt incurred to finance emigration, increased anxiety for communication. Moreover, they face psychological strains when their husband left them at origin. The wife feels lonely and sexually disturbed in case of new marriage. Chee (2003) concluded in her study that marital relations between couples were disturbed for separation by distance. Consequently, some couples experienced conflict and emotional distance, divorce, and extra marital affairs, others actually developed stronger emotional ties during their separation. Another study conducted by Thomas *et al.* (2003), they stated that in UK, China and India, the majority of wives reported that the absence of their spouses had led to various problems, including loneliness, emotional disturbance and lack of guidance for children. Communication with their husbands is very important for the wives left behind; it serves to "allay fears, to

maintain close relationships, to improve sea-farers' morale, to relieve stress (on board and at home) and to maintain relationships with children." In the context of Pakistani culture, where women do not have much mobility, male migration breaks down women's isolation, as their added responsibilities (i.e. caring the children, investing money, etc.) bring them outside the orbit of the home, which leads them toward the liberalism. Besides this, the impact of migration on the families left behind is a major concern in the countries of origin. In Pakistani society, the role of women as the "light of home", the departure of women is seen as problematic for the stability of the family and the welfare of the children left behind. In case of women migration, they bear a lot of guilt in leaving their children behind and the fact that they care for other children (or other families) while they leave their own in the care of others which haunts them. But many women also acknowledged an appreciation of lessons learned and discovering strengths and talents. Gulati (1993) concluded from in-depth study of 10 women left behind by husbands or sons that there were more successes than failures. In the absence of their men, women broke ground by taking on tasks (and did them well) that traditionally men had excluded them from these activities. The present study covers the following objectives:

1. To examine the children's education, health problems and participation in the social functions.
2. To observe the mental stress, as the responsibilities and anxieties are likely to increase in the absence of husband.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research was conducted in four Tehsils of Faisalabad District (Faisalabad, Jaranwala, Tandlianwala and Samundri). Three hundred respondents were taken from the eight villages, two villages from each Tehsil selected by using simple random sampling technique. Moreover, all the respondents were the heads of households who were empowered to make decisions. Subject to their availability, nineteen to fifty-one respondents were interviewed from each village. In order to get a comprehensive range of information, the study used the variety of resources and methods. The census data and other records were also used to get a more general picture of the population profile. Information about rural population and the existing social institutions had been obtained from the census 1998. Interviews in different forms (survey and interviews with key informants) were the main instruments to find out about migrants' families livelihood issues. Chi-square and Probit analysis technique were used to draw the inferences. The Probit Model's Equation is specified as below:

$$IMO = b_0 + b_1 LHOLD + b_2 MINH + b_3 FCED + b_4 MCED + b_5 WOEMP + b_6 POLTP$$

In the above model IMD is a dependent variable, while LHOLD, MINH, FCED, MCED, WOEMP and POLTP are explanatory variables.

Whereas IMO = Impact of migration on origin

LHOLD = Land holding, MINH = monthly income after migration

FCED = Female children education, = MCED Male children education

WOEMP = Women empowerment

POLTP = Political participation of migrant

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Empirical analysis with regard to the women's problems (children education, lack of good social environment/feeling of loneliness, burden as they assume new duties in the absences of their spouse and particularly caring the male children) is discussed in this section.

The data in Table 1 depict that a large majority (65% and 76%) of the respondents reported that they had enrolled all their children (Male and Female) in the school after migration. However, they had received the result against their expectation, particularly for male children because they could not supervise them properly.

Table 1. Enrolment of the migrants' children in the school before and after migration

Sr. No.	Migrants' children	Before migration	After migration	Total
1.	Male	35%	65%	100
2.	Female	24%	76%	100

With respect to performance, a large majority (Table 2) i.e. 60% mothers, reported that they were not satisfied with the performance of their male children education while 64% mothers gave the opinion that their daughters had fulfilled their expectations. These figures coincide with the findings of *Afsar* (2003) who concluded that school enrolment rates were higher among migrants' families in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Other study conducted by *Kuhn* (2006) showed 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. He concluded that out-migration of fathers and brothers in these rural areas have substantial and predominately positive impacts on the pace of schooling of children, both boys and girls, left behind in

Matlab (Village). Moreover, the hypothesis was tested by Chi-square test and Probit model.

Table 2. Mothers' expectation regarding their children education

Mothers' expectation regarding their children education			
Migrants' children	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Total
Male children	120 (40%)	180 (60%)	300 (100%)
Female children	192 (64%)	108 (36%)	300 (100%)

"The higher the rate of male children dropout at school and college level, the greater will be the adverse impact of migration on migrants' families.

The Chi-square value (45.807) shows (Table 3) that there was a strong association between impact of international migration (particularly father) and dropout male children from the schools and colleges.

Moreover, Probit model analysis inferences reflected (Table 4) that the co-efficient was significant at 5% level with regard to the female education. As the schooling of the female children increased by one year regarding the female education, the probability to improvement of the social capital was .001971. Probit model showed that the co-efficient was insignificant at 5% level with regard to the male education. This study coincides with the findings of *Battistella* and *Conaco*

(1998) who have conducted their study in Philippines that the mother's departure was associated with lower

Besides this, the respondents reported (Table 5) that they had to face the number of social problems in the

Table 3. Relationship between educational level of the children and their drop out rate due to international migration

Educational level of the children	Drop out rate among male children due to international migration			Total
	Truancy	Drop out	Successful	
Elementary	12 (19.1)	50 (66.7)	68 (44.2)	130
Matric	26 (14.7)	60 (51.3)	14 (34.0)	100
F.Sc./F.A .+ above	6 (10.3)	44 (35.9)	20 (23.8)	70
Total	44	154	102	300

Chi- Square = 45.807

Significance = 0.01

Table 4. Maximum likelihood estimates by Probit model in the rural community

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Probability
LHOLD (ECOPT)	.27844*	.18712	.068375
MINH	.00001*	.00001	.038180
FCED	.51080***	.17719	.001971
MCED	.33497*	.28433	.049384
WOEMP	.29209*	.20929	.081416
POLTP	.44521**	.20028	.013110

Coefficient is significantly different from zero at 0.1*, 0.05** and 0.01*** probability level, respectively.

Table 5. Children and spouse's feeling in absence of their father and husband in the rural community

Sr. No.	Feeling	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Children deprived to guidance in education/lack of insp./social environment for children	97	32.0
2.	Psychological strains/loneliness/emotional distance	108	36.0
3.	Feel burden with new responsibilities	95	32.0
	Total	300	100.0

school performance and more difficult social adjustment among young children. Moreover, *Zachariah et al.* (2001) concluded in India that the wives of the migrants identified the following problems (in the order of importance): loneliness, added responsibilities, adverse effect on children's education, debt incurred to finance emigration, and increased anxiety. It was concluded that migrants' families had paid maximum attention to the schooling of their children with regard to elevate the position of their families in the society but male children did not come up to their expectations. Many scholars observed that remittances could contribute to cultural renaissance and community level economic improvements in sending it to families, and increased economic and educational opportunities for migrants themselves (Cohen, 2001; Massey *et al.*, 1998; Trager, 2005).

absence of their spouses. In this scenario, 36% of the respondents reported that they had to face psychological strains/ loneliness/ emotional distance in the absence of migrants. Moreover, 32% respondents reported that they were feeling burden with new responsibilities (caring the children, and domestic affairs), while, 32% of the respondents' children were deprived of guidance in the education and other co-curriculum activities i.e. lack of inspiration for children and social environment for children, respectively. Moreover, 59.0% (Table 6) respondents reported that the parents of their spouses had often attended the social functions after migrants' departure because migrants' families were with them. These findings coincided with Lefebvre (1985) who concluded that the migrant's wife was under the control of her in-laws in the extended family.

Table 6. Management of the social functions after migrant's departure in the rural community

Sr. No.	Social relation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Wife/son and daughter	84	28.0
2.	Father/mother	178	59.0
3.	Brother	38	13.0
Total		300	100.0

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Migration is usually associated with general economic and social development. In many developing countries, large scale migration towards the developed and rich countries could not increase the per capita income as much as they have expected. In this context only those persons should migrate, whose family is in custody of their parents and brothers as they can look after the migrants' families left behind particularly the male children who are studying at high school and college level. Moreover, newly married person should not migrate as it may promote the moral corruption which ultimately could lead to misunderstanding between the spouses. Moreover, it would be little easy for those persons whose wives are educated and actively engaged in domestic affairs. Therefore, such category of spouses left behind can easily tackle the children as well as domestic problems. Moreover, the impact of international migration on children left behind is observably mixed, with some countries having a better than expected outcome while the situation in Pakistan looks bleak. An important task which needs to precede policy formulation is to conduct more detailed systematic studies in Pakistan, so, as to gain a better understanding the situation in order to decide on what really needs to be done. In order to create awareness about this issue the different types of training programme should be launched among mass through media. Focus group discussions and other support groups at the community level should be arranged.

1. The mass media can be harnessed to provide education and information to Overseas Pakistani workers' families (e.g., parenting tips, child rearing, the role of fathers, changing gender roles), particularly in reaching inaccessible groups such as husbands.
2. The school has an important role to play in delivering programmes to Overseas Pakistani workers' families. It is a "natural" venue in reaching out to children, parents and caregivers. The school could be a venue for offering programmes on parenting/care-giving, gender sensitivity, constructive

coping mechanisms, and programmes for children. However, the guardian and caregiver should observe young children activities and approach to their teachers, classmates and friends when they faced some problems.

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