THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF RURAL MIGRANTS IN CITY SLUMS

Rashda Azhar, Sycda Khizra Aslam & Muhammad Akhtar
Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology,
University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

The living conditions of migrants in their present city slum dwellings have been highlighted in this study. The migrants face many problems at their new destinations and in turn create more problems for the urban areas where they settle down. The aim of the present study was to focus on the socioeconomic conditions of the migrants as to how far they contributed to drag themselves away from their rural origin. The living conditions in the slum settlements wcrc also observed.

INTRODUCTION

There is always a justification in the process of migration. Usually what is encountered is that there is more movement of people from rural to urban area rather than from urban to the rural.. The causes are many, the problems arc many ..When these people come and try to sett le down in urban areas they face many hardships and in due course generate multidimensional problems for the cities too. They usually settle down in slum areas or *'Kachiabadies'* which are clusters of one to two-roomed mud or thatched houses built without planning.

Gillies (1987) observed that these living slum areas particularly in developing countries, provide minimal protection from environmental elements to the poor people who have to live in abject poverty. Clinard (1966) observed that most of the slum dwellers were undernourished and poorly clad. Their houses wc re filthy and congested. They were generally fatalistic and did little to change their Iate and environment.

This study was an attempt to identify the socioeconomic characteristics of rural migrants. Also the settlement pall erns of these residents of *Kachiabadics* and the quality of their living environment were determined.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The universe of this study was the *Kachiabadies* or slums of Faisalabad city. The unit of this study was the family living in these slums. The respondents were either male or female head of the family. This study involved families who had migrated to Faisalabad prior to 1984 and had constructed their houses on untitlcd land in some of the *Kachiabadies.* . The sample consisted of 600 respondents. The data were statistically analysed. Arithmetic means and Chisquare were applied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomlc Characteristics of the Migrants

Age dlstrlbution: The residents (both males and females) of slum areas were mostly young as the mean age for males and females was 37 and 36 years respectively. A small percentage was above 50 years age. It was observed that generally rural migrants moved out at a younger age in order to cope with the problems ahead since thcy had more risk potential. .

Education: The findings showed that the overall percentage of illiterate respondents

was 66 among the urban poor.. The females constituted 87% and the males 45 of the illiterates. The level of education was also low as only 14% of males had education up to Matric level and above, whereas educated females constituted only 1% of the total sample.

Occupation: The data revealed that about 46% of rural migrants were unskilled and 18% were semi-skilled labourers. Of them, only 12% did government jobs, while the rest were doing some petty jobs. The absorption of these migrant workers in the expanding ami diversified occupational structure of the city was related to their low or negligible education and limited skills and resources.

Income: The family income was calculated by adding income of the head of the family (in case of female respondents, income of their husbands was considered) and income of other family members. Income of the female respondents, doing some sort of a gainful job, was also added.

The data revealed that 86% of the families had less than Rs. 1500 income per month. The overall mean income per family was Rs. 1013 per month. An average-sized family consisted of 6.25 persons. Consequently mean income per head was nearly Rs.162.

Size and tYIJe of respondents families: The mean family size was 6.25 persons and the mean number of dependent children per family was 4.9. Majority (53%) of the respondents had large families with seven members or even more. Only 11.33% of them had small families; about 3('(10) of the families had more than four children. A vast majority (71%) of the respondents lived in nuclear families. The value of Chisquare was significant at 0'()5% level. This showed that there was significant relationship between type of family and the phenomenon of migration. This may help to conclude that mi-

gration leads to change in the type of family i.e. from joint to nuclear.. These results also get support from those of Sarfraz (1987). The data showed that majority of the respondents (66%) shifted from joint to nuclear type of families after migration.

Living environment of migrants: Slums or *Kachiabadies* are unorganized settlements mostly inhibited by low income migrants and are a distinctive form of human settlement. . They come into existence independent of public authorities and are outside the formal structure of a city. These unorganized localities with their inhabitants constitute the environment which to a large extent determines the level and pattern of their life. It was seen that these communities lacked basic amenities.

The findings showed that only 3% were legal occupants of their houses. The land generally belonged to Auqaf Department, Municipal Committee and Railways. It was further revealed that 34% had Pucca houses, while the rest had semi-Pacca or Kacha houses. About 80% of these houses had one or two rooms. About two-thirds of the houses did not have a separate bathroom. Only 50% had separate lavotorics. Also 70% of them did not have a kitchen of their own and 94% did not have Suigas facilities. Electricity was available to 80% of such houses but this too mostly involved so many risks such as defective fillings and untested wiring.

The facilities for proper disposal of garbage were mostly not available. Lack of lavotorics forced the slum dwellers to use the open space around. This tended to create a serious problem of sanitation.

Potable water was very short in such localities. More than 60% of the residents depended upon handpump water.. Most of the people brought water from the neighbourhood. Only 18% of the houses had their own taps.

38

About 73% dwellers were reported to have no proper drainage system rather they had so called Kacha drains in their localities. The drains apart from being insufficient were also found to be choked with filthy water and refuse.

The above facts give a bleak picture of the standard of life of the poor slum dwellers. They live in crowded highly sub-standard places where the basic services if at all available, cannot cope with the influx of migrants from rural areas.

REFERENCES

Clinard, M.B. 1966. Slums and community development. . The Free Press, Col her Mancienlan Ltd., London.

Gillies, J. 1987. Light at the End of the Tunnel: Development and Cooperations. Hans, Bocker-Stra Be 50-5300, Bonn 3, Germany.

Sarfraz, A. 1987. Factors affecting economic and social adjustment of rural migrant families with special attention given to women participation in any economic pursuit before and after migration. M.Sc. Thesis, Dcpt. of Rural Sociology, Univ. of Agri., Faisalabad,