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## **Effects of International Migration of The Psychosocial Well Being of The Migrant's Families Left Behind**

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### **Abstract**

People migrate across international borders when they leave their native countries to find a more permanent or semi-permanent area to live. Migrants frequently leave behind better living situations for their family members back home. Migrating has always been a daring method for people to demonstrate their will to overcome adversity and build a brighter future. Globalization and other technological improvements in communication and transportation have made it possible and desirable for an increasing number of people to relocate. Remittances enhance the financial status of families in beneficiary nations, but they also have a substantial impact on individuals who are left behind, according to the data. They face numerous challenges. The fate of the migrant's loved ones after his departure is a critical subject in migration research. The vast majority of migrants are men, who frequently migrate alone, leaving their families behind. Current study will explore the effects of international migration on the family dynamics and their psychosocial well-being. The study was conducted in rural Punjab, Pakistan. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample. At the first stage from rural Punjab, district Sialkot, Jhelum and Faisalabad was selected through purposive sampling technique. At 2<sup>nd</sup> stage three tehsils (one from each district) was selected through purposive sampling. At 3<sup>rd</sup> stage six union councils (two from each tehsil) was selected conveniently. At fourth stage 18 villages (three villages from each union council) was selected purposively where the rate of migration is high. At final stage of sampling procedure 180 households was selected through snowball sampling technique. Interview guide and interview schedule was used as tool for data collection. The collected Data was analysed with the help of SPSS. Findings reveal that Migration can have positive and negative impacts on the social, economic and political factors of both host nations and origin locations. Many family members, particularly spouses and children, experience symptoms of depression and anxiety. Feelings of abandonment, uncertainty about the future, and the burden of additional responsibilities can contribute to mental health struggles. Families may feel emotionally drained as they try to adapt to their new situation, particularly when faced with loneliness, role changes, and new challenges. Families who previously engaged actively with their community may withdraw socially due to increased household responsibilities, limited time, or feelings of loneliness. In conclusion, while migration offers economic benefits, its impact on family dynamics and psychosocial well-being in rural Punjab is complex and multifaceted. Effective support systems, improved access to resources, and community-based interventions are vital to ensuring the well-being and stability of families left behind, enabling them to better cope with the emotional and social impacts of migration.

**Key Words:** Migration, Families, Well Being, Psychology, Mental health

## **INTRODUCTION**

People migrate when they leave one location for another. Migration can happen both domestically and globally. Migration can be seasonal or permanent. There are various causes of migration. These may have an impact on the economy, society, government, or the environment. Migration is influenced by both push and pulls influences. Migrants have an impact on both the host community and the community where they eventually settle. These effects could have both positive and negative features. Some people opt to migrate for a variety of reasons, such as to seek better career opportunities in another country. Forced migration happens when people are displaced due to war or starvation (Démurger, 2015).

Families and individuals opt to migrate for a variety of reasons, including the desire to diversify income streams and lower household spending as labour demand on family land declines. Approximately one billion people worldwide have left their homes to seek meaningful employment in a different country or region. People are migrating to cities and industrialized foreign countries in search of a better quality of life for a variety of reasons, including poverty, unemployment, the harsh effects of climate change, conflict, insecurity, political instability, marital issues, familial tensions, and high expectations among young people. Migration is typically driven by a combination of push and pulls factors, such as war, poverty, and natural catastrophes (Jaquet et al., 2016).

### **1.1 Trends of Migration in Pakistan**

In this context, it is relevant to note that a significant portion of remittances transferred to Pakistan originates from households residing in Punjab. This phenomena has substantial ramifications for rural parts of Punjab, as a considerable portion of the population may be involved in temporary or permanent migration to urban centres or abroad. A significant outcome of migration is the transfer of remittances to one's home country. Remittances serve as the financial conduit linking migrant workers to their family and communities they have left behind. These remittances possess the capacity to effectuate significant change inside households. Furthermore, rural regions frequently encounter economic difficulties, characterised by restricted job prospects and inadequate infrastructural development. Migration functions as a strategy for individuals attempting to evade poverty and unemployment.

The current literature extensively examines the influence of home country conditions on the happiness of expatriates (Akay et al., 2014b), the effects of migration on migrants' subjective well-being (Nikolova and Graham, 2015), and the impact of subjective well-being on migration decisions (Cai et al., 2014). Certain scholars have focused their research on the effects of migration on the family members who remain in the place of origin (Böhme et al., 2015).

## **1.2 Causes of Migration: Push Pull Trajectories**

A comprehensive account of this narrative is available under the push-pull parts. "Push factors" are circumstances in one's house that compel someone to depart. Pull factors are elements that entice individuals to a specific region. Push reasons for migration including extreme weather conditions, such as droughts, which can adversely impact agriculture. Absence of economic or social options (employment, education).

Absence of safety (conflict, risk to life, persecution) (Thapa et al., 2019)  
Migration pull considerations encompass enhanced employment or economic prospects (income, skills).

Unlike most existing frameworks and theories, Timmerman et al. (2010) concurrently address origin and destination factors and their influence on migration ambitions. Employing the three tiers of influencing factors, they construct an appropriate framework for the various study perspectives present in migration studies and associated disciplines. I permit interactions among the various determinants at each level. This concept is applicable to all types of migration, encompassing both forced and voluntary movements. A compelling future study inquiry may focus on the hierarchy of determinants, which remains established.

International migration is driven by a combination of economic, social, political, environmental, and demographic factors. Here are some primary causes:  
**Job Opportunities and Higher Wages:** Economic migration is a significant driver, with people moving to countries offering better employment prospects, higher wages, and stable economies. **Poverty and Limited Opportunities at Home:** In countries with high unemployment rates, low wages, and limited opportunities for economic advancement, people may migrate in search of better prospects abroad (Bein, et al, 2014).

**Political Instability and Conflict:** Political crises, wars, and armed conflicts force people to leave conflict zones to seek safety in more stable regions. This includes refugees and

asylum seekers. Persecution and Discrimination: Individuals facing persecution based on race, religion, gender, or political beliefs often migrate to escape oppression and find more accepting communities. Family Reunification: Family ties and policies that support reunification encourage migration, as people seek to join family members who have already migrated (Anita, 2022).

Higher Education: Many students migrate to pursue higher education and skills training not available in their home countries, often settling abroad after graduation. Skill-Based Migration Policies: Countries with skill shortages offer incentives and visas to attract skilled workers, motivating people to migrate for professional advancement. Access to Healthcare: People sometimes migrate to access healthcare or quality-of-life improvements that may not be accessible in their home country. Safety and Security: Safety concerns, such as high crime rates or gang violence, can motivate people to leave for more peaceful and secure environments (Black et al, 2011).

Youth and Overpopulation in Sending Countries: Rapid population growth in some countries leads to a surplus of young, working-age people who migrate in search of jobs. Aging Populations in Receiving Countries: Countries with aging populations and low birth rates often encourage immigration to balance demographic shifts and support labor markets. Improved Transportation and Communication: Advances in transportation and communication have made migration more feasible and less costly, allowing people to consider opportunities abroad. Cultural Influence and Networks: Migration is often encouraged by established diaspora communities that provide social networks, reducing risks and uncertainty for new migrants. These causes often interact, as individuals may be influenced by multiple factors at once. The interconnected nature of these factors illustrates the complexity of migration decisions and the wide range of reasons people choose or are forced to migrate internationally (Castles and Miller, 2009).

### **1.3Significance**

The increasing influx of migrants in rural Punjab presents a complex set of challenges pertaining to psychosocial well-being and family dynamics. However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific issues faced by migrants and their families in this context. Limited access to mental health services, social isolation, cultural adaptation conflicts, economic hardships, and gender-specific issues emerge as prominent

concerns that affect their overall integration and well-being. Thus, a systematic analysis of the psychosocial well-being and family dynamics of migrants and their families in rural Punjab is necessary to identify and address these challenges effectively.

This research seeks to bridge knowledge gaps on migration literature in rural Punjab, offering insights into factors affecting their psychosocial well-being and family dynamics. The goal is to inform tailored interventions for enhanced integration and well-being of left-behind families of international migrants.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

- To examine the family dynamics and family structure of migrant families in rural Punjab, Pakistan
- To investigate the effects of remittances on the psychosocial well-being of international migrant's families
- To examine the role of social support networks in mitigating the psychosocial challenges being faced by migrant families

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Looking at the different methods that were used in this study to explain the different aspects and strategies is seen as a huge task in sociology research because it tries to explain the different aspects and strategies. Modern sociologists use forward-thinking methods and cutting-edge study methods to do their work. Researchers in the social sciences do the same thing today. Researchers in the social sciences are now using better computer systems and smart methods in their work. The logical method that was used has a direct effect on the validity, reliability, and accuracy of an exploratory examination. This part or chapter is all about the method for collecting information, analyzing and processing data, and managing information. This chapter talks about research paradigms, triangulation and integrated research strategies, target populations, study locations, estimating sample sizes, sampling methods, data collection tools, and strategies for analyzing and showing data. The part also talks about the study's purpose, its geographical reach, its sampling method, how to estimate the sample size, and the tools used to collect data.

The study was conducted in rural Punjab, Pakistan. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample. At the first stage from rural Punjab, district Sialkot, Jehlum and Faisalabad were selected through purposive sampling technique. At 2<sup>nd</sup> stage three

tehsils (one from each district) was selected through purposive sampling. At 3<sup>rd</sup> stage six union councils (two from each tehsil) was selected purposively. At fourth stage 18 villages (three villages from each union council) was selected purposively where the rate of migration is high. At final stage a sample of 180 respondents were selected purposively. Data was collected with the help of interview schedule. Collected data was analyzed through SPSS. Chi-square and gamma test was applied to check the relationship between variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The main elements of the study are the interpretation and analysis of data. The objective of scientific inquiry is to achieve generalization and prediction, which cannot be realized without these stages. Inferences and generalizations are derived from the characteristics and perspectives of the respondents. Data interpretation and analysis constitute the two most critical elements of research. Scientific inquiry cannot fulfill its goals of generalization and prediction without these techniques. Broad assumptions and generalizations can be drawn from the responses provided by the survey participants. Bivariate analysis is predicated on the relationship between two variables. The first variable is a response variable, whereas the second is an explanatory variable. The Chi-Square test is effective for identifying correlations between two variables. Gamma statistics are utilized to illustrate the nature and magnitude of the link between two variables. This association may be either significant or insignificant, according upon the facts presented.

**Hypothesis 1: Higher household income from migration, higher will be the psychosocial well-being**

**Table 1: Connection between household income and psychosocial well-being**

| Income (Rs.) | Psychosocial well-being |                |            | Total |
|--------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------|-------|
|              | To Great extent         | To Some extent | Not at all |       |
| Up to 30000  | 15                      | 8              | 9          | 32    |
|              | 8.3%                    | 4.4%           | 5.0%       | 17.7% |

|              |       |       |       |        |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 30001-70000  | 35    | 10    | 9     | 54     |
|              | 19.4% | 5.5%  | 5.0%  | 30.0%  |
| 70001-100000 | 23    | 21    | 8     | 52     |
|              | 12.7% | 11.6% | 4.4%  | 28.8%  |
| 100001+      | 29    | 7     | 6     | 42     |
|              | 16.1% | 3.8%  | 3.3%  | 23.3%  |
| Total        | 102   | 46    | 32    | 180    |
|              | 56.6% | 25.5% | 17.7% | 100.0% |

| Test       | Value  | D. F. | P. Value |
|------------|--------|-------|----------|
| Chi-Square | 180.34 | 6     | 0.000**  |
| Gamma      | 0.543  | --    | 0.000**  |

The relationship between household income and the state's socioeconomic progress is explained in Table 1. The chi-square score of 180.34 indicates a highly significant correlation between the variables. The gamma value (0.543) indicates a significant positive correlation between the variables and characterizes their intensity. This suggests that migration can provide families with improved healthcare opportunities. Concerning property purchases, the responses were mixed, with 50% agreeing that migration led to an increase, while 22.2% saw no change, and 27.8% reported a decrease. This indicates variability in how migration affects housing investments. the findings emphasized that international migration is generally perceived as having a positive impact on economic conditions, particularly in terms of income, housing, and social status, while also highlighting concerns regarding increased debt levels. Results coincide with previous researchers that claims that migrants often send money back to support their families, leading to better living conditions, improved educational opportunities, and greater financial security. However, this can also create financial dependency, potentially making family members reliant on remittances. When families rely on remittances, younger family members may feel pressured to follow in the footsteps of the initial migrant to continue the financial support (Adams and Page, 2005).

According to Sadaf et al. (2010), migration affects not just the migrant population, but also the host communities and economy. Their research revealed a positive relationship



between migration and the socioeconomic security of rural families' remaining members. Following their spouses' migration, 76.7% of the women in the research region reported being satisfied with their financial condition. According to the findings, sixty-0.8 percent of women felt socially protected after their partners died. On the other hand, things appeared to be going poorly. Following the migrants' departure, the majority of spouses and children mentioned loneliness as their primary concern. The children also expressed emotions of inadequacy, a lack of direction, and fatherly affection. Some have called for the development of government-run counseling clinics to help displaced families, particularly those with children. It is critical to give migrant women the opportunity to improve their education and skills so that they can face obstacles on their own. To address the concerns of migrating children, parents and educators should plan regular meetings.

According to Siddique (2012), who investigated migration in a socio demographic context, people move from rural to urban areas because the former provides better economic opportunities and the latter meets more social and material demands.

Although Sangita (2013) discovered a positive connection between migration, debut and trade, she claimed that this correlation should be interpreted as having a causal influence, and she emphasized that macro-level study did not demonstrate that migration causes trade.

**Hypothesis 2: Higher the communication with the migrants, higher will be psychosocial well-being**

**Table 2: Association between communication with the migrants and psychosocial well-being**

| Communication with the migrant | Psychosocial well-being |                |            | Total |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------|-------|
|                                | To Great extent         | To Some extent | Not at all |       |
| To great extent                | 17                      | 15             | 10         | 42    |
|                                | 9.4%                    | 8.3%           | 5.5%       | 23.3% |
| To some extent                 | 19                      | 14             | 16         | 49    |
|                                | 10.5%                   | 7.7%           | 8.8%       | 27.2% |
| Not at all                     | 45                      | 25             | 19         | 89    |

|       |       |       |       |        |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
|       | 25.0% | 8.3%  | 10.5% | 49.4%  |
| Total | 81    | 54    | 45    | 180    |
|       | 45.0% | 30.0% | 25.0% | 100.0% |

| Test       | Value  | D. F. | P. Value |
|------------|--------|-------|----------|
| Chi-Square | 214.11 | 4     | 0.000**  |
| Gamma      | 0.720  | --    | 0.000**  |

The relationship between communication level with the migrants and psychosocial well-being is shown in Table 2. It is evident from the chi-square value (214.17) that there is a strong correlation between the two variables. The strong positive association between the explanatory and explained variables is demonstrated by the gamma (0.720). As a result, it is acknowledged that communication level with the migrants and psychosocial well-being are dependent on one another, and the null hypothesis that communication level with the migrants and psychosocial well-being are independent of one another is rejected. Results matched with Anita (2022) who concluded that Communication intensity with international migrants refers to the frequency, quality, and nature of interactions that people or organizations have with migrants who reside in different countries. This intensity can vary depending on the type of relationship (family, friend, work, or institutional support), available communication tools, cultural contexts, and each person's purpose or need for interaction. In this age of Information and communication technologies (ICTs) migrants and family had a daily interaction with each other that helpful in maintaining of bound. Pakistani families left behind have numerous choices for regularly using social media. According to the information in of people browse social media sites using their phones and connect with their family members who are migrated through Whatsapp, Zoom and Social networking sites. Due to youth in Pakistani society's extensive cell phone use, this was made possible (Mahmood et al., 2013; 2015). Because Wi-Fi was available on campuses and there were affordable internet packages available to mobile phone users in Pakistan, they used their mobile phones to access migrants. Laptops have been given to graduate and undergraduate students in Pakistan under this programme, both in the public and commercial sectors (Ahmad and Sheikh, 2013).

**Hypothesis 3: Psychosocial well-being is the function of economic benefits that sent back from the migrants**

**Table 4.30: Association between economic opportunities and psychosocial well-being**

| Economic opportunities | Psychosocial well-being |                |            | Total  |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------|--------|
|                        | To Great extent         | To Some extent | Not at all |        |
| To great extent        | 20                      | 12             | 10         | 42     |
|                        | 11.1%                   | 6.6%           | 5.5%       | 23.3%  |
| To some extent         | 19                      | 14             | 16         | 49     |
|                        | 10.5%                   | 7.7%           | 8.8%       | 27.2%  |
| Not at all             | 45                      | 25             | 19         | 89     |
|                        | 25.0%                   | 8.3%           | 10.5%      | 49.4%  |
| Total                  | 84                      | 51             | 45         | 180    |
|                        | 46.6%                   | 28.3%          | 25.0%      | 100.0% |

| Test       | Value  | D. F. | P. Value |
|------------|--------|-------|----------|
| Chi-Square | 219.12 | 4     | 0.000**  |
| Gamma      | 0.632  | --    | 0.000**  |

The relationship between the creation of economic opportunities and psychosocial well-being is seen in Table 30. The extremely large relationship between the creation of economic opportunities and psychosocial well-being is shown by the chi-square (219.12). On the other hand, the gamma (0.632) indicates a high positive correlation between the variables. Consequently, the connection between economic opportunities and psychosocial well-being progress is acknowledged, and the assumption that the two processes are unrelated is discarded. Chuc et al., (2022) illustrated those remittances as the major source of income for growing economies and it even surpasses foreign direct investment for these countries. Remittances are more stable than various economic aids and can exceed the national foreign reserves in many under-developed and developing countries like the countries in South Asia including China, India, Pakistan, Philippines, and Bangladesh. Cai and Wang, (2021) articulated that remittances yield an effective role in the lives of the left behind parents in China. This study was unique because it postulated that remittances matter and it was not considered in earlier research. It has been noted that China has observed the most substantial migration during the last few

years. These migrants' parents are living in rural settlements and the infrastructure in all terms is not satisfactory in these areas. The results of the migration have been varying on the one hand the emotional support would happen to be negative for the health issues of the elderly left behind. Meanwhile, the migrants share a substantial portion of their earnings in their homes and they would provide ease to the family who is left behind. This is the first study that has taken it into consideration; the extent of the migrant's remittances can be detrimental to the parent's health owing to the migration. The economic benefits of migration lead them to decide same for the children in future for sustainable family development (Ma et al., 2022).

## **Conclusions**

The analysis of family dynamics and psychosocial well-being among international migrant families in rural Punjab, Pakistan, reveals both positive and challenging impacts of migration on the lives of families left behind. While migration often enhances financial stability through remittances, it also significantly alters family structures, roles, and emotional well-being. Families left behind frequently experience emotional strain, loneliness, and stress due to prolonged separation from the migrant. Children, in particular, may feel a sense of abandonment and experience behavioral and academic challenges, while spouses often struggle with loneliness and the pressures of single-handedly managing the household.

Migration has clear psychosocial impacts on mental health, with family members often facing anxiety, depression, and stress. The absence of mental health resources in rural areas compounds these issues, leaving many families to cope without professional support. The mental health impact is particularly significant for women and children, who are often the most affected by the migrant's absence.

In conclusion, while migration offers economic benefits, its impact on family dynamics and psychosocial well-being in rural Punjab is complex and multifaceted. Effective support systems, improved access to resources, and community-based interventions are vital to ensuring the well-being and stability of families left behind, enabling them to better cope with the emotional and social impacts of migration.

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