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**Repercussions of Rural to Urban Migration on Male Senior Citizens  
in Punjab, Pakistan: A Phenomenological Analysis**

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**Abstract:**

National and international migration of youth is a persistent phenomenon that appears as a quest for economic and social development. But when the senior citizens of the family accompany migration, it takes a new dimension that increases their problems. Rural to urban migration as internal migration is a historical tradition of Pakistan but can affect male senior citizens of the family. By finding the said phenomenon as gap in the literature review, this article aims to examine the socio-cultural repercussions of rural-urban migration on male senior citizens in Punjab. Under multi stage sampling, firstly, three districts of Punjab, namely Multan, Lahore, and Rawalpindi were selected purposively; secondly, male senior citizens were interviewed by using volunteer sampling technique. The respondents included the aged male migrants who had migrated in the urban area only before one or less than one year and belonged to the age group of 65 to 74. Respondents were contacted and approached at public places like public parks, restaurants, and hospitals. For data collection, a structured interview guide was developed, which was based on Creswell's model of data collection for qualitative research and constructed central question, sub-questions and core questions for collecting the data until data was saturated after interviewing 27 respondents. Finally, significant themes were derived to be presented as a result and discussion. "I am in a new world, identity crisis and cultural variation and cultural pluralism" emerged as major themes. It was concluded that government is least interested in dealing with the problems of senior citizens whether they are in rural areas or urban areas. There is no social policy for senior citizens that deal with their problem identification and their solution. In this scenario, migration increases their problems regarding cultural variation and identity crisis. So it is recommended that government might address the issues generated as a result of internal migration and also address the problems of senior citizens through the promulgation of social policies in the province.

**Key Words:** Migration, rural to urban migration, senior citizens, identity crises, cultural variation and cultural pluralism.

**INTRODUCTION**

Migration is one of the fundamental demographic components determining the inhabitant's growth and structure in an area. Migration is generally considered a deliberate move by human beings. Thus, it's a result of the social, economic, political, and cultural circumstances to which human

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beings are exposed to their societies. It crosses a limit of a predefined spatial unit by at least one person engaged with a difference in residence (International Organization for Migration, 2020). Human history witnessed that humans had been involved in the process of internal and external migration. Migration is a persistent phenomenon that appears as a result of economic, social, and cultural perspectives.

Migration encompasses a comprehensive arrangement of expansions and surroundings, including persons of erratic upbringings and practicalities. Migration is interlaced with geo-political, social, and economic factors providing chances to get benefits enormously (International Organization for Migration, 2018).

Migration has improved people's lives and has offered an open door for some people worldwide to mold secured and critical lives other than their local spots. National and worldwide Migration is ordinarily seen over the globe. The current overall gauge is that there were around 244 million widespread migrants in the world in 2015, which analyzes to 3.3% of the overall population (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016).

Like the other developing countries, the principal source of national income of Pakistan is land and agriculture. One of the important factors responsible for migration from rural to urban areas is the availability of well-cultivable land; thus, cities act as a host of attractions that acts as a pulling force for the migrants. Migration for employment might be rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to rural, or urban to urban. Imbalanced growth both over time and space may cause any of the above mentioned migration. However, in the case of spatial or sectoral unbalanced growth, one of these types might dominate the other. Factors responsible for unbalanced growth could be the availability of more jobs, higher income and greater vertical occupational mobility in one sector (Ma, L et al., 2019).

In short, Migration is a result of uneven distribution of opportunities. People migrate from areas with fewer opportunities and safety to areas with more opportunities and safety. The migration of individuals has both pros and cons for both the areas, before and after migration. Consequences can be accounted for in social, economic, cultural, political, and demographic terms. Social Consequences: Migration is an essential symptom of social change (World Economic Forum, 2017).

Citizens always move towards the ample facilities due to pulling factors that appeal to them for a better life, and Pakistan is not an exception in this regard. Primary historical years of Pakistan are witnessed with one of the largest world migration that continued in the different decades across the bordering countries. Similarly, internal migration has remained continuous in the last seven decades in Pakistan. Urban to rural migration is a constant process in the country which brings notable demographic changes. The estimated population of Pakistan was 5 million in 1947. With a regular increase, it raised to 23.84 million in 1981 and 42.44 million in 1998. During these decades, 55% of the total population increase was observed; however urban and rural populations increased by 60% and 40%, respectively (Government of Pakistan, 1998) and reached 215.25 million (Government of Pakistan, 2021).

Apart from the statistical demographic increase, there are some repercussions of rural-urban migration on the family institution, especially the senior citizens of a family who migrate with their young ones. Human migration influences the population patterns, including the attributes which

deal with social and cultural patterns and procedures, financial aspects, and physical conditions. As individuals move, their cultural attributes and thoughts diffuse alongside them, creating and altering cultural landscapes.

Factors that influence senior citizen's migration are not the same as the standard determinants of migration at a younger age. Migration at younger age is principally job-related, for example, seeking work or expanded compensation prospects and better living opportunities for their families. In older age, the senior citizens have a great inclination towards place attachment, traditional values and have a lesser rate of social change in their lives. But in the Pakistani family setup, they live with their sons in a joint family system. So, when their sons migrate from rural to urban areas, they move along with them. But there are certain repercussions they have to face due to this phenomenon. The cultural structures are still entirely different in rural and urban communities in Pakistan which raises the question like what are the repercussions and challenges for senior citizens after rural to urban migration? What types of adjustment problems are being faced by a senior citizen in urban areas? This article answers these questions by explaining and exploring the rural-urban migration in Punjab along with the social and cultural impacts of urban migration on the life of senior citizens. A phenomenological analysis of the above issue is presented for the better and in-depth understanding of the rural-urban migration of senior citizens in Punjab. It followed the below-said objectives.

- To study the present way of living and familial conditions of male migrated senior citizens in urban Punjab.
- To examine the socio-cultural repercussions of rural-urban migration on male senior citizens.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Migration is a social problem in the low income countries that has been extending in the course of most recent couple of decades and has particularly turned out to be more complex because of globalization (World Migration Report, 2020). Aside from the significant positive additions, migration additionally has potentially adverse effects on the physical and emotional well-being of migrants and the senior citizens. In many developing nations, the traditional family progressive system of reliance on the male child for help has destabilized because of migration. The absence of appropriate infrastructure for the social care and pension system has devastatingly affected the general prosperity of migrant senior citizens in these nations. Migrants moreover, tend to, for the most part, adopt the local culture of the place they have migrated. The emotional effect on the migrant senior citizens in observing their youngsters and grandkids moving away from their conventional culture also adversely affect their psychological well-being. There is an essential need at both local and universal levels to feature these issues so the policies can be actualized to advance infrastructure change, proficient health services delivery, and social emotionally supportive networks for these migrant groups of the population (Soni, Manarkattu, et al 2014).

People will likely migrate with an increase in the employment opportunities in urban areas, yet for the senior citizens, it is more difficult to move. It may derive that it is more favorable to migrate in young age. Further, the review of literature revealed that it is more likely for those nuclear families with a higher typical year of schooling to have an out-migrant to abroad (Whang & Zhang, 2015).

Similarly, the more significant nuclear family gauge also extends the probability of migration from such families. Higher dependence extent, on the other hand, decreases the chances of advancement of any person from to admiration. Among the variables concerning the financial situation of the nuclear families, ownership decreases the chances of moving, however, the poverty status of the nuclear family was found to have no part in migration decisions. (Haq, R. et al 2015).

Review of the literature also reveals senior citizen's face nervousness, weakness, loneliness feeling, and extended social and cultural issues. Their lives have turned out to be isolated. In this manner, they proposed to go to better places having better services. In any case, they think it is wiser to live respectively with all relatives instead of moving towards new places (Gautam, (2008).

The views of the migrant's senior citizens confront loneliness, included duties, unfriendly impact on the education of the youngsters, obligation brought about to back migration, extended tension for correspondence. Besides, they confront mental strains when leaving their roots (Farooq, et al, 2009). They are born, lived, and spent their whole life in one atmosphere; hence the change in case of migration is like a disaster for them. Actually, they move with their children to not live alone but cannot adjust at once; hence has to face inevitable repercussions..

But no such a kind of study is found in Punjab, Pakistan that reveals the socio-cultural repercussions of rural-urban migration on male senior citizens. This research has attempted to examine and study the repercussions of rural to urban migration on male migrated senior citizens in Punjab.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study aims to investigate the repercussions of rural to urban migration on senior citizens in Punjab and explores the factors affecting social adjustment of senior citizens in urban areas. The study followed phenomenological research approach under the wider umbrella of qualitative social research to explain and explore the said issue. In this type of research, the respondents are asked to describe their experiences according to their own perspective. So, it requires the researcher to keep aside his own biases about that phenomenon, known as 'bracketing'. This is necessary to unveil the real meaning of lived experiences of individuals as understood by them. The procedure for implementing this research consists of focusing on studying a small number of individuals. In-depth interviews were conducted for data collection. Similar sub-themes extracted from raw data were collected for thematic analysis. The male migrated senior citizens in larger cities of Punjab were interviewed. Three districts of Punjab, namely Multan, Lahore and Rawalpindi were selected purposively. Secondly, male senior citizens were interviewed by using volunteer sampling technique. The respondents included the aged male migrants, who had migrated in urban area only before one or less than one year and belonged to the age group of 65 to 74. Respondents were contacted and approached at public places like public parks, restaurants and hospitals. For data collection, a structured interview guide was developed based on Creswell's model of data collection for qualitative research and constructed central question, sub-questions and core questions for collecting the data until data was saturated after interviewing 27 respondents. Data analysis followed the steps of thematic analysis as described by Creswell (2013), and the major themes were derived to be presented as a result and discussion.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Migration from rural to urban areas is an ongoing process that involves certain factors and also affects the senior citizens of the family who migrate with their children and grandchildren to the urban areas. At the younger age, the reason for rural to urban migration is the poor economic condition of the families who migrate to the urban community to improve their economic status and seek jobs. As in rural areas people are involved in agriculture as a source of income. Unfortunately, decline in agriculture sectors resulting in increased poverty and lack of job opportunities for the rural community. But repercussions of such migration are more obvious on senior citizens who face the changes in their life. When they were asked about their present life style, changes they have faced and repercussions they bear, their answers generated the major themes like the new world, an identity crisis and cultural pluralism. Results and discussion derived from the transcripts are presented below.

### **I AM IN A NEW WORLD: LIFE OF SENIOR CITIZENS AFTER MIGRATION**

Migration is a process that brings certain changes in the routine life of individuals. When the senior citizens were asked about the present way of their living in urban areas, many of them said that:

“I used to get up early in the morning, offer morning prayer and recite holy Quran, do morning walk and perform small domestic work at home in the rural areas. I had a small shop and most of the time I spend time on the shop. My friends also used to come at my shop. We used to take tea together and had long discussions there. But there is a lot of difference between my past and present life as it is very much difficult. My past life was very easy relaxed and enjoyable but my present life is very sad, helpless and homesick. I feel I am in a new world where I am an alien. In my past life, I enjoyed my social and financial status. Now a days it is a different situation. I am not happy and adjusted here”.

Other respondents told that

“In my past when I was living in rural areas, where environment was clean, green and healthy, the gardeners make sure that plants are healthy and shady. It was the best life. Now, in the urban area, there are environmental problems. I am not satisfied with the environment of the present life. I used to wake-up early in the morning and offer prayer. I have animals and birds in my home; I take care of animals and birds but there is not enough space that I can keep birds here. But in the urban life I have nothing to do; I also used to spend time on the tea shop that is near my home in the village. Now I just watch TV at home.

Another respondent replied that

“I wake-up early in the morning and have my breakfast. After that, I provide pick and drop for grandchildren at school as my son goes to work too early, most of the time I live at home for the socialization of the grandchildren in an urban area. I am spending most of the time at masjid for the prayer of Allah Almighty. I have no new friends here as I meet with some in Masjid only. I recall my friends in the village all the time. I communicate with friends, relatives, family members living in rural areas through phone. Some time I discussed the rural and urban life. I get emotional when I remember my past life because in my clan there is a strong sense of kinship ties. I miss my previous life but I am helpless to live here as I cannot live alone without my family as who will look after me as now I will be alone in village”.

Some other opined that

“I was not agreed to move in city because I think that migration is not beneficial for me, it was only beneficial for my family members. So, I sacrificed my own life for my family because my family is a top priority for me. My son started a new shop here and he was earning well so we all shifted here but I am not adjusted here. Time spending is most crucial for me now. With the passage of time, I am more depressed here. My grandchildren have to go to school and son goes to work so I receive a little time from them and I spend a day hardly”

Another respondent said that

“In the urban community, I faced residential problems. I am living in a rented house, it is very congested and narrow. My room is small, dark and without a window, I feel that I am losing freedom, independence, and autonomy. Sometime I remember my residence in the village as it completely reflects the beauty of nature. I am very disappointed with the residential system of the city; it’s not a good place to live for senior citizens and their adjustment. I also face some emotional feelings. I am feeling that I am neglected by my family members. None of my family members sit with me and give me time. I am dependent on my family members due to my poor economic condition; I am not attending social gatherings with my social circle of village. My health condition is poor, I am less active and not able to earn. I feel that after migration my social status and standard of living has been declined”.

Migration is a complex process for senior citizens as they migrate for family wellbeing but their own adjustment is not easy. Some people consider that migration is joyful and grants freedom to the individuals. It may be joyful for young family members but it gives no pleasure and freedom to migrant senior citizens. As they had spent their whole life in one community so, migrating to a new urban community is quite challenging for them. Migration has imposed some restrictions and impediments on senior citizens. The data analysis reveals that the majority of the migrant senior citizens could not adjust in the urban community. In the urban areas, poor adjustment is a challenge for migrant senior citizens. They have been facing many adjustment problems such as social isolation, financial insecurity, accommodations problem, health problems, and psychological trouble.

### **THE IDENTITY CRISES**

Although rural to urban migration brings economic prosperity for the migrating families but one cannot deny the adjustment problems and challenges that senior citizens face. When they were asked about the phenomenon of elderly migration, the respondents replied in this regard as

I have been shifted into the urban region with my family for the last years. I did not know before how adversely this movement will affect me. I am passing through the identity crisis. Initially I had no place to go. I had no friends. I started feeling that who am I and where am I? I felt I need to redefine myself either I am a villager or an urban now”.

Some other said that

“I feel I am lost here, no one knows me and I don’t know anyone. I feel I am losing my identity. No one knows my background that what I was, and how my community respected me. I am like a child who has been lost in a mob.”

Another said that

“No one knows me here. I feel I lost my self-confidence as I am an alien in alien community.”

On the actual grounds everyone has place attachment, and this phenomenon is more intense for the senior citizens as an adjustment after migration is not an easy task for them. They are not satisfied and happy with the family decision but are helpless as they cannot live alone at this age and look after the house and themselves. They move for the economic prosperity of the next generation but the feeling of losing identity is a hard task for them.

### **CULTURAL VARIATION AND CULTURAL PLURALISM**

Migration from rural areas is influenced by social, environmental, economic, and cultural factors. However, these factors are often idle until they are triggered by other factors that prompt an individual and family members to migrate.

When individuals move from one place to another, from one culture to another, they bring their cultural values and practices to the host community. Cultural differences between the urban and rural culture of Punjab are pronounced in the province. These differences affect the personality of the migrant senior citizens and at times, the host networks as well. When they were asked about the socio-cultural repercussions of rural-urban migration, most of them replied as

“There is a lot of difference between rural and urban culture. The values of both areas are different from each other like meeting people, attending the guest and hospitality. People have limited time in urban areas to spend with their guests due to the busy life. On the other hand, in rural areas, people spend much of their time with each other and serve guests. In urban areas, the trend of marriage clubs is introduced while the people of the rural areas enjoy the wedding ceremony with old tradition, the types of gifts sharing in family and friends is also different in both areas. In fact there is no similarity. Our culture runs like cultural pluralism; hence we have to maintain our cultural identity here by our hospitality, food, and dresses”.

Some other participants explained that:

“A lot of difference can be observed between two different worlds, in the rural areas when guests come, they are received warmly. A guest of an individual is considered as the common guest of whole village. All members of the village give him time as well as serve him different kinds of foods. But in the urban areas, the guest and the host both do not have enough time. In the rural community, marriage is simple and easy while marriage is costly and artificial in the urban community. In rural and urban areas gift system exists. In rural areas, people spent a lot of time with relatives, but in urban areas, people spend time with friends rather than family and clan. In rural areas, people respect their parents and senior citizens but in urban areas grandchildren donot respect as they deserve as a senior”.

Some respondents explained some more cultural variations between the two cultures and opined that

“Rural and urban culture are really opposite with one another as in rural areas endogamy marriage is preferred while in urban areas exogamy marriage is preferred by many families. In my village at the end of the day, all friends are gathered and share their problems but in urban areas people are gathered at the event, they discuss only their busy life and talk about business and present status. I have nothing to do with

them. In rural areas, people attend guests with open arms; they consider that guest is the blessing of God. But in urban areas attending guests is just a formality. The gift system is a privilege in urban areas than in rural areas, while the respect of grandparent depends on the socialization of the children”.

Another key opinion is given by the migrant senior citizen about the social values of rural and urban culture. He demonstrated that:

“Rural and urban culture is different, the marriage system in rural areas is simple, enjoyable, all people of the village have social and economic support for each other. But in urban areas, the marriage system is costly; as here are more facilitating home appliances listed in dowry. People do not cooperate with each other due to the busy life in the urban area. For me, people are selfish here. They just meet with the people from whom they have some social or economic benefit. Here meeting people, again and again, is considered as ruining of their privacy”.

There is much cultural variation and cultural pluralism between the urban and rural culture. Senior citizens who have spent the major life span in rural area; feel difficult to cope up with cultural variation and cultural pluralism after rural to urban migration.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Internal migration is a common worldwide phenomenon due to modern technology & industrialization, and the increasing socio-economic demands of the young generation. Rural-urban migration is observed in both developed and developing countries; however, the rate is faster in developing countries. The issue is becoming a concern for the developing countries as they might not be prepared well for the social and economic demands of the youth population. The issue is especially significant in a country like Pakistan as the region is mainly characterized by poverty and has inadequate social and health facilities. But when rural to urban migration is concluded for senior citizens, it has different consequences on their life. When migration is spectated from senior citizens lens there is a different picture; they are not in earning phase of their life. They do not move from their villages for economic purposes; rather they move with family for social and economical care. As their place of destination changes, place attachment phenomenon starts in their life. They are not satisfied with their family care and are not happy with the urban culture where they are living now.

Firstly internal migration in the country is unplanned and making cities more polluted and populated. Government has no proper record of migrated citizens as their permanent address i.e. rural address is registered and in national statistics, they are counted as rural population. Also, the senior citizens population is counted as the rural population. Secondly, government is least interested in dealing with the problems of senior citizens, whether they are in rural areas or urban areas. There is no social policy for senior citizens that deal with their problem identification and solution. In this scenario, migration increases their problems regarding cultural variation and identity crisis. So it is recommended that government should address the issues of internal migration and problems of senior citizens through the promulgation of social policies in the province.

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