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Socio-Economic Impacts of Remittances on the Hazara Community of Quetta

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Abstract:

Members of the Hazara community in Quetta, Pakistan, have migrated to various countries because of security concerns and economic opportunities abroad and have sent remittances back to their households. This research addresses the main research question of how households use remittances and their socio-economic impacts on households and communities in Quetta's two localities, namely Mariabad and Hazara Town. Despite the growing importance of remittances to the community, no comprehensive research has been conducted in the area, creating a research gap. Therefore, this study fills the gap by exploring the socio-economic impacts of remittances on the community. The study employs a qualitative research method, utilizing purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews. The study uses the New Economic Labor Migration (NELM) theory. The study has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it expands knowledge in the field; practically, it helps community leaders, NGOs, and policymakers develop sustainable, long-term utilization patterns for socio-economic betterment.

Keywords: Quetta, Hazara community, migration, remittances, socio-economic development, urbanization, economic labour

INTRODUCTION

The Hazara community of Quetta has faced sectarian violence, which led them to face waves of migration in the pursuit of safety and better economic opportunities (Yusuf, 2012). The community has been facing genocide in Balochistan since 2013, which has made them marginalized and isolated socially, politically, educationally, commercially, and psychologically (Mujtaba et al., 2022). Most Hazara community members preferred migrating to other countries for opportunities and security.

Under the push-and-pull migration theory (Lee, 1966), Hazara migration from Quetta is driven by both push and pull factors. Violence, security concerns, and limited economic opportunities in Quetta acted as push factors. In contrast, the prospect of better economic, educational, and living opportunities in countries, mainly the US, Australia, and European states, acted as the pull factor. As a result, migrants sent substantial remittances to their families, which became a key financial resource in the community. Scholars have argued that remittances can play a transformative role in

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community development by improving living conditions and increasing social mobility (Adams & Cuecuecha, 2016; De Haas, 2010).

Further, remittances are a significant source of foreign income and provide households in Pakistan with assets to support survival strategies and socio-economic development (State Bank of Pakistan, 2022). Socio-economic progress is the process that increases individuals' capabilities and expands their social and economic choices by improving their material and non-material well-being (Szirmai, 2005). Economic growth can be measured quantitatively, while socio-economic development is usually measured qualitatively through the sustainability and inclusiveness of progress.

Despite the growing importance of remittances for the community, no research has been conducted on the socio-economic effects of remittances on the Hazara community of Quetta. Most research on the community focuses on the security challenges and economic issues it faces in the province. Therefore, this study examines the socio-economic impacts of remittances on the Hazara community in Quetta, Pakistan, who have migrated to various countries, including Europe, Australia, and the US, due to security concerns and economic opportunities abroad.

The research mainly has two objectives, which are "to explore the patterns of remittance utilization by Hazara households in Quetta" and "to explore the socio-economic impact of remittances on the household and overall Quetta's Hazara community. This paper follows a standard structure, presenting a literature review, theoretical framework, research methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Hazara community migrated to Pakistan in the 1970s and 1990s (Mujtaba et al., 2022). The community has faced targeted killing, suicide bombings, and sectarian violence. Field interviews with Hazara people show that these issues affected their access to education, healthcare, employment, and public life (Majeed, 2020, 2021; NCHR, 2018). Over 509 Hazara individuals were killed, and more than 627 were injured during 2012 and 2017 alone (Shah, 2018).

As a result, most Hazara community members prefer to migrate to other countries for opportunities and security (Jafree et al., 2023). A Hazara man, Hasan Reza Changezi, said that since 1999, when the genocide against Hazaras started, Hazaras have started migrating to other countries. According to the same report, around 50,000 Hazaras have migrated to Australia, about 10,000 have gone to Europe, and 8,000 are still stuck in Indonesia because Indonesia was a way to migrate by ship (Notezai, 2017). Social Capital theory states that social connections provide groups and individuals with resources, such as information and remittances, which can cause economic, political, and social advantages (Putnam et al., 2004). In the context of the Hazara community of Quetta, social capital is significant as it facilitates migration and remittance flow from the diaspora to the community.

Remittances are cross-border payments sent by migrants to their families or communities, supporting household expenses and reducing poverty (World Bank, 2025). Households spend these remittances in three ways: investment goods, status-oriented consumption goods, and human and physical capital investments (Adams & Cuecuecha, 2010). However, remittances are further divided

into two major types. The first type is monetary remittances, which include cash transfers through formal and informal channels, such as bank transfers and hand-carried cash or hawala systems (Ratha, 2005). Non-monetary remittances are a second type, comprising materials and goods sent by immigrants (Carling, 2008).

For many households in many developing countries, remittances are significant as they constitute a major portion of their earnings (Acosta et al., 2008; Adams & Page, 2005). Remittances support macro-level development and long-term economic growth through investments in education, health, and entrepreneurship (Giuliano & Ruiz-Arranz, 2009). However, remittances can increase developing countries' dependence by reducing labor force participation and productivity (Chami et al., 2005). In addition, remittances act as a form of insurance by helping households mitigate economic challenges caused by natural disasters, unemployment, and health issues (Yang & Choi, 2007).

Families that receive remittances tend to send their children to school and invest in better health facilities (Edwards & Ureta, 2003). Similarly, using remittances for welfare projects, specifically building educational institutions, hospitals, and infrastructure, can positively (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012) impact the upheaval of the community (Orozco, 2003). As a result, communities can experience political and social stability through economic and social security (Kapur, 2005). However, remittances can create inequality within communities because families receiving them may prosper while others may not. In the same way, several challenges are associated with the remittance flow (Stark et al., 1986). The major barrier, especially for low-income refugees, is the high transaction costs (Ratha, 2011). Brain drain is another challenge that deprives countries of human capital (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012).

In Pakistan, remittances support households and influence education, health, consumption, and investment decisions, as remittance-receiving households spend an average of 26% or more on education and more than 6% on health, compared with non-recipient families (Yousafzai, 2015). Likewise, remittances substantially increase health and clinical sector expenditures in most areas (Khan et al., 2021). Similarly, in Pakistan, international remittances reduce poverty by 16.7% and raise per capita income annually by approximately Rs 17,779 (Awan et al., 2017). Remittances enhance human development in Punjab, Pakistan, through expenditure on education, healthcare, housing, and financial savings (Imran, 2018). Remittances contribute to reduced infant mortality, better child health outcomes, and improved access to health resources (Shafiq & Gillani, 2018).

Remittances from Hazara diaspora members help many families in Quetta. However, no research has examined the area to highlight their direct consequences for the community. Therefore, this research aims to explore the effects of remittances on the community's socio-economic conditions. This study has two objectives: first, to examine how Hazara households use remittances, and second, to assess their impacts on households and the community overall.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The New Economic Labor Migration (NELM) theory emerged in the 1980s as a critique of the traditional theories of migration (Stark & Bloom, 1985; Todaro, 1969). It frames migration as a household strategy that provides income, manages risks, addresses market failures in the country of origin, and improves the household's relative status (Stark & Bloom, 1985). In developing

countries, migration helps households increase their relative status (Stark & Levhari, 1982). Moreover, remittances act as strategic transfers that are utilized for long-term enhancements in education, business, and infrastructure (Stark, 1991).

Remittances are vital for bottom-up development because they help households increase income and improve livelihoods, nutrition, health, and education (de Haas, 2007). Research shows that remittance flows help build housing, fund education, and cope with the country's harsh economic conditions (Harpviken, 2009; Monsutti & Camiller, 2005). As a result, remittances provide both financial resources and means for upward mobility. In Mexico and Latin America's rural areas, remittances promoted agricultural productivity and supported areas where state support is weak or absent (Taylor, 1999).

NELM offers a nuanced lens by showing how economic challenges shape Hazara migration. The Hazara community throughout history faced sectarian violence, which limited their private business spaces and freedom of mobility (HRCP, 2014). As a result, these hurdles restricted their participation in the labor market and limited them to informal vending and other small work. However, they were not even safe in those areas, as a Hazara man reported, "In a city like Quetta, Hazara men who are in the labour markets face great risks, especially the vendors or drivers" (Yusuf, 2012). One such incident was seen in the Hazarganji vegetable market, which has faced multiple targeted bombings and killed Hazara vegetable and fruit vendors (McKirdy & Saifi, 2019).

Similarly, the Hazara people were even targeted in mixed public places and markets, such as Mezan Chowk and Qandhari Bazar, based on their facial features. As a result, these attacks disrupted economic activity through security threats, and this economic pressure pushed them to migrate. These events show that although labor was not the primary reason for migration, it was central to threats to both physical and economic security. NELM is significantly relevant to this study because the Hazara community in Quetta, facing both violence and economic hurdles, demonstrably employs migration as a coping strategy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore people's experiences and uncover hidden meanings and interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Maxwell, 2012). Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were used, which helped the researcher balance flexibility and structure, so that the researcher could maintain consistency with the research objectives and delve into the emerging themes (Ginn & Munn, 2015). The researcher used purposive sampling to recruit participants from Mariabad and Hazara Town, Quetta. Purposive sampling was used to identify specific resident characteristics that were imperative for the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method suitable for qualitative research, selecting respondents with characteristics relevant to the study's questions (Palinkas et al., 2015). This sampling method involved Hazara residents of the two localities who had someone from their household outside Pakistan, namely in the US, Australia, and the European states, who sent remittances to them. The target audience needed specific characteristics that had to be considered during data collection to ensure authentic results. Also, due to time and resource limitations, the interviews were conducted with residents of specific areas in Mariabad and Hazara town.

Furthermore, to avoid bias, proper sampling was done from the overall Hazara population of Hazara town and Mariabad. The total Hazara population in Quetta is approximately 500,000 (Minority Rights Group International, 2018). The average household size in Pakistan is 8.5 individuals (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2024). So, the total number of Hazara households was approximately 58,824. To determine the study population, we conducted a tentative pilot study in both Mariabad and Hazara town to estimate the number of migrants from the Hazara community. The pilot study areas in Mariabad were Syedabad, Gulistan town, and Muhal-e-Abbasiyah, while those in Hazara town were Aliabad and Munawar Colony. As a result, around 68 to 70% of households have someone in the family outside Pakistan who sends remittances back home. So, 69% of 58,824 equals 40,588. Thus, the study population will be approximately 40,588 households.

Extracting the exact number of interviews in a qualitative study is not possible. However, data saturation is important for limiting the number of interviews (Guest et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2018). Researchers should focus on data quality and depth for validity and generalization, rather than the number of interviews (Sharp, 2003). Similarly, differing research designs have different sample sizes. For phenomenology and thematic research, around 5-25 interviews, and for grounded theory, around 20-60, are preferable (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, this study used thematic analysis, for which around 15 to 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and recorded. The recordings were transcribed and then organized for analysis. After transcription, the data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a commonly used method for interviews, focus group discussions, and textual data, that identifies and interprets themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In inductive analysis, themes emerge from the collected data without theoretical coding before data collection, and the researcher develops them based on the data.

The thematic analysis is conducted based on a six-step process, as shown in Figure 4. Firstly, the researcher familiarizes themselves with the collected data. For this research, this step involved identifying patterns, meanings, and emotional tones in the recorded interviews and transcribed data from Hazara respondents, as well as writing memos and journals. Secondly, Coding refers to the procedure of labeling units of data, such as words or sentences. Codes can be constructed from the data itself (inductively), from theoretical frameworks (deductively), or both (adductively). For this study, the inductive method was used as the themes emerged from the data itself. Thirdly, the labeled data is placed under specific themes, and connections are built between the codes by using visual techniques such as tables and mind maps. Fourthly, this step involves a comprehensive evaluation of the themes so that their coherence, accuracy, and relevancy with the codes can be ensured. Fifth, each theme should receive a name that is concise yet complete, defining the main idea behind the theme. Lastly, the final step involves writing coherently and compellingly about the overall themes. It is not about summarizing the findings; rather, it is interpretative storytelling grounded in strong analytical skills.

This study followed ethical considerations by protecting participants' rights and privacy and informing all participants about the study's purpose to build trust and confidence (Orb et al., 2001). Throughout data collection, the research maintained the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' contributions (Kaiser, 2009). Furthermore, this research did not harm any respondent

psychologically, emotionally, or socially, which is a vital research ethic (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012).

DATA ANALYSIS

The interviews address the first research question, which explores "the utilization of remittances by the Hazara households". Analysis of the interviews revealed several themes that provide a clear picture of remittance utilization by Hazara households. The findings emphasize the household as both the manager and the recipient of remittance flows. In the following section, remittance utilization by households is presented, as shown in Figure 5, across education, healthcare, and infrastructure development.

Livelihood

Interviews with respondents revealed several areas where Hazara households use remittances. One such area is livelihood and daily consumption. As a female respondent who was a student in Mariabad and whose brother was in Australia stated, "I know that around 50-60% of the money is used for household expenses…" Similarly, another male respondent living in Australia and sending remittances to his family said, "The money sent is spent on basic and daily life consumption such as groceries, housing, and electricity and gas bills."

Furthermore, a 60-year-old housewife from Mariabad, who had her two sons in Canada and the US and received remittance, said, "The money that we receive is mainly utilized for the daily consumption materials, such as vegetables, food, fruits, etc." Likewise, a 23-year-old female respondent, whose brother is in Belgium, stated, "The money sent by him is utilized in household consumption materials." Hence, livelihood and daily consumption materials are the major uses of remittances by Hazara households.

Education

Education is another significant area of remittance utilization by the households, which was also proved by the statements of many of the respondents. For instance, a female respondent, who graduated from BUITEMS and depends on the money sent by her sister for the expenses of their household, declared, "The educational expenses of me and my sisters all is based on the money my sister sends us. I attended government school and college because at that time my family could not bear the burden of the expenses. Still, since my sister is sending us money, I did my graduation from BUITEMS in the education department, and my younger sisters too are studying in private schools and college."

In addition, a female student from the Balochistan University whose household was receiving remittance from Australia by her father expressed the utilization of them on education by declaring, "I am the first among my extended family to reach university, as I am currently in my 1st year of BS degree at the Balochistan University. Similarly, my siblings are in school; two of the youngest are in the Garrison School. However, the rest of my sisters have given private exams, which was only possible because of my father, as he sent us money, through which my sisters attended tuition classes and paid the fee of exams."

The utilization of remittances on education was also approved by the migrants who were sending money back to their households, as a factory worker from Australia responded, "it is also being

used on the education of my youngest brother and sister who are currently in school and college." Consequently, another male respondent, a laborer in Australia, mentioned using remittances for education: "my 2 younger sisters are getting an education: one from BUITEMS and the other from Islamia Girls College, whose education expenses are utilized by the remittances I sent to them." Thus, these responses make it clear that migrants' remittances are mainly used by remittance-receiving households for educational purposes.

Besides traditional education, community members also benefit from technical education and skills development through remittances. During the interview, a housewife whose husband was in Australia, living in Mariabad and receiving remittances from him, showed how remittances have empowered her to give her children additional skills. She said, "Both my children have joined the English Language academy as well, and my daughter has joined the Karate academy." Substantially, a 25-year-old artist, living in Hazara town, while talking about additional skills, declared, "We, brothers, have also gained technical skills such as computer programming and art skills. Also, we have done professional advance from English Language centers." Therefore, in the category of education utilization, as shown by interview responses, the money is spent on both traditional education, which comprises school, college, and university-level education, and skills and technical education, which includes language education, arts, karate, and others.

Healthcare

In terms of remittance utilization, the healthcare sector cannot be ignored, as many respondents stated that they used remittances for healthcare facilities. A 60-year-old housewife in Mariabad said, "The previous year, my husband and I went to Karachi for our eyes' surgery as our eyeballs had been covered with a white layer, which made us unable to see properly. Therefore, we both went to Karachi for our operation and got treated." Likewise, another female respondent, aged 75 and facing several health issues, mentioned, "I am a patient and facing several diseases and heart issues; hence, much of the remittances are used on my health expenses..." Another male respondent who owns a shop in Mariabad said, "Before 2 years ago, my mother was facing a health issue, for which we needed to take her to Karachi and get her the best timely treatment so all those expenses was covered by my sisters."

Besides the elderly members, the younger participants even acknowledged this factor. They said that in their households as well, remittances were used for healthcare facilities and disease treatment. Such as a 21-years female respondent mentioned, "My sister-in-law, who is my cousin as well, and lives in the same house with me, 5 years ago, was suffering from cancer and my husband was sending a large amount of money for her as he was sending it continuously. She used to go to Karachi after weeks for her treatment and it was possible because of the amount he sent to her which blessed her with health." Likewise, a 19-year-old female respondent from Mariabad mentioned the health issues faced by her sisters and family, which they were treating in Karachi and for which her father was sending a huge amount of money from Australia. She said, "My parents are cousins and we all sister have anemia. One of my sisters had ITP (Immune thrombocytopenic purpura), based on which she used to get blood vomiting and her liver had started to destroy itself. So, to cure it we went to Agha Khan. My other sister has the epilepsy disease for which we took her to the Agha Khan hospital… My third sister is suffering from cerebral palsy (CP) on whose expense a lot of money is used, such as for her diapers, clothes, wipes, medicines, and others." In a nutshell,

most respondents said that to improve health and treat diseases, they take the patient or ill member to Karachi or to the best facilities so their health and well-being can be ensured. In this case, remittances play a significant role, as a large portion is used for healthcare.

Infrastructure

Another crucial area of remittance utilization is infrastructure, mainly housing, which includes both house purchasing and renovation. As the number of remittance-receiving households has increased, the community has also seen increases in housing renovations and house purchases. “The money was utilized for house purchasing, which is though small, but I am happy that my family is living safely there,” a factory worker in Australia said while discussing how his family used the remittance in Quetta. Further, a male respondent from the Hazara town and a recipient of remittance from his father said, “3 years ago we purchased a land and started the construction work on it, which was completed the previous year, and we moved to that house the previous year. So, it was possible because of the remittances.”

In the same way, a shop owner from Mariabad during the interview told about the renovation of their house based on the amount received by his sisters who were in Australia and Austria, “Though we have had a small house from the beginning, which was my grandfather's, but it was outdated and through the money they sent us in the initial 3 years, bit by bit, we renovated our house and today it is based on three portions and completely modern.” A similar case was affirmed by a female respondent whose household received remittance from her husband and cousin, “My husband and that cousin have sent money through which we have renovated our home, as previously it was very outdated, by we renovated it.” Hence, infrastructural development, both through purchasing land and renovating one’s house, has emerged as another area of remittance utilization among Hazara households.

Business Development

Besides housing, another area of remittance utilization for Hazara households is business development. However, in most interviews, only a few respondents mentioned it. For example, a housewife from Hazara Town and a remittance recipient from his sons said, “my husband opened his medical store on the Aliabad road, Hazara Town.” Moreover, another shop owner at Hazara Town mentioned, “, my fiancé sent money for me and asked me to start my own business. It was in 2022 when I started my clothing shop in Aliabad, Hazara Town. After that till now, many times she has been sending me money to renovate and update my shop.”

Likewise, a scarf shop owner at Mariabad said that he was able to start his business due to the amount sent by his sisters, “when I completed my education I wanted to start a business, a small shop of scarf and veils in my area, for which my sisters sent me money and I used it to invest in my business.” To sum it up, these respondents mentioned that remittances have been a useful tool for business development, as they invested in their businesses using the amounts they received from overseas members.

Other Areas

Besides the sectors mentioned above, the interviews also highlighted a few other areas where remittances were used. A few respondents mentioned using remittances for events and festivals,

such as marriages or other Islamic events, which has increased in remittance-receiving households. “When any festivals or events in the family comes then our expenses reaches around 3 lakhs, which is only possible because of the high exchange rate of dollar to Pakistani rupees,” a female respondent living in Mariabad mentioned. Likewise, a male respondent living in Australia while talking about the increased expenses of weddings in Hazara community said, “In the past the wedding expenses of Hazara Community was less but now weddings has turned to very lavish style, though much burden is not on the bride’s family, still we need to give gold and dowry to our sisters for which I used to send amount to my mother and she would arrange everything required by herself.”

Similarly, another thing where the amount is being used is the outing and travelling ones, “previously, we were not doing this much gathering and outing, we did not go to hotels, restaurants, and other places this much, but now we go a lot”, a respondent whose father was a musician in Australia declared. Likewise, spending on luxuries has increased in a few members, which was mentioned by a female respondent who received remittance from her husband who was in Australia, “I also spent a huge amount of money on branded clothes, perfumes, makeup, and other fashion-related stuff... I recently did a face treatment to get rid of the wrinkles on my face, and also applied fake lashes to my eyes. I have also done skin whitening therapy many times, which has led my skin towards freshness and glow, and made me feel good.” The same respondent, while mentioning travel tours, said, “I also ask for additional money from my husband during the winter vacations of my children, and each year we go to Islamabad, where my brother lives, to spend our vacations.” Thus, all these were the additional areas which were mentioned by the respondents where they used to utilize the remittance they received from their diaspora members.

Socio-economic Impacts on the Households and Community

Based on these uses, the socio-economic conditions of households and the overall community changed, as confirmed by many respondents. As a female respondent with her brother in Australia mentioned, her livelihood improved because of her brother's migration: “His move to Australia has significantly improved our financial situation, and we've been able to access various facilities”. Substantially, another male respondent who is a small shop owner in Mariabad also asserted, “Remittance is the most significant source of income and the major tool for the socio-economic development of my household. Be it health, education, livelihood, or infrastructural development, in all the sectors, my household has benefited heavily from remittances.” Despite the socio-economic impacts of remittances on the household, remittances also possess certain socio-economic impacts on the overall Hazara community as well, which was expressed in the interviews by the respondents. For instance, a 20-year-old female respondent from Mariabad, who was also a student at BUITEMS, said, “Since many people from our community started moving abroad, particularly to Australia and other countries, we've seen a positive impact. For instance, they've adopted a better lifestyle, built new and improved homes, and acquired various amenities.” Together, these findings show that remittances have an immense impact on the Hazara community overall.

DISCUSSION

This research deals with the socio-economic impacts of remittances on the Hazara community of Quetta. It had two objectives: first, to explore the utilization of remittances, and second, to explore

their socio-economic impacts on households and the community. The interview analysis revealed several themes and sub-themes that respondents repeatedly mentioned (as shown in Figure 6). The data presented several major themes for the first research question, i.e., remittance utilization. Those themes include the utilization of education, healthcare, livelihood, infrastructure, and business development. Similarly, the second research question, which addressed socio-economic impacts, is addressed by the themes: impacts on households and impacts on the community.

A household is a group of people who share the same residence, live together, and use the same resources for survival and consumption (World Bank, 2025). A household differs from a family because it is a residential and functional concept that emphasizes social and economic interdependence (Deaton, 2019; Ellis, 1998). In this study, the household is treated as the primary unit of consumption and decision-making. The households in the study were both separate and joint. In most households, women headed the household because male members had migrated abroad and were the earners, which affected traditional gender roles.

Interview responses reflected the push and pull reasons described by migration theory. As a respondent said, “My third brother is in Australia, where he moved in 2013 due to financial issues.” Another response was, “My husband went to foreign countries in 2011, due to the violence and target killings in Quetta.” Because of this migration, members send remittances back to their families, and the mode, amount, and frequency of transfers differ from household to household. Because the amounts sent by diaspora members vary, it is difficult to predict a single estimated amount. Some households send lakhs, while others send thousands. As a result, each household receives a different amount.

Socio-economic impacts refer to the effects that economic activities, phenomena, or policies have on individuals' or communities’ well-being and living conditions (Becker, 1994). A female respondent, who had her husband and brother-in-law abroad while talking about the impacts of remittances, said, “I believe this has created a positive change in our society. Since starting to work abroad, these individuals have been able to send money back to Quetta, helping many jobless brothers and fathers in the community.”

The primary data analysis highlights that remittances are used for education. Education is a basic pillar of socio-economic development, and investing in it improves individuals' conditions and supports their socio-economic well-being. Based on the thematic analysis, almost all respondents reported using a portion of the money for education, including technical, formal, and other forms. The analysis suggests that remittances were used for both formal education (primary, secondary, and higher education) and technical and skills-based education, such as English language attainment, Karate, arts, computer skills, and others. Furthermore, most investment goes to higher education, as many community members pursue higher education in Quetta or in Islamabad, Lahore, and other cities. Hence, remittances by the households are spent on education.

Remittances play a significant role, as a major portion is used for healthcare. The interviews indicated that remittances enable almost all ill people to access the best healthcare facilities, ensuring their physical well-being. To improve health conditions and reduce disease, patients or ill family members are taken to Karachi or other top facilities to ensure their health and well-being.

Another area of remittance utilization is livelihood and daily consumption. Almost all respondents said they use these transfers for livelihood needs and consumption materials. These include food, bills, and other expenses. Furthermore, households without a car or their own means of transportation use it for transport. Similarly, they use it for both inter-city and intra-city travel. Also, the expenses of festivals, events, and functions are covered through this money. Many households use them for outings and enjoyment. Further, it is also used to maintain luxuries, such as brands, jewelry, and others.

Another utilization pattern studied is business development, which was mentioned by many respondents. Remittances have been a useful tool for business development, as they have been invested in their businesses and urban development. New malls and restaurants have developed in both localities. However, the findings suggest that Hazara town has seen more development in terms of businesses, malls, and restaurants. Still, Mariabad has also been transformed over the past decades. Hence, the business development is another finding of the study.

The analysis of primary data also suggests another finding of the study: infrastructural transformation, including house purchasing and renovation. This result was regarded as a finding of the study because many respondents mentioned it, and through the thematic analysis method, it was identified as a theme. The Hazara community's houses have been updated with modern infrastructure. The data also showed that people who did not own a house purchased one after receiving remittances. Those who already had houses before receiving remittances renovated them. Conversely, some respondents did both, buying and renovating their houses. Thus, one of the study's findings include infrastructural development.

Through thematic analysis of the primary data, the socio-economic impacts of remittances were evident in both households and the community. The analyzed data indicate that remittances positively impact households by providing financial stability. They also improve households' educational and healthcare conditions. Many respondents compared their prior conditions with their current ones, highlighting that remittances have improved their situation; previously, they did not have such houses and facilities, but remittances have helped them access better facilities and living conditions. Hence, remittances are a major financial tool for the households.

Remittances have provided the community with social empowerment and have transformed the conservative and patriarchal norms. Women are now more empowered in the community. They own cars and control household matters. This has empowered women more in the community because more male members are abroad, giving women more authority in household matters. For example, a female respondent from Mariabad said, “Females are more empowered as they have more drivers and other sectors.” In most houses, women control household matters because men are abroad to earn, so women manage financial and social matters.

Likewise, these socio-economic changes also include a transformed social environment and values, such as a housewife from the Hazara town who was having her sons abroad mentioned, “When I got married, I was only given a ring in gold and a dress worth a few hundred. However, now the wedding expenses have increased substantially… All these reflect the changed luxurious lifestyle of the community, and we were able to afford it due to the money both my sons have been earning and sending to us.”

These findings present remittances as a tool for households to cope with market failures and improve economic conditions, which aligns with the prospects of NELM theory. The data indicates that migration was mainly driven by violence against this community in Quetta or by economic constraints. Therefore, the households adopted migration as a coping strategy. As a result, the households gained social empowerment and financial transfers, which have improved their conditions. Further, this asset supports households' developmental investments in education, healthcare, and other areas. Hence, the findings support these assumptions of the NELM theory.

However, despite these socio-economic impacts, respondents also mentioned other negative impacts on households and the community, such as laziness and dependence among youth. As one respondent who was a laborer in Australia mentioned, “There are boys who have become lazy, who wake up at noon and take money from their mothers to have breakfast outside the home, and go on outings with their friends.” Similarly, a housewife, while complaining about the laziness of her grandson, said, “My elder grandson always comes to me or his mother and asks for money. I remember when his father was of this age, he used to work and earn money even though he was a laborer. But my grandson does no work, he doesn’t study with interest, and the whole day he is busy in gatherings with his friends and partying.” Hence, the collected data from Hazara members shows that remittances have negative impacts on the community, which hinders the positive use of remittances.

Recommendations

To cope with the negative impacts of remittances, the community needs financial literacy education. For this reason, community leaders, influential members, elderly people, parents, and even youth can arrange financial literacy programs, even through social media, to raise awareness among members about the proper use of money transfer systems. People should use legal transfer methods to ensure that the money entering the country increases national revenue and contributes to the country's overall economic growth.

Similarly, the small youth-led organizations, such as scouts that are functional in the community, and the language centers, which are much in number in the community, while arranging events, such as community-based debates, sessions, seminars, and even the cultural events, should give a specific focus on this topic so that those members who are not literate or unaware of the topic, should realize the significance of the receiving money and use them for sustainable resources, such as better educational opportunities, mainly admissions in the best educational institutions of the country and the world. Likewise, community members can use it for urban development and growth; as a male respondent from Australia mentioned, “The community should understand the importance of investment and should even invest in other major urban cities, such as Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi”. In this way, the community can benefit more from the funds received from abroad and contribute to both community-level development and national growth.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the socio-economic impacts of remittances on the Hazara community of Quetta. The study was based on the qualitative research method with semi-structured interviews, which were later analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings suggest that remittances serve as a

major financial tool for the community. Households mainly use them for their livelihood, education, healthcare, infrastructure, business development, and other needs, providing financial stability.

The research indicates several theoretical and practical implications by increasing knowledge on the topic. Similarly, it highlights both the negative and positive impacts of remittances, which can inform the community's real-world social and economic settings. Moreover, it shows community members that financial literacy programs are vital for understanding the significance of these earnings so they can be used more effectively for sustainable, long-term development.

The research is important because it contributes to both theory and practice. Despite the significance of these financial transfers for the Hazara households and community, no research has been conducted on them. Therefore, the research fills the gap. It also presents primary data through direct interviews with remittance-receiving community members and contributes to the literature in the field.

In addition, the study contributes to community leaders and policymakers by informing better utilization patterns and socio-economic improvement. Policymakers can use insights from this research to design financial literacy initiatives. Moreover, the community leaders, NGOs, and the local authorities can formulate strategies for better urban development and community welfare. In this way, the community can direct its investment toward long-term progress rather than immediate luxuries. Lastly, it provides a pathway for future studies on the topic.

This study also indicates further research areas; for instance, future research can include topics on the relationship between remittance and dependency. Similarly, it could include an exploratory study assessing the role of gender, mainly women, in household decision-making and the socio-economic sphere. Further, a comparative study can be done to analyze the socio-economic impacts of remittance on different remittance-receiving groups in Pakistan. In addition, future studies can explore the dynamics of social change based on remittance receipt and diaspora linkages among Hazara community members in Quetta. Similarly, another area of research could shift the method by adopting quantitative surveys or a longitudinal approach to analyze the impacts of remittances on the community.

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