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Rural-Urban Migration: Causes Challenges and Social Transformations

ABSTRACT

Migration involves a number of social, economic and cultural changes. This study was conducted to explore the social changes associated with migration including changes in social norms of individuals. The study also examined the causes of rural-urban migration and the problems faced by migrants after migration. This research was conducted under a quantitative research design by using systematic sampling technique. The population for the study constituted of 63 heads of the family. The findings indicate that the major push factors for rural-urban migration were identified as lack of educational and health facilities and lack of employment opportunities while the pull factors were search for better employment and educational opportunities. Some of the problems encountered by the respondents included; getting adjusted in the new culture and environment, bearing higher

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costs of living and problems in findings employment. The findings highlight change in social norms of migrants including; change in verbal communication and speaking style, eating habits, dressing patterns and religious practices of individuals. These findings illustrate that migration has implications for social transformation of societies.

Key words: Migration, Change, Social norms, Problems

Introduction

Migration involves the movement of people from one geographical area to another, for either permanent or temporary settlement (Anderson, 2006; Gautam, 2005). The rate of migration has increased remarkably in the last few decades. Academic literature on migration argues that rural urban migration has resulted in surplus labor in the urban centers and has also increased unemployment thus causing problems for the urban areas (Harris & Todaro, 1970).

There are many ways to examine the causes of migration and the recent trends in migration. Studies on migration may be categorized in accordance with the causes of migration; the education level and social class of the migrating individuals, the kind of geographical location and the duration of migration among others. As far as the causes of migration are involved it has been reported that people migrate for either to escape lack of facilitates in the area of origin or in search for opportunities in urban centers (Gautam, 2008).

The process of migration is reported to occur in three stages. The first stage is pre-migration where decisions regarding migration are made. During the second phase the actual migration takes place and the final stage also called

post migration, is the phase where the migrants fully absorb in the new geographical area. It is in this stage where social and cultural transformations are likely to take place (Lucas, 2005).

Importantly migration is believed to have led to social transformation across the world. Migration may involve changes in the economic and other social roles associated with family members, changes in the social norms and culture. These changes include change in religion, clothing, ceremonies, sexual habits, etc (Anderson, 2006). Such transformations are related with the change in identity of individuals. Other changes have been reported to be change in attitudes, values, social structures and support networks (Diener et al, 2013).

In the context of Pakistan migration has been an ongoing process since the independence of the country in 1947. A large number of people migrated from India to Pakistan after independence. Since then migration has taken many shapes and forms. Rural-urban migration takes place steadily which has reshaped cities and expanded them. Data from 1998 census indicate that Sindh is the most urbanized province in the country with 49 percent of the population living in urban centers. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa only 17 percent of the entire population lives in urban areas making it the least urbanized province in the country. The urban populations in Punjab and Baluchistan according to 1998 were 31 and 23 percent respectively (Zhang et al, 2003).

The aim of this study was to investigate the causes of migration, the challenges encountered by migrants after migration and the resultant social transformations. The focus on social transformation is important because over the last few decades we have witnessed enormous change in how

individuals experience change as a consequence of their temporary or permanent migration to urban areas. Change has been experienced in the way we live and the way we think about ourselves and how we are related to one another. The findings of the study are expected to offer contribution at policy and planning level.

Hypotheses

H1: Lack of basic facilities in rural areas and need for educational/employment opportunities lead to rural-urban migration

H 2: Migrants face problems in urban centers

H 3: Rural-urban migration leads to change in social norms

Review of Literature

The causes for rural-urban migration are manifold. Expectations for improved employment and educational opportunities, political and social stability and lack of facilities in the regions of origin are some of the factors which force people to migrate (Fargues, 2006). Academic research has highlighted that an important pull factor for rural urban migration has been the industrial revolution as a result of which people have shifted from agricultural work to factory work (Jong, 2002).

In many cases of migration economic gain and the differences between rural and urban earning has been the major motivating factor for migration (Harris & Todaro, 1970). It has been argued that the three important factors are involved in transforming the migrating individuals. These

include the period of time spent in the urban area by the migrants, the access to employment, and the kind of wages offered to the migrants (Reyneri, 2011).

Empirical studies have demonstrated that besides differences in wages, better educational and employment opportunities another important factor to affect people's decision to migrate is life (dis)satisfaction (Harris & Todaro, 1970). Hence, an ultimate purpose of migration for migrant families is to be able to get satisfaction and this they got from different sources. At times it happens that the expectations of migrants are different from what they actually encounter in the urban areas which often leads to lower level of satisfaction (Bartram, 2011; Grajam, 2011; Schündeln and Fuchs-Schündeln, 2009). Hence, migration does not always meet the expectations of the migrant families. Research also indicates that the increasing urbanization as a result of migration leads to dependency for basic necessities (Andren, 2014).

Academic research shows that the increasing rate of migration in the urban centers leads to insufficient employment opportunities for the migrants (Jong, 2002). Although the first priority of migrant workers has always been work in the formal economy many have no choice but to be self-employed and many end up remaining unemployed (Svaton, 2008). It has been reported that rural-urban migration effects urban housing since more space is required for the incoming migrants. The increasing rate of construction leads to overcrowding and slums. Consequently urban settlements have to experience the problems of poverty and poor sanitation facilities (Lucas, 2005; Tavits, 2008). The increasing rate of population also reduces the quality of life. It deteriorates resources; because more water is needed to serve the needs of

the arriving population and more forests are degraded to meet the needs. Rural-urban migration is also believed to lead to problems like overpopulation, which also lead to higher crimes rates in the urban areas (Taylor et al, 2001; Zhang, 2003). In addition other social problems associated with the rapid urbanization as a result of migration include the traffic problems and increased anxiety which leads to mental health disorders (Gautam, 2008; Portes, 2001).

It has been found that migration significantly affects the population size of the places of origin as well as the places of destination. As the rate of rural-urban migration increases the populations of rural areas tend to reduce while that of urban areas increases in population. Since the migrating population often includes people in their reproductive ages the rural areas are left with older people with low fertility rates. Similarly, in the urban areas it results rejuvenation of the population structure since the migrants are younger than the resident population (Polachek, 2012).

Importantly, research indicates that migration plays a key role in transforming social norms. It creates a space where individuals from both the destination and origin can interact and learn from one another openly. Consequently, societies experience changes related change in social structures, identities, attitudes, norms and practices. Hence, migrants mobilize social and cultural exchanges between societies (Bertinelli, 2004). The implications of migration including change in structure of family and gender dynamics affect women more than they do men. At times it has believed to lead to women's empowerment especially where the male members are the ones to migrate alone leaving women behind (Rooth, 2007). Hence migration plays a significant role in the process of social change. It enriches

the economic as well as the social, cultural and political aspects of human lives. This is equally true for both the source of destination and origin.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Irfanabad in Islamabad by using quantitative research design. The reason for selecting the selected area was considering the large number of migrants in this area. Islamabad in general is considered as one of the greatest centers for migrants. According to an estimate the population of Islamabad including its surrounding territory has increased up to 2 million. Islamabad continues to attract people from different parts of Pakistan.

The total population of Irfanabad is 1,510. Data was collected through researcher administered survey method and transformed into numbers which were empirically tested to explore relationship between the variables (Neuman, 2005). In current study systematic sampling technique was used. In a probability-based random sampling every member of the population is likely to have a known non-zero chance of being selected (Mara & Landesmann, 2013). In systematic sampling every k^{th} element in the frame has the chance to be selected. The sampling interval is calculated as:

$$k = \frac{N}{n}$$

The individuals/households were chosen at regular intervals from the sampling frame (Gabriel et al, 1993). Out of the entire population the target population of current study was 63 heads of the families. Fifteen questionnaires were pretested at the initial stage of the research (Liebig, 2006).

The data was coded and the analysis was performed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Muchowiecka, 2013).

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1
General Information about the Respondents

Categories	Percentage	Categories	Percentage
Age		Employment	
20-30	35	Government employees	37
31-40	39	Private jobs	36
41-50	26	Own business	27
Monthly income		Education	
20,000-30,000	30	Primary	8
31,000-40,000	22	Secondary school	11
41,000-50,000	23	Higher secondary	16
51,000-60,000	25	Graduation	65

Source; survey

According the findings of this study 35% respondents were between the age group of 20 to 30, 39% respondents were between the ages of 31 to 40, the respondent between the age group of 41 to 50 were 26%. The monthly income of 30% respondents was between 20,000 to 30,000 rupees that of 22% respondents was 31,000 to 40,000, for 23% respondents it was between 41,000 to 50,000 and for 25%, the income was between 51,000 to 60,000. As far as education was concerned according to the data 8% respondents were those who had attained only primary

education, 11% respondent had attained education till secondary school and 16% respondents had passed higher secondary school and 65% respondents were graduates. In terms of occupation, 37% respondents were government employees and 36% (including 3% women) were doing private jobs, 27% respondents had their own business.

Since the target population was the heads of household the majority of the respondents 97% were male. The female respondents were 3% and they were accompanied by either an elder son or close relative during the time when the survey questionnaire was filled.

Table 2
Causes of Migration

Causes of migration	Percentage
Unemployment	20
Lack of educational facilities	18
Lack of health facilities	13
Better employment opportunities	27
Better educational facilities	22

Source: survey

The majority of the respondents reported that they had migrated to Islamabad more than a decade ago. The source of origin of the majority of the respondents was Khyber Pakhtunkwa including, Charsada, Swabi, Dir, Batkhela and Hazara. Some of the migrants were also from FATA and Gilgit-Baltistan. Table 2 shows that according to 20%, 13% and 18% respondents the major push factors for rural-urban migration were unemployment, lack of health facilities and lack of educational facilities respectively. While 22% and 27%

respondents reported better educational and employment opportunities were the major pull factors for rural-urban migration.

The findings are also in consistent with the previous literature where the major causes of rural-urban migration have been identified as; search for better wages, education, political and social stability, better technologies, employment and business opportunities (Fargues, 2006). In terms of problems faced by the respondents in this study the majority of the respondents 71% agreed that they had faced problems because of migration.

Table 3 highlights the different kinds of problems faced by migrants after migration. According to the findings the major problems faced by the respondents included housing (11%), finding employment (30%), getting adjusted within the new culture/environment (32%), higher costs of living (24%) and socializing/making friends (3%). These findings confirm previous studies where it has been found that due to migration people face many problems such as poverty, poor sanitation, unemployment and high crime rates (Turan, 2002).

Table 3
Problems Faced by Migrants

Kinds of problems	Percent
Problem regarding housing	11
Problem in socialization/making friends	3
Problem in findings employment	30
Getting adjust within a new culture/environment	32
Higher cost of living	24

Source: survey

Since the search for employment is one of the major reasons for migration the respondents were asked if migration had increased their job opportunities in the city. Despite the fact that finding employment was reported to be challenging as shown above the data (table 4) shows that 55% respondents stated that job opportunities had increased to some extent, while 35% respondents stated that job opportunities had increased to great extent. 10% respondents stated that after migration job opportunities had not increased.

According to the data 98% respondents agreed that they had gained better education facilities in urban areas. Among these 44% respondents were satisfied with the educational facilities to some extent while 54% respondents were satisfied to great extent. Only 2% were not satisfied with the educational facilities.

The respondents 97% also reported satisfaction over health facilities over a period of time. Among these 41% were satisfied from the health facilities to some extent while 56% were satisfied to a great extent. 3% respondents were not satisfied from the health facilities.

In this study 89% respondents were satisfied about their current housing. Out of these 57% were satisfied to some extent and 32% were satisfied to a great extent. 11% were not satisfied from the housing facilities. Empirical research has shown that migrants decide to move to urban areas not only with an expectation of higher earnings and better job opportunities but also an improved standard of living (Otrachshenko & Popova, 2014). The fact that the majority of the respondents had access to appropriate housing in this

study was reported to be a blessing which they attributed to their hard work and determination.

Table 4
Satisfaction with the Facilities in Urban Areas

Categories	Not Satisfied %	Satisfied to some extent %	Satisfied to a great extent %
Educational facilities	2	44	54
Employment opportunities	10	55	35
Health facilities	3	41	56
Housing	11	57	32

Source: survey

For the respondents who showed their concerns about the educational, employment, housing and health facilities the major reasons for their dissatisfaction was reported to be financial resources which provided hindrance to access appropriate facilities. Though the numbers who were dissatisfied were low in this study yet in general the reasons for dissatisfaction have been reported to emerge as a result unrealistic expectations about the quality of life in the host country. Anderson et al., (2006) investigated employment experiences of migrants from Central and Eastern European countries who reached the UK immediately before and after the 2004 enlargement. It was found that despite being highly qualified migrants did not accept low wage jobs. In addition, competencies of employees and the qualifications required for employment also matter in finding appropriate jobs for migrants (O'Reilly, 2015).

The findings of this study highlight that change in social norms was clearly evident among the respondents. This has implications that migration leads to social transformations in societies. The data shows that 91% respondents reported change in eating patterns. Change in religious practices was also reported. According to data 67 % respondents stated that their religious practices had changed. While 33% respondents reported that after migration their religious practices had not changed.

Previous literature has established that change and shift in language may be accelerated as a result of migration (Kerswill, 2006). The data from this study also highlight that 94% respondent agreed that after migration their speaking style and use of language had changed and only 6% respondent did not agree with this statement.

Table 5 indicates that 58% respondents reported the use of western dresses (jeans, shirts) while 10% respondents stated to use designer's brand and 12% reported to adopt dresses according to recent trends. The majority of these respondents were from Hazara and Gilgit Baltistan. They reported that they had started using the western dresses largely after migration. The main reason for change in dressing was reported to be pressure from peer, demand from office, and to have a sense of inclusion in the new place. Respondents from FATA reported that for them it was hard to change the dressing pattern. Though they responded to the need to the new society but acknowledged to be reluctant to let go of their cultural practices so easily.

Table 5
Change in Social Norms

Categories	Percentage	Categories	Percentage
Dressing patterns		Verbal communication & speaking style	
Use western dresses (jeans, shirts)	58	Learnt multiple languages	12
Use Traditional dresses	20	Speak Urdu fluently	32
Use designer/branded clothes	10	Speak English fluently	48
Use dressing according to recent trends	12	Speak in different accent	8
Eating habits		Religious practices	
Eat traditional dishes outside home	34	Often skip prayers/do not recite Quran	67
Cook/eat different dishes at home	54	Started to go to mosque more often	28
Started using fast food	12	Participate in Dars	5

Source: survey

In this study 20% respondents acknowledged that they still preferred traditional dresses because they did not feel comfortable in modern dresses. As far as the 3% women head of families were concerned 2% reported that they had started using abaya because they worked in private sector. They also reported to prefer the same for their daughters. One woman head of family reported to use modern dresses largely because of demand from her workplace.

In terms of eating habits, 34% respondents stated that after migration they had started eating traditional dishes outside home while 12% reported to have started eating fast food. They reported to eat fast food quite often at least once or twice a week. 54% respondents reported that they had started to cook/eat different dishes at home.

Change in verbal communication and speaking style was also reported by the respondents. Here 12% respondents were of the view that they had learnt multiple languages in the new city. 32% reported that they had started speaking Urdu more fluently. Urdu was not the first language of any of the respondent. 48% respondents reported that they had started to speak in English more fluently. 8% respondents reported to be using different accent for speaking both in English and Urdu.

Finally, change in religious practices was evident from the data which can be attributed to migration. According to data 67% respondents stated that they often skipped prayers and 28% respondents reported that they had started to go to mosque more often. While 5% respondents stated that they had started to participate in Dars. This indicates that migration had changed the religious practices of the individuals in two different ways i.e. they had either become religious or they had tended to become secular. 33% had become more religious which they attributed to the need to be closer to their religion and to maintain a sense of identity. The 5% respondents who had started going to dars stated that it was largely to keep a balance between the modern world where they were living and the religious demands. Among these 3% were women and 2% were men. The ones who reported to be secular attributed it largely to the

pressure from work and family and long working hours where they found it hard to practice religion as a priority.

Conclusions

The findings of this study highlight that the push factors were identified as lack of health and educational facilities and unemployment while the pull factors were better employment and educational facilities. Despite the fact that the major purpose of migration was the desire for a better quality of living the migrants reported to encounter problems in the urban centers as well. Some of the challenges in the urban centers were reported to include problems regarding housing, socialization, high cost of living finding employment opportunities.

Though the respondents seemed to be satisfied with the educational facilities a large number remained unsatisfied in terms of employment opportunities. This indicates that migration in itself is not a solution to problems often it leads to other problems both for the individual as well as for the state which has to accommodate the needs of the residents as a result of overflow of people from rural to urban areas. Since the individuals who migrate belong to different socio cultural and socio economic backgrounds the interaction of different ethnic groups in a new space also leads to change in identity and as evidenced by this study changes in social norms. This was attributed to the demand for being modern in the urban center in the form of peer pressure and demand from workplace.

As a consequence change was experienced in language and speaking style, eating habits and religious practices. Nevertheless, the fact that some people preferred to

maintain their identity i.e. by wearing traditional dresses, by eating traditional dishes and by practicing religious shows that individuals transform differently in new spaces. Hence, the research highlighted that migration plays a major role in changing the social and cultural experiences of migrants. These findings have implications that migration leads to social transformations in societies.

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