

ELDERLY MIGRANTS ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS IN THE BIG CITIES OF PAKISTAN

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This paper explores the factors which is contributing towards the elderly' migrants' adjustment problems in the big cities of Pakistan. Three hundred respondents were interviewed at the place of their destination. The open and close-ended questionnaires were used as a tool in order to get the information from the respondents and four focus groups were conducted by the researcher himself. Data analysis revealed that 70% of elderly migrants in Faisalabad city had to face the problems of adjustment regarding loneliness, income, modern way of life, health care, noise and environmental pollutions. Thus, the principal issues of aging in the big cities under consideration are likely to trace their social conditions i.e. isolation and modernity. Moreover, it was observed that the ability of adult children in order to provide support for their aging parents had been eroded by inflation.

Keyword: Isolation, modernity, elderly' migrants' adjustment problems, migration, big cities

INTRODUCTION

It is commonly assumed that care for the elderly people in Pakistani society is a task carried out with respect and sensitivity by adult children and other relatives. Many of the traditional norms of Pakistani society emphasize respect, care and support for the elderly persons and there is an assumption that the family will arrange the needs of their elders. This traditional pattern of support is given as a reason for the high fertility rates in the region-“old age security is found in having many children.” Indeed, the joint family system is a major source to support for the elderly people who have been documented throughout the colonial period in Africa, (Cattell, 1990). Even during the intense periods of seasonal migration when young men are absent from their home village, remittance has sent back to their dependent families in the villages, including parents and they consider this practice as a noble duty. This value is also prevailed in our society as it is sacred and noble duty to look after the parents. In many cases, migrants call their parents and accommodate with themselves in the urban areas.

Migration is a process of re-adjustment particularly for the adjustment of the elders' persons. For the individual, it represents a personal adjustment with regard to bring changes in life circumstances and offers various opportunities, especially for the aged. Immobility of people often reflects their isolation from opportunities available in society e.g. social, economic and political opportunities. For the nation as a whole, migration helps in maintaining a balance between social and economic activities on the one hand and increasing the urban population numbers on the other.

As we move about the country, our actions create broad social, economic and political realignments, as well as adjustment in our personal lives. Balance is

achieved through two broad types of movement (1) the shift from economically depressed region, often rural, to areas of expending employment and higher wages, usually metropolitan (2) migration flows among metropolitan areas by which migrants participate in a nationwide job market, moving to areas offering economic advancement and often personal environmental preferences. Despite these facilities, the elderly migrants are suffering from the isolation and that's why they are not going to adjust themselves in the urban areas.

The lack of adequate institutionalized social security programs for the aged people reflects that alternative support systems for the elderly people in Pakistan society are sub-standard. The society's strong reliance on adult children and joint family as a major source of old age support which is considered the most reliable support system in Pakistan society. Adult children and grand children continue to provide to instrumental aid to their elder's parents (e.g. taking them to doctors, social functions and helping them in their banking transaction etc.). But since elders have few favours to offer in return e.g. looking after the home, giving pieces of advice to their sons and grandsons and introducing the new generation to the relatives. Besides this, caregivers consider them as an unfair burden (Remennick, 2001). However, it is observed in this study that the ability of adult children in order to provide support to their parents has been eroded by harsh economic conditions associated with a changing national economic scenario.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research was conducted in city areas of Faisalabad with sub-division of eight circle areas. In order to draw the sample from the Faisalabad city, a

survey list maintained by excise and Taxation department was used as the sampling frame. A multistage sampling technique was used to draw the sample (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). At the first stage, Faisalabad city was selected which had already been divided into three rating zones and thirty eight circle areas by the Excise and Taxation Department, on the basis of economic stratification. At the second stage, eight circle areas were selected i.e. Ghulam Muhammad abad, Muslim town, Peoples colony No. 2, Ayub colony, Ghulistan colony Madina Town, Katchi abadi and Nasir colony through random sampling technique to observe the impact of rural to urban migration on the elderly migrants adjustment in the urban areas. At third stage, households were selected with the help of interviewers who had visited the research areas but the required information was collected wherever the migrants were available. Three hundred households were selected through random sampling technique. The respondents included the urban migrants who had migrated before 1990. Statistical analysis technique was used to draw the inferences. To investigate the problems of the adjustment of the elderly migrants in the urban areas, four focus group discussions were conducted by the researcher himself in Faisalabad city.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pakistan is a developing country that has experienced rapid rural to urban migration in the last thirty years. This study examines the impact of internal (rural urban) migration on the elderly migrants' adjustment in the urban areas. Migration affects on the entire unit i.e. family, the household and especially for the elders at the places of destination. Majority of the migrants were from the same district and province, but elderly persons had to face many difficulties in adjusting to the new set-up. The findings (Table 1) illustrate, only 63%, 70%, 85% and 60% respondents reported that their elders had to face the problems of loneliness, financial constraints, modern way of life and healthcares, respectively. Moreover, 88% respondents reported that noise and environmental pollution were the main hurdles in their physically adjustment in the city. It was reported by the respondents that major environmental problems had occurred due to uncontrolled and mismanaged urban expansion which lead to dramatic shortages of developed urban land and housing, particularly for the economically weak households. Moreover, respondents reported that expansion of the population and geo-graphical areas had detrimental impact on natural system and upon the quality of life, in particular safe drinking water, fresh air and sanitation.

"A deteriorating urban environment affects on Mass and Nature in a number of areas, lowering productivity, the sense of community, health, safety and ecological integrity. In Calcutta 60% of the residents suffer from respiratory diseases caused by air pollution (WHO, 1988)." In other study conducted by WHO (1988) in China shows that lung cancer mortality is 4.7 times higher in Chinese cities than in the nation as a whole because many cities exceed by several times in the world regarding its population and geo-graphical areas. Focus group discussion with the elderly migrants.

To investigate the problems of the adjustment of the elderly migrants in the urban areas, four focus group discussions were conducted by the researcher at Ghulam Muhammadabad, Muslim town, Peoples Colony No.2 and Nasir colony. Each of the focus group consisted of six men who were 60 years old and above. Most of the elderly participants were engaged in some small scale trading in foodstuffs in mehala/local markets because the monthly household income of this elderly persons group was less than ten thousand. Moreover, the participants reported that they knew many people of their age who lived in this city and came back to settle in their villages, because they were unable to move their company to the city, each of the focus groups provide evidences of links between rural and urban areas. Therefore, migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that show the link among migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through the bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin (Massey, 1988). However, a few (6) participants in the elders' focus group in Ghulam Muhammad abad and Muslim town reported that most elderly migrants who belonged to the upper class did not go back to the village because they were enjoying availing all the urban facilities available to them at their door step. Only ten out of these twenty-four elderly respondents were living with their spouses and the rest of them were living with their children. All these participants reported that the elderly persons were not being well cared for by their families today. The main reason for lack of support for the aged ones was that adult the children had no spare resources to look after their parents because they were busy in economic activities/over business activities in order to provide every type of facilities to their own children. While lack of support from children to parents could be seen as reaction of current economic conditions, it could also be a reflection of changing ideas and ways of living. Majority of the participants suggested that aged parents were not considered a part of their adult children's families, even by their children themselves. Furthermore, they reported that the children did not help their parents much as they

Table-1. Elderly migrants adjustment scenario at Faisalabad city

Migrants Adjustment Problem	No. of Problem	Percentage	Problem	Percentage
Loneliness	111	37	189	63
Income	90	30	210	70
Modern way of life	45	15	255	85
Health cares	120	40	180	60
Noise and Environmental pollution	36	12	264	88

Table-2. Focus group respondents' responses regarding their economic and social Scenario in Faisalabad city

Areas	Percentage	Foodstuffs in mehala	Living with children	Living with spouses
Ghulam Muhammadabad	25 (6)	17%	17% (04)	8% (02)
Muslim town	25 (6)	00	25 (06)	00
Peoples colony No.2	25 (6)	25	8 (02)	17 (04)
Nasir colony	25 (6)	25	8 (02)	17 (04)
Total	100 (24)	67	14	10

showed sympathetic conditions of living in the city, because high cost of living gave children a safe reason for not giving more assistance to the parents. These finding coincides with Litwin (1995) who had examined social networks of the elderly Russian immigrants showed that many of them were suffering from loneliness and receive low social supports from their offspring, while the effect of co-residence with younger family members were rather variable. Another study conducted by Remennick (2001) shows that as a result of resettlement, the elders who are self-sufficient in their daily routine matter become helpless and dependent on their children for daily interaction with host society due to their deteriorating health and misunderstanding of the new social codes. However, modernity delivered the new idea that had curtailed the individual on the nuclear family instead of joint family obligations. This observation related with Hugo (2002) who concluded that the traditional extended family system had changed in to the emotionally nuclear family. This did not refer to the residential arrangements but to the way in which they recognized the obligations in the primary localities by members of the family. In traditional extended family system, primary liabilities were on the shoulder of their parents so that the patriarchal system controls much of the lives of their families, allocates their work tasks, collects all family earnings, decides their marriage partners etc. Thus the transition obligations swing toward one's spouse and children. Thus, a migrants who is struggling for security in the city, recognizes the benefit of giving gifts to his family at home which secures his right and obligation, as well as adheres to

a cultural norms of "supporting one's elder", despite these facts that such gifts are most often minimal. Moreover, in the big cities of the Pakistan, migrants had to face the new social dilemma in which people prefer material values instead of religious and moral values.

POLICY FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Aged population is 7% of the total population (Government of Pakistan, 1998) but this segment of the population is totally ignored. The government should make legislation or approved the law by the parliament with regard to highlight the importance of the elderly people. Furthermore, the government should provide all these facilities to this segment of the population i.e. free medical treatment, reservation of the seats/employment quota in Govt. and private sectors and traveling concession either in railway, buses and air fare.

The Government should establish the old citizen hostel in every district in order to minimize the problems of the elderly people. Moreover, the government should disseminate the idea i.e. to serve the parents is only source to get the relief on the Day of Judgment. Therefore, the people should look after their parents as they look after their children. However, the government should grant the stipends to the old citizens in order to reduce their financial difficulties.

The business/philanthropist communities should come forward to play their dynamic role in this sector and establish the old citizen homes where they should provide every type of facilities (Telephone, TV,

separate room, indoor's games etc.) These facilities may enable them to enjoy the interaction with their grand sons and daughters. This interaction may create affection among them and this affection may force their sons and daughters to bring back their grand fathers and mothers.

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